



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

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(02) 9958 8846

✉ office@lins.org.au

🌐 www.bbcatholic.org.au/lins

OFFICE HOURS

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

CLERGY

Fr. Jose Philip, OSH (Parish Priest)

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Fr. Biju Mathew, AP

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Fr. Vincent Trung Nguyen, AP

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Fr. Emmanuel Obiche, AP

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Fr. Peter Dowd (RNSH Chaplain)

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PARISH STAFF

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Dionne Soares (Mon & Fri)

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Catechist Co-ordinator

Henny Theodorus (Tue)

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Finance (bookkeeper)

Ilona Dudek (Fri)

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

St. Thomas' Primary School

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(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"

THE NATIVITY of the LORD Christmas Day 25 December 2023



Merry Christmas From Fr Jose!



As we gather in the warmth and joy of the Christmas season, I am filled with immense gratitude and a deep sense of appreciation for each and every one of you. The spirit of Christmas is not only about the presents under the tree or the festive decorations; it is a celebration of the greatest gift of all— the gift of love and salvation through the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Reflecting on John 1:1-18, we are reminded that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and through Him, we have received grace upon grace. This passage encapsulates the essence of Christmas, as we commemorate the divine moment when God entered our world as a vulnerable infant, bringing with Him the light that would dispel the darkness.

In the midst of the holiday hustle and bustle, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to each of you for being a beacon of that light within our parish community. Your kindness, generosity, and unwavering support throughout the year have truly reflected the love and teachings of Christ. As we come together to celebrate His birth, let us also celebrate the bonds of fellowship and the sense of community that make our parish a special and welcoming place. In particular, I want to thank all the members of our parish team: Fr Biju, Fr Vincent, Fr Emmanuel, Fr Peter, Fr Geoff, Ursula, Dionne, Ilona, Henny, and Christy, for all their dedication and hard work throughout the year. I also thank our many parish volunteers, lay ministers, benefactors and the members of our Finance Committee. There are too many of you to mention, but you have all made a great contribution to life & vitality of our parish.

I would also like to thank Deacon Peter for his support with our parish Discernment sessions which led to the formation of our new Parish Missionary Council, achieving a Pastoral Plan and establishing our Mission & Vision for the parish, bringing growth, unity, and renewed spirit. To our parish Schools and leadership teams at St Thomas' & St Philip Neri, thank you for your support & collaboration.

May the spirit of Christmas fill your hearts with joy, peace, and hope. As we extend our gratitude to one another, let us also remember those who may be facing challenges during this season. Just as Jesus came to bring light to the world, let us be instruments of His love by reaching out to those in need, offering comfort, and spreading the message of goodwill.

Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed and joyous Christmas. May the coming year be filled with abundant blessings, and may our shared journey of faith continue to strengthen the bonds that make our parish a home for all.

In Christ's Love,

Fr Jose Philip OSH



"The Word was made flesh."

John 1:14

**OFFICE CLOSED Friday
22nd December and will
reopen Monday 8th
January.**

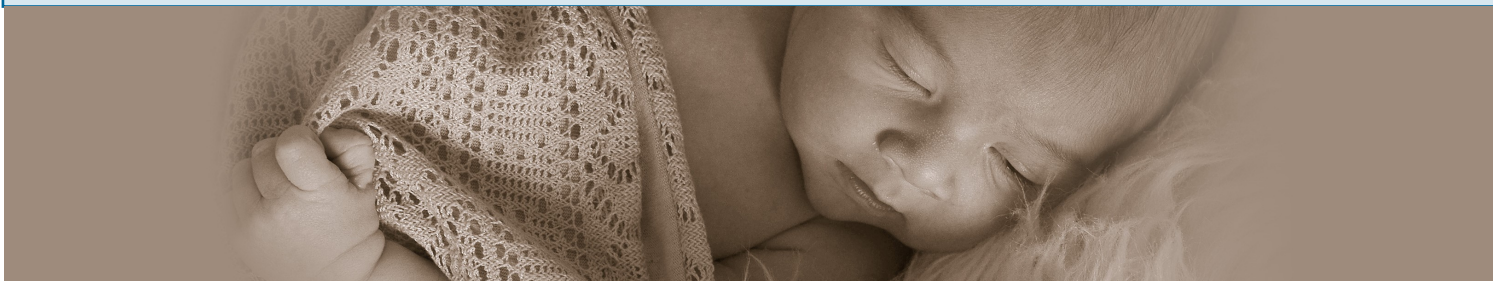
Please Note the Parish Office will be closed from 21st December and re-open on the 8th January. For emergencies & Funerals please phone the parish office on 99588846 and leave a message for one of the clergy to return your call.



Do you play an instrument or can you sing ????? Your talents are needed!! The parish is looking for anyone who would love to share their musical gifts and talents to volunteer once a month on our music ministry roster. Please phone the office if you can help with this important ministry.



The Nativity of the Lord Christmas Day



Entrance Antiphon *Isaiah 9:5*

A child is born for us, and a son is given to us; his sceptre of power rests upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Messenger of great counsel.

First Reading *Isaiah 52:7-10*

How beautiful on the mountains, are the feet of one who brings good news, who heralds peace, brings happiness, proclaims salvation, and tells Zion, 'Your God is king!' Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices, they shout for joy together, for they see the Lord face to face, as he returns to Zion. Break into shouts of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord is consoling his people, redeeming Jerusalem. The Lord bares his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Responsorial Psalm *Ps 97:1-6. R. v.3*

(R.) All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

1. Sing a new song to the Lord for he has worked wonders. His right hand and his holy arm have brought salvation. **(R.)**
2. The Lord has made known his salvation; has shown his justice to the nations. He has remembered his truth and love for the house of Israel. **(R.)**
3. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout to the Lord all the earth, ring out your joy. **(R.)**
4. Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp, with the sound of music. With trumpets and the sound of the horn acclaim the King, the Lord. **(R.)**

Second Reading *Hebrews 1:1-6*

At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son, the Son that he has appointed to inherit everything and through whom he made everything there is. He is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful command; and now that he has destroyed the defilement of sin, he has gone to take his place in heaven at the right hand of divine Majesty. So he is now as far above the angels as the title which he has inherited is higher than their own name.

God has never said to any angel: You are my Son, today I have become your father, or: I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Again, when he brings the First-born into the world, he says: Let all the angels of God worship him.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!
A holy day has dawned upon us.
Come you nations and adore the Lord. Today a great light has come upon the earth.

Alleluia!

Gospel *John 1:1-18*

In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him.

All that came to be had life in him and that life was the light of men, a light that shines in the dark, a light that

darkness could not overpower. 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. The Word was the true light that enlightens all men; and he was coming into the world. He was in the world that had its being through him, and the world did not know him.

He came to his own domain and his own people did not accept him. But to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to all who believe in the name of him who was born not out of human stock or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself. The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. John appears as his witness, He proclaims: 'This is the one of whom I said:

He who comes after me ranks before me because he existed before me.' Indeed, from his fullness we have, all of us, received - yes, grace in return for grace, since, though the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Communion Antiphon *Psalm 97:3*

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.



Introducing The Lower North Shore Parish Missionary Council for 2024



LNS PARISH

Missionary Council

 PARISH PRIEST Fr Jose Phillip	 ASSISTANT PRIEST Fr Vincent Nguyen	 CHAIR PERSON Marko Komadina
 SECRETARY Bernard Ryan	 SECRETARY Georgina Wright	 Martin Crumpton
 ST THOMAS' PRINCIPAL Enrica Bova	 ST PHILIP NERI PRINCIPAL Margaret Holles	 Marie Harris
 Georgina Loughnan	 Lynda Lee	 Adeline Kassis

Latest from Letefoho



Thank you to all parishioners who continue to support the LETS projects.

Despite LETS having decided not to contribute to any more building, 2023 saw us contribute to the new Letefoho Community Centre. This building consists of a very large hall for indoor meetings with guest house accommodation and meeting rooms below the hall.

The Community Centre was opened by Cardinal Virgilio on 10th September and is now in regular use.

Many thanks to the very generous donor who made the LETS donation possible, in answer to Fr Elio's prayers!

Wishing you all a Blessed, safe Merry Christmas.



Farewell Fr Biju



Last week we received news from the Bishop that Fr Biju will be sadly concluding his appointments with us here at Lower North shore to assume a new appointment as Assistant parish Priest of Frenches Forest. The parish would like wish our wonderful Fr Biju

Mathew every blessing for his new appointment at Frenches Forest. We have been greatly blessed and enriched by Fr Biju's ministry here in lower North Shore for the past three years. His new appointment will be effective from Friday 9th February 2024. To thank Fr Biju the parish have a farewell celebration morning-tea on Sunday January 28th after the 9.30am Mass at St Thomas'. Please join us in thanking Fr Biju for his ministry here in lower North Shore over the past three years. Please keep Fr Biju in your prayers.

Date: Sunday 28th January
Time: 9.30am Mass + morning tea
Place: St Thomas 'Church Willoughby

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



January

EVENTS
2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
STT- St Thomas Church SPN- St Philip Neri Church STL- St Leonard's Church	1 New Year's Day Mary The Holy Mother of God	2	3 Rosary STT 7pm	4	5 Healing Mass with Anointing STT 9am	6
7 The Epiphany of the Lord	8 Parish Office Re-opens	9 Holy Hour 7.30pm STL	10 Rosary STT 7pm	11	12	13
14 Fr Emmauel's Farewell Mass & morning-tea 10.30 STL	15 New Sacramental coordinator starts	16	17 Rosary STT 7pm	18	19	20 Healing Mass with Anointing STL 9am
21	22	23	24 Rosary STT 7pm	25	26 Australia Day	27
28 Fr Biju's Farewell Mass & morning-tea 9.30 STT	29	30	31 Rosary STT 7pm School Resumes			

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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WilloughbyGlass

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

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.

