

St. Oliver Plunkett Parish

Harris park



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21 December 2025 | Fourth Sunday of Advent

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.

Isaiah 45:8

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

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

Isaiah 7:14



No Weekday Masses till the end of January

Weekend Mass Times

Saturday: Vigil 5:30pm

Sunday: 8:00 am & 10:00 am



Administrator: Fr Paul Marshall

School Principal: Pascale Rone

School Tel: (02) 8633 8300

Parish Secretary: Lilia Tolentino

Tel: (02) 8863 8801

OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday & Friday: 10:00 am. - 3:00 pm

Wednesday: 8:00 am - 12:30pm

Sacraments @ St Oliver's

For Baptism, Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Marriage and Funerals, please ring or email the parish office for assistance.

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults)

Thinking about becoming a Catholic or know someone who may be interested in exploring the Catholic faith? Contact the Parish Office for more details on joining the RCIA program.

Gospel Reflection –

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Joseph, [Mary's] husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Matthew 1: 18-24

The unrecorded conversation

It must have been a painful conversation.

We know it took place. We've all experienced that kind of devastating encounter: when we were told we were no longer needed, when we discovered that someone we trusted betrayed us, when we heard the most awful words in the English language: I don't love you anymore.

The evangelist Matthew leaves that conversation out of his story of Jesus' birth. But we know it took place: when Mary told Joseph she was with child. We know how Joseph felt because we've felt that way: betrayed, foolish, naïve, used. But the difference is that, despite his own pain, Joseph realizes Mary's own confusion and anguish and fear over what has happened. But love enables these two hearts — no matter how broken and scared — to do that.

Joseph could not and would not subject her to the Law of the time; he would not expose her to public humiliation and shame. They would work this out "quietly." Their difficult conversation ended on a note of compassion and mercy.

Matthew picks up the story from there: how Joseph trusts God in the angel's message, and God's Christ enters human history in the person of Jesus.

It was said by many detractors that Jesus was born in scandal.

But we know better.

Jesus was born in mercy and compassion.

Joseph's response is the first light of the Kingdom of God that this little boy — Joseph's little boy — would proclaim.

In today's Gospel — Matthew's version of Jesus' birth — God's plan of humankind's salvation depends on Joseph, whose life has been turned upside by the angel's news. Joseph accepts the son as his own as a matter of love and compassion, of trust and faith.

God's birth in our midst depends on human partners — a Mary, a Joseph, you, me — willing to put aside our own fears and hurts to be God's ministers of mercy, prophets of God's justice, mirrors of God's compassion.

In this season and in every season, may we imitate the compassion and faith of Joseph: to seek understanding and acceptance within our families even at the cost of our own expectations and hopes, to seek to always be sources of affirmation and support for our spouses and children.

- Fr John



Other News and Events

Migrant Jubilee Cross visits the Diocese of Parramatta

To mark the end of the Jubilee Year, the Vatican's Migrant Jubilee Cross will be visiting several parishes in the Diocese of Parramatta from 5-11 January. For one week, the Diocese of Parramatta will come alive with celebrations that recognise the faith, gifts and resilience of migrant communities who have enriched our parishes, schools and communities. Bring your friends and family to experience the Migrant Jubilee Cross Pilgrimage at a parish near you. Learn more at parracatholic.org/migrant-jubilee-cross.



Pieces of the past

The wooden Cross itself is a sacred symbol of Catholicism, containing significant relics of the Holy Family and St Mary of the Cross MacKillop – patron of the Diocese of Parramatta and Australia.

Relics of the Holy Family, gifted by the Order of the Discalced Augustinians, include:

Fragments from the Holy Crib of our Lord

Veil of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Cloak of St Joseph

A relic from the 1914 original cedar coffin of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop was gifted by the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart.

"This is a special moment to come together as one community of faith – to honour the stories of migration that have shaped our Church and our country," said Fr Gayan Thamel, Episcopal Vicar for Migrant Chaplaincies and Parish Priest of St Luke's Parish, Marsden Park.

"It reminds us of our shared human journey to seek belonging, safety and faith," Fr Gayan said.

The pilgrimage of the Migrant Jubilee Cross is part of the Church's worldwide Jubilee celebrations, calling the faithful to renewal, mercy and unity. As the late Pope Francis reminded us: "The Church is not a home for some, it's a home for all".



Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv DD STL

Bishop of Parramatta

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15 December 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The tragedy at Bondi Beach yesterday has shocked and deeply saddened our entire community, with many carrying fear, grief and unanswered questions.

Such violence is a grave assault on human dignity and can never be justified. We condemn this act unequivocally and reject all hatred that seeks to harm innocent people. There is no place for antisemitism, especially in Australia.

Together with all people, and with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, we stand in solidarity with the Jewish community and pray for all those affected – those who have lost their lives or been injured, and the many individuals, families and communities whose lives have been changed in an instant.

We also pray for the first responders, healthcare workers, and members of the public who acted with courage and compassion in the face of danger – protecting others, offering help and bringing calm and support amid uncertainty. These acts of self-giving love and care reflect the very best of our humanity, our shared values, and our hope for each other.

Let us continue to offer our care, compassion and prayers, calling on Mary, our Mother and Queen of Peace, to intercede for us.

At times like this, it is vital that we do not allow fear or anger to divide us. Violence, retaliation and discrimination are never the answer, even in the face of terrorism and antisemitism.

As Pope Leo XIV reminds us, peace is "an unarmed peace and a disarming peace, humble and persevering. It comes from God, God who loves us all unconditionally." This is the peace to which we are called, even when the path is difficult.

I invite our Diocesan community to pray for healing, for comfort for all who mourn, and for a renewed commitment to unity, mutual respect and peace across our diverse faiths and cultures. May we continue to stand together against violence in all its forms. May God be close to all who are suffering, and may His peace rest upon our community.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv.
Bishop of Parramatta

Parish Updates

Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Eucharist 2026 Registration at St Oliver's



Dear Parents and Carers, please complete the form in the link given below, if you wish to begin preparation of your child for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Eucharist in 2026. This will take place through a formation, family-centred community process. The requirement by CSPD is that your child is at least 8 years old in order to receive both Sacraments. Please submit applications by **30th January 2026**.

Please note that we generally celebrate the Sacrament during Holy Week. This date is to be confirmed.

The registration link for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharist in 2026 —

<https://forms.gle/BJP355dqb1mpqz419>

(This message is from our Sacramental Coordinator)

Christmas Mass Times at St Oliver's

Christmas Mass Times:

24 December, Vigil mass, 7pm

Midnight Mass

Christmas Day: 8am & 10am



Please remember the Notice about the Parish Self-Assessment Review on Working With Children Check (WWCC) Registers

Fr Paul would like to ask for the assistance of all volunteers who may be required to have a WWCC.

This data will provide evidence that our Ministry Teams who work directly with children are suitable, supported and are up to date with verified Working With Children Check Numbers; and, all those in volunteer ministries, as Mandatory Reporters, are up to date with their Mandatory Safeguarding Training.

PARISH READING ROSTER: 24/25 DECEMBER

Christmas Eve 7:00 pm Jim Hanna / Kristine Alba

Christmas Day 8:00 am Anne Haddad / Victoria Micalizzi

Midnight Mass Jackie Perumal

10:00 am Geoff & Monica Officer

Diocesan Notices



Year 12 recipients of the 2025 Bishop of Parramatta Award for Student Excellence, with Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv. Image: Gene Ramirez/ CSPD

With 80 schools across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese is dedicated to nurturing faith-filled, service-minded students. By fostering a supportive environment that encourages academic excellence and personal growth, their schools empower students to thrive.

Donate to Jesuit Refugee Services this Christmas!

As Christmas approaches, Jesuit Refugee Services is calling upon the community to support their work accompanying and serving people seeking asylum who are facing homelessness. Parishes and communities are invited to contribute to JRS' Advent Food Drive or donate to their Christmas Appeal. For more information about how you can help, please contact Kristen on (02) 9356 3888 or email kristen.lazarus@jrs.org.au.

Grab your FREE copy of the Catholic Outlook Magazine!

The latest quarterly edition of the Catholic Outlook Magazine is out now, keeping you connected with exciting news and events in the Diocese of Parramatta. In this Advent/Summer edition, you will find:
Bishop Vincent's Christmas message
The Migrant Jubilee cross visiting Western Sydney
Stories of love at the annual Wedding Anniversary Mass
Reflections for the Advent and Christmas season
Pick up your copy from your church or parish office today!
Also available online via catholicoutlook.org/magazine



At Our Parish

The Advent Wreath - Fourth Sunday of Advent

LOVE

The fourth candle often called the "Angel's Candle", symbolizes Love, representing God's immense love in sending His Only Son, Jesus, and the angels' message of "Peace on Earth, Goodwill to all".

We reflect on the good news of God's love brought to us from the angel Gabriel. This is the last week to prepare our hearts for the joy of Christmas. Are you ready?

The fourth candle signifies that the wait is almost over, bringing the ultimate message of God's enduring love and the promise of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, arriving to bring salvation and joy to the world.

Prayer:

Loving God, we thank you for your gift of love - shown to us perfectly in Jesus Christ our Lord. Help us prepare our hearts to receive Him. Bless us in our prayer. Help us to hear and do your word. We ask it in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord. Amen



Our Community

Starting 1st December, there will be no 7 am weekday masses at St Oliver's until the end of January but weekend Masses will be as normal.



Please pray for those who are sick, recently deceased, have an anniversary at this time and all those for whom you have a special intention.



Deceased: Sayed Doueihy | Queenie & Nicholas Nicholas, Namtullah & Christine Coorey, Rizcullah & Patricia Coorey, Jeanette & Veronica Coorey, Jabour & Doura Nicholas & family, Saidie & Joseph Coorey & family, Najia & Toufic Samyia, Vincent Budwee, All deceased members of the Nicholas, Budwee & Norman families | Namtallah & Patrick Malkoun | Frank & Ray Malkoun | Romanos Malkoun | Samiha Frome | Joe & Clare Boulous, Isaac Moses, Ruby Moses | Artemio, Abraham, Augustus, Rebecca & Tranquilina Patacsil; Yolanda & Donald Muir; Rachael Sumagui, Melissa, Rebecca Llanillo, Luzviminda Nolasco | David (Dib) & Theresia Romanos | Romanos Family | Pamela Romanos | Evelyn Betros | Tony & Samira Abood & their Family | Fred Betros Family | Constanton Family | All Holy Souls in Purgatory especially for those who have no one praying for them

Recently Deceased: Julieta F. Gonzaga | Kevin Abood | Fahim Laoulach

Sick: John Joaquin Patacsil, Virginia, Agnes, Napoleon, Manuel & Jorge Patacsil & his families, Elizabeth, Michael & Maryrose Perez, Naty & Maria Aurora Degamo & Erwin Ayuste, Ellen Patacsil | All the Sick especially those who are sick in our parish community

Special Intentions: John Joaquin Patacsil, Agnes, Napoleon, Manuel, Virginia & Jorge Patacsil & his families; Elizabeth, Michael & Maryrose Perez; Erwin Ayuste | For all our special intentions and for those who have asked us for prayers

Thanksgiving: Luigi, Jackie & Jonathan Perumal | For all our blessings and prayers for thanksgiving

*To our parishioners who would like to request for a **home or hospital visit for the sick**, please call the parish office on (02) 8863 8801 or email harrisparke@parracatholic.org. For mass offerings or special intentions, you may use the envelopes provided at the church foyer.*

Mass Readings

First Reading

Isaiah 7:10-14

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Let 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 Immanuel, a name which means "God-is-with-us."'

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 23:1-6

℟ 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. ℟

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. ℟

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. ℟

Second Reading

Romans 1:1-7

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

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.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 1:23

Alleluia, alleluia!

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

Gospel

Matthew 1:18-24

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph; being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son
and they will call him Emmanuel,

a name which means 'God-is-with-us.' When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

The Gospel of the Lord.

