

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Mt 1:23

Alleluia, alleluia!

The virgin will give birth to a son;
his name will be Emmanuel: God-is-with-us.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 1:18–24

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus was born of Mary, the betrothed of Joseph, a son of David.

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.

A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL



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Breaking Open the Word

GOD WITH US

With Christmas only days away, today's Gospel announces Jesus' birth. Unlike the perhaps more familiar story from Luke's Gospel, with the annunciation by Gabriel to Mary, Matthew's focus is on Joseph, a heroic character for the Gospel's Jewish audience, reminiscent of the Old Testament patriarch, Joseph. Matthew's story is different from Luke's. In Matthew's Jewish world marriage occurred in two stages. The first was engagement; the second, cohabitation. Mary and Joseph are married according to Jewish law, though not living together. We must remember, too, that the Gospel in general and this story in particular is a *theological* narrative. Matthew is not concerned with gynaecology, but *theology*. It is about God and the Holy Spirit. Mary's pregnancy is the fruit of God's action. As this becomes known to Joseph, he wants to step out of the scene and divorce her quietly without bringing her shame—an option open to him from Jewish law.

Through an angel in a dream—reminiscent again of the Old Testament patriarch, 'the dreamer'—Joseph comes to a profound theological truth. Mary's conception is the work of God's Spirit. This is God's act. Joseph is then instructed to name the child, an important Israelite convention that incorporates the one to be born into Joseph's kinship group. Matthew concludes the scene with a second naming, now provided by the prophet Isaiah. The child will be 'Emmanuel', 'God with us', a theme that will continue throughout Matthew even to the Gospel's concluding scene on Easter day. We celebrate and affirm God 'being-with-us' this Christmas. We want this God to 'be with us' for the year ahead.

Fr Michael Trainor



THE SAVING WORD

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT / A

21 DECEMBER 2025

FIRST READING

Isa 7:10–14

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The virgin will conceive.

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 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".'

■ The word of the Lord.

RESP PSALM

Ps 23:1–6. R. cf. vv. 7, 10

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

1. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness,
the world and all its peoples.

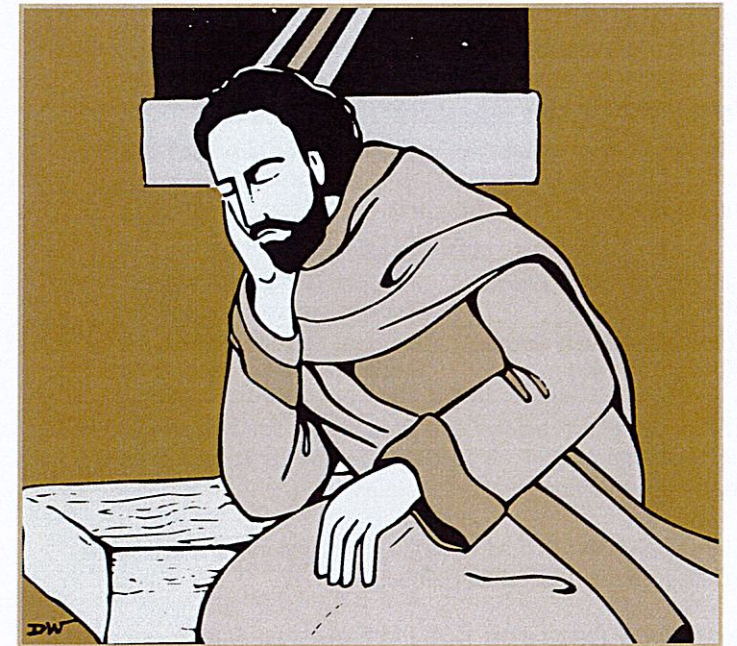
It is he who set it on the seas;
on the waters he made it firm. **R.**

2. 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.**

3. 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.**



SECOND READING

Rom 1:1–7

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, is the Son of God.

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.

*Welcome to
St Nicholas' Catholic Parish,
Tamworth
for
The Fourth Sunday of Advent
Year A*

21st December 2025

Fr Christopher Onuekwusi – Parish Priest
Fr Clarence Canafe – Assistant Priest
stnicholasparish@armidale.catholic.org.au ☎ (02) 6766 2228
 Parish Website: <https://www.stnicholasparish.org.au/>

Parish Secretaries: Finance: Stephanie Hetherington - Mon/Tue 9-5pm
 Admin: Anne Jones Wed/Fri 9-5pm Pauline Skewes Thurs 9-1pm
Parish Office hours: Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm

Catholic schools in our parish

McCarthy Catholic College Principal: Mr Michael Whitton
 ☎ (02) 6761 0800 Students currently enrolled: 945
 St Nicholas Primary School Principal: Mr Peter Flynn
 ☎ (02) 6766 1500 Students currently enrolled: 590

ENTRANCE: 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.

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

'A MAN OF HONOUR' Today's Gospel invites us to reflect on Joseph, the husband of Mary, who played such an important role in God's plan of salvation. Joseph was a man of honour who combined respect for the law with compassion for Mary. He was open to hear God's word to him. He is an example for us all.

Psalter Week 4

Monday 22/12 St Nicholas' Mass 7am
 1 Sam 1:24-28 1 Sam 2:1, 4-8 Lk 1:46-56

Tuesday 23/12 St Mary's Mass 9am
 Mal 3:1-4, 23-24 Ps 24:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14 Lk 1:57-66

Wednesday 24/12 St Nicholas' Mass 7am
 2 Sam 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16 Ps 88:2-5, 27, 29 Rom 16:25-27 Lk 1:67-79
Christmas Eve, St Nicholas' Church, 6pm & Midnight
 Is 9:1-7 Ps 95:1-3, 11-13 Titus 2:11-14 Lk 2:1-14

Thursday 25/12 Christmas Day, St Mary's 7.30am
St Nicholas' 9.30am, no evening Mass
 Is 52:7-10 Ps 97:1-6 Heb 1:1-6 Jn 1:1-18

Friday 26/12 St Nicholas' Mass 9am Boxing Day
St Stephen, the first martyr
 Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59 Ps 30:3-4, 6, 8, 16-17 Mt 10:17-22

Saturday 27/12 St Nicholas' Mass 9am
St John, apostle, evangelist
 1 Jn 1:1-4 Ps 96:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 Jn 20:2-8
Vigil Mass 6pm

Sunday 28/12 St Mary's 7.30am Mass
St Nicholas' 9.30am & 5.30pm

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: Saturday 4pm – 5.30pm

BAPTISMS are held Saturdays at 11am & Sundays at 12 noon. If you wish to book a Baptism, please email or telephone the Parish Office on 67662228 for more information. Forms can also be submitted on our parish website.

Parish toilet is located in the Outdoor Function Area. Please ensure children are accompanied by an adult when leaving the Church during Mass to go to the toilet or for any other reason.

Parish Bulletin Deadline: Midday Wednesday – The Bulletin is printed on Thursday morning.

PRAYERFUL REFLECTION on the readings is always included on this Bulletin, after the Communion Antiphon. You are encouraged to reflect on this every week.

A warm welcome to all new parishioners! To help you feel at home in our parish, we encourage you to introduce yourself to Father after Mass, or you might also consider exploring opportunities to get involved in parish life through various ministries and activities. If so, please see our Parish Notice Board or contact the Parish Office.

PARISH EVENTS – for the month ahead

25 Dec Thu	CHRISTMAS DAY	
26 Dec Fri	BOXING DAY	
26 Dec Fri	FAMILY Eucharistic Adoration 6-7pm	St Nicholas'
	Followed by a light supper in the Parish Meeting Room	
28 Dec Sun	The Holy Family	
31 Dec Wed	Silent Adoration	10.30-11.30am St Nicholas'
31 Dec Wed	New Year's Eve	
01 Jan Thu	New Year's Day	
01 Jan Thu	Mary, the Mother of God	
04 Jan Sun	Epiphany of the Lord	
06 Jan Tue	Petitions' Rosary	12.15 pm St. Nicholas
07 Jan Wed	Silent Adoration	10.30-11.30am St Nicholas'
11 Jan Sun	Baptism of the Lord	
14 Jan Wed	Silent Adoration	10.30-11.30am St Nicholas'
18 Jan Sun	Birthday blessing	All Masses
21 Jan Wed	Silent Adoration	10.30-11.30am St Nicholas'
26 Jan Mon	Australia Day	

THERE ARE NO FORMAL ROSTERS DURING JANUARY,
 except for money counters, altar linens, sacristy cleaners &
 candelabrum cleaners – their rosters will still appear each week.

Media Release: Pope Leo XIV has formally recognised the *heroic virtues* of Servant of God Dr Sr Mary Glowrey JMJ, daughter of Victoria and missionary doctor in India. Her new title is **Venerable Mary of the Sacred Heart Glowrey**. Please feel free to take a copy of the **Media Release** at the church entrance for more information.

Catholic Viewpoint: The December edition is now available.
 You can now access current and previous editions of the
Catholic Viewpoint from the Diocesan website at:
<https://armidale.catholic.org.au/catholic-viewpoint>

CHRISTMAS MASSES 2025

6pm Mass – Christmas Eve, St Nicholas' Church

Commentator: Patrick Mahony
 Greeter/Reader 1: Gina Mahony Greeter/Reader 2: Cate Allen
 Offertory: Michael & Gemma Moy Ex Min: Leonie Hansen/Karen King
 Altar Servers:
 Music: St Nicholas' Choir Collection:
 Slides:

Midnight Mass – 12am St Nicholas' Church

Commentator:
 Greeter/Reader 1: Maria Gruer Greeter/Reader 2: Rica Utley
 Offertory: Nico Paje/Rica Utley Ex Min: Claire Doherty
 Altar Servers:
 Music: St Nicholas' Choir Collection: Maria Gruer/Josie Cox

7.30am – Christmas Day St Mary's Church

Commentator: Matt Pawsey
 Greeter/Reader 1: Sue O'Halloran Greeter/Reader 2: Bernadette Virgin
 Offertory: Cheryl Higgins Ex Min: Deb Pawsey
 Altar Servers:
 Music: Grant Quinn Collection Bill Higgins

9.30am – Christmas Day St Nicholas' Church

Commentator:
 Greeter/Reader 1: Helen Rowsell Greeter/Reader 2: Brian Lincoln
 Offertory: Ex Min: Maria Lincoln
 Altar Servers:
 Music: St Nicholas' Choir Collection:

Please write your name on the clipboard at the entrance to the
 church if you wish to be rostered on for any of the Christmas
 Masses – thank you!

WEEKLY ROSTER – 20/21 December 2025

St Nicholas' Saturday 6pm 4th Sunday of Advent
 C: Giovanna McDougall G/R1: Paul McDougall
 G/R2: Belinda Tyrrell
 Ex Min: Leonie Hansen Music: Noel Greacen
 Collection: David Raffaele/Bill Campbell/Morgan Hawthorne

St Mary's Sunday 7.30am
 C: Joan Newley G/R1: Brian Thompson G/R2: Matt Pawsey
 Ex Min: Karen King Music: Grant Quinn
 Altar Servers: Will Nguyen
 Collection: Carl Cavallaro/Bill Higgins

St Nicholas' Sunday 9.30am
 C: Alison Hamilton G/R1: Tim Igbenije G/R2: Lucy Roberts
 Ex Min: Laura Hughes/Jennifer Hatfield
 Altar Servers: Amanda Nweke/Isaac Hetherington
 Music: St Nicholas Choir
 Collection: Maria Gruer/Josie Cox/Phil Elliott

St Nicholas' Sunday 5.30pm
 C: Henry Buckman G/R1: Carol Wheaton R2: Merrilyn Gaffney
 Ex Min: Tania Roberts Music: Recorded Music
 Altar Servers: Callum/Emmett Buckman
 Collection: Volunteers

Counting Team: Cecilia Dries/ Pauline Skewes
 Altar Linen: Cecilia Dries
 Sacristy Cleaning: St Nicholas Women Connecting
 Candelabrum: Brian Thompson 21/12/25 – 27/12/25

PLANNED GIVING: SUPPORTING OUR PRIESTS & PARISH

1st Collection (supports the clergy)
 BSB: 082 105 A/C No: 001 023 584
 A/C Name: St Nicholas Presbytery

2nd Collection (Planned Giving for Parish maintenance)
 BSB: 082 105 A/C No: 001 003 255
 A/C Name: St Nicholas Parish

Ref: Planned Giving Number/or your name. Thank you for your support.

COLLECTIONS: 14th December 2025

1 st Collection	\$ 1410.65
Planned Giving	\$ 1798.00
Loose	\$ 487.75
	\$ 2285.75

Christmas Masses 2025

Christmas Eve: 6pm Family Mass at St Nicholas'
 12am Midnight Mass at St Nicholas'
 Christmas Day: 7.30am Mass at St Mary's
 9.30am Mass at St Nicholas'

~No evening Mass in our parish on Christmas Day~

ROSTERS: If you wish your name to be added to, or removed from, any of the parish rosters in 2026 please contact the parish office no later than Friday 19th December. Thankyou!

*** CHRISTMAS OFFERING ***

is our collective Christmas gift to our priests. It is deposited in the Presbytery Account & used for the upkeep of the Priests – their food sustenance & the salary of the Presbytery housekeeper. The annual excess from this account is used to support the retired and sick clergy of our Diocese. Envelopes are available at the back of the church & on the pews. Your generosity will be most appreciated – Thank you!

Parish Pastoral Council – nominations are invited for new members to join in 2026. Nomination forms and copies of the Constitution are at the entrance to the church. Please submit forms in person to Fr Chris or by email to:
fronuekwusi@armidale.catholic.org.au
 on or before Sunday 18th January 2026.

WEEKLY ROSTER – 27/28 December 2025

St Nicholas' Saturday 6pm The Holy Family
 C: Cate Allen G/R1: Leonie Hanson
 G/R2: Eil Smyth
 Ex Min: Paul McDougall Music: Noel Greacen
 Collection: David Raffaele/Bill Campbell/Morgan Hawthorne

St Mary's Sunday 7.30am
 C: Judy Scott G/R1: John Wallace G/R2: Bruce Stewart
 Ex Min: Kevin McMahon Music: Grant Quinn
 Altar Servers: Will Nguyen
 Collection: Carl Cavallaro/Bill Higgins

St Nicholas' Sunday 9.30am
 C: Maria Lincoln G/R1: Nicholas Nweke G/R2: Ben Lamey
 Ex Min: Anne Bowden/Maria Lincoln
 Altar Servers: Ryan Pham/Dominic Vinod
 Music: St Nicholas Choir
 Collection: Maria Gruer/Josie Cox/Phil Elliott

St Nicholas' Sunday 5.30pm
 C: Judy Campbell G/R1: Cecilia Dries R2: Merrilyn Gaffney
 Ex Min: Tania Roberts Music: Recorded Music
 Altar Servers: Callum/Emmett Buckman
 Collection: Volunteers

Counting Team: Brian & Maria Lincoln
 Altar Linen: Lynne Prisk
 Sacristy Cleaning: Beth & John Ryan/Bruce Stewart
 Candelabrum: John Wallace 28/12/25 – 03/01/26

BAPTISMS: We pray for **Gordon Sims** who is receiving the sacrament of Baptism this weekend, and for **Adeline Brazel** and **Willow and Amelia Zucker** who will be baptised during the week. May God always be with them and their families.

PERPETUAL INTENTIONS: Please pray for the repose of the souls of **Alec & Betty Fyffe** and **Cyril & Grace Cahill**, who will be long remembered in our parish.

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK AT THIS TIME

Dan Daly, Brindley Cavallaro (Sydney), Rev. Fr Tony Castelli, Kath Donoghue, Colin Bryant, Darren Graham, Suzanne Perment, Kay Tucker, Ken Mitchell, Julie Michell, Judy Murphy, Steve Tierney, Richard Noad, Pat & Tony Favell, Kay Mason, Doreen Eunson, Maureen White (Orange), Cornac Downes (Uralla), Michael Bryant, Sullivan Hum (Singleton), Cannel Bennett (Gladstone), Bill Dennis, Maddy Anderson (Sydney), Sherree Haylock, Russell Smith.

“Day by day I see more clearly
 how in healing the sick one
 comes in touch with souls”
*Venerable Mary of the Sacred
 Heart Glowrey*

