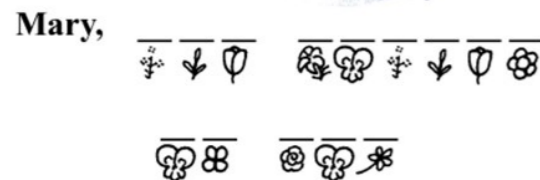


Date:	30th/31st Dec 2023 Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph				
Mass Time:	Acolyte	First Reading	Second Reading	Prayer of the Faithful	Music
Vigil: 5:00 PM	Ian Miles	Colleen Baker	Lynette Boyd	Tanya Graham	No One
8:00 AM	Randall Noney	Jim Gresser	Vicky Walker	Tom Horsfall	
9:30 AM	Richard Merchant	Phillip Saville	Margaret Hickey	Ingrid Merchant	No One
Date:	6th/7th Jan 2024 The Epiphany of the Lord				
Mass Time:	Acolyte	First Reading	Second Reading	Prayer of the Faithful	Music
Vigil: 5:00 PM	Ed Junis	Cheryl Kirby	Neil Kirby	Anne Maureen Scarff	Andrew Wilson
8:00 AM	Marek Grus	Cecilia Hunt	Kim Crawford	Tanya Graham	
9:30 AM	Bernard Ellis	Steve Bishop	Anne Ellis	Domhnall MacCormac	Chris Wilson

Kid's Corner

December 31st, 2023: Feast of the Holy Family
January 1st, 2024: Feast of Mary the Mother of God



Under what title do we honour Our Lady on January 1st?
Use the code to find out!

D E F G H M O R T

The Holy Family

When we talk about the Holy Family we are talking about Jesus and his mother Mary and his foster-father, Saint Joseph. Mary became the mother of Jesus when she was betrothed (formally engaged) to St. Joseph, and Jesus' real father was God the Father Himself. So Saint Joseph acted as the Father of Jesus on earth.



Holy Family Word-Find

See if you can find all these words about the Holy Family in the puzzle!

Use the leftover letters to fill in the blanks at the end!

LGODSELFLESS
OMHVJEF AEJAC
COOPERATIONA
HTLCSLMHSSHR
IHYHUEIEHELP
LEOOSALRAPOE
DRTMARYHRHVN
HOMEHNJAEET
FAITHROPEACE
FOSTERYPPOR
PERFECTYCARE

- | | | |
|-------------|--------|----------|
| CARE | GOD | LOVE |
| CARPENTER | HAPPY | MOTHER |
| CHILD | HELP | MARY |
| COOPERATION | HOLY | PEACE |
| FAITH | HOME | PERFECT |
| FAMILY | JESUS | POOR |
| FATHER | JOSEPH | SELFLESS |
| FOSTER | JOY | SHARE |
| | LEARN | |

The best way to be like the Holy Family:



Saint Joseph was a carpenter and worked hard to provide for his family. Mary loved Jesus and Joseph and cooked and cleaned for them. When Jesus was old enough Saint Joseph trained Him to be a carpenter as well. Because they all loved each other with generosity and selflessness they were really the happiest and holiest family that ever lived.

We can imitate the Holy Family by loving our parents and siblings and putting others before ourselves. What can you do today to make your family happier and holier?



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



Support us!
Scan to donate

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
Children's Liturgy: 3rd Sunday of every month, 9:30 am
Baptisms: 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month - 11 am and by appointment
Weddings: By appointment
Funerals: Please Contact the Parish Office

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.

Jesus and the Family Unit

During the season of Advent we have listened to a wide variety of Scripture speaking of the coming of the promised Messiah - now with Christmastide in full swing we see the numerous of ways Jesus exercises his ministry proving to the world that he is the Christ. As Christians we are well accustomed to reading of Jesus' incredible ministry; his teaching, preaching, and healing are more or less engrained in our subconscious that any other expression of emotion not associated with evangelisation seems foreign. With this in mind the Church celebrates the Feast of the Holy Family on the first Sunday following Christmas. Whilst Jesus Christ is God, he is also part and parcel of the human family highlighted in his utter dependance to both Mary and Joseph in his childhood and his devotion to Our Lady throughout his ministry (we don't hear of St. Joseph after Jesus' childhood; Scripture scholars assume he had passed away beforehand). As such the life of Christ is not simply defined but his final three years on Earth, but encompasses his hidden life as well: before Jesus preached the Kingdom of God he spent the majority of his earthly life under obedience to his Mother Mary and Father Joseph.



If you've ever watched the movie The Passion of the Christ directed by Mel Gibson you will know how powerful it is. The movie, while focusing on Our Lord's final moments, contains several flashbacks of Jesus exercising his ministry and his hidden life. One of my favourite scenes is Jesus building a tall table in his workshop while Mary is preparing a meal. The scene is quite sentimental as it underscores Our Lord's special relationship with Our Lady; Jesus is portrayed as both playful and humorous to the point of laughing at Mary's sarcastic comments regarding his table and eventually splashing her with water used to wash his hands. In short this scene details the beautiful lesson of Jesus hidden life: the family unit (Father, Mother, and Children) is precious to the Lord. This is evident in the Incarnation as God chose to enter the human experience through the family. He could have come down in all his glory already in the form of Man at his first coming; God is not limited in his power to act, however he chose to be born into the family of Mary and Joseph. Furthermore he entrusts his mother to the apostle John, not simply as a caretaker for an elderly woman, but as a son who loves his mother.

Dear friends, this Feast of the Holy Family celebrates the human family unit, as well as the ultimate family unit: Jesus, Mary, and Joseph; they provide us with a great example of family life. We each have our crosses in our family, but the Holy Family shows us that in Christ all things are possible. The Holy Family were not immune to tribulation, they too experienced great suffering like us; death threats from Herod and the plight to Egypt underscore a few trials. Despite this they continued to rally behind their trust in God by keeping their greatest treasure, Jesus Christ, at the centre of their lives. May we follow their holy example and keep Our Lord at the centre of our families - In imitating them in practising the virtues of family life and in the bonds of charity, may we one day be united with our Heavenly Family in Paradise.

With blessing this Christmas Season,

Fr. Chris

Entrance Antiphon

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

First Reading [Genesis 15:1-6. 21:1-3](#)

A reading from the book of Genesis

Your own son shall be your heir.

The word of the Lord was spoken to Abram in a vision, 'Have no fear, Abram, I am your shield; your reward will be very great'.

'My Lord', Abram replied, 'what do you intend to give me? I go childless...' Then Abram said, 'See, you have given me no descendants; some man of my household will be my heir.' And then this word of the Lord was spoken to him, 'He shall not be your heir; your heir shall be one of your own flesh and blood.' Then taking him outside he said, 'Look up to heaven and count the stars if you can. Such will be your descendants,' he told him. Abram put his faith in the Lord, who counted this as making him justified.

The Lord dealt kindly with Sarah as he had said, and did what he had promised her. So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the time God had promised. Abraham named the son born to him Isaac, the son to whom Sarah had given birth.

Responsorial Psalm [Ps 104:1-6. 8-9. R.vv.7.8](#)

(R.) The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

1. Give thanks to the Lord, tell his name, make known his deeds among the peoples. O sing to him, sing his praise; tell all his wonderful works! (R.)
2. Be proud of his holy name, let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice. Consider the Lord and his strength; constantly seek his face. (R.)
3. Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, the judgements he spoke. O children of Abraham, his servant, O sons of the Jacob he chose. (R.)
4. He remembers his covenant for ever, his promise for a thousand generations, the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. (R.)

Second Reading [Hebrews 11:8. 11-12. 17-19](#)

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

It was by faith that Abraham obeyed the call to set out for a country that was the inheritance given to him and his descendants, and that he set out without knowing where he was going.

It was equally by faith that Sarah, in spite of being past the age, was made able to conceive, because she believed that he who had made the promise would be faithful to it. Because of this, there came from one man, and one who was already as good as dead himself, more descendants than could be counted, as many as the stars of heaven or the grains of sand on the seashore. It was by faith that Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He offered to sacrifice his only son even though the

Second Reading (continuation)

It is through Isaac that your name will be carried on. He was confident that God had the power even to raise the dead; and so, figuratively speaking, he was given back Isaac from the dead.

Gospel Acclamation [Hebrews 1:1-2](#)

Alleluia, alleluia!
In the past God spoke to our fathers through the prophets;
now he speaks to us through his Son.
Alleluia!

Gospel [Luke 2:22-40](#)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

The child grew to maturity, and he was filled with wisdom.

When the day came for them to be purified as laid down by the Law of Moses, the parents of Jesus took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord – observing what stands written in the Law of the Lord: Every first-born male must be consecrated to the Lord – and also to offer in sacrifice, in accordance with what is said in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he looked forward to Israel's comforting and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord. Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, he took him into his arms and blessed God; and he said:

'Now, Master, you can let your servant go in peace, just as you promised; because my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the nations to see, a light to enlighten the pagans and the glory of your people Israel.'

As the child's father and mother stood there wondering at the things that were being said about him, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected – and a sword will pierce your own soul too – so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.'

There was a prophetess also, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well on in years. Her days of girlhood over, she had been married for seven years before becoming a widow. She was now eighty-four years old and never left the Temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayer. She came by just at that moment and began to praise God; and she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem.

When they had done everything the Law of the Lord required, they went back to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. Meanwhile the child grew to maturity, and he was filled with wisdom; and God's favour was with him.

Communion Antiphon [Baruch 3:38](#)

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



Sick: Fr Bob Bossini, Dane San Pedro, Marama Watson, 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

FINANCIALLY SUPPORTING OUR PARISH AND ITS WORKS:

There are a variety of ways you can support our Parish and its Mission:

- **QR Code:** located on the Bulletin Front Page.
- **EFTPOS Machines:** located at the back of the Church.
- **Direct Debit:** Please contact the Parish Office for more details.
- **Direct Deposit:** Details are as follows:

Bank Account Name: Springwood

BSB: 067-950

Bank Account Number: 00000560

Reference: Your name in full.

All donations go to maintaining our Church and supporting the various ministries associated with our Parish.

PARISH OFFICE HOLIDAY CLOSURE:

The Parish Office will be closed for holidays from the Tuesday 26 December 2023 - Monday 15 January 2024. It will reopen on the Tuesday 16 January 2024. Masses and Confessions will continue as normal during this period.

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT:

Adoration will resume on Monday 5th February 2024. Our new schedule follows:

Monday - Saturday: From 8:15 am - 9:15 am

First Friday Adoration starts from the 1st of March 2024 at 7:00 pm



EPIPHANY PILGRIMAGE 2024:

The parishes of the Blue Mountains Deanery will host the Epiphany Pilgrimage from 2 -9 Jan 2024. You are invited to write any prayer requests on the cards provided and place them in the Epiphany Pilgrimage prayer box at the back of the church to be prayed each day by the pilgrims. You can also 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/M: 0407 125 427 or leave your details at the parish office.

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE FROM FR CHRIS:

Happy New Year to you all. I pray the Good Lord continues to guide and bless us on our pilgrim journey towards Eternal Life.

I'm looking forward to serving our Parish for a full year in 2024!

- Fr. Chris



GIRLS SUMMER CAMP

12-16 YEARS OLD

SESSIONS ARE SPLIT INTO AGE GROUPS

Places are limited & registrations are necessary.

START

15th January
4pm

END

17th January
2pm

COST

\$85

Activities

- ✓ Arts & Craft
- ✓ Games
- ✓ Spiritual Input
- ✓ Singing
- ✓ Prayers
- ✓ Discussions

Venue

"Home of Light"
230 Fairlight Road, Mulgoa 2745

Contact

Sr. M. Rita Baysari
0493 026 628
srrita@schoenstatt.or.au

My little piece of HEAVEN

Weekend Retreat for Young Women 17+

START: FRIDAY 12TH JAN @ 6.30 PM

FINISH: SUNDAY 14TH JAN @ 4 PM*

COST: \$75
VENUE: "Home of Light"
230 Fairlight Road, Mulgoa 2745

*There is the opportunity to stay on and be a leader at the following Girls Camp

THE WEEKEND INCLUDES:

talks | laughs | singing | music sharing | discussions | prayers walks | adoration | holy mass

PLUS a 'Home Shrine' dedication ceremony

Places are limited. Registrations are essential & close on 07/01/2024.

CONTACT:
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0493 026 628
srrita@schoenstatt.org.au