

# St Paul the Apostle Parish

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Parish Priest: Fr Raining Creta

Assistant Priest: Fr Marcus Hazelman

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Bookings are not required for any of our Masses.

## Weekend Mass times

Saturday Vigil 5:00pm

Sunday 8:00am, 9:30am and 5:00pm

## Weekday Mass times

Monday to Friday 9.10am | Saturday 9.00am

(all preceded by the Rosary at 8:40 am)

**Reconciliation:** Saturday 4.00pm - 4.45pm

**Baptisms:** First and Third Sunday of each month

Baptism bookings only via our website



## From Father Raining

Just a few days before Christmas, a family of four drove to a huge mall to do some last minute shopping. They decided to shop separately so that any presents they might buy for each other would be kept secret. Before they split up, the father said, "Let's synchronise our watches and agree to meet in the parking lot at five o'clock sharp. The four dutifully complied. Then the mother turned to the father and said, "Okay, now let's synchronize our wallets."

For weeks now, most of you, perhaps, have been asking each other: "What do you want for Christmas?" A child's quick answer might have been, "A bike," or "some video games" or a "puppy." But for most of us adults it perhaps is more difficult to put into words what we really want for Christmas.

Deep down at the centre of each and every one of us there is the longing for wholeness of life, the longing to be complete persons, the longing to "get it all together" - in other words the longing for peace of mind and heart and soul.

Face this squarely and you can begin to acknowledge, down deep inside, that God is trying to get through to you with the only genuine source of wholeness of life: the love that is revealed to us in Jesus the Christ. Until you come to terms with that reality, the sources of temporary satisfaction will let you down, ultimately.

Thomas Merton said it beautifully: *I know that myself exists and I know that God exists, and the whole business of living is getting the two together.*

The truth of Christmas Day is that the "Word became flesh" to show us in a once-and-for-all way what "the business of living" is all about. The Word became flesh to show us the love of a Gracious God and to show us how to share it.

So on this Christmas feast we celebrate and sing with angels: Glory to God! Glory to God in the highest!

## The Twelve Days of Christmas

The song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" is an English Christmas carol. From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. During that era someone wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the Church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember.

1. The partridge in the pear tree represents Jesus because that bird is willing to sacrifice its life to protect its young by feigning injury to draw away predators. The "True Love" one hears in the song is not a smitten boy or girlfriend but Jesus Christ, because truly Love was born on Christmas Day.
2. The two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments
3. The three French hens stood for faith, hope, and love.
4. The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
5. The five golden rings rerepresented the first five books of the Old Testament, which describe man's fall into sin and the great love of God in sending a Saviour.
6. The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.
7. Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit-----Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.
8. The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.
9. Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit-----Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience [Forbearance], Goodness [Kindness], Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty, Continency [Chastity].
10. The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.
11. The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful Apostles.
12. The twelve drummers drumming symbolised the twelve points of belief in The Apostles' Creed.

(source: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resource/55904/the-history-of-the-twelve-days-of-christmas>)

## Divine Mercy Chaplet

Every Friday 3:30pm in the Marian Chapel. All welcome to attend and join in solemn and intimate prayer.

## Moments of Mercy

O my Jesus, my only hope, thank You for the book which You have opened before my soul's eyes. That book is Your Passion which You underwent for love of me. It is from this book that I have learned how to love God and souls. In this book there are found for us inexhaustible treasures. O Jesus, how few souls understand You in your martyrdom of love! Oh, how great is the fire of purest love which burns in Your Most Sacred Heart! Happy the soul that has come to understand the love of the Heart of Jesus! — *Diary*, 304

## Holy Hour for Vocations

Can you honestly pray: Unless your family loves you, nothing else makes sense. In your family your vocation can grow in wisdom, age and grace.

## Catholic Weekly

- The amazing Christian art of Daniel Mitsui
- God, faith, a 27kg gold lump
- How to make a brilliant family Christmas
- Living in a time of conflict
- From Ukraine with love
- New biography of Pope Benedict XVI

Overheads for hymns used in the Church are used with permission under ONE LICENCE No A-642251

**Due to COVID-19 this bulletin cannot be reused and must be taken home with you.**

## New Year Eve Mass

There will be a special Mass at 7:00pm on Friday 31st December.

## COVID restrictions—IMPORTANT CHANGES

- Wearing of masks is mandatory and a requirement whilst in the Church be it for private prayer or Mass
- Upon arrival at the Church you will need to QR code or record your details on the sign on sheet
- Congregation singing is not permitted
- Holy Water fonts will remain empty however is available from the glass dispenser in the centre of the Church foyer
- The Church is open every day for personal prayer and Masses will also continue to be livestreamed on Facebook
- All Ministries that are currently suspended eg Altar Servers, Children's Liturgy will continue to remain temporarily on hold.

## 24 Hour Adoration returning in 2022

Unfortunately in 2021 due to COVID we were unable to hold the 24 Hour Adoration each month. We are hopeful it will return in the first weekend of February 2022 and further updates will follow.

## Farewell to Seminarian Menard

It's true when they say all good things come to an end. With a heavy heart we say thank you and farewell to Menard who spent December in our parish as part of his journey of becoming a priest. Menard's role as Seminarian was also a welcome addition this month as he provided tremendous support to our parish liturgies and operations. Please continue to pray for Menard and all his fellow Seminarians as they continue on their journey and learning. Following is a farewell message from Menard:

Grace and Peace to you Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I gladly take this opportunity to express to you my deepest gratitude and appreciation for welcoming me into your community for my pastoral experience. Like all work experience in different vocational areas, it is a chance to put the theory into action and discern whether it is the right vocation for you. I am truly consoled by the opportunity to share these 'short but sweet' weeks with you that have deepened my desire and further confirmed my realization of being called to serve as a priest of Christ and his church in Western Sydney.

From day one I have felt the concern, encouragement and support from the parish. There has been no shortage of work that has kept me active and opened my eyes to the many parts that go into Parish operation. Ministering as acolyte in the liturgy, registering baptisms and confirmations, good old-fashioned manual labour around the church, opening and closing the church, are some of the duties that I have been blessed to participate in during my stay here.

I would like to thank Fr. Raining and Fr. Marcus for your fatherhood and accepting me into the parish. You both have taught me many lessons along the way which I will value in my journey. I would like to thank Diane for her guidance and unwavering patience. Last but not least I would like to thank the community for your kindness, joyful smiles, interesting stories, endless questions, encouraging support, the mountains of food and most especially your prayers.

Please continue to pray for the seminarians of our diocese and for young people to be open to God's call to holiness, whatever that vocation may be. I'm sure our paths will cross again in God's time.

Until then you have my thoughts and prayers.

Menard Gaspi

## Please pray for our sick

Antonio Abulad, Junelle Ausuncion, Maroun Ayoub, Rosalin Baker, Marielin Suazo Barcelona, Marija Barclay, Elly Bejma, Danielle Brown, John Buggy, Kay Bull, Helen Butler, Christine Casey, Ron Cini, Christine Coorey, Sorayda Corpuz, Camarillo Cossid, Fevoura, Daroy, Joseph Daroy, Selene Daroy, Emma Davies, Mark Deady, Stephen Deady, Norman De Luca, Frederick de Silva, Gus DelVillar, Camille Diesta, Lara Duncum, Rebecca Duncum, David Edwards, George El-Bayeh, Josephine & Chafic Filfilii, Nick Galea, Ma Juana Gaueta, Jake Graudins, Piper Hastings, Peter and Julie Herlinger, Colleen Holroyd, Brian Horan, Anthony Iannuzzi, Ludie Irrulbandra, Jacqueline Kelly, Elizabeth Kenny, Karen Le Huray, Sophie Lawrence, Josephine Mamari, Carolyn Martin, James Matos, Leanne Maree McInerney, Mary McNamara, Judy McNeilage, Sonia Merhi, Maria Micallef, Tess Micallef, Dennis Murray, Annie Newton, Lesley Palaki, Arun Papali, Iranie Perumal, Silvi Perumal, Des Prendergast, Emely Reyes, Rhiannon McInerney-Robertson, Honor Rosario, Kenneth Del Rosario, Rudy Severino, Geraldine Senewiratne, Joe Stagnitta, John Trost, Pelenatete Tuaimau, Karl Wagner, Patrick Wheeler.

**Heavenly Father, We pray that you will lay your healing hands upon all those who are sick. We ask you to have compassion on all who are suffering so that they may be delivered from their painful circumstances. May they know that you are always with them, especially through difficult times. Amen**

## Please pray for

Jack & Gladys Scott, Father David Scott, Charles & Josephine Clayton, Saverio & Rosa Marotta, Paul Beck, Brian Hurney, Lottie & Fredrick Gibbs, Brian Baker, Major Dante Dinanno Snr, Annette Herft, Maurice & Yvonne Sequeira, Andrew Busuttill, Kerry Cini, Aurelio & Connie Lopez, Bal & Jennifer Villanova, Michael & Julia Sherman, Chammouni Frangi, Madeleine & Wasley Adolphe, Mary & John Ford, John Ford Junior, Rosy Attard, Jim Rowan, Michelle Makin, Lena Pereira, Donald Ramage, Dex Habito, Andy and Maureen Haddad, Charlie Micallef, Maggie Simpliciano, Lourdes Zaballa, Patricia Minahan, Thelma Nalliah, Vicky Mifsud, Joseph Borg, Leon Chalker, George Khodeir, Richard Cassin. **May the souls of our dearly departed rest in peace**