



ONE MISSION, TWO CHURCHES



Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year A - 21st Dec. 2025

Parish Priest

Fr Alex Chow

Parish Secretary

Sonya O'Farrell

Wednesdays,

Thursdays & Fridays

10am – 2pm

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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 7:10-14; Ps 23:1-10; Romans 1:1-7

Gospel Reflection: **Matthew 1:18-24**

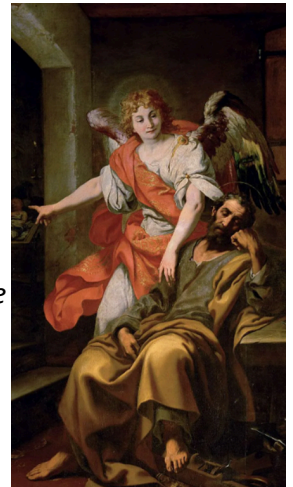
Meditation: Do you hold on to the promises of God at all times, especially when you are faced with uncertainty or adversity? The prophet Isaiah spoke words of hope in a hopeless situation for Israel. When Ahaz, the apostate king of Judah and heir to the throne of David (735 B.C.) was surrounded by forces that threatened to destroy him and his people, God offered him a sign to reassure him that God would not abandon the promise he made to David and his descendants. King Ahaz, however, had lost hope in God and refused to ask for a sign of favour. God, nonetheless, gave a sign to assure his people that he would indeed give them a Saviour who would rule with peace and righteousness (Isaiah 7:11ff). Like the prophet Isaiah we are called "in hope to believe against hope" (Romans 4:18) that God can and will fulfill all his promises.

Mary was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit: Mary had to face an enormous challenge to her faith and trust in God and to the faith of her family and Joseph, the man she chose to marry. She was asked to assume a burden of tremendous responsibility. It had never been heard of before that a child could be born without a natural father. Mary was asked to accept this miraculous exception to the laws of nature. That required faith and trust in God and in his promises. Second, Mary was not yet married. Pregnancy outside of wedlock was not tolerated in those days. Mary was only espoused to Joseph, and such an engagement had to last for a whole year. She was asked to assume a great risk. She could have been rejected by Joseph, by her family, by all her own people. Mary knew that Joseph and her family would not understand without revelation from God. She nonetheless believed and trusted in God's promises.

Joseph believed the angel's message "that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit": Joseph, a just and God-fearing man, did not wish to embarrass or punish his espoused wife, Mary when he discovered that she was pregnant. To all appearances she had broken their solemn pledge to be faithful and chaste to one another. Joseph, no doubt took this troubling matter to God in prayer. He was not hasty to judge or to react with hurt and anger. God rewarded him not only with guidance and consolation, but with the divine assurance that he had indeed called Joseph to be the husband of Mary and to assume a mission that would require the utmost faith, confidence, and trust in Almighty God. Joseph believed in the divine message to take Mary as his wife and to accept the child in her womb as the promised Messiah.

A model of faith for us: Like Mary, Joseph is a model of faith for us. He is a faithful witness and servant of God's unfolding plan of redemption. Are you ready to believe in the promises of God, even when faced with perplexing circumstances and what seems like insurmountable problems? God has not left us alone, but has brought us his only begotten Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us celebrate Christmas, the feast of the Incarnation, with joyful hearts and let us renew our faith and hope in God and in his redeeming work.

Saint Joseph's dream, Daniele Crespi (1630) on canvas © Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
© 2025 Servants of the Word, Don Schwager.



Next Week's Daily Readings 22 Dec - 28 Dec

MONDAY, Dec 22 1 Sam 1:24-28 : 1 Sam 2:1, 4-8 Lk 1:46-56

TUESDAY, Dec 23 Mal 3:1-4, 23-24 Ps 24:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14 Lk 1:57-66

WEDNESDAY, Dec 24 2 Sam 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16 Ps 88:2-5, 27, 29 Lk 1:67-79

THURSDAY, Dec 25 Vigil Is 62:1-5 Ps 88:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29 Acts 13:16-17, 22-25 Mt 1:1-25
Night Is 9:1-7, Ps 95:1-3,11-13 Titus 2:11-14 Lk 2:1-14

Dawn Is 62:11-12 Ps 96:1, 6, 11-12 Titus 3:4-7 Titus 3:4-7

Day Is 52:7-10 Ps 97:1-6 Heb 1:1-6 Jn 1:1-18
The NATIVITY of the LORD (Christmas)

FRIDAY, Dec 26 Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59 Ps 30:3-4, 6, 8, 16-17 Mt 10:17-22
St Stephen, the first martyr

SATURDAY, Dec 27 1 Jn 1:1-4 Ps 96:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 Jn 20:2-8
St John, apostle, evangelist

SUNDAY, Dec 28 Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 Ps 127:1-5 Col 3:12-21 Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

The HOLY FAMILY of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (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

20 and 21 DEC

Lucy Ferris
 Beryl Chelliah
 Alfred Lee
 Youth Group

27 and 28 DEC

Edna Lee
 Steve Kilroe-Smith
 Molly Hemsley
 Thu Ngo, Tuyet Nguyen & Hieu Nguyen

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

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

Kevin Rogers
 Kana Chelliah
 Pat Kawalewski
 Youth Group

Godfrey Thong
 Lynda Kilroe-Smith
 Mary Italiano
 Hoang Nguyen

SLIDE OPERATORS

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

Choir
 David Prabha
 Lee Min Yee
 Theresa Nguyen

Choir
 Megan McLean
 Manny Gonzalez
 Toan Tran

SL WELCOMERS 20-21 DEC

5pm John Ryan
 8.30am Janette Clark
 10.30am Volunteer

SL CHURCH CLEANING

31st Jan - Kellie's team
 Kellie McCarthy, Emma Brodawka,
 Toni Wynne & Daniella Manolopoulos

SL CHURCH FLOWERS

Christmas Flowers:
 Marie Parker

ST CHURCH FLOWERS

Flowers: Parishioners

SL WELCOMERS 27-28 DEC

5:00pm Libby Theodore
 8.30am Margaret Gearon
 10.30am Volunteer

ST CHURCH CLEANING

20th Dec @ 8am
 Hoang Nguyen, Anico Yee, Dzung Vu, Trong Nguyen,
 Toan Tran, Dao Dinh, Hieu Nguyen & Dieu Nguyen

ST COUNTERS

This week Team 2:
 Raj & Violet Fonn
 Next week Team 3:
 Kelvin Chen & Patrick Rajaratnam

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 those who lost their lives in Bondi last weekend and for those whose anniversaries occur about this time especially Biagio & Carmen Nicoli, James King, Carrie Willett, Maxwell Lea, Lawrence Howes, Frank O'Connor, Stephen DeFina, Peter Michael Kelly, Guido Cigana, Merlyn Alwis, Timothy Curtain, Zenon Salanowski & Julian Lobo. 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.

FOUR NEW CATECHUMENS FOR R.C.I.A.: We like to congratulate Isaac Cheng, Graeme Mark Robertson, Dewen Ling and Andrew Fowler as catechumens on their journey to becoming Catholics at Easter 2026.

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 FREE in the church foyer.

SAFEGUARDING ESSENTIALS TRAINING: All church volunteers must complete this training which can be done online via this link: [Safeguarding Essentials training module](#) | [Melbourne Catholic](#) Please email your certificate to the parish office when you receive it.

HELPERS NEEDED: We are in need of two volunteers to assist with light cleaning of the altar at St Timothy's (approx. once a month). Training will be provided. Please contact the parish office if you can help.

LUKTIM YAM GATHERINGS: Next gathering Wednesday 4th February 2026. @7pm. Venue: St Luke's Presbytery, 46 Orchard Grove, Blackburn South

MASSES ON DEC. 26th: There will be **MASS at 9.15am at St Luke's and Holy Hour at 5.30pm and Mass at 6.30pm at St Timothy's on Fri. 26th December** for the Feast of St Stephen.

THANK YOU: The Young Adult Ministry would like to thank everyone who helped with the Christmas Markets held last weekend at both churches and to all the parishioners who bought treats.

Resources

MELBOURNE CATHOLIC: [Light in the darkness](#) ✨

MAJELLAN MEDIA: [Senseless Violence](#)

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: \$382.60

Last week's Church Stewardship Total Collection: \$315.40

Vietnamese Donation: \$304.55

SL: Last week's Presbytery Stewardship Total Collection: \$516.40

Last week's Church Stewardship Total Collection: \$560.40

Parish Groups & Contacts

Volunteers and Rosters

ST: Corrie Quimbo

SL: Margaret Gearon

Baptism Preparation

ST: Mary Italiano

Vietnamese Community

Hoang Nguyen

Andy Tran

Vietnamese Youth

Theresa Nguyen

Parish Collection Preparers

ST: Barry Silvester &

Michael Kawalewski

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: 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.

Response to the Psalm: Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

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

Eucharistic Acclamation: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

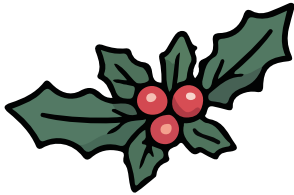
Communion Antiphon: Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

At St. Luke the Evangelist:

4.30pm Carols &

5.00pm Christmas Eve Family Mass



At St. Timothy's:

9pm Carols &

9.30pm Christmas Eve Mass

10:15am Carols & 10.30am Christmas Day Mass

CHILDREN'S LITURGY AT ST TIMOTHY'S

On Sunday 28th 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.



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 this weekend. Card and cash payments are welcome. The raffle will be drawn on December 21st.

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 Peatrie.

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

A Christmas Message

Dear Parishioners,

At Christmas, we welcome the gentle presence of the Christ child, born among us in meekness, lowliness, simplicity and love.

May His coming bring Comfort to those who are weary, Hope to those who struggle, Peace to every home in our parish, Joy to the downtrodden, and Love to those who are lonely.

May you encounter and experience the joy of the newborn Christ, Emmanuel, Christ with us, Prince of Peace, Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty God.

Fr Alex Chow, Parish Priest

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 23rd @ 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.

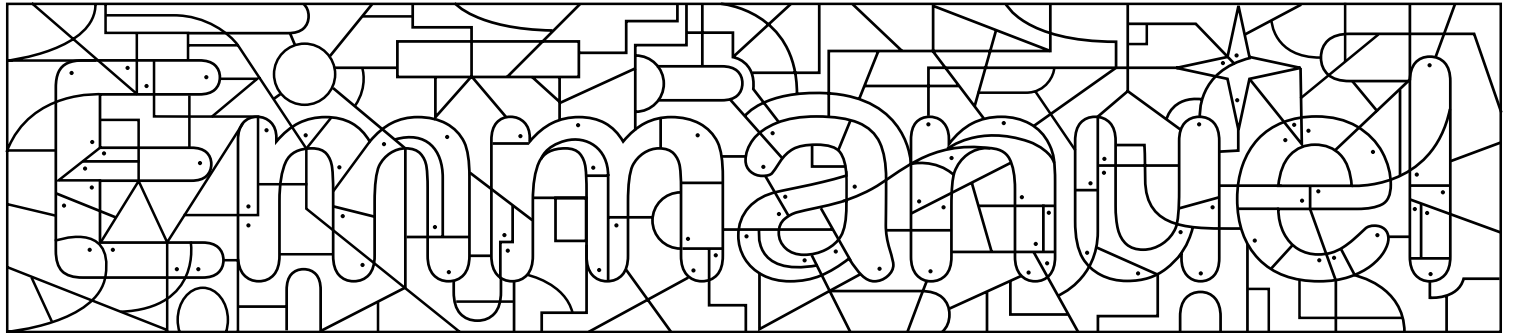


He will be called
Emmanuel



4th Sunday of Advent, Year A

Colour in the shapes with dots to reveal a special name.



One night, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream.
What were some of the things the angel told Joseph?



Follow the branch that extends from
King David to the birth of Jesus.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – 21 DECEMBER 2025



COLLECT

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.
Amen.

READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

At last, the Christmas novena has begun (17-25 December)! The Church's liturgy will continue to explore the Christmas mystery over the next four weeks, long after the tinsel has disappeared from our shopping centres.

This final week of Advent is preparatory. As the gospel begins, *This is how Jesus Christ came to be born*. On Christmas day, we hear Luke's account of the stable and the shepherds (or the epic prologue of John's gospel). On the feast of the Lord's Epiphany, we have Matthew's story of the wise men from the East. The whole is brought to a conclusion with another story showing who Jesus is – the revelation at his baptism thirty years later.

Today we are invited to reflect on the figures of Joseph and Mary and the extraordinary challenges they faced.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah 7:10–14

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 my 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".'

Responsorial Psalm Ps 23:1-6

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

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.**

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.**

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..**

First Reading

The famous words at the end of this reading are quoted in today's gospel passage from Matthew, but in a whole new context.

The story here is that, in time of war, Isaiah is trying to persuade King Ahaz to trust in God rather than in politics. Isaiah promises him a sign that his royal house will be preserved. A child will be born, a son and heir, who will be a living sign that God is with his people, protecting the nation

The mother is a young woman (here 'maiden') without the suggestion that she is a virgin. A Greek version of the text uses the word for 'virgin' and it is this reading that Matthew chooses in the gospel. Joseph is addressed as 'Son of David' making a connection with the 'House of David' in this reading. Paul also writes to the Romans that Jesus was a descendant of David.

It is the end of the reading which should be emphasised because of its link with the gospel. 'The patience of men' should be read as 'human patience'.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 23/24 does not relate in a clear way to the reading from Isaiah, though it does affirm 'God-is-with-us' in saying that the world and its peoples belong to the Lord. This calls for a response of purity of heart on the part of God's people who in turn are blessed by God.

The psalm is an appealing acknowledgement of God the Creator and Saviour. The cantor/reader can proclaim the text strongly. The response 'Let the Lord enter' suggests that we welcome God to be part of our lives.

The last six lines could be made plural. Instead of 'man', 'he' and 'the men', the text could be sung as 'those' and 'they'. Prepare this carefully and mark the text accordingly.

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

1:1-7

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.

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

1:18-24

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.

Second Reading

There is a formality to the opening of Paul's letter to the Romans which demands a deliberate style of proclamation. Paul preaches Good News, that is, Jesus Christ, the one promised from of old.

A contrast is drawn between his human nature (descended from David) and the order of the Spirit. It is by the Spirit that he is proclaimed Son of God, a reality which is finally revealed in power in his resurrection.

Christ is the source of Paul's mission to call the nations to Christ. The passage concludes with a beautiful blessing of grace and peace upon those who hear the call and who belong to Christ. The reader should take the text slowly so that the hearers can follow each step of Paul's message.

Gospel

The message of the second reading is reinforced in this gospel passage. Jesus Christ is a real human being, born of Mary who is betrothed to Joseph of the ancient House of David. Yet he is conceived through the Holy Spirit and so is the incarnation of 'Emmanuel/God-is-with-us'. He will save people from their sins, which is clearly the work of God.

Matthew gives us a unique insight into who Jesus is and opens for us the significance of the Christmas mystery we are about to celebrate.

From a human point of view, we identify with the terror Mary was experiencing in finding herself pregnant, and the bewilderment of Joseph in discovering what was happening. What an extraordinary character he was to stand by her, believing the incomprehensible message he received from heaven. His naming of the child Jesus is significant for this was the role of the legal father.

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)



We proclaim a crucified Christ

1Cor1.23

11 December 2025

To the People of God in Melbourne – Parishioners, Families, and Staff,
my prayerful greetings to you in the Lord this Advent season.

With hearts full of gratitude and wonder, we give thanks for the remarkable grace that has flowed through our Archdiocese during the recent Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF), held and hosted here in Melbourne. For those few unforgettable days, our Church came alive with the vibrant faith of over 6,000 young pilgrims — a radiant sign of Christ alive among us.

Throughout the Festival, we witnessed a Church deeply alive: young people singing with joy, kneeling in reverence, seeking God's mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and uniting in the Eucharist with profound love. Their faces reflected hope, their hearts radiated faith, and their voices echoed the joy of knowing Christ. It was a living encounter — a testimony that the Church is young, and Christ is truly alive in the midst of His people.

To our parish communities, schools, families, teachers, and staff: thank you. Your support, encouragement, and faithful accompaniment opened the door for so many of our young people to walk this sacred journey. Whether you prayed from afar, volunteered, spread the word, or walked alongside our youth — your role mattered, and the fruits are already visible.

A special acknowledgment goes to the countless hands and hearts who made this Festival possible: to our clergy, volunteers, leaders, and organisers. Their efforts — most especially those of Festival Director Teresa Rhynehart and the Proclaim Team — bore witness to the unity, professionalism, and generosity that defines our Archdiocese.

To those who could not attend: seek out someone who did. Ask them what they saw, heard and felt. Let their stories renew your own faith.

As we look ahead to World Youth Day 2027, we carry with us the blessings sown during ACYF. May these seeds grow into deeper discipleship, vibrant vocations, renewed mission, and lasting holiness in every corner of our Church — in homes, schools, and parishes alike.

Let us continue to walk together, young and old, clergy and lay, rejoicing in what God is doing among us. May Mary, Help of Christians, accompany our young people always, and may the Holy Spirit fan into flame the gifts we have received.

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne



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



St Luke the Evangelist Primary School Blackburn South
9877 4023 | www.slblackburnsth.catholic.edu.au



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)

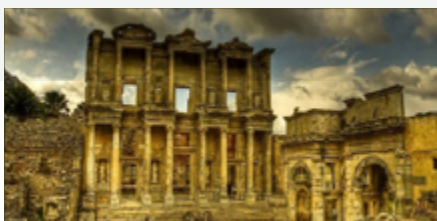
Such passionate, life giving, encouraging and hopeful words written by St Paul the Apostle. Come and join us for an extraordinary pilgrimage of Greece and Turkey and (optional Rome extension) as we follow the footsteps of St Paul and experience the contexts in which these passionate letters were written. 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.](#)
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3. Final balances will be due by late February 2026.



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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

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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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of
hope

By
Olivia
Dawson