

## Catechist Sunday

### Thank You to Our Wonderful Catechists

As we come to the close of another year, we pause to reflect on the incredible work carried out by our catechists. These dedicated individuals go out into the community, sharing the light of faith and the message of Christ with children and families who may not otherwise have the opportunity to encounter it. Their commitment is not just a service—it is a ministry of love, patience, and hope. Through their efforts, countless young hearts have been nurtured in faith, and seeds have been planted that will bear fruit for years to come.

Catechists are often the unsung heroes of parish life. They give their time freely, prepare lessons with care, and walk alongside students in their spiritual journey. This is no small task—it requires creativity, perseverance, and above all, a deep love for God and His people. To each and every catechist who has stepped into this role, we say a heartfelt **thank you**. Your work matters. Your presence matters. And your witness to the Gospel is a gift to our entire community.

#### Special Congratulations

Today, we also celebrate some remarkable milestones and achievements among our catechists:

**15 Years of Service: Denisse Sanheuzza** – Your unwavering dedication over the past 15 years is truly inspiring. You have touched countless lives and have been a pillar of strength and faith in our catechetical ministry. Thank you for your perseverance and for the joy you bring to this work.

#### Diploma of Catechetics:

Congratulations to **Nellie Rafidi, Vira Fernandes** and **Josephine Theunissen** for completing the Diploma of Catechetics. This accomplishment reflects your commitment to deepening your understanding of the faith and equipping yourselves to serve more effectively. Your willingness to learn and grow is a blessing to our parish and to the children you teach.

**A Special Tribute to Josey**—We also want to take a moment to acknowledge **Josephine Theunissen** for her incredible contribution and leadership. After retiring from paid employment at the end of 2018, Josey commenced volunteering as a catechist in 2019 a testament to her enduring passion for this ministry. For the past two years, she has served as our coordinator, guiding the team with wisdom and grace. Her leadership has strengthened our program and ensured that our catechists feel supported and valued.

As Josey steps down from her role, we express our deepest gratitude for her tireless efforts and the love she has poured into this work. While she will be greatly missed in this capacity, we are comforted knowing that her legacy will continue. The role of coordinator will now be taken up by **Sr Ines**, and later by **Sr Jill**, who will build upon the strong foundation Josey has laid.

#### Closing Words

To all our catechists whether you have served for decades or just begun your journey—thank you for saying “yes” to this call. Your ministry is vital, and your impact is eternal. May God bless you abundantly for the time, energy, and heart you invest in sharing His Word. Let us continue to walk together in faith, supporting one another as we bring Christ’s love to the world.

**14 December 2025**  
Third Sunday of Advent  
Year A

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

**First Reading** from the  
prophet Isaiah 35:1-6, 10

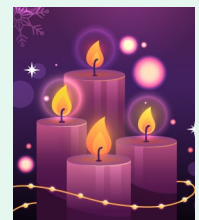
**Responsorial Psalm Ps**  
145:6-10. R. see Is 35:4  
(R.) Lord, come and save us.

**Second Reading** from the  
letter of James 5:7-10

**Gospel Acclamation**  
**Alleluia, alleluia!**  
The Spirit of the Lord is  
upon me; he sent me to  
bring Good News to the  
poor. **Alleluia!**

**Holy Gospel** according to  
Matthew 11:2-11

**Communion Antiphon**  
Say to the faint of heart: Be  
strong and do not fear.  
Behold, our God will come,  
and he will save us.



**Next Week**  
**21 December 2025**  
Fourth Sunday of  
Advent Year A

**First:** Isaiah 7:10-14  
**RespPs** 23:1-6. R.vv 7. 10  
**Second:** Romans 1:1-7  
**Gospel:** Matthew 1:18-24

## Mass and Devotions

### Sunday Mass

**Saturday Vigil:** 6pm

**Sunday:** 9.30am & 5pm

**Samoan Mass:** 1st Sunday at 12 noon

**Maori Mass:** 1st Sunday of each month at 2pm

**Filipino Mass:** 3rd Sunday of each month at 11.15am

**Children's Mass:** 5th Sunday of the month at 9.30am

### Weekday Mass

9am each day except Thursday; Thursday at 7.30pm

Healing Mass on the 1st Saturday of each month at 9am.

### Reconciliation

every Saturday at 11am

### Devotions & Prayer groups

#### Adoration with the Rosary:

Saturday at 9.30am

#### Alliance of the 2 hearts Mass

**& devotion:** 1st Friday of each month at 7.30pm

**Divine Mercy Devotion:** 3rd Sunday of each month at 3pm

**Faith Circles:** every Monday at 2pm & 7pm via zoom

#### Holy Family Fellowship:

every 4th Saturday at 7pm.

**Book Club:** meets on the 3rd Wednesday at 10am.

**Friendship Group:** is on the 1st Tuesday of the Month

#### Bible Study & Reflection

**Group:** meets Monday at 10am.

#### Children's Ministry

**Gathering** will meet on the 4th Sunday from 3– 5 pm

#### Ascent Youth Ministry:

meets on the 2nd & 4th Friday from 6.30pm.

## Parish Notices

**Advent Reconciliation Service will be held on Friday 19 December commencing at 7.30pm.**

**Calling all Angels and Shepherds:** Preparation for the Christmas Pageant will be held at the church on 16, 22, 23 December from 6 –8 pm.

**Advent Books** "The Promise" are now available from the Parish office and the Piety stall. The cost is \$5.00

**Prayer Intentions:** There is a box to submit your prayer intentions near the statue of Our Lady in the church. You may have a concern or a celebration you wish to bring to the Lord. All our intentions are read and prayed for at 9.30 each Saturday morning during Rosary and Adoration.

**The Art of Dying Well:** a four part series based on Eternal Rest (a powerful video program from the Augustinian Institute). This series helps us honestly and prayerfully confront questions about death, dying and our hope in eternal life. Commencing on Saturday 10 January at 10.30am and concluding on 31 January 2025 in our parish meeting room. Each session opens with a short video from the Eternal Rest Series, followed by small group discussion so everyone can share, ask questions and learn together. Light refreshments will be provided.

**For your safety;** please be aware the portico is a drive through and cars will be using it before and after Mass. If you wish to stop after Mass and chat please congregate in the alfresco area outside the meeting room. The door to the alfresco is to the right of the main door past the kitchen servery window.

**Join us for a night of Christmas Carols and praise at Carmel House.** BYO dinner, drinks and picnic chair. Friday 19th December at 6.30pm at Carmel House, 345 St Andrews Rd, Varroville. RVP: 16th December. [mgl sisters.sydney@gmail.com](mailto:mgl sisters.sydney@gmail.com)

**Sanctus Summit- Rosemeadow** Join us for the last Sanctus Summit for the year at Our Lady Help of Christians, Rosemeadow on Wednesday 17 December. Sanctus Summit is a monthly adoration night, bringing youth and young adults together from different parts of the Diocese! Eucharistic Adoration from 6.30 – 7.30pm (Reconciliation will be available), followed by Dinner at Ambarvale Hotel. Come along to pray before Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and connect with other young people from the area!

**World Youth Day – Seoul 2027** World Youth Day is returning in August 2027- and this time it's heading to Seoul, South Korea! WYD is an unforgettable celebration of faith with millions of young Catholics from around the world, and we're excited to begin preparing a diocesan pilgrimage. If you (or someone you know) will be 18–25 years old in August 2027 and would love to experience the vibrancy of the universal Church, a new culture, and a life-changing encounter with Christ, we'd love to hear from you. Register your expression of interest: [dow.sh/wyd27](https://dow.sh/wyd27); Let's start the journey!

### Christmas Mass Times

#### Christmas Eve:

Christmas Pageant & Carols at 6pm

Vigil Mass at 7pm

Samoan Mass at 9pm

\* Midnight Mass

**Christmas Day** Mass at 9am

#### Parish Reconciliation Service

Friday 19 December at 7.30pm



**Caritas Australia:** Be a light in the darkness for families facing adversity this Christmas. This Christmas, we are inviting Australians to “be a light in the darkness” for families who are living through the trauma of war, displacement, and poverty. The intensity of the conflict in Ukraine has increased and more people are experiencing displacement and poverty. But with your support, we can bring hope to these families. Our partner, Caritas Ukraine are on the ground working hard to prepare food kits, emergency shelter kits and psychosocial assistance to families facing adversity. Donate today at <https://www.caritas.org.au/christmas-appeal/be-the-light-in-darkness/>

**Immaculata Mission School 2026** What is it? A wonderful opportunity to grow in faith through daily Mass, Adoration and times of prayer, fantastic Catholic speakers (including international speakers Steve and Katey Norman from Renewal Ministries), share groups, fun activities, friendship and lots more. What is the theme? "Our Father" - join us and go deeper in God’s goodness and love! When is it? 1-7 Jan for youth and young adults (14 years and up); 1-5 Jan for married couples and families (includes children's ministry). Where is it? Armidale, NSW; For costs, more information and to register visit [www.immaculata.org.au/ims](http://www.immaculata.org.au/ims); Registrations close 23 Dec.

**Stouthearted men's program- coming in 2026** Stouthearted is a new Jesus centred men's program designed to meet a desperate need in men. It's an 8-week program that draws from well-known experts, shares powerful teachings and models real world conversations. Stouthearted fosters learning, discussion, prayer, reflection, healing and builds essential practical strategies. In addition to the main sessions, there are short daily reflections that include video input, bible study, and self-reflection. The Stouthearted program will be running in Wollongong in 2026, starting on Monday 2 Feb and finishing on the last Monday of March. Register now: [dow.sh/stouthearted](http://dow.sh/stouthearted)

**A vocation view:** John the Baptist cried out and made ready for the Lord. Promote the gospel in our community (Luke 3:1-6). 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)

**What’s on around the Diocese?** [dow.sh/stayingconnected](http://dow.sh/stayingconnected) or [dow.sh/weekly](http://dow.sh/weekly) bulletin see everything that is on around our Diocese!

## Prayer intentions

### *For the sick and homebound:*

Pat Cullen, Mary Ponnappalam, Myka Mangos, Kevin Cloran, Karen Browne, Reg Gardner, Sr Heather Burke, Barry Atkins, Carol & Gabriel Gonzales, Amelia Jimenez, Susan Mella, Sean Finnerty, Rose Levoune, Doris Wahhib, John Kajdrys, Pat Stewart, Allan Marquinez, Richard Scolyer, Angela Pavlovic,

*May they experience the saving power of the risen Lord amidst their pain & affliction.*

### *For our recently departed*

Maria Cuaresma, Graham Henneberry, May Whitlock, Paul Crawford,

### *Anniversaries that occur at this time*

Lily Pereira, James Pereira

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, may perpetual light shine upon them.*

## Our Rosters

21 December 2025	Saturday 6pm	Sunday 9.30am	Sunday 5pm
Welcomers	Paul & Lori	Martin, Violeti & Paul	Terry & Maree
Altar Servers	Andrew, Diane, Sebastian & Eliana	Vu	Michael & Nathan
Readers	Suzanne & Margaret	Gabriel & Laura	Niya D & Effie D
Altar Linen	Margaret	<b>CLOTW:</b>	
Flowers	Lorraine & Effie	<b>Church Vacuuming</b>	Thess & Effie
Counters	Louise & Lina	<b>Church Foyer</b>	Margaret & Arland

### Contact Us

Parish Priest:  
Fr. Shane Kelleher OCD

Parish Associate:  
Sr “Jill” Girlie Sudario, CM

### Office Hours

Tuesday-Friday: 9.30am-12.30pm  
Phone: 9603 7373 / 0434 705 176  
Address: 193 St Andrews Rd, Varroville  
Email: [varroville@dow.org.au](mailto:varroville@dow.org.au)  
Website: [varroville.dow.org.au](http://varroville.dow.org.au)



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.

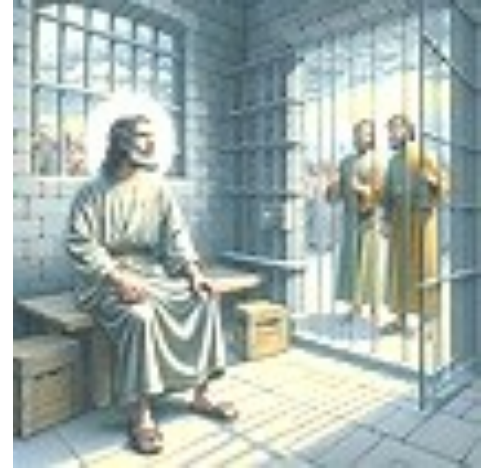
## Holy Gospel according to Matthew 11:2-11

*Are you the one who is to come, or must we wait for someone else?*

John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?' Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor; and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.'

As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: he is the one of whom scripture says: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way before you. I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.'

The Gospel of the Lord.



### Gospel Reflection by Greg Sunter

Why would John the Baptist send messengers to question Jesus? We recall from last week's gospel passage that John had a somewhat 'fire and brimstone' perception of what Jesus would be like. Perhaps as he sat in his prison cell John began to wonder whether Jesus was indeed the Messiah that John believed him to be. Perhaps the question was not for himself but rather for his disciples that he sent to Jesus. Given the answer that Jesus provided them, perhaps John's intention was for the disciples to recognise that Jesus was in fact the one that John had proclaimed and that the disciples should switch their allegiance to Jesus. John probably guessed that he would not be leaving that prison alive and may have been leading his disciples to the next step in their discipleship by having them go and scrutinise Jesus.

The indirect answer that Jesus provides to the query would have not sounded like such a roundabout response as it does to us. The picture Jesus describes of the blind seeing, the lame walking, lepers cleansed, and the deaf hearing would have been very familiar to those who were listening and the first audience of this gospel. These were signs of the coming of the Messiah that had been foretold by the prophets. In his answer, Jesus effectively says, 'Well, all the things that are supposed to happen when the Messiah comes are happening now with me. There's your answer!'

The reading continues to build on the Advent themes of anticipation, preparedness and hope. As we draw closer to the celebration of the Nativity, in this reading is confirmation that our hope is not misplaced. Today's readings emphasise the joy that lies in the anticipation and expectation of what is coming.

Jesus declares that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater even than John whom he has just finishing praising as greatest of all men. It is an indication that in the kingdom, things are not as they are on earth. The blind, lame, deaf, poor and lepers that Jesus named earlier would have been seen as the very lowest of society. Their afflictions were seen as punishments from God and so it was assumed that they, or their parents, had done something to deserve this punishment. Jesus rejects this interpretation and shows these people to be the most open to responding to his message.

Jesus is not recorded as asking the messengers about John's wellbeing. He doesn't appear to express any concern about John's imprisonment. Yet Jesus must have felt this situation very deeply. John the Baptist and Jesus were related; they were cousins. The depth of his feeling is reflected when Jesus speaks so positively and powerfully about John. It reads almost as a eulogy that might be given at a funeral; praising the greatness of the deceased. Yet regardless of John's greatness, Jesus assures his audience that even the least in the kingdom is greater than John.

The third Sunday of Advent was traditionally known as Gaudete Sunday. The word, gaudete, (pronounced gow-day-tay) is from Latin and means *Rejoice!* The name was given to this Sunday because the entrance antiphon for the day is: 'Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice! The Lord is near.' When Advent was observed as a more penitential season, this third Sunday was a break from the sombre mood and was more celebratory. The rose-coloured candle in the Advent wreath and rose-coloured vestments convey a mood of joy and celebration.