



ONE MISSION, TWO CHURCHES



Second Sunday of Advent, Year A - 7th Dec. 2025

Parish Priest

Fr Alex Chow

Parish Secretary

Sonya O'Farrell

Wednesdays,

Thursdays & Fridays

10am – 2pm

SUNDAY MASS

Saturday Vigil: 5pm (SL)

Sunday: 8:30am (SL),
10:30am (ST),
5pm (ST, Vietnamese)

WEEKDAY MASSES

Tues. 6:30pm (SL)

Wed. 9.15am (ST)

*1st Wed Mass of Anointing
@10am*

Thurs. 9.15am (ST)

Fri. 9.15am(SL*),6.30pm (ST)

Sat. 9.15am (SL*)

*Rosary after Mass

RECONCILIATION

SL: Tues 5:30 - 6:10pm

Sat 9:45 - 10:15am

Sat 4:30 - 4:50pm

ST: Fri 5:30 - 6:10pm

EXPOSITION OF THE

BLESSED SACRAMENT &

EVENING PRAYER

SL: Tues 5:30 - 6:30pm

ST: Fri 5:30 - 6:30pm

HOSPITALITY AFTER MASS

AT ST. LUKE'S

Second weekend of each
month - bring a plate to
share (optional)

Young Adult Group - 1st & 3rd

Wed. each month at 7pm

at St Luke's Presbytery

Isaiah 11:1-10, Ps 71:1-17, Romans 15:4-9

Gospel Reflection: **Matthew 3:1-12**

Meditation: What kind of Messiah did God promise to send to his people and how would he bring God's kingdom to them? The prophet Isaiah foresaw the day when God would raise up a Messianic King long after King David's throne had been overthrown and vacant for centuries. God promised that he would raise up a new king from the stump of Jesse, the father of King David (Isaiah 11:1). This messianic king would rule forever because the Spirit God would rest upon him and remain with him.



Head of St John the Baptist, Igor Mitoraj,
2006, Carrara marble © ChristianArtToday

John pointed others to the coming of Christ and his kingdom

John the Baptist's life was fueled by one burning passion - to point others to Jesus Christ and to the coming of his kingdom. Who is John the Baptist and what is the significance of his message for our lives? Scripture tells us that John was filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb by Christ himself, whom Mary had just conceived by the Holy Spirit. When Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth John leapt in her womb as they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, John devoted his entire life to prayer and the word of God. He was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness where he was tested and grew in the word of God. John's clothing was reminiscent of the prophet Elijah (see Kings 1:8). The Holy Spirit prepared John for the mission entrusted to him as forerunner of the Messiah, Jesus Christ - the Word of God who became man for our salvation (John 1:1,14). John pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world by offering his life on the cross as the atoning sacrifice for our sins and the sin of the world (John 1:29). John broke the prophetic silence of the previous centuries when he began to speak the word of God to the people of Israel. His message was similar to the message of the Old Testament prophets who chided the people of God for their unfaithfulness and who tried to awaken true repentance in them. Among a people unconcerned with the things of God, it was his work to awaken their interest, unsettle them from their complacency, and arouse in them enough good will to recognize and receive Christ when he came. Are you eager to hear God's word and to be changed by it through the power of the Holy Spirit?

A new era of God's restoration begins; Jesus tells us that John the Baptist was more than a prophet (Luke 7:26). John was the voice of the Consoler who is coming (John 1:23; Isaiah 40:1-3). He completed the cycle of prophets begun by Elijah (Matthew 11:13-14). What the prophets had carefully searched for and angels longed to see, now came to completion as John made the way ready for the coming of the Messiah, God's Anointed Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. With John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit begins the restoration to the human race of the "divine likeness", prefiguring what would be achieved with and in the Lord Jesus. John's baptism was for repentance - turning away from sin and taking on a new way of life according to God's word. Our baptism in Jesus Christ by water and the Spirit results in a new birth and entry into God's kingdom as his beloved sons and daughters (John 3:5). The Lord Jesus gives us the fire of his Spirit so that we may radiate the joy and truth of the Gospel to a world in desperate need of God's light and truth. His word has power to change and transform our lives that we may be lights pointing others to Christ. Like John the Baptist, we too are called to give testimony to the light and truth of Jesus Christ. Do you point others to Christ in the way you live, work, and speak?

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Parish Office tel: 03 9412 8499; Presbytery tel: 03 9877 2292

St Luke the Evangelist, 46 Orchard Grove, Blackburn South

Email: foresthill@cam.org.au | Web: sttimothys.org.au / Email: blackburnsouth@cam.org.au | Web: blackburnsouth.org.au

Next Week's Daily Readings 8 Dec - 14 Dec

MONDAY, Dec 8 Gen 3:9-15, 20 Ps 97:1-4
Eph 1:3-6, 11-12 Lk 1:26-38
The IMMACULATE CONCEPTION of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

TUESDAY, Dec 9 Is 40:1-11 Ps 95:1-3, 10-13
Mt 18:12-14

WEDNESDAY, Dec 10 Is 40:25-31 Ps 102:1-4, 8, 10
Mt 11:28-30

THURSDAY, Dec 11 Is 41:13-20 Ps 144:1, 9-13
Mt 11:11-15

FRIDAY, Dec 12 Is 48:17-19 Ps 1:1-4, 6
Mt 11:16-19

SATURDAY, Dec 13 Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11
Ps 79:2-3, 15-16, 18-19 Mt 17:10-13
St Lucy, virgin, martyr

SUNDAY, Dec 14 Is 35:1-6, 10 Ps 145:6-10
James 5:7-10 Mt 11:2-11

THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT

*(Taken from
ORDO 2025, Liturgy Brisbane, ACBC 2024)*

The Jubilee Prayer



Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

SOME USEFUL CATHOLIC RESOURCES:

PRAY AS YOU GO (<https://pray-as-you-go.org/daily-meditation>)

HALLOW (<https://hallow.com>):#1 prayer Catholic App

UNIVERSALIS website and App. (<https://universalis.com/index.htm>)

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

Saturday 5pm SL
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST
5pm ST

6 and 7 DEC

Godfrey Thong
Peter McKeown
Ryan Yee
Nhat Anh, Hoa Doan & Dzung Luong

13 and 14 DEC

Mia Perang
May McKeown
Joelle Roussety
Duong Tong, Thuy Vu & Loc Le

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

Saturday 5pm SL
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST
5pm ST

Lucy Ferris
Margaret Gearon
Chin L Tay
Hung Dinh

Melina Barcellona
Beryl Chelliah
Anico Yee
Hoang Nguyen

SLIDE OPERATORS

Saturday 5pm SL
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST
5pm ST

Choir
Megan McLean
Lee Min Yee
Toan Tran

Choir
Rosemary Donaldson
Manny Gonzalez
Toan Tran

SL WELCOMERS 6-7 DEC

5pm Libby Theodore
8.30am Margaret Gearon
10.30am Volunteer

SL CHURCH CLEANING

13th Dec - Megan's team
Megan McLean, Janette Clark,
Maureen Davis & Ellen Donoghue

SL CHURCH FLOWERS

No Flowers for Advent

ST CHURCH FLOWERS

No Flowers for Advent

SL WELCOMERS 13-14 DEC

5:00pm Edna Lee
8.30am Marie Pekish
10.30am Volunteer

ST CHURCH CLEANING

20th Dec @ 8am
Hoang Nguyen, Anico Yee,
Dzung Vu & Trong Nguyen

ST COUNTERS

This week Team 8:
Fela Colasanti & Chin L Tay
Next week Team 1:
Owen Grealy & Anthony Yeo

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

All who are sick, especially Sr June Dunford, Emilio Moreno Garcia, Kevin Ryan, Agatha Wink, Ronda Smith, Chris Leach, Dora Leung, Hazel Grealy, Josephine Alexander, Grace Dimattina, Kit Bing Fan, Kathryn Holmes, Stewart Davis, Mark, Margaret Hayes, Charmaine Bancroft, Marilene Japour, Paciencia Cabral and all those parishioners unable to be among us this weekend.

All who have died, especially Mary Goodwin & Merlin Gomez who died recently and for those whose anniversaries occur about this time especially Jack Taya, Mario Cardenti, John Wilson Rarela, Margaret Jones, Andrej Kawalevski, Eugena D'Souza, June Dorling, Garry Halourson, Else Rasmussen, Norberto Gonzales, Monica Bone, Josephine Cannestra, Francesco Boccaccio, Maria Cassano, Giosue Iaccarino, Damiano Viola, Gabriel Soosadasan, Gina Berenato, Alan Stewart, Paul Van Raay & Jean Willett. May they rest in peace.

POPE LEO'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR DECEMBER:

For Christians in areas of conflict. Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation, and hope.

RITE OF ACCEPTANCE FOR R.C.I.A.: The rite of acceptance for the enquirers who are attending our weekly R.C.I.A. sessions will be during Masses on the weekend of 7 & 13 Dec.

ADVENT PRAYER GROUP: We warmly invite everyone to an Advent Reflection on Thursdays during Advent. The next one is on Thurs. 11th Dec. from 7 to 8pm at St Luke's church. The "In Holy Stillness" resource will be used, which can be purchased from the foyer of both churches.

COLUMBAN CALENDARS & CHRISTMAS CARDS: 2026 Calendars are on sale at the St Timothy's Piety Stall for \$9.00. Christmas Cards are also on sale. Packs of 5 cards are \$5.00 and \$10.00 for a pack of 10 cards. Calendars & cards are available at St Luke's for a donation into the poor box in the church foyer.

SAFEGUARDING ESSENTIALS TRAINING: In-person Safeguarding Essentials training for all parish volunteers will be on Sunday Dec. 7th at St Timothy's from 11.45 to 1pm. It can also be done online via this link: [Safeguarding Essentials training module | Melbourne Catholic](#)

CHRISTMAS DECORATION OF CHURCHES: All are invited to assist with church decorations on Sat. 13th December at 10.15am at St Timothy's.

CHRISTMAS CHOIR PRACTICE: Choir practice for all Christmas Masses will be on Sat. 13th Dec. at 3pm at St Luke's. All are welcome to join us.

LUKTIM YAM GATHERINGS: Wed. Dec. 10th @ 7pm - Preparation for Christmas Market, Wed. 17th Dec. @ 7pm - Christmas Party (BYO food to share).
Venue: St Luke's Presbytery, 46 Orchard Grove, Blackburn South
[Resources](#)

MELBOURNE CATHOLIC: [Celebrating 'the Spirit's new shoots' at ACYF 2025](#)

MAJELLAN MEDIA: [Advent Week Two](#)

STEWARDSHIP CORNER:

The First collection is for the priest and retired priests.

The Second collection is for parish expenses.

ST: Last week's Presbytery Stewardship Total Collection: \$808.15

Last week's Church Stewardship Total Collection: \$713.70

Vietnamese Donation: \$174.10

SL: Last week's Presbytery Stewardship Total Collection: \$465

Last week's Church Stewardship Total Collection: \$470.05

Parish Groups & Contacts

Volunteers and Rosters

ST: Corrie Quimbo

SL: Margaret Gearon

Baptism Preparation

SL: Mary Italiano

Vietnamese Community

Hoang Nguyen

Andy Tran

Vietnamese Youth

Theresa Nguyen

Parish Collection Preparers

ST: Barry Silvester &

Michael Kawalevski

Stewardship Counters

SL: Dale Dixon

Steve Kilroe-Smith

Parishes Safeguarding Committee

Theresa Nguyen, Mary Italiano,

Darren McLean

Janette Clark

Parish history

SL: Margaret Gearon

Parish Accountant

Bernard Negline

SL: Hall Hire

Sonya O'Farrell @ the

Parish Office – 9877 2292

Church Sacristan

ST: Margaret King & Hoang Nguyen

SL: Greg Grant

Church Housekeeping

ST: Margaret King

Church Cleaning & Flowers

SL: Megan McLean

Church Linen

SL: Beryl Chelliah

Parish Garden Maintenance

ST: Des Connors, Leo Watson,

Anico Yee & Vietnamese Community

SL: Darren McLean

Parish Choirs

ST: Miguel Ilagan & Theresa Nguyen

SL: Lina & Maria Mafi

St Vincent de Paul Conference

For Assistance: 1800 305 330

(Monday to Friday 10am-3pm)

Parish Contacts:

ST: John McCoy

SL: Margaret Gearon &

Steve Kilroe-Smith

Entrance Antiphon: O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.

Response to the Psalm: Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all people shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

Eucharistic Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Communion Antiphon: Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.

Melbourne - January 4 to 11

What is it? A week long retreat into the powerful experience of the Holy Spirit, opening up possibilities for deepening faith, peace, healing, joy and freedom.

Where: Holy Cross Retreat Centre, Templestowe

Who for: 16 to 35 year olds

What happens: Opportunities for prayer, music, Catholic teaching and formation and engaging liturgy.

More info.: summerschool.org.au



CHILDREN'S LITURGY AT ST TIMOTHY'S

On Sunday 14th December, we will continue our Children's Liturgy group at the 10.30am Mass at St Timothy's. This will run on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month. Parents are welcome to accompany their children. No prior registration required. Please contact the parish office if you have any questions.



MERCY NIGHT

St Luke the Evangelist Church

Tues. 16 December 2025

6:30pm Mass

7pm to Adoration &

8:30pm Reconciliation



Come, reflect and experience an evening of God's merciful and forgiving love in the God's presence and Sacrament of Reconciliation.

(Note: NO 5:30pm Holy Hour on this date)

St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal (St Luke's)

Please place any non-perishable items in the bins in the church foyer. Cash donations can be placed in the Poor Box at the back of the church. If a receipt is required, please contact the conference President, Steve Kilroe-Smith or the treasurer, Laurie Peattie.

Thank you very much for your continuing support of the conference's works.

LukTim YAM FUNDRAISING for ACYF PILGRIMS

All are invited to our

CHRISTMAS MARKET after

5pm Vigil Mass, Dec. 13th @ St Luke's

10:30am Mass, Dec 14th @ St Timothy's.

Enjoy a sausage sizzle and treats. There will be home made Christmas fruit cakes & slices on sale as well as raffle tickets for great prizes - see Christmas Hamper Raffle notice on this page.

Parishioners are asked to bake a cake or slice to be sold on these dates. Cake plates are available in the church foyers this weekend. Thanks for your support.



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS HAMPER RAFFLE

Tickets are on sale for the St Luke's Christmas Hamper Raffle which will run in conjunction with the ACYF fundraising by our Young Adults Ministry. Donations for the hampers can be left in the labelled baskets in the church foyer. The proceeds will go towards the costs of sending our young parishioners to the recent ACYF as well as to our Care Group who look after funeral refreshments and food for Parish Outreach programs. Thanks in advance for your support. *Prizes include: A Coffee Espresso and milk frother, 4 bottles of good wine, Gift card including 2 Gold Class Hoyts tickets worth \$190 & mystery hampers.*

Tickets are \$4 each or 3 for \$10 and are on sale at all Masses for the next three weekends. Card and cash payments are welcome.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)

RCIA is a 5 month program for those who are interested and would like to know more about

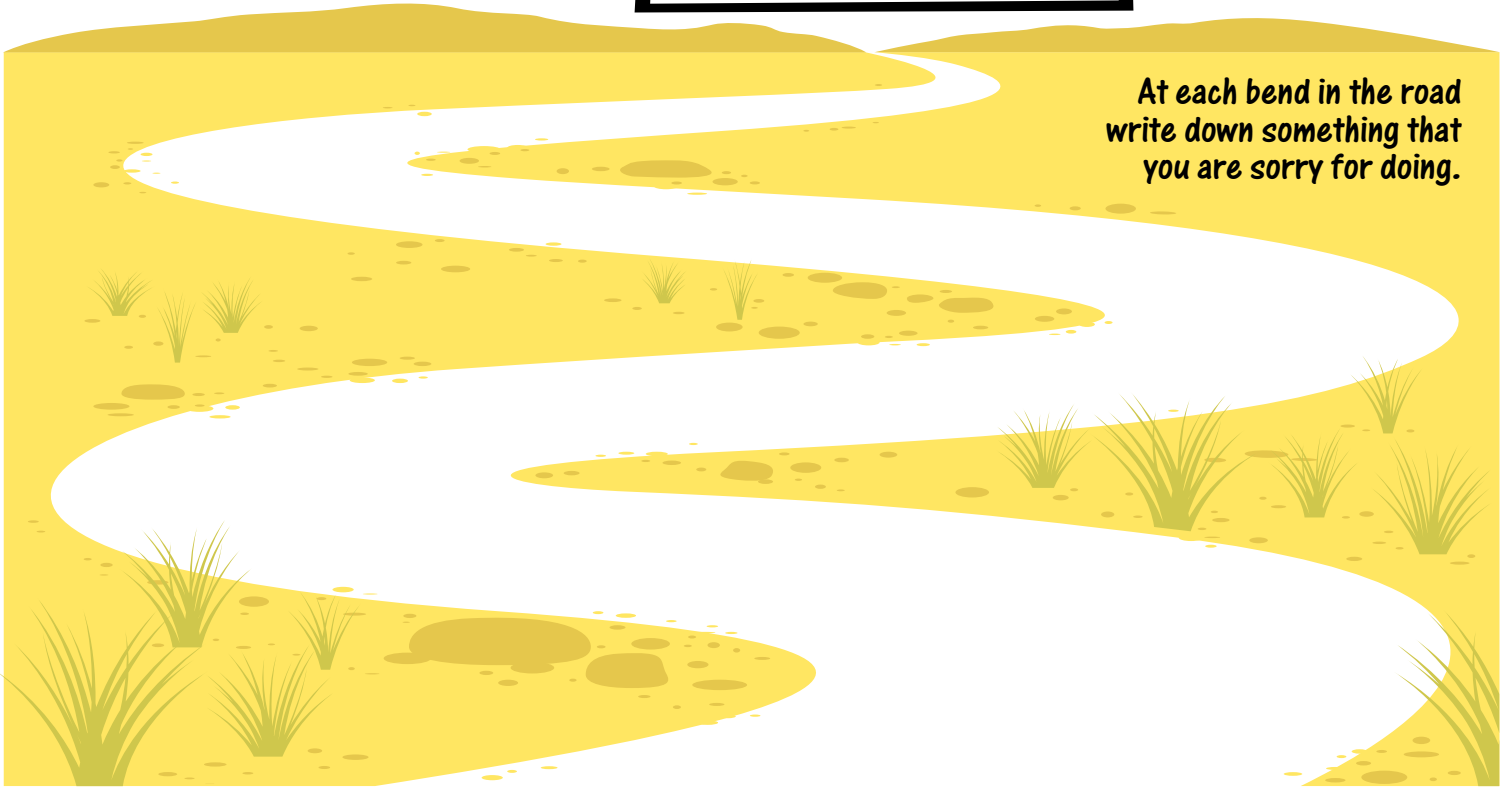
the Catholic faith as well as the possibility to encounter Jesus Christ in a personal way. It is a journey together with other enquirers as well as parishioners. The RCIA program will continue on Tuesday, December 9th @ 7pm at St Luke's Presbytery, 46 Orchard Grove, Blackburn South. It will run until March 2026 with weekly meetings (1.5hrs) both in person and via Zoom. For more information or to join in please contact the parish office.



Make a straight path for the Lord



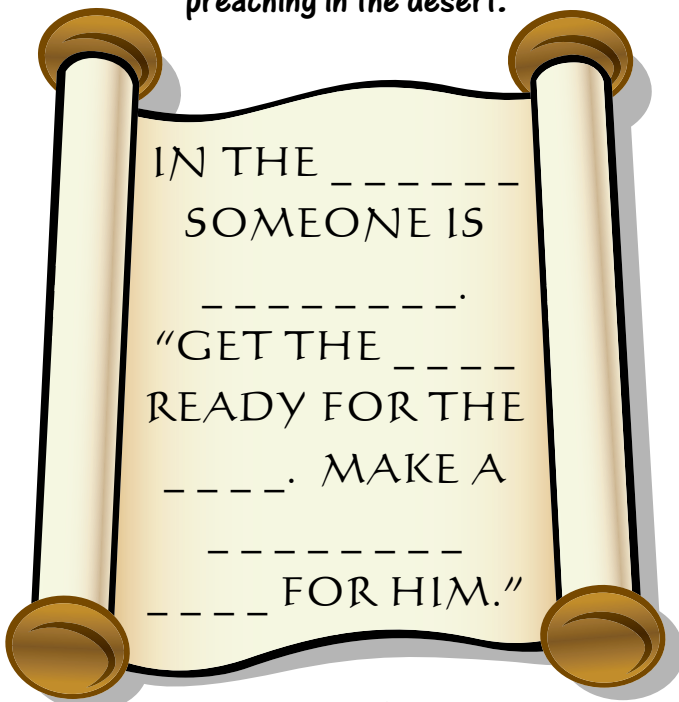
2nd Sunday of Advent, Year A



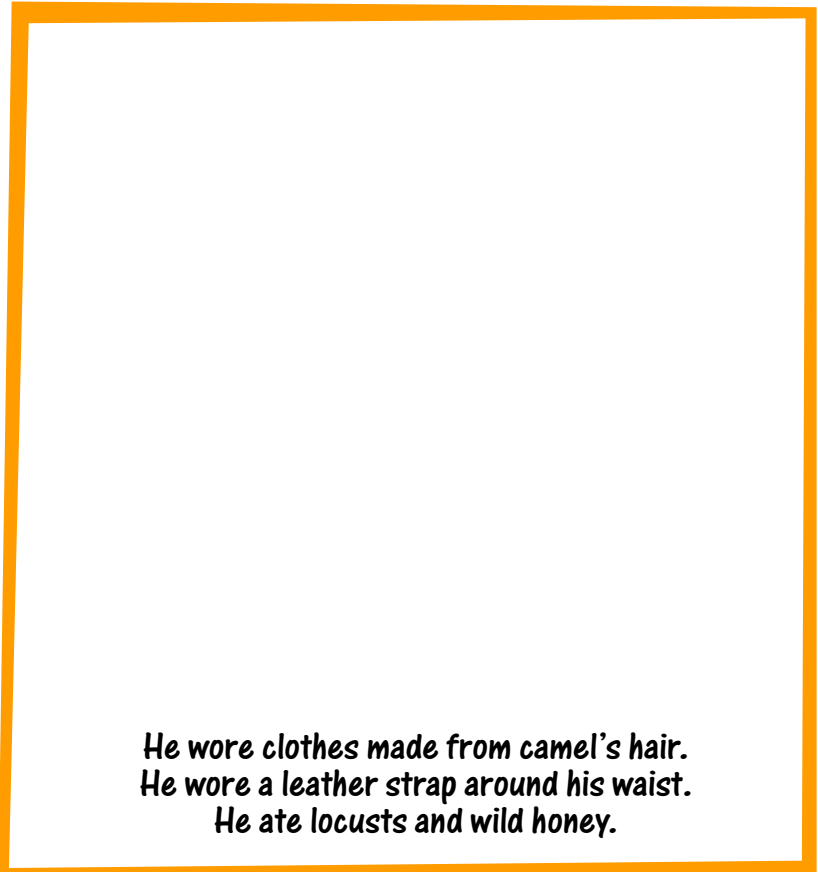
At each bend in the road write down something that you are sorry for doing.

Use the words below to complete Isaiah's prophecy which tells of John the Baptist preaching in the desert.

Draw a picture of John the Baptist from his description in the bible.



STRAIGHT **ROAD**
LORD **PATH**
SHOUTING **DESERT**



He wore clothes made from camel's hair.
He wore a leather strap around his waist.
He ate locusts and wild honey.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – 7 DECEMBER 2025



COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God,
may no earthly undertaking hinder those
who set out in haste to meet your Son,
but may our learning of heavenly wisdom
gain us admittance to his company.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

Today we meet a wild prophet crying out in the wilderness. It is John the Baptist, dressed in a camel-hair garment, eating locusts and honey, and calling people to prepare a way for the Lord. Many come to receive his baptism of repentance in the Jordan River. He acknowledges that another will follow him and will baptise them with the Holy Spirit – it is his second cousin, Jesus of Nazareth. It is worth exploring this extraordinary prophetic figure today for John is a key figure in Advent. Next week, Jesus lauds him lavishly. He reappears for the feast of the Baptism of the Lord in the Christmas season, and he is there again in mid-January at the beginning of Ordinary Time.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah 11:1-10

A shoot springs from the stock of Jesse, a scion thrusts from his roots: on him the spirit of the Lord rests, a spirit of wisdom and insight, a spirit of counsel and power, a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. (The fear of the Lord is his breath.) He does not judge by appearances, he gives no verdict on hearsay, but judges the wretched with integrity, and with equity gives a verdict for the poor of the land. His word is a rod that strikes the ruthless; his sentences bring death to the wicked. Integrity is the loincloth round his waist, faithfulness the belt about his hips. The wolf lives with the lamb, the panther lies down with the kid, calf and lion cub feed together with a little boy to lead them. The cow and the bear make friends, their young lie down together. The lion eats straw like the ox. The infant plays over the cobra's hole; into the viper's lair the young child puts his hand. They do no hurt, no harm, on all my holy mountain, for the country is filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters swell the sea. That day, the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples. It will be sought out by the nations and its home will be glorious.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 71:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17

R. Justice shall flourish in his time,
and fullness of peace for ever.

O God, give your judgement to the king,
to a king's son your justice,
that he may judge your people in justice
and your poor in right judgement. **R.**

In his days justice shall flourish
and peace till the moon fails:
He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the Great River to earth's bounds. **R.**

For he shall save the poor when they cry
and the needy who are helpless.
He will have pity on the weak
and save the lives of the poor. **R.**

May his name be blessed for ever
and endure like the sun.
Every tribe shall be blessed in him,
all nations bless his name. **R.**

First Reading

The house of David is like a tree stump. But the burnt-out stump produces a new shoot and thus begins a glorious future. This is Isaiah's vision of hope and consolation.

The Spirit of the Lord rests upon the new leader. Here we have a listing of the gifts of the Spirit – a list used to the present day, for example, in the Confirmation prayer. The Spirit enables the leader to rule with justice and integrity.

And by the power of the Spirit, the leader inaugurates a glorious, idyllic kingdom of harmony and peace. All creation is restored to its original goodness. As described in the poetic and evocative litany, this fantastic concord is wildly improbable. Yet it articulates a dream for a better future.

At the beginning, the reader should pronounce the gifts of the Spirit with solemn deliberation. But in the second half, the reader should manifestly take delight in the playful images of the new creation. Let the assembly smile and be amazed as the lines unfold

Responsorial Psalm

This royal Psalm 71/72 extols a king who rules justly, defending the weak and saving the lives of the poor and vulnerable. He is praised not just for his own sake but for the people he rules: they are blessed in him, they will live in peace and fairness.

The psalm takes up perfectly the dream of Isaiah and becomes a plea to set a broken world right. The cantor/reader should have little trouble in proclaiming this psalm well. The couplets are nicely paired and the stanzas regular.

**A reading from the letter of St Paul
to the Romans**

15:4-9

Everything that was written long ago in the scriptures was meant to teach us something about hope from the examples scripture gives of how people who did not give up were helped by God. And may he who helps us when we refuse to give up, help you all to be tolerant with each other, following the example of Christ Jesus, so that united in mind and voice you may give glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It can only be to God's glory, then, for you to treat each other in the same friendly way as Christ treated you. The reason Christ became the servant of circumcised Jews was not only so that God could faithfully carry out the promises made to the patriarchs, it was also to get the pagans to give glory to God for his mercy, as scripture says in one place: For this I shall praise you among the pagans and sing your name.

**A reading from the Gospel
according to Matthew**

3:1-12

In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' This was the man the prophet spoke of when he said:

A voice cries in the wilderness:
Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.

This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. But when he saw a number of Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them, 'Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming? But if you are repentant, produce the appropriate fruit, and do not presume to tell yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father," because, I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. Even now the axe is laid to the roots of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire. I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand; he will clear his threshing-floor and gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.'

Second Reading

Paul reminds the Romans that the Scriptures contain many stories of believers who did not give up and who were helped by God. This is a source of hope for us all. If we stick at it, being tolerant with each other after the example of Christ himself, then by our very lives we give glory to God.

Patience and persistence are good Advent virtues. They point to that conversion of heart to which John the Baptist calls us in the gospel. They lead to a unity of mind and voice so that we can in fact join Christ and his Body, the Church, in praising God.

A reader will need to study this text carefully. Not every sentence is equally transparent. Underline the parts you would like to emphasise to encourage your listeners.

Gospel

The commanding figure of John the Baptist crying out in the wilderness is vividly drawn in today's gospel. He is by the River Jordan baptising people, challenging them to repent and turn away from their sins. In the next chapter of Matthew's gospel, Jesus begins his preaching with the very same words as John the Baptist uses here: *Repent for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand!*

John evidently thinks that the religious leaders who come for baptism are hypocrites in that they are not genuinely repentant. He fearlessly challenges all who come to produce the good fruit which is a sign of a change of heart. The image is strong. The axe is laid to the roots of the tree that fails to give good fruit and it will be thrown on the fire. Eastern icons of the Baptism of the Lord often show an axe ready in the fork of a tree beside John the Baptist as a visible sign of his call to repentance.

The passage ends with John humbly deferring to Christ who will come after him; he will baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire. John employs a new image to announce that Christ will harvest the wheat and burn the chaff.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Solemn Blessing for Advent

May the almighty and merciful God,
by whose grace we have placed our faith
in the First Coming of his Only Begotten Son
and yearn for his coming again
sanctify us by the radiance of Christ's Advent
and enrich us with his blessing.

Amen.

As we run the race of this present life,
may he make us firm in faith,
joyful in hope and active in charity.

Amen.

So that, rejoicing now with devotion
at the Redeemer's coming in the flesh,
we may be endowed with the rich reward of eternal life
when he comes again in majesty.

Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
come down on us and remain with us for ever.

Amen.

(Adapted from the Solemn Blessing for Advent, *The Roman Missal* p. 709)



ST. LUKES SCHOOL
BLACKBURN SOUTH



St Luke the Evangelist Blackburn South

We are Taking Enrolments for All Year Levels

Book in for an Open Morning or a Personal Tour

SCAN TO
BOOK A
TOUR





IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST PAUL

TO GREECE & TURKEY (WITH ROME OPTION)



20TH APRIL –
3RD MAY 2026

LED BY
FR ALEX CHOW

14
DAYS

PACKAGE PRICE: AU\$ 8,490*
per person (twin share)

OPTIONAL SINGLE
ROOM SUPPLEMENT:

AU\$ 1,150

FULLY
ESCORTED

*Conditions apply. Subject to change.
Price estimated based on group
size of 20 pilgrims. Actual pricing
will be known in late May 2025.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



'Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres'. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

'Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love'

(Ephesians 4:2)

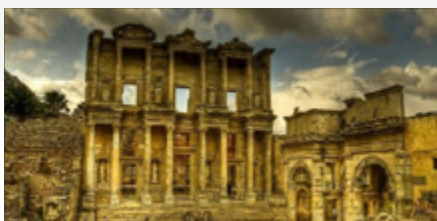
Such passionate, life giving, encouraging and hopeful words written by St Paul the Apostle. Come and join us for an extraordinary pilgrimage of Greece and Turkey and (optional Rome extension) as we follow the footsteps of St Paul and experience the contexts in which these passionate letters were written. It will be an opportunity of spiritual renewal, deepen our relationship with God as we reflect and experience the incredible journey of Paul, Apostle of the Gentiles.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

REGISTER FOR AN INFORMATION SESSION at 7pm ON THURSDAY, 5th JUNE

* Enjoy full travel briefing * Meet your fellow Pilgrims * Have your questions answered

CONTACT FR ALEX OR OLIVE TREE TRAVEL TO REGISTER & GET THE DETAILS



NEXT STEPS

1. Register your interest and obtain a booking form from Fr Alex or Olive Tree Travel or by [CLICKING HERE.](#)
2. To secure your place, a deposit of \$500 per person is payable by 16th June 2025 (unless sold out prior)
3. Final balances will be due by late February 2026.



Ph. 1300 550 830 or 03 8488 9696
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103A Gardenvale Road, Gardenvale Victoria 3185



DAY 1 MONDAY 20TH APRIL

DEPART AUSTRALIA

Depart Melbourne this evening on your Emirates flight to Dubai. On arrival, transfer to your connecting flight to Athens.

DAY 2 TUESDAY 21ST APRIL

ARRIVE ATHENS

Arrive in Athens today. Athens is the thriving capital of Greece but more importantly, we have entered into the world of the New Testament where St Paul and his companions established the first Christian communities throughout his four missionary journeys. On arrival in **Athens** we will be met and transferred to our centrally located hotel for the remainder of the day at leisure. Athens overnight (D)

DAY 3 WEDNESDAY 22ND APRIL

ATHENS - CORINTH – ATHENS

Journey out to **Ancient Corinth** where the Apostle Paul lived for almost two years, teaching the people the Word of God and converting many. We visit the ancient ruins and see the site where he preached the Gospel from the **Rostrum**. Also visit the Peirene fountain, and the 6th century BC **Temple of Apollo** before an outdoor Mass in this stunning pilgrimage setting. Finally we come to **Cenchreae**, the ancient port from where Paul said farewell to the believers and departed for Ephesus (Acts 18:18). Return to Athens in the late afternoon for dinner and overnight. (BD)

DAY 4 THURSDAY 23RD APRIL

ATHENS

When St Paul first came to Athens it was predominantly a city that worshipped pagan gods. St Paul was taken before the city council at the Areopagus Hill, a rough outcrop of limestone rock from which he preached the Gospel message to the Athenian philosophers (Acts 17:16-21). We begin our day with a tour of **Christian Athens** including the **Acropolis**, the **Areopagus** where St Paul delivered his famous sermon about the identity of "the Unknown God" (Acts 17:15-34) and the **Parthenon**. Continue for a visit the **Ancient Agora** and a bus tour to see the highlights of the city including the Kallimarmaro Stadium, dating back to 330 B.C. and restored for the first modern Olympic Games held here in 1896. Visit to the New Acropolis museum. Enjoy dinner and overnight in Athens. (BD)

DAY 5 FRIDAY 24TH APRIL

ATHENS – METEORA – KALAMBAKA

Depart this morning and travel north to the small town of **Kalambaka** built at the foot of the majestic grey rocks of **Meteora**. Marvel at this unique phenomenon of nature – 24 perpendicular rocks where 600 years ago Byzantine monks chose to worship God and build their Monastic community of Meteora. We visit two of the Byzantine Meteora monasteries. Among striking scenery and perched on top of huge rocks, the ageless monasteries of Meteora seem to be suspended in mid-air. The monasteries contain beautiful Byzantine art and offer an insight to the mystic world of the monks still residing there. Mass this evening, will be held in a private room at the hotel before dinner and overnight in Kalambaka (BD)

DAY 6 SATURDAY 25TH APRIL

KALAMBAKA – VERGINA – VERIA – THESSALONIKI

Depart this morning to **Vergina**, the first capital of the Macedonian Kingdom. Here we visit the "Vergina findings", treasures of Ancient Macedonia and the tomb of King Philip II of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great. A few minutes away is Veria, located on the ruins of **Ancient Beroea**, is one of Apostle Paul's stops. Here we see the Byzantine mosaic in the monument commemorating his preaching. Continue our drive to Thessaloniki. Dinner & overnight in Thessaloniki. (BD)

DAY 7 SUNDAY 26TH APRIL

THESSALONIKI

Today is for Thessaloniki exploration. Welcome to Greece's second city, founded in 315 BC, and where St Paul preached during the winters of 49-50AD and wrote the two epistles to the ancient Thessalonians. See the ramparts of the city, the triumphal Arch of Galerius and the Roman Agora where St Paul once preached. We shall visit St Demetrios' Church with its valuable mosaics and frescoes and will drive up to the upper town, which offers a marvellous view of the city. We will also have the chance to celebrate Mass at the Catholic Church. Dinner & overnight in Thessaloniki. (BD)

DAY 8 MONDAY 27TH APRIL

PHILIPPI – KAVALA – THESSALONIKI

Arise and journey along the ancient route of the Apostle Paul to nearby Philippi, named after Philip II, father of Alexander the Great. It was here that St Paul won his first European convert, a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira (Acts 16:12-40). Visit the Baptistery of Lydia for a beautiful outdoor Mass on the River Zygaktis, and renew

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our Baptismal vows. Visit the market place (where St Paul and St Silas were brought before the rulers) and the cistern which tradition identifies as the place where St Paul was imprisoned. We will also see the famous Acropolis, Basilica and the theatre. It was here that he established the first Christian Church in Europe. Visit the Octagonal church, an early Christian monument thought to be built on the site where St. Paul had established a house of prayer. Finally, we drive to the port in Kavala (Neapolis in New Testament times), where Paul landed with Timothy, Silas, and Luke. Return to your hotel in Thessaloniki for dinner and overnight. (BD)

DAY 9 TUESDAY 28TH APRIL **THESSALONIKI – IZMIR (SMYRNA) - KUSADASI** This morning, we depart Thessaloniki Airport for our flight to Izmir (via Istanbul or Athens). Upon arrival we will be met by our Turkish guide and commence our touring programme by visiting the Ruins of Ancient Smyrna, one of the 7 Churches. After the Agora visit we will drive to the coastal city of Kusadasi. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. (D)

DAY 10 WEDNESDAY 29TH APRIL **EPHESUS PILGRIMAGE**
 Today we visit the famous city of Ephesus. Ephesus, as we will see, is in a very good state of preservation and the overall existing view of this ancient city will make it evident that she was a wealthy, cultural, and commercial centre in the 1st century. Paul’s preaching in the area resulted with the uproar of the Guild of Silversmiths and the evangelisation of the whole province of Asia. Highlights include the ancient temple to the Roman Emperor, the ‘slope’ houses, the Library of Celsus, the Temple of Hadrian, the Fountain of Trajan, the brothel, and the large theatre in which the riot of Acts 19 took place. Not far from the theatre, we visit the Church of St Mary, where it is said that Mary spent the later years of her life. Celebrate Mass. Finally you will visit the restored remains of the 6th century Basilica of St John at Celcuk where a small church was originally built over the tomb of St John the Evangelist. Return to your hotel in Kusadasi for dinner and overnight (BD)

DAY 11 THURSDAY 30TH APRIL **KUSADASI - ISTANBUL** After breakfast at the hotel, we will depart for Izmir Airport to catch our flight at 10:00AM. On arrival, we will be met and transferred to old city to visit Basilica Cistern, the largest of several hundred ancient cisterns that lie beneath the city. We’ll also get to see one of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. This afternoon visit the Byzantine Hippodrome, the Blue Mosque and nearby Hagia Sophia (meaning ‘Holy Wisdom’). Built in 548 AD, Hagia Sophia was the greatest Church in Christendom until 1453 when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Empire. Onwards then to the Grand Bazaar, with over 4000 exotic tiny shops. Return to your hotel for dinner and overnight (BD)

DAY 12 FRIDAY 01ST MAY **ISTANBUL**
 Commence the day with a special morning cruise along the Bosphorus River, where you will sail past the Ottoman Palaces, Byzantine fortresses, Beylerbeyi Palace and Suleiman’s Mosque. An opportunity to celebrate Mass at a Catholic Church. Enjoy a brief visit to Topkapi Palace. After the visit, transfer to our hotel for dinner and overnight (BD)

DAY 13 SATURDAY 02ND MAY **ISTANBUL - AUSTRALIA**
 End your pilgrimage with a transfer to Istanbul Airport for your departure flight to Dubai. Transfer to your connecting flight back to Melbourne. (B)

DAY 14 SUNDAY 03RD MAY **ARRIVE AUSTRALIA**
 Arrive back to Melbourne this evening with wonderful memories from your pilgrimage!

**

Itinerary subject to change **

Interested in continuing the Footsteps of St Paul and visiting other amazing sites in Rome?

Instead of flying straight home from Istanbul, we will hold a limited number of seats out of Rome, allowing pilgrims to enjoy an independently arranged Rome Pilgrimage in the Eternal city and surroundings as organized with/by Fr Alex Chow.

Fr Alex has lived in Rome as a seminarian for 4 years. Fr. Alex has offered to assist pilgrims in finding

[REGISTER HERE](#)



modest but clean and comfortable accommodation. The Roman stay will consist of the following (depending on time availability):

1. Sites of St Paul: Basilica of St Paul Outside the Wall, Tre Fontana (where St Paul was imprisoned and executed), via Ostiense (where St Peter and St Paul met in Rome)
2. 3 major Pontifical Basilica: Basilica of St Peter, Basilica of Mary Major, Basilica of John Lateran
3. Churches of Saints of the Roman Canon: St Cosmos and Damian, St Clement, St Agnes in Agony, St Cecilia, St Bartholomew
4. Beautiful Rome: Colosseum, Rome Forum, Pantheon, Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain, Piazza di Popolo, etc...
5. Churches of the Passion of Jesus Christ: Church of the Holy Steps, Basilica of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, Basilica di Santa Prassede (Column of the Flagellation)
6. Elegant Churches: San Luigi dei Francesi (Caravaggio - calling of Matthew), Basilica of Saint Mary of Minerva (the tomb of St Catherine of Siena), Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria (Bernini's dramatic carving "The Ecstasy of Teresa."), Chiesa del Gesu.

****Olive Tree Travel will arrange your flight from Istanbul – Rome****

PRICE INCLUSIONS:

- Emirates Flight from Melbourne to Athens via Dubai and then return Istanbul to Melbourne via Dubai
- One way flight from Thessaloniki to Izmir
- One way flight from Izmir to Istanbul
- 11 nights in total: 7 nights in Greece and 4 nights in Turkey in hotel accommodation in twin share rooms.
- Breakfast and Dinner daily. Breakfasts and Dinners at hotels unless otherwise specified.
- All tips, gratuities and portorage (where available)
- Whisperer headsets
- All guiding and entrance fees as per the itinerary.
- Air-conditioned coach

NOT INCLUDED:

- Drinks with meals
- Travel insurance
- Incidentals, laundry
- Lunches
- Turkey Visa – currently US\$66 and obtained privately before departure

HOTELS (OR SIMILAR):

• Hotel Luwian	Athens	3 nights
• Hotel Amalia	Kalambaka	1 night
• Hotel Imperial Plus	Thessaloniki	3 nights
• Korumar Hotel	Kusadasi	2 nights
• Port Bosphorous Hotel	Istanbul	2 nights

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WHO TO CONTACT:

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Year
of
hope

By
Olivia
Dawson