

St. Oliver Plunkett Parish

Harris park



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18 January 2026 | Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

ENTRANCE ANTIphon

All the earth shall bow down before you, O God,
and shall sing to you,
shall sing to your name, O Most High!

Psalm 65:4

COMMUNION ANTIphon

We have come to know and to believe
in the love that God has for us.

1 John 4:16

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 –

God speaks to us in many ways, including through the Sunday Scripture readings.

Our readings this Sunday provide a useful background to understand better and help us to connect the Scripture to daily life in a meaningful way.

Today we break from our reading of Matthew's Gospel (the primary Gospel for our current liturgical cycle, Cycle A) to read from John's Gospel.

We heard Matthew's account of Jesus' baptism last Sunday, on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Today, we hear John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus as found in John's Gospel. John's Gospel differs from the other Gospels because John does not describe Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. Instead, John the Baptist announces that he knows that Jesus is the Son of God.

In today's reading, John the Baptist sees Jesus approaching and cries out, giving witness about who Jesus is. In John's testimony he says that he saw the Spirit descend upon Jesus. By this sign, John the Baptist knew that Jesus was the one who is to come after him.

John the Baptist uses two titles for Jesus that are familiar to us. John calls Jesus the "Lamb of God" and the "Son of God." By using these titles, John the Baptist identifies Jesus' ultimate purpose: to redeem sinful humanity.

John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus clearly distinguishes John's baptism from the Baptism that Jesus will inaugurate. John baptizes with water; Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit. John also puts his practice of baptism in the context of Jesus' ministry. The purpose of John's baptism was to make Jesus known to Israel.

John the Baptist's sense of purpose is clearly identified in this reading: he baptized to prepare for and make known the ministry of the One who was to follow. John's witness is an excellent example of what it means to be a disciple.

By our Baptism, we are called to make Jesus known to all the world by our words and by the witness of our lives.

Lord Jesus, Lamb of God,
may we "behold" your presence in our midst
in every moment of this new year and every year.
May your Spirit transform our vision,
our perspective,
our expectations for this life
and the life to come.

Fr. John



Other News and Events

Imagining a better world this New Year

Image: Ian Schneider/Unsplash

(Extracts from an article from Catholic Outlook written By Tony Magliano, 31 December 2025)



The world is a wonderful place. Our God is so good in giving it to us. But to a large extent, we have not taken good care of it, nor of each other. We have polluted the water, fouled the air and are dangerously changing the climate.

The breakdown of the family, the redefining of biblical marriage, global poverty, hunger, homelessness, hostility to migrants, abortion, physician-assisted suicide, the arms trade, nuclear weapons, human trafficking, corporate greed, murder, and the mass murder of war are also among the critical illnesses humanity has inflicted upon itself.

But it doesn't have to be this way! We don't need to stumble around and die in darkness. For God entered onto the human stage to show us that he is the light of the world. For as the prophet Isaiah predicted, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." With humble and trusting hearts, we can be the very people who walk out of the darkness into the light of Christ Jesus. God entered into the world not as the warrior Messiah the Jews were expecting, but as a defenseless, gentle, innocent baby.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, my thoughts higher than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9). Since the Lord's thoughts and ways are so very different and far better than human thoughts and ways, true disciples must be counter-cultural. We must swim upstream against the often evil currents of society. We must rock the boat!

Therefore, we must be counter-cultural. But being counter-cultural is not socially acceptable. Our culture encourages us to accept the status quo; to be quiet; to leave things the way they are. But genuine followers of the Prince of Peace, the God of life, the Lord of the poor and vulnerable cannot be quiet, cannot leave evil the way it is.

The late "Servant of God" Dorothy Day, who was a convert, pacifist, and co-founder of the Catholic Worker ministry for the homeless, said, "We must cry out against injustice or by our silence consent to it. If we keep silent, the very stones of the street will cry out."

Filled with a fresh Christmas rebirth of our Lord Jesus within our hearts, may we take his infinitely loving, prophetically peaceful, and infectiously joyful presence out into our hurting world this new year, and courageously challenge the culture of greed, war and death!

Let us imagine during 2026 a better world where all God's people and all of God's creation are welcomed, respected, protected and cherished!

Honouring milestones of devotion



All the priests and deacons of the Diocese of Parramatta gathered for their first clergy conference in nine years. Image: Alphonsus Fok/ Diocese of Parramatta Catholic Outlook wishes to acknowledge and honour the clergy and consecrated men and women who have celebrated significant anniversaries in 2025.

10th anniversary of priestly ordination

Fr Thomas Thien Hien Bui – Parish of Baulkham Hills

Fr Pio Yong Ho Jang – St Paul the Apostle Parish, Winston Hills

20th anniversary of priestly ordination

Fr Philip Alesin – Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese

Fr Jose (Joe) Manjaly – St Nicholas of Myra Parish, Penrith

Fr Jobi Payyappilly – St Paul the Apostle Parish, Winston Hills

Fr Robert Riedling EV – St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta

Fr Kevin Redmond SM – St Andrew the Apostle Parish, Marayong

25th anniversary of priestly ordination

Fr Walter Fogarty – Sacred Heart Parish, Westmead

25th anniversary of Religious Profession

Sr Jeremiah Mendoza CFSN – Congregation of the Sisters of the

Holy Family of Nazareth

Sr Christina Ramada CFSN – Congregation of the Sisters of the

Holy Family of Nazareth

Br Louis Schmidt OFM Conv – Order of Friars Minor Conventual

Sr Vicki Maree Wilson SMSM – Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary

30th anniversary of priestly ordination

Fr Michael Gitau Gathuku – Our Lady of the Way Parish, Emu Plains

Fr Gerard O'Dempsey OFM Cap – The Good Shepherd Parish, Plumpton

Fr Henry Huu Duc Tran – Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Seven Hills

40th anniversary of priestly ordination

Fr Anthony Khoudair – Chaplain

Fr John Rizzo – Chaplain

Fr Vincent Savarimuthu – Holy Name of Mary Parish, Rydalmere

50th anniversary of religious profession

Sr Mary-Louise Petro RSM – Sisters of Mercy (Parramatta)

50th anniversary of priestly ordination

Fr John Powell

55th anniversary of priestly ordination

Fr Arthur Cook

Fr Christopher Dixon

Monsignor Ron McFarlane – Sacred Heart Parish, Mt Druitt South

60th anniversary of religious profession

Sr Elizabeth Murray SGS – Sisters of the Good Samaritan

60th anniversary of priestly ordination

Fr Robert (Bob) Anderson

Fr Paul Hanna

Fr Michael McGloin

70th anniversary of religious profession

Sr Barbara McDonaugh RSM – Sisters of Mercy (Parramatta)

The Diocese prays for the repose of the souls of Fr Tim Hogan (6 July) and Deacon Rodrigo ('Rudy') Rupac (16 February), who passed away this year. (By Mary Brazell, 21 December 2025, Catholic Outlook)

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)

New seminarians from Timor Leste:

Where is Timor Leste (East Timor)? It is an island to the north of Darwin which suffered much during the Second World War. The Timorese people died in their thousands at the hands of the Japanese whilst also protecting 400 Australian soldiers who were stationed there and defending Australia from invasion as well.

On the 22nd January we welcome 5 seminarians from Timor Leste who will come to spend 10 weeks in our formation program.

They are Cassandro, Leopoldino, Francisco, Flavio and Cipriano. Please make them welcome as they join in with our parish worship and come to experience our Australian faith and culture. - Fr Paul



Please Note that there will be **NO PARKING IN THE SCHOOL GROUNDS** on the following dates while maintenance is being undertaken -

17/18 January || 24/25 January || 31 January/1 February

PARISH READING ROSTER: 24/25 JANUARY

Saturday 5:30 pm Jackie Perumal / Kristine Alba
Sunday 8:00 am Seini & Ipolito Lasalo

10:00 am Carol Isaac / Nick Tagnipis

Diocesan Notices

Catholic Care Sewing and Crochet classes

All are welcome to join Catholic Care's weekly sewing and crochet classes every Thursday during school terms, 10am-1pm at Mamre House and Farm, 181 Mamre Rd, Orchard Hills. Learn new skills, connect with others, and enjoy a friendly, supportive environment. Perfect for anyone wanting to meet new people! To register, contact Catholic Care on (02) 8843 2500 or email enquiries@catholiccarewsbm.org.au

Volunteers needed at Catholic Care's Mamre Creche

Are you great with young kids? Catholic Care is looking for friendly, caring volunteers to support staff during crèche sessions on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10am to 2pm at Mamre House, Orchard Hills. If you enjoy spending time with young children (aged 0-5) and have a few hours to spare, we'd love to hear from you. Volunteers will need to obtain a Working with Children Check and Police Check. To help make a difference in the lives of local families, call Catholic Care on (02) 8843 2500.

Volunteers needed at Catholic Care Emerton!

Catholic Care is looking for volunteers to help at their Walk-In Centre in Emerton on Tuesdays to Thursdays. Volunteers would assist welcoming people into the drop-in centre, greeting clients for counselling appointments, assisting the local Aunties' yarning and art gatherings, reception of the OzHarvest food delivery and overall assistance with Catholic Care projects and programs. For more information, please contact Catholic Care on (02) 8843 2500.

At Our Parish

Seminarians embody ancient mystics in formation opportunity

Seminarians from the Holy Spirit Seminary during a formation day on medieval mystics. Image: Diocese of Parramatta



On 27 November, the Diocese of Parramatta's Mission Enhancement

Team held a formation day for the seminarians at the Holy Spirit Seminary to 'seek the sacred' in all aspects of life – from music, art, to people, through fasting and feasting and more. Using the medieval mystics from the 12th-14th centuries as inspiration, each seminarian took on the role of one of the mystics – from Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe, St Francis of Assisi, Cloud of Unknowing and Richard Rolle.

The feedback was positive. "This is a very meaningful workshop where spiritual, academic and human aspects are integrated," said one seminarian.

"I discovered anew that God is nearer than my own breath, yet I spend so much of my life reaching outside of myself," said another.

The seminarians continued role-playing as their chosen mystic through the day and even during dinner, which was a medieval delight. Carmel Bendon's book The Mystics who Came to Dinner was used as the basis for the factual conversation.

Trying to embody a mystic during dinner had surprise benefits. "I love spiritual talk during meals. It inspires me to have more spiritual talk instead of gossip," said one seminarian. "Fantastic meal – good and uplifting conversations. Great friendship," said another.

The meal finished with crystallised ginger, which was thought in the 14th century to 'close the stomach'. All courses used many different ancient spices in them, such as hyssop, savory, cinnamon, ginger, poudre douce and galangal.

The seminarians thought the workshop was very engaging and gave them a better understanding of the challenges the mystics faced, but also their prayer life and how to focus on "being more aware and sensitive to the presence of God in all things."

By Merilyn Hancock, 23 December 2025, Catholic Outlook

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.



Recently Deceased: Sue O'Brien | Fahim Laoulach

Deceased: Pantaleon Jimenez, Gerondio Jimenez, Pascuala Dionson, Tita Diongson, Macelinda Diongson, Vicente Diongson, Josefina Magsayo, Eufemia Altoveros, Quintina Quizon, Alejandro Altoveros | Joe & Clare Boulous, Isaac Moses, Ruby Moses | Pelesala Tuaimau | Bernadette Tuaimau | Namtallah & Patrick Malkoun, Frank & Ray Malkoun, Samiha Frome, Romanos Malkoun | 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, John Doumit, All deceased members of the Nicholas, Budwee & Norman families | 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

Anniversary: Samantha Diaz

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: 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 harrisspark@parracatholic.org. For mass offerings or special intentions, you may use the envelopes provided at the church foyer.*

Mass Readings

First Reading

Isaiah 49:3,5-6

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The Lord said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I shall be glorified'; I was honoured in the eyes of the Lord, my God was my strength.

And now the Lord has spoken, he who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, to gather Israel to him:

'It is not enough for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel; I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.'

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 39:2,4,7-10

R Here I am, Lord;
I come to do your will.

I waited, I waited for the Lord and he stooped down to me; he heard my cry. He put a new song into my mouth, praise of our God. *R*

You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings, but an open ear. You do not ask for holocaust and victim. Instead, here am I. *R*

In the scroll of the book it stands written that I should do your will. My God, I delight in your law in the depth of my heart. *R*

Your justice I have proclaimed in the great assembly. My lips I have not sealed; you know it, O Lord. *R*

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

I, Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle, together with brother Sosthenes, send greetings to the church of God in Corinth, to the holy people of Jesus Christ, who are called to take their place among all the saints everywhere who pray to our Lord Jesus Christ; for he is their Lord no less than ours. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel Acclamation

John 1:14. 12

Alleluia, alleluia!
The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us.
He enabled those who accepted him to become the children of God.
Alleluia!

Gospel

John 1:29-34

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This is the one I spoke of when I said: A man is coming after me who ranks before me because he existed before me. I did not know him myself, and yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptising with water.' John also declared, 'I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven like a dove and resting on him. I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is going to baptise with the Holy Spirit." Yes, I have seen and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

