

FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Isaiah 7:10-14

The Lord spoke to Ahaz and said, 'Ask the Lord your God for a sign for yourself coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights above.' 'No', Ahaz answered 'I will not put the Lord to the test.'

Then Isaiah said:

'Listen now, House of David:

are you not satisfied with trying the patience of men without trying the patience of my God, too? The Lord himself, therefore,

will give you a sign.

It is this: the maiden is with child

and will soon give birth to a son

whom she will call Immanuel,

a name which means "God-is-with-us".'

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

*R/. Let the Lord enter;
he is king of glory.*

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 1:1-7

From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus who has been called to be an apostle, and specially chosen to preach the Good News that God promised long ago through his prophets in the scriptures.

This news is about the Son of God, who, according to the human nature he took, was a descendant of David: it is about Jesus Christ our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in him, was proclaimed Son of God in all his power through his resurrection from the dead. Through him we received grace and our apostolic mission to preach the obedience of faith to all pagan nations in honour of his name. You are one of these nations, and by his call belong to Jesus Christ. To you all, then, who are God's beloved in Rome, called to be saints, may God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send grace and peace.

The Word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

*A virgin will give birth to a son;
his name will be Emmanuel: God is with us.*

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 1:18-24

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.

When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

The Gospel of the Lord.



ST JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH

Knox Deanery

19 Forest Road, Ferntree Gully, 3156

Phone: 9758 1029

Email: office@stjohnthebaptist.net.au

Website: www.stjohnthebaptist.net.au

4th Sunday Advent – Year A - Love

21st / 22nd December, 2019

*Lord Jesus,
as we patiently wait,
Open our hearts
so that they may be filled
with Your light and love,
Help us to stay focussed on You,
as we prepare to receive You into our lives.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



FOCUS ON THE WORD

In today's passage, Joseph provides an example of the proper application of the Law. His betrothed wife was pregnant; she would have been subject to the Law against adultery and probably would have been stoned to death. Under the Law, Joseph was obliged to divorce her, and yet he determines that he will do so quietly and protect Mary from too much shame and possibly save her life. Joseph did not intend to ignore the Law, but he sought to carry it out in such a way as to bring the least shame and the least hurt to all involved. The role of Joseph is often overlooked. There is no mention of him during the public ministry of Jesus. In fact the latest mention in any of the gospels is the account of Jesus in the Temple at the age of 12. After that, Joseph disappears and we can only assume that he has passed away by the time Jesus takes up his ministry. Yet Joseph is truly a man of great faith. By rights he should have divorced Mary and walked away. But he trusts in the word of the God that is addressed to him in a dream and from that point on he goes to great lengths to protect and care for his family. Emmanuel; God-is-with-us – that's what we celebrate through Christmas and that's what we've been preparing for during Advent. We celebrate God-with-us in a particular time and place through our celebration of the birth of Jesus. But we remember it every year because we also use the Christmas celebration to remind ourselves that God continues to be with us. That is what is so remarkable about the Christmas season: that God-is-with-us **now**, not just in a stable in Palestine so many years ago, but now! Advent is the time to remind ourselves of this incredible truth and prepare ourselves to acknowledge it once again.

FEAST DAYS THIS WEEK

25th December – The Nativity of the Lord (Solemnity)

26th December – St Stephen, the first martyr

27th December - St John, apostle, evangelist

28th December – The Holy Innocents, martyrs.

I have come that you may have life and have it to the full

(John 10:10)

PRIEST ADMINISTRATOR :

Fr Thomas Kuruvila 9758 1029
 Email: Thomas.Kuruvila@cam.org.au

DEACON:

Rev. Peter Stringfellow 9758 1029
 Email: Peter.Stringfellow@cam.org.au

FAITH DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATOR

Carolyn Sombekke 9758 1029
 Email: csombekkesjb@gmail.com

PARISH OFFICE:

9758 1029
 Monday 9.45am – 3.45pm
 Tuesday to Friday 9.00am -3.00pm
 Secretaries: Charmaine Premaratne & Maree Wilson
 Accountant: Sara Luk
 Email: office@stjohnthebaptist.net.au

SCHOOLS:

St John the Baptist 9758 1013
 Principal: Catherine Mason

St. Joseph's College

9758 2000
 Principal: Catherine Livingston

Mater Christi College

9754 6611
 Principal: Mary Fitz-Gerald

MASS TIMES:

Saturday 6:00 pm
Sunday 9:00 am, 11:00 am
 Tuesday 7.00 pm
 Wednesday & Thursday 9.15 am
 Friday 11.00 am

RECONCILIATION:

Saturdays 5.15 pm

BAPTISMS:

Either during a weekend Mass or at 12.30pm on the 2nd Sunday of the month. 6 weeks' notice required. Please refer to our Guidelines for Infant Baptism on our Parish Website. Contact the Parish Office on: 9758 1029 or via email at: office@stjohnthebaptist.net.au

WEDDINGS:

By appointment, 6 months' notice required. Saturdays or weekdays (not Sundays). Contact the Parish Office: on 9758 1029.

4th Sunday of Advent– Year A
 21st / 22nd December, 2019 - Love

PRAYING FOR...**All who have died recently**

Michael Windebank (UK), Nuala Mohan

And those who we remember at this time:

Maria Daraio, Peter South, Maria Saracino, Teresa Tan Lai Yeok, Ryan Castricum, George Kuhlmann.

The sick: Lea Hartley, Tom Clynnnes, Cosimo Petracca, Christopher Windebank, Giuseppina Zarro, Lesina Maio, Peter Dunlop, Catherine Turner, Peter Commons, Wilma Neville, Mary Brimelow, Patricia Quinn, Charlie Kelly, Kathleen Hatton, Edward Kitain, Scott Warner, Lilian Luiyf, Kayden McDevitt, David Merton, Rosa Jones, Peter Mitchell, Beryl Turner, Michael Byrne, Ann Jayawardena, Mary Edmunds, Anabelyn Malabed, Ethel Arrowsmith, Eillien Patrick, Brendan Kearns, Elsie Johnson, Jill Neville, Maria Iaconis, Bev McNamara, Anthony McNamara, Victoria Lewis, Nicole Moore, Peter Fairhurst, Hans Whitaker, Edward Osborne, Allida Serafin, Barbara Kenny, Clive Geach.

SICK LIST – If you are aware that any names on the sick list need to be removed, please contact the Parish Office on 9758 1029.

 **A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE** from Archbishop Peter A Comensoli entitled “A time of Hope” Christmas 2019 is available for collection on the trolleys.

WEEKDAY ROSARY on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, Rosary will be recited 25 minutes prior to the Weekday Mass. All are welcome to join.

GROUP ROSARY SESSION FOR PEACE

When: Each First Saturday of the Month at 10.30am.
 Where: 37 Lane Road, FTG. All are welcome.
 Contact: Pauline Barlow on 9758 5106.

CHARISMATIC PRAYER is taking a break over the Christmas period Our first meeting for 2020 will be **Tuesday 4th February at 10.15 am** in the Parish Hall. We wish everyone a happy and holy Christmas and every blessing for 2020.

FRIENDSHIP GATHERING: will take a break until **January 9th 2020**. We wish everyone a Happy Christmas and New Year.

MOTHERS' PRAYERS: will take a break until **Tuesday 4th February 2020**. We wish you a wonderful Christmas and look forward to meeting again next year.

**CHRISTMAS MASSES AT ST JOHN'S**

Tuesday 24th December – Christmas Eve:

✦ 7.30pm Family Mass (Carols: 7pm)

✦ 10pm Mass of Christmas Night (Carols: 9.30pm)

Wednesday 25th December – Christmas Day:

✦ 9am

✦ 11am



...from Fr Thomas & the Parish Staff

PARISH OFFICE HOURS THROUGHOUT THE CHRISTMAS / JANUARY HOLIDAY PERIOD:

Wed 25th & Thurs 26th December – Closed.

Fri 27th Dec - Closed.

Mon 30th Dec – Open 9.45 -3.45pm

The office will be **Closed between the 1st and 2nd of January**, and will then open each Monday and Friday until Normal Office hours resume in the week commencing Monday 3rd February.

**SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL - FERNTREE GULLY CONFERENCE- THANK YOU**

The Conference of Ferntree Gully would like to thank all our parishioners for their tremendous support for our on-going work in assisting the disadvantaged in our neighborhood. Our Christmas Giving Tree Appeal contributed to the awareness of our varied work in the community as well as the cash donations and many bags of essential non-perishable food/toiletries. You will be pleased to know that each item of food and each gift card that was donated has been used directly in the 75 Christmas hamper bags that were individually delivered at the weekend. Thanks most sincerely to the Parish Primary School's very generous financial donations. Thanks to Fr Thomas and each one of you who supports our unique charity in so many ways. Please remember that a basket is always available at the doors of church for any ongoing non-perishable food donations. The piety store is available each Sunday at each Mass for your personal religious purchases. Money collected at the piety store supports the work of St Vincent De Paul. New volunteers are very welcome to join us in this rewarding work. We extend a sincere Christmas wish to each of you and your families that it will be filled with Peace Happiness and Love - **SVPDP-Conference of Ferntree Gully**

BAPTISMS – We offer our congratulations to **Emmett Muthu & Kaylee Drake** who are to be baptised this weekend: The Church of God welcomes you with great joy



CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY MASS Once again the “Nativity play” will be part of our 7:30pm Christmas Eve Family Mass. All children (especially the little ones) are invited to come dressed as Angels or Shepherds. Costume, need not be elaborate – a white dress or fairy skirt & wings for angels and tea towel headwear for shepherds will do. We are also looking for children (Grade 3 and above) to play the parts of Mary, Joseph, 3 Kings and Caesar. All costumes for these main characters will be provided. The children will be asked to sit in the area surrounding the altar. If you are interested, or if you have any questions, please contact the Parish Office on 9758 1029.



LECTORS ROSTER the new lectors' roster is ready for collection in the Church foyer. Thank you for your commitment to this Church ministry

2020 STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS CONFERENCE

Saturday 15 February 2020, 9:00am – 6:30pm, at 400 City Road, Southbank (Planetshakers Centre). A day of prayer and renewal for all Christians to come together and be strengthened and encouraged in their faith. Encouraged by Pope Francis' message that we are all called to be saints, the underlying theme of the conference is to rely solely on God's grace and strength – especially in times when your faith could be questioned and challenged. Guest speakers will include Archbishop Peter A Comensoli, Archbishop Christopher Prowse, Fr Augustine Vallooran V.C, Lenyce Willason, Fr Ken Barker MGL & Lalith Perera. We invite everyone to this free event. If you are interested in participating, please register online. For more information & free registration visit www.strengthinweakness.com.au

ROSTERS: Mon 23rd to Sun 29th December

Flowers	Ann P, Connie B
Linen	Alvi M
Welcomers	6pm: Louis D, Peter G 9am Sue & David W, Thelma B 11am Kath & Andrew W
Lectors	6pm: Louise D 9am: Adrian S 11am: Trish M
Counters	Peter & Dawn G, George & Genevieve
Gardening	Patrick S & Harry R