

**18 December 2022**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
**Year A**



**Entrance Antiphon**

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

**First Reading** from the  
prophet Isaiah 7:10-14

**Responsorial Psalm**

Ps<sub>23</sub>:1-6. R. see v 7. 10

**Response:**

Let the Lord enter;  
he is king of glory

**Second Reading** from the  
letter of St Paul to the  
Romans 1:1-7

**Gospel Acclamation**

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

**Holy Gospel** according to  
Matthew 1:18-24

**Communion Antiphon**

Behold, a Virgin shall  
conceive and bear a son;  
and his name will be  
called Emmanuel

*We acknowledge and respect the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we stand, the elders, past and present and all the Dharawal people. May we too be good stewards of this land.*



**Reconnect this Christmas**  
**an Invitation**  
**from Bishop Brian Mascord**

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ

Peace be with you. As you continue to prepare this Advent for the joy of Christmas, I pray that you and your family are well. May Jesus be present in your conversations, your homes, and your lives.

It has been my earnest desire and prayer that this year would see us come back together. Indeed, I saw this year as being an important time of reconnection and so it has been heartening to see many of us able to return in person to the sacraments and parish community life.

During the pandemic, we were physically separated from one another. For many of us, the effects of that separation still linger. Perhaps we are a little slower to embrace a friend or more reluctant to share a meal together. We have seen echoes of this in broader society as well. Our towns and suburbs sometimes feel more like a collection of strangers than friends or neighbours. We are apart together. But we don't have to be.

The radical message of Christmas has always been the mystery of Emmanuel - God with us (cf. Matthew 1:23). It is not God with us in a palace or five-star hotel or a world where all is well. No, rather it is God with us where we are - in a humble stable, the mess of our lives. It is through Jesus that we are no longer strangers but become members of the household of God – his family – joined together and growing into a holy temple in the Lord (cf. Ephesians 2:19-21). He is our unity. He is the one who truly draws us together to be a people of peace.

So, when we gather at the table of the Lord this weekend, and every weekend, it is not who is present that should be our only focus, but also who is missing. Perhaps it's part of our family that is missing - our sons or daughters, brothers or sisters, mother or father, husband or wife. Perhaps it's a neighbour, colleague, or friend – maybe they never knew there was a seat for them in the first place.

When the prophet Isaiah was called to serve the Lord, he heard God say, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" (cf. Isaiah 6:8) And so I say to you, whom shall God send to your family? To your neighbours, friends, and work colleagues? Someone else? Each of us has at least one person in our life who is disconnected from faith. Will you invite them to be with you, with us, this Christmas? With Isaiah, I ask you to respond to my call, by saying, "Here I am. Send me."

May this Christmas be a blessed time of reconnection and new connection. May we have the courage to invite and share our story of faith with those not at the table. And may God give you and your family all the grace you need to live out your mission to be faithful disciples who love God and your neighbours.

Yours in Christ

*Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD*

BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG

## Worship: Mass and Devotions

Sunday Mass	Weekday Mass	Devotions
Saturday Vigil: 6pm	Mon, Tues, Wed Mass at 9am	Adoration with the Rosary: Saturday 9.30am
Sunday: 9.30 am & 5pm	Thursday - Mass at 7.30pm	Divine Mercy Devotion: Third Sunday at 3pm
Filipino Mass: Third Sunday at 11.15am	Fri & Sat Mass at 9am	Alliance of the 2 Hearts Mass and Devotion: First Friday from 7.30pm
<b>Samoan Mass:</b> First Sunday of even months at 12 noon	<b>Maori Mass:</b> First Sunday at 2pm	

### Contact us

Office Hours: Tuesday-Friday 9.30am-12.30pm

Phone: 9603 7373 / 0434 705 176

Email: [varroville@dow.org.au](mailto:varroville@dow.org.au)

Website: [varroville.dow.org.au](http://varroville.dow.org.au)

Parish Priest: Fr. Shane Kelleher OCD

Assistant Priest: Fr "Sam" Ransom Rapirap OCD

Parish Associate: Sr "Jill" Girlie Sudario, CM

## Prayer intentions

**For the sick & homebound:** Kevin Cloran, Robert Yap, Les Portikiewicz, Karen Browne, Amanda & John Meredith, Reg Gardner, Phyllis Cooper, Sr Heather Burke, Marie & Barry Atkins, Carol & Gabriel Gonzales, Amelia Jimenez, John Ingster, Elizabeth Moore, Greg Watson, Joe Spinnato, Susan Mella, Ron Allen, Sean Finnerty, Rose Levoune, Francisco Carmona, Doris Wahhib, John Kajdrys  
*May they experience the saving power of the risen Lord amidst their pain & affliction.*

**For our recently dearly departed:** Lily Pereira, Marita Waugh, Danilo Mercado, John McDermott

**Those whose anniversaries occur at this time:** Angelito Baterina, Guiseppe Cuomo, Angela Tomarchio  
*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon them.*



## Our Community: Rosters

25 December	Saturday 6pm	Sunday 9.30am	Sunday 5pm
<b>Welcomers</b>	Suzanne, Russell & Berna	Sarah, Violetti & Martin	Geoff & Margaret
<b>Altar Servers</b>	Ryan & Amana	Orly & Luisa	Vu
<b>Readers</b>	Loretta & Gerard	Irene & Lee	Gloria & Rachel
<b>Refreshments</b>	Tracey & Richard	Tina & Ronda	
<b>CLOTW</b>		School Holidays	
<b>Flowers</b>	Katalina	<b>Church Vacuuming</b>	Pawan & Effie
<b>Counters</b>	Vilma & Jeanette	<b>Foyer Cleaning</b>	Estela & Anita

## Our Community

**Rosters:** The new rosters are now available and have been sent out by email. They are also listed on the website in the ministry section. If you require a paper copy please contact the parish office. If you are not able to attend on your rostered date, you must arrange to swap with another person or put a message on the whatsapp for that ministry. There is a whatsapp group created for the various ministries in our parish. If you need help to connect please reach out for assistance. The purpose of the whatsapp groups is to share information relevant to the particular ministry. Please be respectful and keep the group chats relevant.

Ministry workshops have been happening for new and existing members. Induction, training and support will be offered for new and existing members of the ministries.

- **Readers Ministry meeting** is held on the last Tuesday of each month at 7pm via Zoom.



# Bulletin Notices

**"The free hard copy of the OLMC November Ministry Newsletter** is available in the foyer after Mass for those who have difficulty accessing technology. If you wish to subscribe to this monthly newsletter via email please send an email to [dianeredmayne@gmail.com](mailto:dianeredmayne@gmail.com) or [varroville@dow.org.au](mailto:varroville@dow.org.au)"

**Fundraising News:**The fundraising team is selling raffle tickets after Mass during December. The prizes will be for some hampers. Tickets will cost \$2 each or 3 for \$5. The raffle will be drawn after the pageant on Christmas eve.

**The Family Fun Night** that was postponed in October will be held on Saturday 11 February 2023 at 7pm in the parish hall. Tickets will be available for purchase during January and all those who purchased tickets previously will be contacted to confirm they are able to attend the new date.

**Christmas Carols at Carmel House with the MGL Sisters:**  
The MGL Sisters warmly invite you to join us for a family friendly Carols by Candlelight. Bring a picnic dinner and your singing voices for a community night of carols and praise. BYO dinner, BBQ facilities available.  
**When:** 6pm Tuesday 20 December.  
**Where:** Carmel House, 345 St Andrews Rd, Varroville  
**RSVP:** 18/12/22 by the facebook event or via text 0402 602 520

**Summer School of Evangelisation—8-15 January 2023: Mt Carmel Retreat Centre:** Summer school is a week long, live in life changing retreat featuring live music, incredible worship, inspiring talks, engaging liturgy, time to chill and learn...and more... in the midst of a community of 150+ young people age 4-16-35. Register by 15 December to receive early bird registration. More info & bookings at [summerschool.org.au](http://summerschool.org.au).

**Working with Children:** Various ministries in our Parish involve adults working directly with children; including Altar Servers, Children's Liturgy of the Word, Sacramental Preparation teams, Children's Ministry, namely Choir and Children's Pageant. If you are involved in a ministry that works directly with children it is your responsibility to ensure you have obtained a WWCC and submitted the approval to the parish office before you commence working in your ministry. A WWCC is an ongoing assessment of a person's eligibility to work or volunteer with children. It is a prerequisite for anyone in paid or voluntary child-related work in NSW. The clearance varies from each state and territory in Australia; for NSW it is referred to as a WWCC and is governed by the Office of the Children's Guardian. It involves a national criminal history check and a review of findings of relevant workplace misconduct. More information is available at <https://www.dow.org.au/safeguarding/resources-and-information>.

**A vocation view:** When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel had commanded him. 'God's invitation demands a response. If He is calling you, pray for the courage to respond wholeheartedly, as did St. Joseph. (Matt 1:24) If you want to talk about your vocation, please contact the diocesan vocations director, Fr Duane Fernandez at [vocations@dow.org.au](mailto:vocations@dow.org.au)

**Social Justice Statement:** Publicise the support available in your area for victim-survivors and for perpetrators who want to change their behaviour. <https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

**The Journey, Weekly Podcast:** On The Journey This Week: Fr Chris Sarkis' Gospel reflection – we too are called to say "yes" to God's will in our lives. Mother Hilda on letting God take up residence in your grief or loss. Plus, extra Advent reflections from Sr Magdalen Mather and Sr Anastasia Reeves. The Journey podcast available at [www.jcr.org.au](http://www.jcr.org.au).

**Reconnect this Christmas: An Invitation from Bishop Brian**  
"Each of us has at least one person in our life that is disconnected from faith. Will you invite them to be with you, with us, this Christmas?" - Bishop Brian.  
Perhaps they are a family member - a son or daughter, a sibling, or spouse - or a friend or colleague. You can pray a simple prayer for them (and for yourself!) and then simply ask them, "What are you doing for Christmas this year? Would you like to come to mass with me?"  
Please prayerfully read Bishop Brian's letter and consider, "who is God calling me to reach out to?" <https://bit.ly/bishopchristmas2022>

**An invitation to join electronic parish planned giving from your Parish Finance Council** An electronic regular gift provides many benefits. You will find it a secure, convenient, and efficient way to regularly support your parish, while also reducing our administration costs. It will also help us to confidently forecast and plan, as we know that we can rely on your support. You can increase, decrease, discontinue or restart your monthly gift at any time. Please visit <https://dow.sh/parishgiving> to learn of the four simple ways you can support our parish electronically.

**Formed (Free for DoW Parishioners)** Join hundreds of other families around the Diocese of Wollongong in nurturing your faith at home, in your own time and at your own pace? FORMED.org is a large Faith Formation Resource library website containing thousands of faith formation documentaries, courses, movies, audio and books covering all aspects of our Catholic faith. Materials for both adults and children. Sign-up for Free using our Diocesan Subscription by contacting [darren.mcdowell@dow.org.au](mailto:darren.mcdowell@dow.org.au) or [helen.bennett@dow.org.au](mailto:helen.bennett@dow.org.au)



## Christmas Services

- Christmas Eve:**  
Pageant at 6pm followed by Mass at 7pm
- Midnight Mass**
- Christmas morning at 9.30am**

## Holy Gospel according to Matthew 1:18-24

*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.

## A Reflection by Pope Francis

In this fourth and final Sunday of Advent, the Gospel guides us towards Christmas through the experience of Saint Joseph, a figure seemingly in second place, but whose attitude encapsulates all Christian wisdom. He, together with John the Baptist and Mary, is one of the characters whom the liturgy proposes to us for the time of Advent; and of the three he is the most modest. He is one who does not preach, does not speak, but tries to do God's will; and he does it in the style of the Gospel and the Beatitudes. Let us think of: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven". And Joseph is poor because he lives on what is essential, he works, he lives by his work; it is the poverty typical of those who are aware that they depend on God for everything, and place all their trust in Him.

Today's Gospel passage presents a situation that is in human terms embarrassing and conflicting. Joseph and Mary are betrothed; they do not yet live together, but she is expecting a child by the work of God. Joseph, faced with this surprise, is naturally disturbed but, instead of reacting in an impulsive and punitive manner – as was the custom, the law protected him – he seeks a solution that respects the dignity and integrity of his beloved Mary. The Gospel says so: "And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly". Joseph knew that if he denounced his betrothed, he would expose her to serious consequences, even death. He had full faith in Mary, whom he chose as his bride. He does not understand, but he seeks another solution.

This inexplicable circumstance leads him to question their bond; therefore, with great suffering, he decides to detach himself from Mary without creating scandal. But the Angel of the Lord intervenes to tell him that the solution he proposes is not the one desired by God. On the contrary, the Lord opened a new path for him, a path of union, love and happiness, and said to him: "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife. For that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit".

At this point, Joseph trusts God totally, obeys the Angel's words and takes Mary with him. It was precisely this unshakable trust in God that enabled him to accept a humanly difficult and, in a certain sense, incomprehensible situation. Joseph understands, in faith, that the child born in Mary's womb is not his child, but the Son of God, and he, Joseph, will be its guardian, fully assuming its earthly paternity. The example of this gentle and wise man exhorts us to lift up our gaze and push it further. It is a question of recovering the surprising logic of God which, far from small or great calculations, is made up of openness towards new horizons, towards Christ and His Word.

May the Virgin Mary and her chaste husband Joseph help us to listen to Jesus Who comes, and Who asks to be welcomed in our plans and in our choices.

