

The Perspective of Justice - Hope and Joy

What an overwhelming message is carried in today's liturgy: "Rejoice in the Lord always! May we experience the joy of salvation! Shout for joy! Sing joyfully! Cry out with joy and gladness!"

There is a profound sense of hope for a better world to come, a world in which, the prophet says, "you have no further misfortune to fear and the apostle tells us to dismiss all anxiety from your minds."

The reason for this joy and hope is clear: "The Lord himself is near" (Second Reading); "there is one to come who is mightier than I" (Gospel).

It is within this context of joyous and hopeful expectation of the coming of Christ that we must understand the exhortations of John to the people. Our work for a better world is preparation for the coming of Christ. It is also a sign that the coming of Christ is near.

"The Spirit of the Lord sent me to bring Good News to the poor." That is the message which we are to shout with joy: Jesus is coming with Good News for all those who are suffering because of injustice and peacelessness.

The Christian's hope comes primarily from the fact that he knows that the Lord is working with us in the world, continuing in his Body which is the Church - and, through the Church, in the whole of mankind - the Redemption which was accomplished on the Cross and which burst forth in victory on the morning of the Resurrection. This hope springs also from the fact that the Christian knows that other men are at work, to undertake actions of justice and peace working for the same ends.

Pope Paul VI, *Octogesimo Adveniens*, 1971: 48

Gerald Darring

Gerald Darring is an adjunct instructor of Theology at Spring Hill College, Alabama

THE FIRST READING

Zephaniah 3:14-18a

He will sing joyfully because of you.

God's zeal, God's joy in us,
brings a saviour into
our very midst to dwell in us,

To hold out our
hands and soften our hearts.

God,
Our Lord,
we love your delight in the beauty of our days,
in the surprise of our creation,
in the graced lives of the ones we love.

You sing our lives into being.

Anne Osdieck



Sunday, 12th December : *Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday)*
 Saturday, 25th December : *Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)*
 Sunday, 26th December : *Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph*
 Monday, 27th December : *Feast of St John the Evangelist*
 Tuesday, 28th December : *Feast of the Holy Innocents*



St Thomas Aquinas Parish Bulletin

168 Hawkesbury Road, Springwood, NSW, 2777
 PO Box 4410, Winmalee, NSW 2777
 Parish Office: 02 4754 1052

Parish Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm
Parish Email: springwood@parracatholic.org
Parish Website: www.stachurchspringwood.org.au
Parish Facebook Page: St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community Springwood
Parish Priest: Fr Paul Slyney - 4754 1052 *Emergency ONLY:* 0418 461 316
Assistant Priest: Fr Shinto Francis - 4754 1052 *Emergency ONLY:* 0415 077 969

Weekend Masses: Saturday Vigil Mass 5.00 pm, Sunday 8.00 am and 9.30 am
Weekday Mass: Tuesday - Saturday 9.30 am

Rosary Devotion: Tuesday - Saturday 9.00 am
Adoration, Rosary & Chaplet: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month, 7.30 - 8.30 pm
Intercession & Adoration: None until further notice

Baptisms: 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month - 10.30am and by appointment

Reconciliation: By request

Weddings: By appointment - restricted numbers

Funerals: By appointment - restricted numbers



**MASKS ARE
 COMPULSORY**

A Poem to Sit With

*Fear not, O Zion, be not discouraged!
 The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a mighty saviour.
 (First Reading)*

BLUE GRASS

Hints of honeysuckle
 in the air
 a skunk's slow progress
 told by the trembling
 of tassel grass and pokeweed
 an indigo bunting
 feeding on seeding thistle
 both silk - the thistle *white*
 the bird *electric blue*
 the swell of corn fields
 pilings of clouds with
 the sun breaking through
 as Hans Christian Andersen
 said on his deathbed
 "Oh God, I could kiss you"

J. Janda

This poem comes from the Janda's book, In Embrace.

THE GOSPEL

Luke 3:10-18

The crowds... tax collectors... soldiers... asked John the Baptist, "what should we do?"

What
 should we do
 to ready our hearts
 O Lord for your coming?
 Your Baptist says we must
 give away our coat,
 share our food,
 make justice for all.

Lord,
 baptise us with the fire of your Holy Spirit
 burn the chaff from the wheat.
 gather us into your kind
 and loving arms.
 Warm our hearts
 to share your
 love with everyone.

Anne Osdieck

Today's Readings: *Zeph 3:14-18; Is 12:6-6; Phil 4:4-7; Lk 3:10-18*

Entrance Antiphon: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.

Responsorial Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-6. R. v. 6

R. Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring Good News to the poor. Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon: Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

Next Week: *Micah 5:1-4; Heb 10:5-10; Lk 1:39-44*



Sick: Molly Hurley, Gerry Thistleton, Roshan Rupesinghe, Evelyn Robinson, Susie Ziino, James Wallace, Mischa Damaguc and family, Margaret Day, Adam McCully, Christopher Coombs, Kate Moore, Luca Hurley and all Private Intentions.

Due to the strict privacy laws, names of the deceased and sick can only be included in the Bulletin with the express permission of the immediate family. Thank you.

Parish and Local Community News

CLEANERS WANTED: Are you able to help our Parish and have a spare 2 hours every 3 weeks - we would love to hear from you as we seek volunteers to be added to our cleaning list for vacuuming or dusting our beautiful Church. Please contact the Parish office on 4754 1052. Thank you.

CCD MASS INFORMATION (LIVESTREAM): If you would like to watch the **CCD Mass live** please follow this direct link: <https://www.facebook.com/standrewsmarayong/> and if you wish to view the stream at your leisure, please follow: <https://bit.ly/SAAPM>. Only the Facebook page will have the livestream otherwise, YouTube will be available about 30 minutes after the Mass concludes this Friday (3rd Dec).

BLUE MOUNTAINS EPIPHANY PILGRIMAGE AND FIESTA: 2 – 3 January 2022; Celebrate the Christmas season with a two-day pilgrimage and fiesta! Choose from a classic pilgrimage experience or family adventure pilgrimage on Sunday, 2 January then join the family-friendly festivities at St Finbar's Parish, Glenbrook including Mass, a festive meal and children's movie night. Stay overnight at St Finbar's, then continue the celebrations on Monday 3 January with a morning pilgrimage and Mass in the bush. For more information and to register visit www.epiphanypilgrimage.org.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING CATHOLICARE'S HOUSES TO HOMES: Thank you for your kind-hearted generosity and support over the last few weeks for the Bishop's Christmas Appeal. Your donation will help CatholicCare's Houses to Homes to provide a loving sanctuary for young mothers in crisis. Thank you for your compassion and generosity. For anyone who hasn't had a chance to donate, please visit yourcatholicfoundation.org.au/appeal

INTERCULTURAL CHRISTMAS ALBUM: To raise funds for House of Welcome - A new CD featuring classic Christmas songs in eight languages from the Asia Pacific – Samoan, Filipino, Fijian, Tamil, Tongan, Mandarin, Indonesian and Japanese is raising money for the House of Welcome in the Diocese of Parramatta. Find how to order at linktr.ee/SoundsChristmasAsiaPacific

IMMACULATA MISSION SCHOOL 2022: You are invited to discover what it means to *Be A Saint!* Program includes talks on the faith, praise & worship, daily Mass, Adoration & the Rosary, recreation, community & friendship. Families welcome and children's ministry available! Come and join us for an amazing time to grow in faith and love for God, and make new friends! 1-9th January, 2022 (Family program 4th-9th); NEGS (New England Girls' School) 13-83 Uralla Road, Armidale, NSW; **Cost:** Individuals 15+ years: \$410 (before 8th December) \$450 (after 8th December). Includes accommodation, food, speakers, and activities. For additional information and TO REGISTER see: <http://www.sistersoftheimmaculata.org.au/ims>

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES 2021:

	Springwood	Lawson (OLN)
Christmas Eve, Fri 24 th Dec	5.00pm Children's Mass 8.00pm VIGIL	5.00pm Children's Mass 8.00pm VIGIL
Christmas Day, Sat 25 th Dec	9.30am	8.00am, 9.00am
Boxing Day, Sun 26 th Dec	9.30am	8.00am, 9.00am
Tues 28 th , Wed 29 th Dec	9.30am	
Thurs 30 th Dec	9.30am	
Fri 31 st Dec	9.30am	
Sat 1 st Jan	9.30am	
	<i>2nd Rite of Reconciliation</i>	
Tues 21 st Dec	7.00pm	Mon 20 th Dec 7.00pm (Lawson)



St Thomas Aquinas Parish Christmas Giving Tree

This year, our Parish is supporting the **Wimlah Women's Refuge Outreach and Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service**, a specialist domestic violence service, located in the Blue Mountains.

They offer a Domestic Violence Support Group, and Family Law Support Group (National online support), in addition to residential crisis accommodation and many other forms of support.

We would love for our parishioners to this year wrap a small gift for a woman or a child (**Currently there are 4 boys in care - ages 10, 7, 6, 3, 18 months and 1 girl in care, 9 years of age**) to open this Christmas, who might otherwise not be able to open anything.

Please leave this gift under our Christmas Tree and it will be hand delivered the Wednesday prior to Christmas Day to the women and children who will be relying on the refuge this year as their safe haven - **a place to call home.**



UPDATE on Social Justice COVID-19 Food and Toiletries Drive

Under the remaining influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and House of Welcome (HoW) cannot receive physical food and toiletry donations. However, many refugee families are still relying on their foodbanks or the provision of food vouchers. In this difficult time, please support JRS and HoW with a cash donation if you can. Find more information at parracatholic.org/diocesanfooddrive or call JRS on 02 9356 3888 or HoW on 02 9727 9290.

World Day of the Sick Mass 2022 - 11th February 2022

The Annual World Day of the Sick Mass will be celebrated by Vicar General Fr Peter Williams and clergy of the Diocese on 11th February 2022 at 11am at St Patrick's Church, Blacktown. The Mass of Our Lady of Lourdes will be celebrated and will include the Rite of Anointing of the Sick and prayer of blessing for all carers. Refreshments will be available after Mass. For catering purposes, please RSVP to anne.stanton@parracatholic.org or 02 8838 3456.



Congratulations to the Graduating Students of 2021, Year 12, St Columba's Catholic College

In this time of uncertainty and trial you are called to remember what Yahweh asks of you:

*only this, to act justly,
to love tenderly and to
walk humbly with your God.*

- Micah 6:8

