

Date:	2nd/3rd Dec 2023	First Sunday of Advent	
Mass Time:	VIGIL 5:00PM	8.00AM	9.30AM
Acolyte:	Ed Junis	Marek Grus	Richard Merchant
Commentator:	Tanya Graham	Jim Gresser	Anne Ellis
First Reading:	Cheryl Kirby	Kim Crawford	Ingrid Merchant
Second Reading:	Neil Kirby	Vicky Walker	Domhnall MacCormac
Music:	Andrew Wilson		Chris Wilson
Date:	9th/10th Dec 2023	Second Sunday of Advent	
Mass Time:	VIGIL 5:00PM	8.00AM	9.30AM
Acolyte:	Ian Miles	Randall Noney	Bernard Ellis
Commentator:	Felix Kobus	Tanya Graham	Anne Ellis
First Reading:	Tanya Baldwin	Cecilia Hunt	Katherine Mahns
Second Reading:	Wilhelmina de Raadt	Jim Gresser	Margaret Hickey
Music:	Chris Wilson		Streeters

Morning Tea Roster: 3rd December after 9:30am Mass - East Timor Support Group #2



SYDNEY SUMMER SCHOOL OF EVANGELISATION: 7 – 14 JANUARY 2024

Summer School is a week-long, live-in, life-changing retreat at the Mt Carmel Retreat Centre in Varroville NSW, featuring praise and worship, inspiring talks, engaging liturgy, time to chill & learn and more in the midst of a community of 150+ young people aged 16-35. Registrations open 31 October. Register by 30 November to receive early bird rates (concession \$525/adult \$625). More info: contact@summerschool.org.au. Bookings: summerschool.org.au

ST THOMAS AQUINAS CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE: This year our parish is again supporting Wimlah Women’s Refuge Outreach and Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, a specialist domestic violence service located within the Blue Mountains.

Wimlah offers a Domestic Violence Support Group, Family Law Support Group and residential crises accommodation for women and children.

We would dearly love for our kind hearted parishioners to wrap a gift for a woman and a child to open this Christmas who might otherwise not be able to open anything.

We have been notified by Wimlah that they are currently housing:

- 20 women
- 3 years – 7 years : 9 boys and 11 girls
- 15 years – 17 years : 4 boys and 1 girl
- 6 months – 2 years : 5 boys and 7 girls
- 8 years – 14 years : 7 boys and 12 girls

That is 20 women and 55 children who are relying on this refuge at this given time.

Please leave your gift under the Christmas Tree from Saturday 2nd December which will be located at the back of the church next to our St Thomas Aquinas statue. The gifts will be hand delivered on the Wednesday prior to Christmas Day to the women and children who are relying on the refuge this year for a safe haven – a place to call home.



STA CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES 2023	
Christmas Eve, Sun 24th December:	8:00am Fourth Sunday of Advent Mass 9:30am Fourth Sunday of Advent Mass 5:00pm Children’s Mass 12:00am Midnight Mass
Christmas Day, Mon 25th December:	8:00am Christmas Morning Mass 9:30am Christmas Morning Mass
Boxing Day, Tues 26th December:	9:30am
Wed - Fri 27th - 29th December:	9:30am
Saturday 30th December:	9:30am Saturday Morning Mass 5:00pm Saturday Vigil Mass
Sunday 31st December:	8:00am and 9:30am

St Thomas Aquinas Parish

168 Hawkesbury Road, Springwood, NSW, 2777
PO Box 4410, Winmalee, NSW 2777
Phone: 02 4754 1052; *Emergency ONLY:* 0474 631 168

Parish Email: *email: springwood@parracatholic.org*
Parish Website: www.stachurchspringwood.org.au
Parish Facebook Page: St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community Springwood
Parish Administrator: Rev Christopher del Rosario (E: christopher.del-rosario@parracatholic.org)
Parish Pastoral Council: Email suggestions to springwoodparishpc@gmail.com
Parish Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm

Weekend Masses: Saturday Vigil Mass 5:00 pm, Sunday 8:00 am and 9:30 am
Weekday Mass: Monday - Saturday 9:30 am
Reconciliation: Saturday after 9:30 am Mass and 4-5 pm before the Vigil Mass
Rosary & Devotions: Monday-Saturday, 9:00 am
Children’s Liturgy: 3rd Sunday of every month, 9:30 am
Eucharistic Adoration: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month, 7:30 - 8:30 pm
Baptisms: 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month - 11 am and by appointment
Weddings: By appointment
Funerals: Please Contact the Parish Office



Support us!
Scan to donate

We respect the Darug people and their elders both past and present, as the traditional custodians of this land on which we celebrate the Eucharist.

The Apocalypse

In 2009 Hollywood released the science fiction disaster film named 2012. Based on the 2012 phenomenon (a range of eschatological beliefs that cataclysmic or transformative events would occur on or around 21 December 2012) its plot follows geologist Adrian Helmsley and novelist Jackson Curtis as they struggle to survive an eschatological sequence of events including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, mega tsunamis, and a global flood. The film was a major success as it amassed over \$700 million in the box office against a production budget of \$200 million. The film is one of many in the disaster genre which has consistently perked the interest of viewers. Other films such as The Day after Tomorrow (2004), War of the Worlds (2005), San Andreas (2015) and Moonfall (2022) have all been successful in their adaptation of the end times and the impending apocalypse. In short the success of each film highlights the human person’s interest in the end of the world and how one can prepare for such an event.



Our Gospel for this Sunday, the First Sunday in Advent and the beginning of the new Liturgical Year (Happy New Year everyone), brings to light the attitude each person ought to bring in preparation for the Second Coming of Christ. Our Lord says to his disciples ‘Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming.’ I’m not sure about you but the impending arrival of Jesus Christ has somewhat terrified me; if the arrival of Our Lord resembles that found within the Book of Apocalypse (please do not read without a favourable commentary otherwise it is easily misinterpreted) then I’d be begging Our Lord to arrive after my time on earth has passed. In short, the Apocalypse both interests and terrifies people. But must we be afraid of the Second Coming of Our Lord? Must we tremble with fear as we await the final revelation of God Almighty at the end of time? The answers to these questions are found within the term itself. Apocalypse comes from the Greek apokálypsi which means ‘to uncover, to remove the veil.’ The word was never designed to terrify others but rather reveal the truth. In our faith the Apocalypse speaks of the revelation of God; God is not foreign, inaccessible, and impersonal, rather he is closer to us than ever through the incarnation of his Son, Jesus Christ. God is revealed to us as a fragile baby in the manger. This season of Advent celebrates this revelation and reminds us that Christ will come again. So must we be fearful of Christ’s coming? With the above in mind... absolutely not. Our Lord did not come to destroy the world but rather redeem it; Through Christ humanity is freed from the power of sin and death; he saves us from our transgressions. Joy should fill our hearts as Christ’s life brings light into the world.

Dear friends, in preparation for his coming I suggest each of us renew our commitment in Christ through our daily prayers and reception of the Sacraments. Such small yet significant acts helps prepare our hearts for his arrival. When Christmas Day arrives may we be ready to received the greatest gift: Christ Himself.

With every blessing in this Advent Season.

Fr. Chris



Responsorial Psalm (continued)

- God of hosts, turn again, we implore, look down from heaven and see. Visit this vine and protect it, the vine your right hand has planted. (R.)
- May your hand be on the man you have chosen, the man you have given your strength. And we shall never forsake you again: give us life that we may call upon your name. (R.)

Second Reading [1 Corinthians 1:3-9](#)

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

The revelation we looked for, Christ Jesus our Lord.

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.

I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through Jesus Christ. I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways, especially in your teachers and preachers; the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed; and he will keep you steady and without blame until the last day, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, because God by calling you has joined you to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God is faithful.

Gospel Acclamation [Psalm 84:8](#)

Alleluia, alleluia!
Lord, show us your mercy and love,
and grant us your salvation.
Alleluia!

Gospel [Mark 13:33-37](#)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

Stay awake! You never know when the Lord will come.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!'

Communion Antiphon [Psalm 84:13](#)

The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.

Entrance Antiphon

To you, I lift up my soul, O my God.
In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame.
Nor let my enemies exult over me;
and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

First Reading [Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:1. 3-8](#)

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Oh that you would tear the heavens apart and come down.

You, Lord, yourself are our Father,
Our Redeemer is your ancient name.
Why, Lord, leave us to stray from your ways
and harden our hearts against fearing you?
Return, for the sake of your servants,
the tribes of your inheritance.
Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down
– at your Presence the mountains would melt.
No ear has heard,
no eye has seen
any god but you act like this
for those who trust him.
You guide those who act with integrity
and keep your ways in mind.
You were angry when we were sinners;
we had long been rebels against you.
We were all like men unclean,
all that integrity of ours like filthy clothing.
We have all withered like leaves
and our sins blew us away like the wind.
No one invoked your name
or roused himself to catch hold of you.
For you hid your face from us
and gave us up to the power of our sins.
And yet, Lord, you are our Father;
we the clay, you the potter,
we are all the work of your hand.

Responsorial Psalm [Ps 79:2-3. 15-16. 18-19 R. v.4](#)

(R.) Lord, make us turn to you, let us see your face and we shall be saved.

- O shepherd of Israel, hear us, shine forth from your cherubim throne.
O Lord, rouse up your might,
O Lord, come to our help. (R.)



Recently Deceased: *Robyn Annette Tomczak*

Sick: Fr Bob Bossini, Deirdrie Madden, Dane San Pedro, Marama Watson, Faith Naughton-Green, Margaret Munro, 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 DIOCESAN NEWS

HOW TO SUPPORT OUR PARISH FAMILY FINANCIALLY:

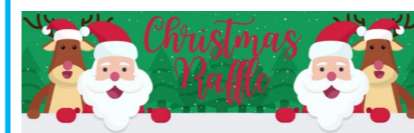
We are beyond grateful to those who continually drop envelopes each week and make use of our Tap & Go machines. You may also continue to offer support by making a direct deposit into our account, details follow:

Bank Account Name: Springwood

BSB: 067-950; **Bank Account Number:** 00000560

Reference: YOUR NAME IN FULL

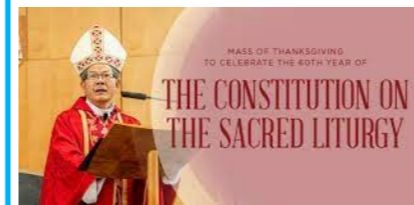
Or you may opt to scan our new STA QR Code, which is now shown on the front page of our bulletin. You may also choose to avail of direct debit services. Just call our parish office to discuss. All contributions are greatly appreciated and will help meet the upkeep needs of our parish.



The Saint Thomas Aquinas Ladies Fellowship will be holding their annual Christmas Raffle at the

Saturday night and Sunday morning Masses on 25th/26th November and the 2nd/3rd December. Great prizes. All money will be given to St Vincent de Paul to purchase vouchers to assist with their Christmas Appeal.

60TH YEAR OF THE CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY COMMEMORATIVE MASS: 4 DECEMBER:



Bishop Vincent invites all to join him in a commemorative Mass to mark the 60th Anniversary of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) to be held at St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta on Monday 4th December at 7.30pm. Please RSVP for catering purposes to 0460 037 795 or email Hannah Portelli: hannah.portelli@parracatholic.org

EPIPHANY PILGRIMAGE 2024 PRAYER REQUESTS:

Our parish community will be hosting the Epiphany Pilgrimage group again in 2024 as they journey up the mountains from 2 - 9 January. In preparation for the pilgrimage, you are invited to write any prayer requests on the cards provided and place them in the Epiphany Pilgrimage prayer box to be prayed each day by the pilgrims. To participate in some or all of the pilgrimage - including walks, Mass, Adoration / prayer sessions and meals - visit www.epiphanypilgrimage.org, or to assist with hospitality when the group visits our parish, please contact the parish office.



ALTAR CRUCIFIX AND CANDLE

HOLDERS: All your donations have been such a blessing! And we would also be appreciative of those who will continue to meet our needs and provide financial resources to help cover our cost in the purchase of a new Altar Crucifix coming from Spain and which will also be used to pay off



the remaining balance of the cost of the restoration of the candle holders now in full display in our church. If you feel you are called to help please do via cash or eftpos machine at the back of the church near the sacristy. Thank you.

WORKING BEE: Saturday 16th December, 10.00am to 4.00pm! We would love as many parishioners as possible to help us clean up our church property. Bring along your gardening tools, hats, sunscreen, WATER and



wheelbarrows! Many hands make light work! Come for an hour, two or whatever you can spare. We will spark up the BBQ at lunchtime to fuel our wonderful volunteers!



Members of the Springwood St. Vincent de Paul conference will be inviting parishioners to contribute to their Christmas Hamper Appeal, by offering to supply either a hamper or cash so we can purchase fruit and vegetable or fresh food vouchers, at all Masses on the weekends of 11th /12th and 18th /19th November. Donations towards this appeal will be accepted by conference members on the weekend of 16th / 17th December. All cash donations placed in the Poor Box, on the table near the sacristy door, from 11th November will go towards supporting the 40 local families we are supplying with hampers this Christmas.

EPIPHANY PILGRIMAGE 2024 MEAL:

The parishes of the Blue Mountains Deanery will host the Epiphany Pilgrimage from 2-9 Jan 2024. You can be a part of the celebrations and help welcome the pilgrims to our beautiful mountains by assisting with the festive meal when they visit us at STA parish on 3rd -4th January. Please contact Colleen Kime on 02 4754 4335 or leave your details at the parish office.

