

Date:	11th Jan/12th Jan 2025		<i>The Baptism of the Lord</i>	
Mass Time:	Acolyte	First Reading & Responsorial Psalm	Second Reading & Prayer of the Faithful	Music
Vigil: 5:00 PM	Ian Miles	Tamsyn Baldwin	Timothy Baldwin	Chris Wilson
8:00 AM	Randall Noney	Tom Horsfall	Ros Comfort	
9:30 AM	John Belfanti	Anne Ellis	Domhnall MacCormac	Streeters
Date:	18th Jan/19th Jan 2025		<i>Second Sunday in Ordinary Time</i>	
Mass Time:	Acolyte	First Reading & Responsorial Psalm	Second Reading & Prayer of the Faithful	Music
Vigil: 5:00 PM	Ed Junis	Anne Maureen Scarff	Felix Kobus	No One
8:00 AM	Marek Grus	Jim Gresser	Kim Crawford	
9:30 AM	Richard Merchant	Matt Aldous	Peta Sparkes	Chris Wilson

KID'S CORNER



Draw Jesus being baptised in the river by John the Baptist.

Find Out

When were you baptised?

Where were you baptised?

Who are your Godparents?

Draw a line to connect each symbol with its correct meaning.

	Candle	Symbolises the Holy Spirit	
	Water	Symbolises life, cleansing and growth	
		Symbolises purity and freedom from sin	
		Symbolises the emergence from darkness into the light	

St Thomas Aquinas Parish

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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
Adoration: Monday - Saturday from 8:15 am - 9:15 am
First Friday Adoration: Every first Friday of the month 7:00 pm
Reconciliation: Saturday after 9:30 am Mass and 4:00-5:00 pm before the Vigil Mass
Children's Liturgy: 3rd Sunday of every month, 9:30 am
Baptisms: 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month - 11:00 am and by appointment
Weddings: By appointment
Funerals: Please Contact the Parish Office



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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.

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (by Pope Francis)

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

The Gospel of today's Liturgy shows us the scene with which Jesus' public life begins: he, who is the Son of God and the Messiah, goes to the banks of the Jordan River to be baptised by John the Baptist. After about 30 years of hidden life, Jesus does not present himself with a miracle, or by rising to the podium to teach. He queues up with the people who were going to receive baptism from John. Today's liturgical hymn says that the people went to be baptised with a bare soul and bare feet, humbly. This is a beautiful attitude: with a bare soul and bare feet. And Jesus shares the plight of us sinners, he *descends* towards us; he descends into the river, and into the wounded history of humanity. He immerses himself in our waters to heal them, and he immerses himself with us, in our midst. He does not rise up above us, but rather comes down towards us with a bare soul, with bare feet, like the people. He does not go on his own, nor with a selected, privileged group. No: he goes with the people. He belongs to those people and he goes with them to be baptised, with those humble people.

Let us reflect on an important point: in the moment that Jesus receives Baptism, the text says that he "was praying" (Lk 3:21). It is good for us to contemplate this: Jesus prays. But why? He, who is the Lord, the Son of God, prays like us? Yes, Jesus — the Gospels repeat this many times — spends a lot of time in prayer: at the beginning of every day, often at night, before making important decisions.... His prayer is a dialogue, a relationship with the Father. Thus, in today's Gospel, we can see the "two moments" in the life of Jesus: on the one hand, he *descends* towards us into the waters of the Jordan; on the other, he *raises* his eyes and his heart, praying to the Father.

It is a great lesson for us: we are all immersed in the problems of life and in many complicated situations, called upon to face difficult moments and choices that get us down. But if we do not want to be crushed, we need to raise everything upwards. And this is exactly what prayer does. It is not an escape route; prayer is not a magic ritual or a repetition of memorised refrains. No. To pray is the way to let God act within us, to understand what he wants to communicate to us even in the most difficult situations, to pray to have the strength to go forward. Many people feel they cannot go on, and pray: "Lord, give me the strength to continue". We too, very often, have done this. Prayer helps us because it unites us to God, it opens us up to the encounter with him. Yes, prayer is the key that opens our heart to the Lord. It is dialoguing with God, it is listening to his Word, it is worshipping: remaining in silence, entrusting what we are experiencing to him. And sometimes it is also crying out to him like Job, venting with Him. Crying out like Job; He is the father; He understands well. He never gets angry with us. And Jesus prays.

Prayer — to use a beautiful image from today's Gospel — "opens the heaven" (cf. v. 21). Prayer opens the heaven: it gives life oxygen, it gives a breath of fresh air even in the midst of breathlessness and lets us see things from a broader perspective. Above all, it enables us to have the same experience of Jesus by the Jordan: it makes us feel like beloved children of the Father. When we pray, the Father says to us too, as he does to Jesus in the Gospel: "You are my beloved Son" (cf. v. 22). Being God's children began on the day of our Baptism, which immersed us in Christ and, as members of the people of God, made us become beloved children of the Father. Let us not forget the date of our Baptism! If I were to ask each one of you now: what is the date of your Baptism? Perhaps some of you do not remember. This is a beautiful thing: remembering the date of your baptism because it is our rebirth, the moment in which we became children of God with Jesus! And when you return home — if you do not know — ask your mother, your aunt, or your grandparents: "When was I baptised?", and remember that date so as to celebrate it, to thank the Lord. And today, at this moment, let us ask ourselves: how is my prayer going? Do I pray out of habit, do I pray unwillingly, just reciting formulas, or is my prayer an encounter with God? I, a sinner, always with the people of God, never isolated? Do I cultivate intimacy with God, dialogue with him, listen to his Word? Among the many things we do each day, let us not neglect prayer: let us dedicate time to it, let us use short invocations to be repeated often, let us read the Gospel every day. The prayer that opens the heaven.

And now, let us turn to Our Lady, the prayerful Virgin, who made her life into a hymn in praise of God.

Entrance Antiphon

After the Lord was baptised, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and the voice of the Father thundered: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

First Reading [Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11](#)

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it.

‘Console my people, console them’ says your God. ‘Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for, that she has received from the hand of the Lord double punishment for all her crimes.’

A voice cries, ‘Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord.

Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low,

let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley; then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it;

for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.’

Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion. Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem. Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah, ‘Here is your God.’

Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him.

The prize of his victory is with him, his trophies all go before him.

He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms,

holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

Responsorial Psalm [Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 24-25, 27-30](#)

R. v.1

(R.) Oh, bless the Lord, my soul!

1. Lord God, how great you are, clothed in majesty and glory, wrapped in light as in a robe! You stretch out the heavens like a tent. (R.)

2. Above the rains you build your dwelling. You make the clouds your chariot, you walk on the wings of the wind, you make the winds your messengers and flashing fire your servants. (R.)

3. How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you have made them all. The earth is full of your riches. There is the sea, vast and wide, with its moving swarms past counting, living things great and small. (R.)

4. All of these look to you to give them their food in due season. You give it, they gather it up: you open your hand, they have their fill. (R.)

Responsorial Psalm (continuation)

(R.) Oh, bless the Lord, my soul!

5. You take back your spirit, they die, returning to the dust from which they came. You send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the earth. (R.)

Second Reading [Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7](#)

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Titus

He saved us through the water of rebirth and renewal in the Holy Spirit.

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.

When the kindness and love of God our saviour for mankind were revealed, it was not because he was concerned with any righteous actions we might have done ourselves; it was for no reason except his own compassion that he saved us, by means of the cleansing water of rebirth and by renewing us with the Holy Spirit which he has so generously poured over us through Jesus Christ our saviour. He did this so that we should be justified by his grace, to become heirs looking forward to inheriting eternal life.

Gospel Acclamation [See Luke 3:16](#)

Alleluia, alleluia!

John said: He who is to come is mightier than I; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Alleluia!

Gospel [Luke 3:15-16, 21-22](#)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

When Jesus had been baptised and had been praying, the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit came upon him.

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, ‘I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’

Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.’

Communion Antiphon [John 1:32,34](#)

Behold the One of whom John said: I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.



Sick: Colleen Baker, John Hunia, Eva Fitzgerald, Philip Coggan, James Connor, Richard Ford, Julie Somerville, 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:

Please support our Parish and its projects.

- **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.



FIRST COLLECTION: This goes to the Board of Management. The fund supports the living expenses of the priests within our Diocese.

SECOND COLLECTION: This goes to our Parish of St Thomas Aquinas—directly funding operational costs, pastoral activities and various programs that enrich our community.

MASS OFFERING ENVELOPES are also available which can be used to express your ongoing generosity and support. Thank you.

ST THOMAS AQUINAS FEAST FUNDRAISING EVENT:

The Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) is excited to announce our upcoming Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas & Australia Day Fundraising Event, taking place on **Sunday, 26th of January.** This special day will feature fun activities for children and families alike.



To make the event a success, we kindly ask for your support in contributing prizes for our raffle. Donations of any non-perishable items would be greatly appreciated.

If you're able to help, please drop off your donation at the Parish Office, or let any members of PPC know after mass. Thank you in advance for your generosity, and warm regards from the PPC!



We congratulate

Amelia Salvador

who completed her Sacrament of Holy Communion on Sunday morning.

Lord, may Amelia be welcomed into your family, guided by your light, and kept in Your love forever. Amen.

An Afternoon of Uplifting and Beautiful

Sacred Music

Sunday 09 February 2025 at 3pm
St. Finbar's Catholic Church, Levy Street, Glenbrook
With afternoon tea after the concert
Entry by donation to aid the St. Vincent de Paul Society



FR CHRIS' ANNUAL LEAVE: Fr Chris will be away on leave from **Monday 20th January up to Sunday 2nd February.** He will be back for Mass on **Monday 3rd February 2025.**

Please see our Parish Notice Board or STA Parish Website for Mass schedule during this period.

FEAST DAY OF ST THOMAS AQUINAS: On the **26th of January** we will celebrate the Feast of St Thomas Aquinas and Australia Day. Details of the celebration are to follow.

DIOCESAN DISCERNMENT PLAN MEETINGS: As we continue to be involved in the Pastoral Plan, Discernment Plan Meetings are scheduled on the following dates: 1.) **1st February 2025, Saturday at 6pm** and 2.) **9th February 2025, Sunday at 10:30am.** Estimated run time: 1.5 hours. All are invited to attend either one of the above-mentioned dates.

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS / Acolytes, Readers, Musicians: on **Saturday 8 February 2025 from 10.15am.** EVERYONE who did their Safeguarding training two years ago is required to renew these modules. Please contact the parish office via email to confirm your attendance. If you do not attend this training you will NOT BE ABLE to volunteer in the parish as per the Diocese of Parramatta Safeguarding requirements.

CHRISTMAS TREE PALLETS: Johann and his team of lovely gentlemen would like to thank the STA Community for purchasing the wooden Christmas Trees made from old pallets in support of Wimalah Women's Refuge Outreach and Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service. This wonderful service received \$470 in vouchers (Big W, Coles, Woolworths etc). Absolutely amazing. Thank you.



We welcomed the Epiphany Pilgrims to our parish with Fr Chris leading them in Adoration after a brief rest and shower. Our parishioners showered them with love, good food and charming hospitality with a delicious dinner before the pilgrims rested for the evening. On Saturday morning, Fr Dominic (who was also a pilgrim) lead the Mass prior to them leaving for Lawson. We congratulate the pilgrims as this is the 10th year of their pilgrimage journey.



St Thomas Aquinas Parish

2025 Confirmation Sacramental Program

Parent ONLY Sessions:
Wednesday, 30th April at 7.00pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church
Wednesday 7th May at 7.00pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church

Children and Parent Sessions:
Saturday 17th May at 11.00am, St Thomas Aquinas Church
Saturday 24th May at 11.00am, St Thomas Aquinas Church (and practice)

2025 Reconciliation Sacramental Program

Parent Information Sessions:
Tuesday 5th August at 7.00pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church
Tuesday 12th August at 7.00pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church
Children and Parent Information Sessions:
Saturday 23rd Aug at 11.00am, St Thomas Aquinas Church
Saturday 30th Aug at 11.00am, St Thomas Aquinas Church (and practice)

2025 First Holy Communion Sacramental Program

Parent Information Sessions:
Tuesday 21st October at 7.00pm, St Thomas Aquinas Parish
Tuesday 28th October at 7.00pm, St Thomas Aquinas Parish
Children and Parent Sessions:
Saturday 8th Nov at 11.00am, St Thomas Aquinas Parish
Saturday 15th Nov at 11.00am, St Thomas Aquinas Parish (and practice)