

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Col 3:15,16

Alleluia, alleluia! / May the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, / and the fullness of his message live within you. / Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 2:13–25, 19–23

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt.

After the wise men had left, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do away with him.' So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, left that night for Egypt, where he stayed until Herod was dead. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet:

I called my son out of Egypt.

After Herod's death, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you and go back to the land of Israel, for those who wanted to kill the child are dead'. So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, went back to the land of Israel. But when he learnt that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as ruler of Judaea he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he left for the region of Galilee. There he settled in a town called Nazareth. In this way the words spoken through the prophets were to be fulfilled:

He will be called a Nazarene.

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.**

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Breaking Open the Word

LIVING OUT ISRAEL'S HISTORY

With today's feast we return to one of Matthew's special heroes, Joseph. As we have already seen, Matthew's Joseph is like the Old Testament patriarchal figure—he is a 'dreamer' who leads God's family. In this Gospel Joseph has a dream, a privileged religious experience of divine communication. In this dream, an angel, the Gospel's representation of the presence of God, appears and again directs Joseph. This time it is to escape into Egypt; Herod is out to execute the child Jesus. Like ancient Israel through the Old Testament story of the other Joseph who goes to Egypt, Matthew's Joseph leads Mary and the child into Egypt and safety, paralleling the story of Israel.

For Matthew, Jesus is the symbolic representation of Israel's story and sums up in his being the desire of God to free the people from disaster. After Herod dies, Joseph—perhaps now an insomniac!—gets another dream to go back to Israel. Instead of returning to his hometown, which in Matthew is Bethlehem, he takes the family 'into exile' to Nazareth because of the murderous intent of Herod's son, Archelaus. In this last movement, Jesus completes the cycle of Israel's story—being called, to Egypt, to the exodus and finally, into exile. It is from this perspective that the rest of Matthew's Gospel unfolds. The evangelist, writing to Jewish followers of Jesus, is keen to show how Jesus is a true Israelite, living out Israel's history.

Two things might be reflectively helpful for the contemporary family: God always accompanies the family of Jesus in its journey, no matter where it leads; trust one's dream. God can communicate in different and, sometimes, unpredictable ways.

Fr Michael Trainor

THE SAVING WORD

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH / A

28 DECEMBER 2025

FIRST READING

Sir 3:2–6, 12–14

A reading from the Book of Sirach

Whoever fears the Lord honours his parents.

The Lord honours the father in his children, and upholds the rights of a mother over her sons.

Whoever respects his father is atoning for his sins,

he who honours his mother is like someone amassing a fortune.

Whoever respects his father will be happy with children of his own,

he shall be heard on the day when he prays.

Long life comes to him who honours his father, he who sets his mother at ease is showing obedience to the Lord.

My son, support your father in his old age, do not grieve him during his life.

Even if his mind should fail, show him sympathy, do not despise him in your health and strength; for kindness to a father shall not be forgotten but will serve as reparation for your sins.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 127:1–5. R. cf. v.1

R. Happy are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

1. O blessed are those who fear the Lord/ and walk in his ways!/ By the labour of your hands you shall eat./ You will be happy and prosper. **R.**

2. Your wife like a fruitful vine/ in the heart of your house;/ your children like shoots of the olive,/ around your table. **R.**

3. Indeed thus shall be blessed/ the man who fears the Lord./ May the Lord bless you from Zion/ all the days of your life! **R.**

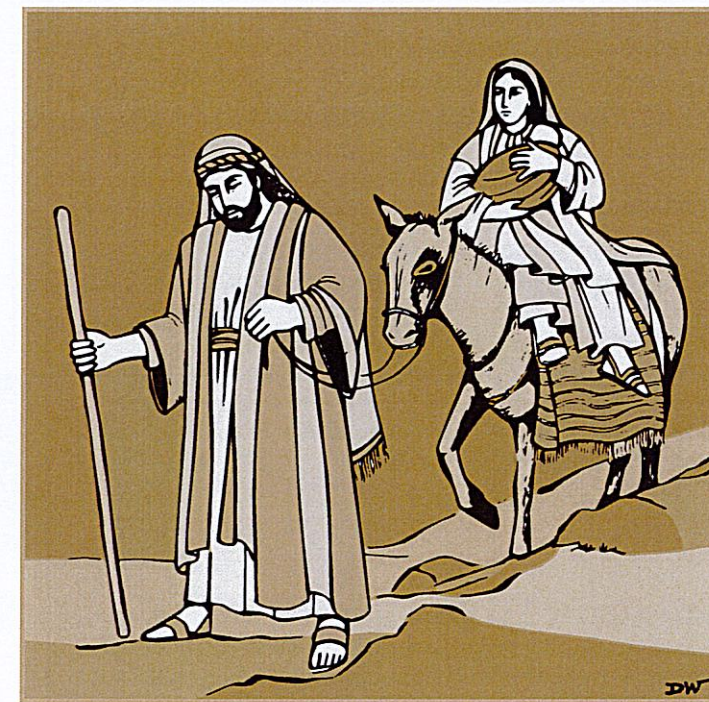
SECOND READING

Col 3:12–21

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians

Concerning the Christian life in the world.

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you and you should be clothed in sincere



compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful.

Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God; and never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Wives, give way to your husbands, as you should in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and treat them with gentleness. Children, be obedient to your parents always, because that is what will please the Lord. Parents, never drive your children to resentment or you will make them feel frustrated.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

*Welcome to
St Nicholas' Catholic Parish,
Tamworth
for
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
Year A*

28th December 2025

Fr Christopher Onuekwusi – Parish Priest
Fr Clarence Canafe – Assistant Priest
stnicholasparish@arnidale.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 Whittion
 ☎ (02) 6761 0800 Students currently enrolled: 945
 St Nicholas Primary School Principal: Mr Peter Flynn
 ☎ (02) 6766 1500 Students currently enrolled: 590

ENTRANCE: The shepherds went in haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in a manger.

COMMUNION: Our God has appeared on the earth, and lived among us.

‘FLEE TO EGYPT.’ The gospel of Matthew highlights the many difficulties faced by Mary and Joseph before and after the birth of Jesus. But Matthew highlights also the abiding presence of God, who is with them on every step of their journey. We see in these early episodes what Jesus will make explicit at the end of the Gospel: ‘And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.’

Monday 29/12 St Nicholas' Mass 7am
 1 Jn 2:3-11 Ps: 95:1-3, 5-6 Lk 2:22-35

Tuesday 30/12 St Mary's Mass 9am
 1 Jn 2:12-17 Ps 95:7-10 Lk 2:36-40

Wednesday 31/12 St Nicholas' Mass 7am
 1 Jn 2:18-21 Ps 95:1-2, 11-13 Jn 1:1-18

Thursday 01/01 St Mary's Mass 9am
Mary, the Holy Mother of God
 Num 6:22-27 Ps 66:2-3, 5, 6, 8 Gal 4:4-7 Lk 2:16-21

Friday 02/01 St Nicholas' Mass 7am
Sts Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, bishops, doctors
 1 Jn 2:22-28 Ps 97:1-4 Jn 1:19-28

Saturday 03/01 St Nicholas' Mass 9am
 1 Jn 2:29-3:6 Ps 96:1, 3-6 Jn 1:29-34
Vigil Mass 6pm

Sunday 04/12 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

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 Tues	Petitions Rosary	12.15pm	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 Mass	9.30am	St Nicholas'

Followed by a 'cuppa' in the Outdoor Function Area



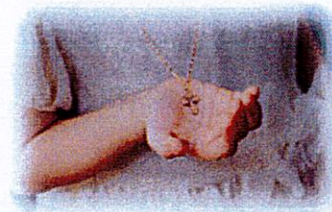
Please Pray for the Sick

The **sick list** will be cleared at the end of January – anyone wishing to have their loved one on the new list for 2025, please advise the parish office by email or phone – thank you.

School-Age Baptism is being offered for children in **Kinder to Year 6** who have not yet been baptised.
Parent Information Session: Wednesday 18 March 2026 at 5.30pm in the Parish Meeting Room.

School-Age Baptisms: Saturday 21st March 2026 at 10am at St Nicholas' Church.

Forms are currently available at the entrance of St Nicholas' and St Mary's churches.



2026 Columban Art Calendars are available for sale at the entrance to the church for \$10 per calendar.

Call for Nominations: Parish Pastoral Council

The Parish Pastoral Council plays a vital role in our parish, serving as a consultative body to the Parish Priest to help guide the spiritual life and future direction of our parish community. We are now calling for nominations for members to serve on the Council for an upcoming term.

Parishioners are invited to nominate a fellow parishioner or even yourself for consideration to the PPC. Forms to facilitate this, along with copies of the PPC Constitution, are available at the entrance to the church. The PPC must be a diverse team representing many different activities in the parish. Please give prayerful consideration as you reflect on this important duty.

Please return the form to Fr Chris, or email him on or before Sunday 18 January, 2026. Thankyou!

WEEKLY ROSTER – 27/28 December 2025

St Nicholas' Saturday 6pm **The Holy Family**
 C: Cate Allen G/R1: Pauline Skewes
 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
 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

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: 21st December 2025
 1st Collection \$ 1675.85
 Planned Giving \$ 1893.00
 Loose \$ 420.90
 \$ 2313.90

*** 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!

New Years Day 2025: Greet the New Year with the celebration of the Solemnity of **MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD**, which will be held at St Mary's Church at 9am.



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

PLEASE VOLUNTEER to help out at Masses as needed. Thankyou!

Roster – 03/04 January 2026

Counting Team: Pauline Skewes/Andrew Tighe
Altar Linen: Rosemary Kinsela
Sacristy Cleaning: Marie Rice/Gemma & Michael Moy
Candelabrum: Peter Virgen 04/01/26 – 10/01/26

RECENTLY DECEASED: Please pray for the repose of the soul of **Donald Seymour**. May he rest in peace.

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 Perfrement, Kay Tucker, Ken Michell, Julie Michell, Judy Murphy, Steve Tierney, Richard Noad, Pat & Tony Favell, Kay Mason, Doreen Eunson, Maureen White (Orange), Cormac Downes (Uralla), Michael Bryant, Sullivan Hurn (Singleton), Carmel Bennett (Gladstone), Bill Dennis, Maddy Anderson (Sydney), Sherree Haylock and Russell Smith.

“On the journey of this life to eternity, let me carry You in my heart, following Mary's example, who bore You in her arms, during the flight to Egypt.”
St Alphonsus Liguori

