

Merry Christmas

A Christmas Message from Fr. Damien

As we celebrate Christmas and draw near to the close of this year, I wish to offer my heartfelt thanks to you all for your generosity, kindness and support throughout this year, and indeed across my 26 months in Armidale. It has been a privilege to journey with you in faith, to pray with you, and to share in the joys and challenges of parish life.

As I now bid farewell to the Parish, I do so with deep gratitude and affection. Please know that you will remain in my prayers, just as I trust I remain in yours.

May the peace, hope and gentle joy of Christmas fill your hearts and homes, and may the New Year bring abundant blessings to you and those you love.

With every good wish and a grateful heart,

Fr Damien



Cathedral Parish Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection and Safeguarding Statement

Commitment to Safety

Our parish is dedicated to creating a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment for all, especially children and vulnerable adults.

Zero Tolerance for Abuse

We have a strict zero-tolerance policy for any form of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children or vulnerable adults.

Compliance with Safeguarding Standards

Our parish follows the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, Integrity in Our Common Mission, and adheres to the NSW Child Safe Standards to ensure our practices are aligned with best-practice safeguarding principles.

CHRISTMAS DUES

Every year, excess funds in the first collection (Presbytery Account) are sent to Priest Salary Fund to help priests in the smaller parishes like ours. This also means that, at the beginning of each year our Presbytery Account is \$0.

Help us cover our costs for January. Envelopes for Christmas Offering are available in the foyer and side entrances and may be left on the collection plate at any Mass. This contributes towards the support of our priest and presbytery upkeep. Thank you!

Please ensure that your children are accompanied when leaving the Cathedral during Mass to go to the toilet or for any other reason.

Saints Mary & Joseph Cathedral Parish Armidale

Most Reverend Peter Mel Murphy Ph.D Bishop of Armidale

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Parish Secretary Ms Tina Clarke | Office Hours: Mon - Fri 9am - 1pm

Principal, St Mary's Catholic Primary School: Mrs Belinda Burton

Principal, O'Connor Catholic College: Mr Philip Gibney

Interim Parish Pastoral Council Chair: Mr Michael Barry

Parish Finance Council Chair: Mrs Fiona Miron



THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (A/2) 25TH DECEMBER 2025



2025 CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

From Bishop Peter Mel Murphy

During this season of Christmas we ponder the meaning of life. With the anniversary of the birth of our Saviour at Bethlehem, the reality of life in its most innocent form becomes most paramount and thought provoking. Thus, we ask ourselves what is the purpose of our lives and what value do we attach to life itself? Within that context, we deplore any meaningless deprivation of life or barbaric assault on innocent lives, as witnessed at Bondi Beach, in recent times. Moreover, we oppose whatever religious connotations were construed that denies the inalienable right to life and religion that pertains to our human dignity. Life at all times is always sacred and a gift from God. It warrants our vigilance and care, at all phases of our existence, especially when we are most vulnerable; that is, both ends of the spectrum, from womb to tomb.

At the coming of our Lord, so long ago, in the city of David, at Bethlehem, to fulfil the ancient prophecies (Isaiah 9:6) that he would be borne of royal lineage, we note his birth amid strangers and that they were unwelcome at the Inn and even foreigners in a distant land. Ought then, our sentiments of hospitality be heightened towards others in need, at the anniversary of his birth? Who in our community can we welcome, who might be alone or unwelcome, to our Christmas luncheon this year?

In addition, as we contemplate the simplicity of the stable of Bethlehem, we acknowledge the utter poverty in which the Christ Child was born. God emptied himself of the wealth and glory of his divinity (Philippians 2:7), and so entered our world amid the poor and weak. At this time, how can we not think of those who are poor and marginalised in our society? Let me take, this opportunity, to express my heartfelt gratitude to the members and volunteers of Saint Vincent de Paul, who are so active and generous to the poor in the parishes of the Diocese of Armidale: we thank you and may God bless your efforts!

Lastly, I would encourage us all at Christmas time, after attending Mass to worship the Lord, to spend as much time, as possible, with your families. In spite of the difficulties that our families may undergo and their inherent imperfections, God in heaven holds, every family on earth as precious, for did he not will to enter our lives by means of a family and lived for so many years within a family. So even if your family may be fragile and wounded, make the most of it, until one day, that day, when we are all reunited in the eternal family of heaven.

May God bless you all in this festive Season and in the New Year of 2026.

+ Peter Murphy



VIGIL/NIGHT MASS

FIRST READING

Isaiah 9:1-7

The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone. You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase; they rejoice in your presence as men rejoice at harvest time, as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils. For the yoke that was weighing on him, the bar across his shoulders, the rod of his oppressor, these you break as on the day of Midian.

For all the footgear of battle, every cloak rolled in blood, is burnt, and consumed by fire.

For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him:

Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace. Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end, for the throne of David and for his royal power, which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity. From this time onwards and for ever, the jealous love of the Lord of Hosts will do this.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 95(96):1-3,11-13

R: Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

O sing a new song to the Lord,
sing to the Lord all the earth.

O sing to the Lord, bless his name. *R:*

Proclaim his help day by day,
tell among the nations his glory
and his wonders among all the peoples. *R:*

Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad,
let the sea and all within it thunder praise,
let the land and all it bears rejoice,
all the trees of the wood shout for joy
at the presence of the Lord for he comes,
he comes to rule the earth. *R:*

With justice he will rule the world,
he will judge the peoples with his truth. *R:*

SECOND READING

Titus 2:11-14

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Lk2:10-11

Alleluia, alleluia!
I bring you news of great joy:
today a saviour has been born to us, Christ the Lord.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-14

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

MASS OF THE DAY

FIRST READING

Isaiah 52:7-10

How beautiful on the mountains,
are the feet of one who brings good news,
who heralds peace, brings happiness,
proclaims salvation,
and tells Zion,
'Your God is king!'

Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices,
they shout for joy together,
for they see the Lord face to face,
as he returns to Zion.

Break into shouts of joy together,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the Lord is consoling his people,
redeeming Jerusalem.

The Lord bares his holy arm
in the sight of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 97(98):1-6

R: All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Sing a new song to the Lord
for he has worked wonders.

His right hand and his holy arm
have brought salvation. *R:*

The Lord has made known his salvation;
has shown his justice to the nations.
He has remembered his truth and love
for the house of Israel. *R:*

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.
Shout to the Lord, all the earth,
ring out your joy. *R:*

Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp
with the sound of music.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
acclaim the King, the Lord. *R:*

SECOND READING

Hebrews 1:1-6

At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son, the Son that he has appointed to inherit everything and through whom he made everything there is. He is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful command; and now that he has destroyed the defilement of sin, he has gone to take his place in heaven at the right hand of divine Majesty. So he is now as far above the angels as the title which he has inherited is higher than their own name.

God has never said to any angel: *You are my Son, today I have become your father; or: I will be a father to him and he a son to me.* Again, when he brings the First-Born into the world, he says: *Let all the angels of God worship him.*

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

A hallowed day has dawned upon us.
Come, you nations, worship the Lord,
for today a great light has shone down upon the earth.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word: and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him.

All that came to be had life in him and that life was the light of men, a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower.

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him.

He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light. The Word was the true light that enlightens all men; and he was coming into the world.

He was in the world that had its being through him, and the world did not know him.

He came to his own domain and his own people did not accept

him. But to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to all who believe in the name of him who was born not out of human stock or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself.

The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John appears as his witness. He proclaims: 'This is the one of whom I said: He who comes after me ranks before me because he existed before me.'

Indeed, from his fullness we have, all of us, received – yes, grace in return for grace, since, though the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

LITURGY THIS WEEK

CHRISTMAS TIME

WEDNESDAY 24 DEC - THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

05:00 PM Cathedral - First Vespers of Christmas
06:00 PM Cathedral Christmas Vigil Mass with a focus for families & children

10:30 PM Cathedral Christmas Night Mass

THURSDAY 25 DEC - THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

08:00 AM Cathedral Christmas Morning Mass
10:00 AM Cathedral Christmas Day Mass

FRIDAY 26 DEC - St Stephen, the first martyr

09:15 AM Cathedral Mass +Hewens, Smith & Browning Families
05:30 PM Cathedral Mass +Evelyn Griffith

SATURDAY 27 DEC - St John, apostle, evangelist

09:00 AM Cathedral Mass Private Intention
01:00 PM Marriage of Telesia Pili Lafaaaua & Taniela Kite

06:00 PM Cathedral Mass *Pro populo*

SUNDAY 28 DEC - The HOLY FAMILY

08:00 AM Cathedral Mass *Pro populo*
10:00 AM Cathedral Mass *Pro populo*

11:00 AM Solemn Mass with Choir (Latin parts)

04:30 PM NO VESPERS TODAY

05:30 PM Cathedral Mass

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (Cathedral)

MONDAY - THURSDAY 11:30 – 11:50 AM

FRIDAY 04:45 – 05:15 PM

SATURDAY 09:45 – 10:45 AM & 04:30 – 05:30 PM

SUPPORTING OUR PRIESTS & PARISH

1ST COLLECTION (cash or eft only)

(supports the clergy: food, housekeeping, annual retreat & monthly stipend)

Account Name: St Mary's Presbytery Account
BSB: 082-105 Acc. No: 001023527

2ND COLLECTION (cash, eft or tap & go - credit card)

(supports the Cathedral Parish: insurance, employees' salary, repair & maintenance, office and church requisites, utilities, etc)

Account Name: St Mary's Cathedral Parish
BSB: 082-105 Acc. No: 001006225
(Ref: Planned Giving Number and/or your name)

Thank you for your support!