



Catholic Parish of Lower North Shore



St Thomas' Willoughby

St Philip Neri Northbridge

St Leonard's Naremburn

Twinned with the Parish of Letefoho, Timor Leste.

We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather, the Cammeraygal and the Wallumedegal peoples, who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to this Country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

PARISH OFFICE

182 High St, North Willoughby NSW
(02) 9958 8846

✉ office@lns.org.au

🌐 www.bbcatholic.org.au/lns

OFFICE HOURS

Monday to Friday: 9:00am - 4:00pm

CLERGY

Fr. Jose Philip, OSH (Parish Priest)

jose.philip@bbcatholic.org.au

Fr. Biju Mathew, AP

biju.mathewK@bbcatholic.org.au

Fr. Vincent Trung Nguyen, AP

vincent.nguyen@bbcatholic.org.au

Fr. Emmanuel Obiche, AP

emmanuel.obiche@bbcatholic.org.au

Fr. Peter Dowd (RNSH Chaplain)

peter.dowd@bbcatholic.org.au

PARISH STAFF

Secretary

Ursula O'Hare (Mon - Fri)

Dionne Soares (Mon & Fri)

Children's Sacrament

Co-ordinator

Kristy Komadina (Tue & Wed)

sacraments@lns.org.au

Catechist Co-ordinator

Henny Theodorus (Tue)

ccd@lns.org.au

Finance (bookkeeper)

Ilona Dudek (Fri)

accounts@lns.org.au

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

St. Thomas' Primary School

2 Horsley Ave, Willoughby NSW

(02) 7256 2104

Principal: Enrica Bova

enrica.bova@dbb.catholic.edu.au

St. Philip Neri Primary School

67 Baringa Rd, Northbridge NSW

(02) 9958 7136

Principal: Liz Calabria

MISSION - "Together, in Christ's love, for others"

VISION - "To know and love God, and to be Christ to one another"

**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR B
17th DECEMBER 2023**

"I am the voice of one
crying out in the desert."

Dear Parishioners,

In this week's Gospel we encounter the inspiring figure of John the Baptist. His life was dedicated to a divine purpose - not to be the Light but to bear witness to the Light, a profound reminder for each of us. In a world often clouded by uncertainties and distractions, we are called to be witnesses to the transformative power of Christ. John's humility in denying personal greatness and acknowledging his role as a voice in the wilderness teaches us valuable lessons. In our own lives, can we embody such humility, recognizing our part in God's plan? Just as John pointed towards the imminent arrival of Jesus, our actions and words can be a beacon, directing others to the enduring Light that is Christ. As we navigate our journeys of faith, let us ponder our identities in the broader narrative of God's redemptive plan. Like John, may we joyfully accept our roles as witnesses, understanding that our ultimate purpose is to illuminate the path to Christ, who is the true source of hope and salvation. May this inspire us to live our lives as testimony to the Light, guiding others toward the transformative grace found in Jesus Christ.

FAREWELL TO FR EMMANUEL

After ministering in our parish for the last 12 months, Fr Emmanuel is returning home to his diocese in Nigeria on 15th of January. Supported by our own Bishop Anthony Randazzo, Fr Emmanuel came to us at the beginning of this year for a one-year placement on sabbatical leave. During this time, he has learnt a great deal about the Australian church and its people, he has made friends, and he has successfully completed the Clinical Pastoral Education Course (CPE) at St Vincent's Hospital. He is now well placed to benefit from his experience and training as he resumes his priestly ministry in Nigeria. On behalf of all in our parish, I thank Fr Emmanuel for his cheerful disposition and good work, and wish him every blessing as he journeys home.

Fr Jose Philip OSH

Advent



Please Note the Parish Office will be closed from 21st December and re-open on the 8th January. For emergencies & Funerals please phone the parish office on 99588846 and leave a message for one of the clergy to return your call.

SUNDAY'S READINGS

Entrance Antiphon *Philippians 4:4-5*

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.
Indeed, the Lord is near.



Lighting of the 3rd Advent Candle

"Loving God, as we light the third candle of this Advent wreath, we rejoice in your presence. May the light of this candle fill our hearts with the joy of your salvation. Help us to share this joy with others, spreading your love and happiness to all we encounter. Amen."

First Reading *Isaiah 61:1-2. 10-11*

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken; to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord. 'I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation, he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity, like a bridegroom wearing his wreath, like a bride adorned in her jewels. 'For as the earth makes fresh things grow, as a garden makes seeds spring up, so will the Lord make both integrity and praise spring up in the sight of the nations.'

Responsorial Psalm *Lk 1:46-50. 53-54. R. Is 61:10*

(R.) My soul rejoices in my God.

Second Reading *1 Thessalonians 5:16-24*

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus. Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything - hold on to what is good and avoid every

form of evil. May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

Gospel Acclamation *Isaiah 61:1 (Lk 4:18)*

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;
he sent me to bring Good News to the poor.
Alleluia!

Gospel *John 1:6-8. 19-28*

A man came, sent by God.

His name was John.

He came as a witness,
as a witness to speak for the light,
so that everyone might believe through him.
He was not the light,
only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, 'I am not the Christ.' 'Well then,' they asked, 'are you Elijah?' 'I am not,' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?' So John said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied:

a voice that cries in the wilderness:

Make a straight way for the Lord.'

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?' John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands among you - unknown to you - the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.' This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

Christmas Volunteers Needed!

We need many volunteers to help us make our Christmas Masses a glorious celebration. These include roles in the nativity play for children, choir members, food servers, readers, people to set up and pack down and many more! If you are able to help, at the 6pm Christmas Eve Mass at St Leonards please use the QR code on the following page. All other Christmas Masses will have sign up sheets in each church for you to use.



CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN THE NATIVITY CHRISTMAS MASS ST THOMAS' CHURCH AT 6PM WILL HAVE REHEARSAL ON - THURSDAY 21st DECEMBER AT 10.30AM.



CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATING IN THE CHRISTMAS EVE CHOIR REHEARSAL- SUNDAY 17th AFTER 9.30AM MASS

Come and join our St Thomas

Christmas Eve Choir

Calling all children and their parents to come and sing with us at the Family Mass on Christmas Eve

24 DECEMBER

CAROLS: 5.30PM
MASS: 6PM
ST THOMAS WILLOUGHBY

RSVP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO:
HENNY.THEODORUS@GMAIL.COM

OR PHONE PARISH OFFICE: 9958 8846



Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve Mass Times

St Leonard's Church Naremburn

5.30pm Carols/ 6pm Family & Youth Mass

This Mass will include a Nativity Play & Music by
SPN & Youth Choir

10.30pm Carols/11pm PNGCCAA Mass

St Thomas' Church Willoughby

5.30pm carols/ 6pm Family Mass with a Nativity Play

11.30pm Carols/ 12 midnight Mass

Royal North Shore Hospital

4pm Mass

Christmas Day Mass Times

St Philip Neri Church Northbridge

9am Mass

St Thomas' Church Willoughby

8am & 9.30am Mass

St Leonard's Church Naremburn

10.30am Mass



The St Philip Neri and St
Leonards Communities invite
you to volunteer at our

Christmas Eve VIGIL MASS



SCAN QR CODE TO SIGN UP
OR GO TO [HTTPS://BIT.LY/SPNCHRISTMASEVE](https://bit.ly/SPNCHRISTMASEVE)

We need kids to play roles in our pageant,
teens and adults to assist with catering and
various other helping roles. The success of this
night depends on on volunteers. Please help!



Cuppa N' Conversation

You are invited to join in the spirit of Christmas by
enjoying a delicious Morning Tea and singing of
Christmas Carols.

Date: Wednesday 20th December

Time: 9.30am to 11am

Venue: Parish Hall Blue Room, Cnr High St and
Horsley Rd

*Come along and join in the fun and
Christmas Spirit*

IN OUR PRAYERS

Anniversaries: Lee Gemmell, Ojdana
Curać and Marin Curać.

Sick: Bishop Peter Ingham, Peter Champion,
Anne-Maree Nevil, Nicole Eve Van de Gard,
Lana Zalmic, Lucy Rappa and Michael Chiu



Farewell Fr Emmanuel



The Parish would like to wish
our wonderful Fr Emmanuel
every blessing for 2024 as he
heads back to Nigeria after
having one year sabbatical in
our parish. We are sincerely
grateful for his support to the
parish over the past year. We
will miss his charismatic
personality which overflowed
with energy and enthusiasm

in his homilies. Please keep Fr Emmanuel in your
prayers during this time of transition, his last day
in the Parish will be Sunday 14th January.

The Parish will have a farewell celebration
morning-tea on Sunday January 14h after the
10.30am Mass at St Leonards. Please join us in
thanking Fr Emmanuel for his minis- try here in
Lower North Shore over the past year.

Date: Sunday 14th January

Time: 10.30am Mass + morning tea

Place: St Leonard's Church Naremburn



Join us for an evening of Reconciliation and Prayer

Date: Wednesday 20th December
St Thomas' Church

Time: 7.00PM - 8.30PM
Including Rosary & Adoration



Sharing the Christmas Joy

Some of our parishioners joined our Mayor Tanya Taylor for a beautiful Christmas party with the residence at Estia in Willoughby. Thank you for spreading some Christmas cheer to the elderly in our community.

We will be kept safe by ADULTS who...

CARE

for us as we are a precious gift from God



HEALING MASS

Including Anointing of the Sick and Novena to the Sacred Heart

DECEMBER

- 9.00 am on Saturday 16th December
- St. Leonard's Church

PARISH SCHEDULE

	St Thomas' Willoughby	St Leonard's Naremburn	St Philip Neri Northbridge
Weekend Masses	6.00pm Vigil Saturday 8.00am & 9.30am Sunday	10.30am Sunday 6.00pm Sunday (Youth Mass)	5.00pm Vigil Saturday 9.00am Sunday
Weekday Masses	9.00am: Mon – Sat	9.00am: Tue, Thu, Sat	9.15am: Mon, Wed, Fri
Adoration	Tuesday: 9.30am - 10.30am	Saturday: 9.30am - 10.00am	
Reconciliation	Saturday: 5.15pm - 5.45pm	Saturday: 9.30am - 10.00am	Saturday: 4.15pm - 5.00pm
Healing Mass	9.00am on First Friday (Divine Mercy & Adoration)	9.00am on 3 rd Saturday	
Baptism	11.00am on 2nd and 4th Sunday	12pm on 4th Sunday	10.30am on 3rd Sunday
Children's Liturgy	9.30am Sunday (during school term)		9.00am 4 th Sunday (Family Mass)
Rosary	8.30am Mon-Fri 7.00pm Wednesday	9.30am Tue, Thu, Sat	9.45am Mon, Wed, Fri

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ALLIED HEALTH : DR GEORGE DRAGASEVICH, CHIROPRACTOR
OUR LOCATION : GROUND FLOOR, NORTH SHORE HEALTH HUB, 7 WESTBOURNE STREET, ST LEONARDS, NSW

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19/1-7 Short Street Chatswood, NSW 2067 | Email: info@willoughbyglass.com.au | Tel: (02) 9882 3648 | Web: www.willoughbyglass.com.au | Fax: (02) 9882 3649

Epsilon Legal lawyers

Conveyancing - Wills and Estates - Powers of Attorney Appointment of Enduring Guardian - Leasing

France Booth
9 High St, Willoughby NSW 2068
phone/Fax: +61 2 9958 1994
mobile: +61 432 320 701
e: flisbooth@epsilonlegal.com.au
www.epsilonlegal.net

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Vox Populi

14 December 2023

This Sunday is the Third Sunday of Advent, traditionally known as Gaudete Sunday.

Gaudete is the Latin word for rejoice. We continue to prepare in our hearts a sense of holy participation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus as well as His promised second coming.

Although the year has presented turmoil and challenges, both here and overseas, taking the time to pray and reflect will help us focus on the hope, joy and peace God gives us in the gift of his Son.

The Advent candle we light this Sunday is rose coloured, a symbol of joy, and the priest will wear rose vestments. As people who put our hope in God's love and promises, we are all called to adopt an attitude of joy, and it is in joy we find the ability to anticipate the future within our present reality.

Advent starts this Sunday, heralding a new church year and the Year B cycle of liturgical readings at Mass.

No season of the year is more at odds with our Australian culture than Advent. The advertising blitz for the Christmas shopping binge is in full swing, secular Christmas music is everywhere, neighbourhood streets become ablaze with Christmas lights and good cheer. We easily forget the true meaning of Christmas, the birth of our Messiah, so lost on many today. Then suddenly, all the commercial Christmas glitz disappears Christmas night makes way for Boxing Day sales, the Sydney to Hobart yacht race is on and the summer holidays are in full swing.

Yes, it's a crazy time of the year; school graduation ceremonies, concerts, farewells. Workplaces celebrating end-of-the year parties. We are preoccupied with plans for Christmas day feasting and summer holidays. For many, there's a spirit of indulgence in the air, congruent with the languor of balmy summer days ahead. For others the struggle is just to keep their lives together, with living costs causing enormous stress for so many. In 2023 we are all overshadowed by a darker world with wars, conflict, and social division. Will we simply let Advent pass by unnoticed?



What does our Church say about Advent?

Advent is the twofold coming of Christ. The season where we prepare ourselves in heart and mind, to remember the first coming of the Son of God, through his Incarnation (God becomes human), **and** to joyfully anticipate his second coming at the end of time.¹

Our Advent liturgy tells its own story.

Advent begins on the Sunday on or nearest to 30th November and ends before the evening prayer on Christmas Eve. Depending on the day of the week that Christmas falls, the number of days vary but there are always four Sundays. **This year the 4th Sunday of Advent falls on 24th December, Christmas Eve.**

Our **music** settings and hymns change, they're anticipatory, reflecting simplicity and restraint. We hear lovely hymns like the age-old *O Come O Come Emmanuel* and, *Creator of the Stars of Night*. The Gloria is not said or sung this season.

The **colour violet** springs up everywhere denoting a season of penance, humility, and prayer as we await Christ's birth.

The **Advent wreath** is an evergreen circular wreath signifying continuous life, the eternity of God who has no beginning or end. Each week of Advent, we will light one of the 4 candles, 3 purple and one rose, representing the 4 weeks of Advent: hope, faith, joy (rose) and peace. The white candle placed in the middle of the wreath is lit on Christmas Eve. This candle is called the "Christ Candle" and represents the life of Christ.

The Advent Sunday readings

The Sunday Mass readings are centred on the **Gospel** readings.

1st Sunday heralds the end times. (*The second coming*)

2nd and 3rd Sundays highlight the mission of John the Baptist,

4th Sunday turns attention to the forthcoming Nativity of Christ.

The **Old Testament** readings consist of messianic prophecies, mostly from Isaiah, while the **second readings** are season-related extracts from the writings of the Apostles.

Take a little time during each week this Advent to read through the Sunday readings and see this story unfold.

(UNLYGRC #39, 1969)

Ref: <https://www.catholic.au/s/article/Advent-and-Christmas>

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Here are some ideas to help you focus on the Advent season this year.

We have put together a music play list of Advent music both old and new. Take a little time out, listen in the car, out walking, at home, to help you focus on this wonderful season of Advent. Keep the Christmas carols to later in Advent. <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4NkqWPgXx4VeVwwcoqQxbf?si=e9771d18ae38423b>

Have a listen to the popular Fr Mike Schmitz on the true meaning of Advent (**8mins**). https://youtu.be/WD357YYDk1A?si=576WFL5_gll_QeBj

Partake in an Advent prayer study at home or with others. Eg <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/advent/>

Spend calming prayer time with Jesus in the Advent Holy Hour 7.30pm Dec 12, St Leonards Church.

Go to confession.

Get to a local Handel's Messiah concert, specifically written as an Oratorio to be performed during Advent.

