



The Catholic Parishes of Branxton and Singleton are part of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

**Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year B**

**24 December 2023**

**First Reading** 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16  
A reading from the second book of Samuel.

Once David had settled into his house and the Lord had given him rest from all the enemies surrounding him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'Look, I am living in a house of cedar while the ark of God dwells in a tent'. Nathan said to the king, 'Go and do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you.'

But that very night the word of the Lord came to Nathan:

'Go and tell my servant David, "Thus the Lord speaks: Are you the man to build me a house to dwell in? I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel; I have been with you on all your expeditions; I have cut off all your enemies before you. I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall dwell in that place and never be disturbed again; nor shall the wicked continue to oppress them as they did, in the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel; I will give them rest from all their enemies. The Lord will make you great; the Lord will make you a House. And when your days are ended and you are laid to rest with your ancestors, I will preserve the offspring of your body after you and make his sovereignty secure. I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me and your throne be established for ever."'

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

**Responsorial Psalm**

**Ps 88:2-5. 27. 29. R. see v.2**

**(R.) For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord; through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth.

Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever, that your truth is firmly established as the heavens. **(R.)**

'I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your dynasty for ever and set up your throne through all ages.' **(R.)**

He will say to me: 'You are my father, my God, the rock who saves me.'

I will keep my love for him always;

for him my covenant shall endure. **(R.)**

**Second Reading** Rom 16:25-27  
A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans.

Glory to him who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery kept secret for endless ages, but now so clear that it must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things to be. He alone is wisdom; give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation** Lk 1:38

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

**I am the servant of the Lord:  
may his will for me be done.  
Alleluia!**

**Gospel** Lk 1:26-38

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

The Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**



**REFLECTION  
BY FR MICHAEL TATE**

**Spirit Hovering**

St Luke's account of the Annunciation draws on the Jewish tradition describing creation: 'There was darkness over the deep and God's Spirit hovered over the water. God said: "Let there be light", and there was light.' (Genesis 1:2-3) St Luke depicts Mary hearing in the depths of her soul: 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow.'

The Holy Spirit hovers over this young Jewish woman so that the most stupendously creative act in human history can take place. With her consent, God assumes human nature to be gradually enfleshed, embodied, in Mary's womb.

A naturally bewildered young woman was able to respond to God's will because she understood the imagery and the symbolism of the Genesis Story. We, in turn, need to read the Gospels in all their Jewishness so that we can understand when God's Holy Spirit hovers over our lives, asking us to fulfil some particular role in the Divine Plan.

We could pause for a moment to ask whether now is the time for a Marian response: 'Be it done unto me according to your word.'

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**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:**  
Drop down dew from above, you heavens,  
and let the clouds rain down the Just One;  
let the earth be opened and bring forth a  
Saviour.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON:**  
Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a  
son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

**NEXT WEEK'S SCRIPTURES**  
Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph, Year B  
**1st Reading:** Sir 3:2-6, 12-14  
**2nd Reading:** Col 3:12-21  
**Gospel:** Lk 2:22-40

**MYSTERY OF FAITH**  
When we eat this Bread and drink  
this Cup, we proclaim your Death  
O Lord until you come again.

## Prayer Requests

**Sick:** Lorraine Cooper, Phuong Ho, Ron Hebbe, Austin Hoffman, Warren Markham, Jen Phillips, Olga Roberts, Selene Maree Stanholm-Atkins and Sharon Wood. **Bring healing, comfort, and peace to their bodies. Send strength to their carers.**

**Recently Deceased:** Margaret Eveleigh, Gwen Lambkin and Christine Turner (Fri 29/12 St Patrick's 11am). **May they rest in peace and light perpetual shine upon them.**

**Anniversaries:** Mary Bonser, Carol Cox, Pamela Davy, Paul O'Connor and Gordon Wright. **Having returned to the Father, may they rest in peace.**

*Due to Privacy Laws, names of the sick and deceased can only be put in the bulletin with the permission of the immediate family.*

## PARISH CONTACTS

<b>Parish Priest</b>	<b>Rev Thomas Chirackal</b>	Presbytery: 6578 9651	Email: <a href="mailto:Thomas.chirackal@mn.catholic.org.au">Thomas.chirackal@mn.catholic.org.au</a>
<b>Parish Secretary</b>	<b>Mrs Erica Janssen</b>	Parish Office: 02 5507 4048 (Tues-Fri, 9am-3pm) Unit 5, 16 Cambridge St, Singleton	Email: <a href="mailto:singleton.branxton@mn.catholic.org.au">singleton.branxton@mn.catholic.org.au</a> Web: <a href="http://www.singletoncatholicparish.org.au">www.singletoncatholicparish.org.au</a>
<b>Facebook</b>	Catholic Parishes of Singleton and Branxton	<b>Promoters of Safeguarding</b> Contact via the Parish Office	Singleton Parish: Niamh Marzol Branxton Parish: Lydia Gorczyca
<b>St Patrick's Parish PLEASE PHONE THE PARISH OFFICE FOR BOOKINGS OF PARISH CHURCHES (5507 4048)</b>			
<b>Singleton</b>	<i>St Patrick's Church</i>	Queen Street Singleton 2330	
<b>Broke</b>	<i>Immaculate Conception Catholic Church</i>	Wollombi Street, Broke	
<b>Glendon Brook</b>	<i>St. Paul's Catholic Church</i>	874 Glendonbrook Road, Glendon Brook	
<b>St Brigid's Parish PLEASE PHONE THE PARISH OFFICE FOR BOOKINGS OF PARISH CHURCHES (5507 4048)</b>			
<b>Branxton</b>	St Brigid's Catholic Church	Station St, Branxton 2335	
<b>Greta</b>	St Catherine's Catholic Church	Branxton Street, Greta 2334	

## Schools in our Parishes

<b>St. Catherine's Catholic College</b>	<b>Principal: Mrs Niamh Marzol</b>	K-12 Office: 02 6578 9600	Email: <a href="mailto:admin@singleton.catholic.edu.au">admin@singleton.catholic.edu.au</a>
<b>Rosary Park Catholic School</b>	<b>Principal: Miss Sallyanne Stanbridge</b>	K-6 Office: 02 4938 1541	Email: <a href="mailto:admin@branxton.mn.catholic.edu.au">admin@branxton.mn.catholic.edu.au</a>
<b>St Nicholas Early Education Singleton</b>	<b>Director: Ms Madison Keevill</b>	Office: 02 4015 2860	Email: <a href="mailto:singleton@stnicholasmn.org.au">singleton@stnicholasmn.org.au</a>
<b>St Nicholas Early Education Branxton</b>	<b>Director: Ms Alex Stafford</b>	Office: 02 4931 1220	Email: <a href="mailto:branxton@stnicholasmn.org.au">branxton@stnicholasmn.org.au</a>

## MASS ROSTER – SUNDAY 31 DECEMBER 2023

	<b>Branxton Saturday 6pm</b>	<b>Greta Sunday 8am</b>	<b>Singleton Sunday 7am</b>	<b>Singleton Sunday 10am</b>	<b>Singleton Sunday 6pm</b>	<b>Counters 9.30am Tuesday</b>
<b>Welcomer</b>	E Bendeich	D & J Clarke	C Crow	J Dries	J Dries	Counting will be done on Tues 9/1/24. Any counters available.
<b>Commentator</b>		L Gorczyca	G Cattermole	<b>SCAE LEADER</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER NEEDED</b>	
<b>Readers</b>	H Hartcher S Trunk	L Harrison	P Boyd	<b>VOLUNTEER NEEDED</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER NEEDED</b>	
<b>Prayers</b>		L Gorczyca	P Boyd	<b>VOLUNTEER NEEDED</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER NEEDED</b>	
<b>Offertory</b>	C & A Trunk	J Nightingale C Anderson	<b>VOLUNTEER NEEDED</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER NEEDED</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER NEEDED</b>	
<b>Rosary Leader</b>		C Miller				

*Faithful and compassionate God, your Spirit guides the Church and makes it holy; hear the prayers we offer, that in the ministry to which you have called us, may we serve you faithfully, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.*

## WEEKLY MASS DIARY

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
<b>25 December</b> NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)	<b>26 December</b> St Stephen, The First Martyr	<b>27 December</b> St John, Apostle and Evangelist	<b>28 December</b> The Holy Innocents, Martyrs	<b>29 December</b> St Thomas Becket	<b>30 December</b>	<b>31 December</b> THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH, YEAR B
<b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	<b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	<b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	<b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	<b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>		
<u>10.00am</u> <b>Mass Christmas Day</b> St Patrick's Singleton	<b>NO MASS</b>	<u>9.20am</u> <b>SCAE</b> St Patrick's Singleton	<u>6.00pm</u> <b>SCAE</b> St Patrick's Singleton	<u>9.20am</u> <b>Mass</b> St Patrick's Singleton	<u>9.00am</u> Novena <u>9.20am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>7.00am</u> Mass <u>10.00m</u> SCAE <u>6.00pm</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton
<u>8.00am</u> <b>Mass Christmas Day</b> St Catherine's Greta	<b>NO MASS</b>		<b>NO MASS</b>		<u>6.00pm</u> <b>SCAE</b> St Brigid's Branxton	<u>7.35am</u> <b>Rosary</b> <u>8.15am</u> <b>Mass</b> St Catherine's Greta

**St Brigid, St Catherine, St Patrick, and St Paul – pray for us**

# Weekly Notices

## **WELCOME TO OUR PARISH**

We welcome visitors from all faith communities to our Parish Mass. If you are new members of our Parish, we ask that you take a Welcome Pack from the back of the church, complete and return the Member forms and one of our welcoming team will contact you.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, the Wonnarua people, who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

## **SAFEGUARDING OUR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. Information brochures are available in the entrance to the church. If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult, contact the Office of Safeguarding 02 49791390 or [childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au) or visit [www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au](http://www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au) for more information and resources.

## **St Brigid's Caritas Group**

St Brigid's Caritas Group thank you for your support in 2023. May this Christmas season fill your home with joy and peace.

## **Cemetery Thanks**

A very special thank you to those who have worked hard to ensure the cemeteries in Singleton and Branxton are tidy for visitors at this special time of year.

Special thanks in Singleton to Terry Dunn, Adrian Klasen, Ron Nowland, Kerry Dries and Julies Dries.

## **Christmas Offering Envelopes**

Christmas Offering envelopes are available at each church and are also included in planned giving envelope sets. These offerings are sent to the Maitland Central Clergy Fund. Please place your offering on either collection plate at Mass.

## **Christmas around the Diocese**

Are you thinking about attending mass this Christmas? If you're not sure where to go, we've put together a list of services happening across the Diocese! Access it here: [www.mn.catholic.org.au/news-events/christmasmasstimes2023/](http://www.mn.catholic.org.au/news-events/christmasmasstimes2023/)

## **Parish Bereavement Teams – Expression of Interests**

Interested persons are invited to contact the Parish Office to submit an Expression of Interest for either the Singleton or Branxton Parish Bereavement Teams. Members of the Bereavement Teams tirelessly support and service people of our parish in their time of loss. They liaise with the Parish Funeral Directors when funeral arrangements are required. Ministers in the team will undertake the Stepping Stones formation program.

## **Hope Tree Project 14 – Martha's Piggery**

Thank you to everyone who has donated to the Hope Tree Group Project 14 – Martha's Piggery. A total of \$3251.25 was collected from our church donation boxes, St Brigid's Caritas Group, the Legion of Mary Greta and generous personal donations.

The amount of \$1800 has been transferred to Martha.

We are pleased to report that the first load of bricks has been delivered to Martha's house to begin building the piggery. We will post further updates as they come in.

## **Hope Tree Group – 2023 Christmas Appeal**

Details of this year's Hope Tree Christmas Appeal is on the back page today and will be printed in the bulletins for our Christmas masses. A special thank you to St Catherine's Catholic College who have been collecting and recycling cans and bottles during the year and raised \$1078.20 which will go towards the Christmas appeal.

## **2024 God's Word – Daily Reflections**

Designed to help you to keep the Word of God close to your heart in your daily life. A companion on the journey to pray, to share, to grow in God's love and be nourished by the Word of God. Includes the Bible readings set down for each day, with a reflection.

Limited copies are available at the Parish Office. Please bring \$15 cash for payment.

## **Caritas – Global Gifts Change Lives**

Caritas Australia's Global Gifts Christmas cards are a great way to spread joy and hope this Christmas season and to make a life-changing impact. Each gift represents a donation that will support vulnerable communities to create a brighter future. Order now to receive in time for Christmas at [www.globalgifts.org.au](http://www.globalgifts.org.au)

## The Nativity of the Lord



### **CHRISTMAS VIGIL MASS**

**St Brigid's Branxton 6.00pm**  
**St Patrick's Singleton 6.30pm**

### **CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT MASS**

**St Patrick's Singleton 12.00am**

### **CHRISTMAS DAY MASS**

**St Catherine's Greta 8.00am**  
**St Patrick's Singleton 10.00am**



## **Parish Office Hours**

The Parish Office will be **CLOSED 25 Dec to 9 Jan** (Bulletins for this period were published on 22 December). I wish you a Christmas season that is merry and bright with the light of God's love.

## **2023 Christmas Message – God is with Us**

"May our contemplation of the Christ child this Christmas fill our hearts and souls with hope, peace and joy because we know that God is with us. God bless you all and Happy Christmas."

Listen to Bishop Michael Kennedy's Christmas message using this link! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnZ6A-35mcl>

## **Do you have the Mass App?**

Whether you're at home or travelling, the Diocese's mobile app shows you Churches and Mass times near you. If you're looking to attend Christmas Mass in your Parish, or you're just not sure about upcoming Mass times near you, simply searching in the app by your location allows you to find service times in your area. You can download the app for free from the **Apple App Store** and **Google Play Store**. Just search for 'Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle' and click install on your mobile or tablet!

## **Donations for Christmas Decorations**

If you would like to contribute to the decorating of the churches for Advent and Christmas, please leave your donation in an envelope with the collections marked "Christmas Decorations".





# The Lighting of the Advent Candles

## Fourth Sunday of Advent: The Joy Candle

**During the fourth week of Advent, we focus on Mary's open heart as she prepares to receive the gift of Emmanuel ~ God-with-us.**

*(Lighting of the fourth purple candle of the Advent Wreath – the love candle)*

**Leader:** We light the fourth candle as a sign of our faith in God's redeeming love. God's promised Messiah is coming. He brings good news for the poor and oppressed. He will bind up broken hearts. He will proclaim release to those who are held captive.

**All:** **Loving God, we thank you for your gift of love - shown to us perfectly in Jesus Christ our Lord. Help us prepare our hearts to receive Him. Bless us in our prayer. Help us to hear and do your word. We ask it in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

Use the words below to find out what the angel Gabriel and the Blessed Virgin Mary are saying to each other.

-----  
favored one!  
The \_\_\_\_\_ is with you.  
Don't be \_\_\_\_\_!  
God is \_\_\_\_\_  
with you. You shall  
have a \_\_\_\_\_ and his  
name will be \_\_\_\_\_.



I am the  
-----  
of the Lord!  
Let this  
-----  
as you  
have said.

**Jesus   afraid   happen   servant   Lord   Greetings   pleased   son**



Hope Tree  
Group

# 2023 Christmas Appeal

## Home Care for the Disabled

Sr Dhanya is working as a teacher in a special school for the mentally challenged in Madhya Pradesh, central India.

She visits villages and helps disabled children and their families. She gives ADL (Activities of Daily Living) skills to children and trains parents to do that. She gives physiotherapy to children and trains the parents to give it too. She helps them to obtain disability certificates and other government documents which will entitle them to get a pension of \$20 per month and other travel concessions. The government does not provide any other assistance to the disabled, so she gives them help as needed. She assists with clothes, food, wheelchairs and crutches and other needs.

Part of the collections at our Christmas Masses will be donated to Sr Dhanya's work.

