

OUR SUNDAY CELEBRATION

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT / A

21 DECEMBER 2025

A MAN OF HONOUR. Today's Gospel invites us to reflect on Joseph, the husband of Mary, who played such an important role in God's plan of salvation. Joseph was a man of honour who combined respect for the law with compassion for Mary. He was open to hear God's word to him. He is an example for us all.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

cf. Isa 45:8

Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

GREETING

P. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

P. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

R. And with your spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT

P. Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

P. You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

P. You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.

R. Christ, have mercy.

You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

P. May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

The Gloria is not said during Advent.

COLLECT

P. Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

Isa 7:10–14

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The virgin will conceive.

The Lord spoke to Ahaz and said, 'Ask the Lord your God for a sign for yourself

coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights above.' 'No,' Ahaz answered 'I will not put the Lord to the test.'

Then Isaiah said:

'Listen now, House of David:

are you not satisfied with trying the

patience of men

without trying the patience of God, too?

The Lord himself, therefore,

will give you a sign.

It is this: the maiden is with child

and will soon give birth to a son

whom she will call Emmanuel,

a name which means "God-is-with-us".

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

RESP PSALM

Ps 23:1–6. R. cf. vv. 7, 10

R. Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

1. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all its peoples.

It is he who set it on the seas;

on the waters he made it firm. **R.**

2. Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?

Who shall stand in his holy place?

The man with clean hands and pure heart, who desires not worthless things. **R.**

3. He shall receive blessings from the Lord and reward from the God who saves him.

Such are the men who seek him,

seek the face of the God of Jacob. **R.**

SECOND READING

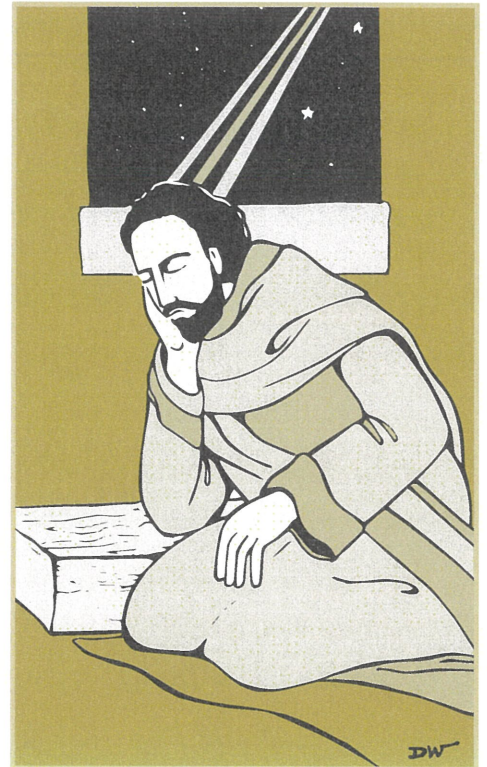
Rom 1:1–7

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, is the Son of God.

From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus who has been called to be an apostle, and specially chosen to preach the Good News that God promised long ago through his prophets in the scriptures.

This news is about the Son of God, who, according to the human nature he took, was a descendant of David: it is about Jesus Christ our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in him, was proclaimed Son of God in all his power through his resurrection from



the dead. Through him we received grace and our apostolic mission to preach the obedience of faith to all pagan nations in honour of his name. You are one of these nations, and by his call belong to Jesus Christ. To you all, then, who are God's beloved in Rome, called to be saints, may God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send grace and peace.

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Mt 1:23

Alleluia, alleluia!

The virgin will give birth to a son; his name will be Emmanuel: God-is-with-us. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 1:18–24

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit

P. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

R. Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus was born of Mary, the betrothed of Joseph, a son of David.

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her

publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son

and they will call him Emmanuel,

a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.

When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

HOMILY

PROFESSION OF FAITH APOSTLES' CREED

Or the Nicene Creed may be said.

I believe in God, / the Father almighty, / Creator of heaven and earth, / and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, / who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, / born of the Virgin Mary, / suffered under Pontius Pilate, / was crucified, died and was buried; / he descended into hell; / on the third day he rose again from the dead; / he ascended into heaven, / and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; / from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. / I believe in the Holy Spirit, / the holy catholic Church, / the communion of saints, / the forgiveness of sins, / the resurrection of the body, / and life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

After the priest raises the paten with the bread and prays, and then the chalice, we respond to each prayer:

R. Blessed be God for ever.

P. Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

R. May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

P. May the Holy Spirit, O Lord, sanctify these gifts laid upon your altar, just as he filled with his power the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

P. Lift up your hearts.

R. We lift them up to the Lord.

P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

R. It is right and just.

PREFACE II OF ADVENT

After the Preface, we sing or say:

All: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

THE MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

P. The mystery of faith.

All: When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,

we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

COMMUNION RITE

P. At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven ...

P. Deliver us, Lord, we pray ...

All: For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

P. Lord Jesus Christ, who said ...

R. Amen.

P. The peace of the Lord be with you always.

R. And with your spirit.

P. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

All exchange a sign of peace.

LAMB OF GOD

All: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P. Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

R. Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Isa 7:14

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son;

and his name will be called Emmanuel.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P. Having received this pledge of eternal redemption, we pray, almighty God, that, as the feast day of our salvation draws ever nearer, so we may press forward all the more eagerly to the worthy celebration of the mystery of your Son's Nativity.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

P. May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

P. Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

R. Thanks be to God.

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

GOD WITH US

With Christmas only days away, today's Gospel announces Jesus' birth. Unlike the perhaps more familiar story from Luke's Gospel, with the annunciation by Gabriel to Mary, Matthew's focus is on Joseph, a heroic character for the Gospel's Jewish audience, reminiscent of the Old Testament patriarch, Joseph. Matthew's story is different from Luke's. In Matthew's Jewish world marriage occurred in two stages. The first was engagement; the second, cohabitation. Mary and Joseph are married according to Jewish law, though not living together. We must remember, too, that the Gospel in general and this story in particular is a *theological* narrative. Matthew is not concerned with gynaecology, but *theology*. It is about God and the Holy Spirit. Mary's pregnancy is the fruit of God's action. As this becomes known to Joseph, he wants to step out of the scene and divorce her quietly without bringing her shame—an option open to him from Jewish law.

Through an angel in a dream—reminiscent again of the Old Testament patriarch, 'the dreamer'—Joseph comes to a profound theological truth. Mary's conception is the work of God's Spirit. This is God's act. Joseph is then instructed to name the child, an important Israelite convention that incorporates the one to be born into Joseph's kinship group. Matthew concludes the scene with a second naming, now provided by the prophet Isaiah. The child will be 'Emmanuel', 'God with us', a theme that will continue throughout Matthew even to the Gospel's concluding scene on Easter day. We celebrate and affirm God 'being-with-us' this Christmas. We want this God to 'be with us' for the year ahead.

FR MICHAEL TRAINOR

A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL

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WELCOME TO ST GREGORY THE GREAT—DONCASTER

Fourth Sunday of Advent / A

20/21 December 2025

Parish Office:

Hours: Mon—Fri 9.00am to 3.30pm

Tel: 9412 8425

Email: doncaster@cam.org.au

Website: <https://www.stgregs.org.au/>

Parish Priest: Fr. Charles Balnaves

Assistant Priest: Anton Aseervathampillai

Business Manager: David Hii

Parish Secretary: Mon & Wed: Vera Arief

Tue, Thurs & Fri: Luisa Yambao

Mon: Bernadine De Silva (bookkeeping)

Sacristan: Mary Stocco - Mob: 0412 742 657

MASS TIMES:

St Greg's: Sat Vigil 6.00pm; Sun 9.00am, 10.30am & 5.00pm; Wed & Fri 9.00am

Holy Rosary: Every Wednesday after the 9.00AM Mass

Eucharistic Adoration: Every Wednesday and Friday following the 9.00AM Mass

CHILDREN LITURGY: Sunday mornings @ 10.30am

Reconciliation: Saturdays 9.30-11.00am (or by appointment or before/after any Mass but allow time)

Anointing of the Sick before/after any Mass or by appointment

St Kevin's: Sat Vigil 5.30pm; Sun 9.15am; Tue & Thurs 9.15am

Hygiene: An essential part of our everyday lives — always, forever, please be careful and caring.

NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS:

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (A)

Sir 3:2 – 6, 12 – 14, Ps 127:1 – 5, Col 3:12 – 21,

Mt 2:13 – 25, 19 – 23

BAPTISMS: Please ring the Parish Office for bookings

ST GREGORY THE GREAT CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL:

Tel: (03) 9848 4483

Email: principal@sgdoncaster.catholic.edu.au

PARISH SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS:

Email Margaret O'Donnell at margaretodonnell@gmail.com

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION GROUP:

Wednesdays at 9.45am in the church meeting room

Contact Paola Cheng 0415 280 216

CORNERSTONE YOUTH GROUP: 3rd Fridays of the month 7.00pm-9.00pm

YOUNG ADULTS GROUP: 4th Fridays 7.15pm—9.30pm

ST VINCENT DE PAUL CONFERENCE: 3rd Mondays 7.00pm in the School Parish Room

ST GREGORY'S TENNIS CLUB: Membership enquiries: Gianna Alessio (President) 0438 410 506

Please pray for: Those who are **sick** at this time including Anna M, Anna Ng, Monia Iaconi, Chee Mee Lian, Emmly Luethamphakdee, Phaisan Luethamphakdee, Priscilla Cheng, Marleen Liu, Amy Liu, Chantal Wong, Christopher Wong, Ximena Simian, Nik & Somaratna, Michael Mullens, Bob Ulehla, Carmel Aloj, Bishop Terry Curtin, Madelaine Fitzpatrick, Don Pavone, John Reid, Meredith Barnes, Siv Cuasay

and for those who died recently

Raimonda Falcone

and for those whose anniversaries occur

about now Manuepillai Wilfred Rajanayagam, Leong Duen Ling, Charlie Cannizzo, Eddie Ong

In Our Thoughts and Prayers



Words from the desk of the PP:

ALPHA:

28th January start! I was reflecting on the past two years of Alpha with somewhere near 100 people having participated. Two people out of the 100 felt they gained nothing from Alpha – though what they needed and wanted something more like faith formation to deepen an already deep faith.

The other participants, including me, gained something, even though most of us are also people of deep faith. Some had a real 'coming to Jesus' moment. Most were already Catholic but found their understanding of Jesus enriched and their faith strengthened. Five have begun their journey with Christ in an intentional way with two still preparing for baptism/confirmation next Easter.

I give thanks for the encounter with the Holy Spirit all these participants have had. Hallelujah!

Alpha changes everyone who participates because it is grounded in spending time with Jesus our Saviour. Sometimes there is change in seemingly small ways. Sometimes change in immediately significant or major ways. But always Jesus and his Holy Spirit change us when we spend time with them.

Please take a moment. Think. Discern. Who do you know that would benefit from some relaxing time with Jesus? Please invite them or let me know and I can invite them.

Christmas 2025 and New Year 2026:

Thank you to each of you who is part of the parishes to which I am called to be shepherd. Thank you for the faith you bring to your life and the presence of Christ Jesus in St Greg's and St Kevin's. I pray you will have a most graced and joyful Christmas and New Year.

We live in uncertain times. We live amidst uncertainty and indeed, as the Bondi Beach murders showed, there is danger. But that is nothing new. Just look at the times the lie beside and behind the writings that make up the Bible. I grew up with the start of the Cold War and the Bay of Pigs and the Red Brigade and the PLO. A few of you have been around long enough that grew up with the Great Depression and WW-II.

Christ Jesus our Lord is the only certainty we have. The certainty that we are loved and cared for amidst all the joys and hardships and uncertainties of life.

The more **you** can be an intentional disciple of Christ, reaching out to the world with love, the more we can bring Jesus' love into reality in the world around us. Then we can foster peaceful co-existence of all peoples, recognising that all are created in God's image of love and mercy.

Columbarium:

To all those who have commented back expressing sorrow that our columbarium is not going ahead: thank you for your comments and thoughts. My decision, with others, was not made lightly and reflected a necessity so as not to cause harm to others.

Leaks & Toilets:

Final work on roof / window leaks seems to be finished today (Thursday 18/12) Thank God.

Paper Hand Towels: I reiterate my plea of a few weeks ago: use only the minimum amount of paper towels. Leave plenty for others and leave the toilets clean and tidy.

God bless, Fr Charles.



Fr Charles' Prayer Intention for this week:

For the Jewish People of Australia, and especially those directly affected by the shootings at Bondi Beach: that they will know God's love and care and that we will seek to grow our own acceptance of them.

St Gregory's is committed to growing a Child Safety Culture with Love

THIS WEEK

Sat 6.00pm Noel McClelland, Cathy McClelland
 Sun 9.00am Luisa Yambao, Chris Perera
 Sun 10.30am Sauro Antonelli, Paola Villanueva
 Sun 5.00pm Isabelle Hii, Dot Haynes

CARE OF THE CHURCH: Phil Handang

MONEY COUNTERS: Iris O'Farrell, Sharron Wilkinson

LECTORS**NEXT WEEK 27/28 Dec****LECTORS**

Sat 6.00pm Frances Cannizzo, Robert McHugh
 Sun 9.00am Philip Dunlop,
 Sun 10.30am Ivonne Gunawan, Amanda Stefanovski
 Sun 5.00pm Mary Tonti Filippini, Enza Scaffidi

CARE OF THE CHURCH: Agnes Chee

MONEY COUNTERS: Marian See, Christopher Lim

COMMUNION MINISTERS

Margaret O'Donnell, Iris O'Farrell
 Mike Yambao, Margaret Wallace
 Lilian & Sauro Antonelli, Nuccia La Rocca
 Judy Ablaza, Mary Tonti-Filippini

MORNING TEA: N/A

FLOWERS: Tessa Leung

COMMUNION MINISTERS

Noel & Cathy McClelland
 Katica Puhaj
 Agnes & Fred Fulia, Rob Rukavina
 Dot Haynes, Seleana Ng

MORNING TEA: N/A

FLOWERS: Irene Dharmawan

For those who are **Coeliac**, we can provide low gluten (<20 ppm) hosts or a separate chalice. Please let the priest or sacristan know your need.

We invite all parishioners to take note of the holiday Mass timetable below as we gather to celebrate the Christmas season and welcome the New Year.

Reconciliation Service 18 December, Thursday 7:30 PM
 at St Kevin's Church Templestowe

Christmas Eve – 24 December

7:00 PM (Carols at 6.40 PM) and 10:00 PM

Christmas Day – 25 December

9:00 AM and 10:30 AM

Feast of St Stephen – 26 December at 9:00 AM

Feast of the Holy Family

27 December – 6:00 PM

28 December – 9:00 AM, 10:30 AM, 5:00 PM

New Year's Eve Mass – 31 December at 6:00 PM

New Year's Day Mass – 1 January at 9:00 AM and 10:30 AM

Christmas Offering Envelopes are available in the Stewardship sets of envelopes and on the seats / in the gathering space.

This offering supplements your weekly giving to the presbytery in this special season. This offering directly supports our clergy in the following ways: 5% is allocated to the Archbishop, 12.5% helps support priests in underfunded parishes, another 12.5% supports retired and ill priests. The remainder covers essential expenses such as the lease and upkeep of the priest's car, operational costs of the presbytery, hospitality, and stipends for priests who provide supply when our priests are not available. Thank you for your generosity.

**Children's Liturgy**

Please note that Children's Liturgy will be on break from Sunday, 28th of December. We will resume on Sunday, 2nd of February.

We thank our children, parents, and volunteers for their continued support and look forward to welcoming everyone back in February.



Parents attending the Carols at 6:40pm followed by the 7:00pm Christmas Eve Mass are invited to dress their young children as angels or shepherds. This will help them—and all of us—to be more actively engaged in celebrating the birth of Jesus at Christmas.

St Gregory the Great Catholic Primary School

For School Tours and Open Days visit sgdoncaster.catholic.edu.au

Parish Facilities: The Tennis Club Room and Courts and the Hall and the Parish Room are available. Room bookings can be made: St.gregoryhall3108@gmail.com

(03) 9848 4483 principal@sgdoncaster.catholic.edu.au

**Ways of Giving—**

Thank you for your generosity and continuous support!

**Scan and Give**

Scan this code with your phone camera and donate directly to our church. Choose Payment for Church Donations. It's simple and secure.

Give by Contactless

Use our Eftpos Machine located in the church Narthex. You can donate with: a debit/credit card. It's simple and secure.

St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal – Thank You

A heartfelt thank you to all parishioners for your generous support of the Vinnies Christmas Appeal. To date, we have received \$742 in cash donations and 50 gifts for children. Your kindness and generosity will bring joy and hope to many families this Christmas season.

Volunteers Needed**Church Flowers Ministry**

We are seeking volunteers to help with arranging and preparing flowers for our church. This is a beautiful way to serve the parish and contribute to the prayerful atmosphere of our liturgies.

Care of the Church

We are seeking volunteers to assist with the care of our church. This may include light cleaning, tidying, and helping to keep our sacred space welcoming and prayerful for all who enter.

No experience is required—just a willing heart and a little time. If you are interested on any of the roles or would like more information, please contact the parish office 03 94128425 or doncaster@cam.org.au.

We are grateful for our volunteers who have dedicated their time and support throughout these years:

Church Flowers Ministry: Geraldina D, Mary P, Tessa L, Irene D, Connie A

Care of Church: Stephen M, Mary W, Agnes C, Carole T, Boris K, Mike Y, Phil H

Sacramental Preparation Classes

Catholic children who do not attend our parish school are invited to participate in programs to prepare for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist or Confirmation.

For further information parents may contact the parish office on 9412 8425 or by email on margaretodonnell@gmail.com

There will be an information session on Tuesday, 17th February at 4.30pm in St Gregory's Parish Church. Specific details for celebrating each sacrament will be made available at that meeting.

Please bring this information to the attention of any families you know who may wish to avail of this opportunity.