

My sisters and brothers in Christ and to all people of goodwill in the Diocese of Wollongong,

Grace, peace, and a very happy Christmas to you and your loved ones.

During the first animated Peanuts Christmas special in 1965, "A Charlie Brown Christmas", Charlie Brown exclaims, "Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?" This is the question that we return to every year and that each person must have an answer for in their heart. Yes, Christmas is a day to celebrate our relationships with one another, but it is also the day we celebrate the relationship we have with the one who pitched his tent among us. We often do this with presents and food and drink. A time to gather together, stop, and simply "be" with one another. For many people, it is also a day to serve those in our communities who are homeless, sick, or grieving. But why this day? Why Christmas?

At the heart of Christmas is a mystery. On this day we remember that "once in our world, a stable had something in it that was bigger than our whole world" (C.S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*). Or rather, *someone* bigger than our whole world—The Son of God, The Light of the World, Jesus. Today, "Let us open our eyes to the light that comes from God" (St Benedict, *RB Prologue*).

Jesus, born in a manger, tells us that, "A God who became so small could only be mercy and love" (St Therese of Lisieux). Jesus, truly God and truly man, became one of us so that we might be drawn into the very life of God (St Irenaeus). Jesus, born to die on the cross, is the saviour of the World (cf Jn 3:16).

But perhaps even more mysterious still, Jesus teaches us who we are. Indeed, this day is a great celebration because the incarnation, God becoming flesh, bears witness to the truth as St Pope John Paul II said in his Christmas Day message in 1978 "every human being [is] somebody unique and unrepeatable.... Somebody thought of and chosen from eternity, some[one] called and identified by their own name". You are known and loved by God. Christmas is a testament to that fact.

Many people in our community, often beset by disconnection and isolation, question not only their situation but their worth, their very existence. Christmas speaks to this pain. Christmas says to us, if God humbled himself to become one of us, how can you be "so worthless in your own eyes and yet so precious to God?" (St Peter Chrysologus)

So today, let us allow Christmas to speak to our hearts the truth of who Jesus is and who we are. In Jesus, we see God's glory and the dignity of humanity. We see the gift of God with us, Emmanuel.

I invite you to pray with me this Christmas prayer of St Pope John XXIII:

*"O sweet Child of Bethlehem,
grant that we may share with all our
hearts in this profound mystery of Christmas.*

*Put into the hearts of men and women
this peace for which they
sometimes seek so desperately
and which you alone can give to them.*

*Help them to know one another better,
and to live as brothers and sisters,
children of the same Father.*

*Reveal to them also your beauty,
holiness and purity.*

*Awaken in their hearts love
and gratitude for
your infinite goodness.*

*Join them all
together in your love.*

And give us your heavenly peace.

Amen."

I wish you every Christmas blessing and may the peace and joy of this blessed day be with you and your loved ones. And may you recognise, in those around you Emmanuel, God with us.

Yours in Christ,



Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD
Bishop of Wollongong
19 December 2022



Holy Family
Catholic Parish
INGLEBURN & MINTO

Holy Family Church
136 Oxford Rd
Ingleburn

Holy Trinity Church
57 Guernsey Ave
Minto

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The Nativity of the Lord

25 December 2022

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

We've been hearing a lot about the "Spirit of Christmas" lately. Our Advent Season of waiting and watching gives way to the joy and holiness of Christmas Day and all it brings: the tearing of wrapping paper, the precious time with friends and family, Christmas Mass, and an extra good meal!

For some, Christmas is about giving; for others, it's joy, or family, or peace on earth. However, when we come to the various accounts of that first Christmas in the Bible, it is obvious that the "spirit of Christmas" is primarily about God's love manifested in a divine giving. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3: 16.) The heart of Christmas is the gift of Jesus Christ who saves us. He is the gift who overwhelms us with his love and peace, and guides our hearts.

Christmas is also about encountering God who comes to be with us and sharing this Good News with others. The shepherds on a hillside, after hearing about this divine visit from the angels become the first heralds of the Good News. Having heard this news, the shepherds ran to see what the angels had announced, and after seeing with their own eyes they couldn't keep it to themselves. Luke says, *"When they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child."* (Luke 2:17)

As we celebrate this gift of Jesus Christ among us this Christmas, let joy, peace and love be born in our hearts, in our families, in our parish and in the whole world, not just this Christmas day, but every day of our lives. And let us share the Good News about this gift from heaven with others, especially with family members, relatives, and friends.

If you are returning to Church today from a long or short absence, or read this message at home, let the Spirit of Christmas and the Good News of God's Love fill you, that your hearts may open wide this day and return to the joy of celebrating the Eucharist today and every week of the year.

The Eucharist is the feast the Father has so lovingly prepared for you. He waits to receive you with arms wide open. He can't wait to hear about your week, your worries, your success, your desires... everything. Our heavenly Father doesn't care if you've been away for a week, a few months or even a few years. All He truly desires is your company at Mass this Christmas and we the Holy Family Parish do too.

May God bless you this Christmas and may your hearts be filled with the Joy of Christ's birth and may you be messengers of that joy. Merry Christmas!

Fr. Henry Adler, SVD



What's On

- 30 Dec Patronal Feast Day: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
- 7 Jan Church cleaning - Team "A"
Altar Server Candidates meeting - 11am
- 31 Jan First day of Term 1
- 12 Feb Parish and School 2023 Welcome Mass - 9am
- 26 March Sacrament of First Reconciliation - 6pm
- 18 June Sacrament of First Holy Communion
- 12 Nov Sacrament of Confirmation



We pray ... For those who are affected by the floods, earthquakes and those affected by war: that God will grant peace, justice and healing to all involved during these times.

For all the forgotten Souls and Holy Souls in Purgatory.

For the sick and homebound: Noal Bornstein, Phil Clarke, Dawn O'Donoghue, Ann Marie Praud; and all who have nobody to pray for them.

May the saving power of the risen Lord bring healing, comfort and peace to their bodies and send strength to their carers.

For our recently dearly departed: Josephine Ooi, Marian D'Cruz, Jennifer Malone, Lorraine Morrison, Margaret Rose, Michael Brezinski, Joyce O'Keefe, Giuseppe Occhiuto, Gerald Barbara, Jeanette Morand, Angelita Z Molano.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.

For those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Carmela Catalano, Edgee LeClerc, Fr Peter Caruana, Giuseppe Lanzafame, Mee St Guillaume, Sr Patricia Murphy OLN.

Having returned to the Father, may they rest in peace.

Visiting the Sick and Homebound: There are an increasing number of people who, whether due to age or ill health, are not able to attend church, but would like to receive Holy Communion, particularly during Christmas time. If you know of somebody in this situation, please contact the Parish Office, so that a visit can be arranged.

With joyful hearts, during November we welcomed the newly Baptised to our Holy Family parish community:

Penelope Sillato, Aylah Manyu, Sebastian Iannuzzelli, Stephanie Sinha Chowdhury, Cooper Haigh, Harlow Haigh.



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.

You can continue to contribute financially to the Parish via the two collections at the weekend Masses, but if you prefer, the Holy Family Parish bank account details are:

First collection

Account name: Ingleburn Presbytery

BSB: 066711

Account number: 001978

Second collection

Account name: Ingleburn Parish

BSB: 066711

Account number: 00177

A Big Thank You from Ingleburn St Vincent de Paul Conference Members

The Ingleburn St Vincent de Paul Society Conference members would like to offer our sincere thanks to the Holy Family Ingleburn parishioners, including those who contributed directly to our online fundraising page, for your generosity in contributing to the Ingleburn Conference Christmas appeal.

The total amount of money raised to date, is \$6,940.05, which was a fantastic response.

We are also very grateful to the Holy Family School students and their families who contributed Christmas food hampers, and to the student leaders and teachers who coordinated this appeal and compiled the hampers. These hampers were distributed to struggling families and individuals in the Ingleburn community and were greatly appreciated.



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

Ministry of Altar Serving - Meeting

The next meeting of Altar Server Candidates will take place on:

Date: Saturday, 7 January

Time: 11am

Venue: Holy Family Church



Macarthur Combined Churches Christmas Day Lunch

Date: Sunday 25 December, 2022

Time: 10:30am-2:00pm

Venue: Campbelltown Civic Centre – 91 Queen St, Campbelltown

If you have no plans for Christmas Day this year, members of the Macarthur Combined Churches invite you to come and enjoy a day out and share the meaning of Christmas by attending their annual Christmas lunch at the Campbelltown Civic Centre. People from all walks of life attend this free celebration.

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS 2023

Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion

If your child is in Year 3 or above, has been Baptised, they are eligible to receive the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion in our parish.

The Sacrament of First Reconciliation will be held on Friday 26th March 2023 at 6pm.

Sacrament preparation will be held at 6.30pm on 27th February, 6th March, 13th March, 20th March.

The Sacrament of First Holy Communion will be held on Sunday 18th June 2023.

Sacrament preparation will be held at 6.30pm on 8th May, 15th May, 22nd May, 29th May, 5th June.

Registrations forms will be available at the end of January 2023.

Sacraments of Confirmation

If your child is in Year 6 or above, has been Baptised and has received the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, they are eligible to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The Sacrament of Confirmation will be held on Sunday 12th November 2023.

Sacrament preparation will be held at 6.30pm on 9th October, 16th October, 23rd October, 6th November.

Registrations forms will be available in 2023.