

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

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

Morning Mass

25 December 2024

First Reading

Is 52:7-10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

How beautiful on the mountains,
are the feet of one who brings good news,
who heralds peace, brings happiness,
proclaims salvation,
and tells Zion,
'Your God is king!'

Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices,
they shout for joy together,
for they see the Lord face to face,
as he returns to Zion.

Break into shouts of joy together,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the Lord is consoling his people,
redeeming Jerusalem.

The Lord bares his holy arm
in the sight of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 97:1-6 R.v.3

**(R.) All the ends of the earth have seen
the saving power of God.**

Sing a new song to the Lord
for he has worked wonders.
His right hand and his holy arm
have brought salvation. **(R.)**

The Lord has made known his salvation;
has shown his justice to the nations.
He has remembered his truth and love
for the house of Israel. **(R.)**

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.
Shout to the Lord all the earth,
ring out your joy. **(R.)**

Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp,
with the sound of music.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
acclaim the King, the Lord. **(R.)**

Second Reading

Heb 1:1-6

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

At various times in the past and in various
different ways, God spoke to our ancestors
through the prophets; but in our own time,
the last days, he has spoken to us through
his Son, the Son that he has appointed to
inherit everything and through whom he
made everything there is. He is the radiant
light of God's glory and the perfect copy of
his nature, sustaining the universe by his
powerful command; and now that he has

destroyed the defilement of sin, he has
gone to take his place in heaven at the
right hand of divine Majesty. So he is now
as far above the angels as the title which
he has inherited is higher than their own
name. God has never said to any angel:
You are my Son, today I have become your
father, or: I will be a father to him and he a
son to me. Again, when he brings the First-
born into the world, he says: Let all the
angels of God worship him.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

A holy day has dawned upon us.

Come you nations and adore the Lord,

**Today a great light has come
upon the earth.**

Alleluia!

Gospel

Jn 1:1-18

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to
John.*

In the beginning was the Word:
the Word was with God
and the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things came to be,
not one thing had its being but through
him.

All that came to be had life in him
and that life was the light of men,
a light that shines in the dark,
a light that darkness could not overpower.

The Word was the true light
that enlightens all men;
and he was coming into the world.

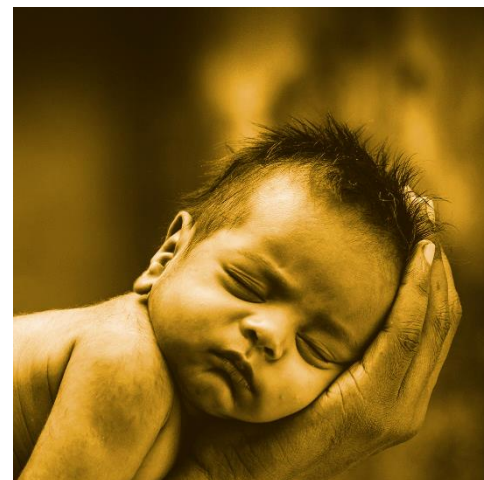
He was in the world
that had its being through him,
and the world did not know him.
He came to his own domain
and his own people did not accept him.

But to all who did accept him
he gave power to become children of God,
to all who believe in the name of him
who was born not out of human stock
or urge of the flesh or will of man
but of God himself.

The Word was made flesh,
he lived among us.
And we saw his glory,
the glory that is his as the only Son of the
Father, full of grace and truth.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.



REFLECTION

BY LISA-MARIE CALDERONE-STEWART

*For people surrounded by department
store decorations, commercials,
Christmas carols, special foods, and the
like, believing that today's Christmas
celebration actually evolved from the
humble story of a young woman giving
birth in the straw is a stretch. It might help
to focus on the characters involved.*

*What do you think went through Joseph's
mind as he witnessed Mary giving birth to
a baby? What do you think went through
Mary's mind as she struggled with the birth
experience?*

*The Christmas story is full of symbols.
Jesus, who becomes our bread and wine –
our nourishment – is laid in a manger, the
feeding trough for the animals. Jesus, who
is the champion of poor people, is born into
a homeless family. Poor shepherds were
the first to welcome the Messiah that the
Jewish people had been awaiting for
generations. The symbol of angels singing,
praising God, and flying madly all over the
sky was a good clue that something out of
the ordinary was happening.*

*Modern Christmas stories use different
symbols to make the same points:
Rudolph, the 'poorest' reindeer, becomes
the champion; and Frosty, a snowman,
transforms children's lives.*

*What story from your own personal
Christmas experiences has special
meaning or symbolism?*

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: A child is born for us, and a son is given to us; his sceptre of power rests upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Messenger of great counsel.
COMMUNION ANTIPHON: All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
NEXT WEEK'S SCRIPTURES The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph, C 1st Reading: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 2nd Reading: Colossians 3:12-21 Gospel: Luke 2:41-52
MYSTERY OF FAITH <i>When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.</i>

We remember in our prayers:
Sick: Cecily Agnew, Mary Bailey, Lorraine Cooper, Mary Della-ca, Jose De Sousa, Tony Ernst, Ron Hebbe, Austin Hoffman, Liz Matt, Indira Nanda, Jen Phillips, Selene Stanholm-Atkins, Ross Timmins, Colleen Torrington, Sharon Wood, Zoe. **Bring healing, comfort, and peace to their bodies. Send strength to their carers.**
Recently Deceased: Christine Lewis and Clinton Bawden.
Anniversaries: Rev Thomas Purcell, Carol Cox, Matthew Spiteri, Gordon Wright, Christina Manacap.
Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord, and may light perpetual shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.

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PARISH CONTACTS

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

Schools in our Parishes			
St. Catherine's Catholic College	Principal: Mr Dave Crawford	K-12 Office: 02 6578 9600	Email: admin@singleton.catholic.edu.au
Rosary Park Catholic School	Principal: Miss Sallyanne Stanbridge	K-6 Office: 02 4938 1541	Email: admin@branxton.mn.catholic.edu.au
St Nicholas Early Education Singleton	Director: Ms Alex Stafford	Office: 02 4015 2860	Email: singleton@stnicholasmn.org.au
St Nicholas Early Education Branxton	Director: Ms Stella Danks	Office: 02 4931 1220	Email: branxton@stnicholasmn.org.au

MASS ROSTER – SUNDAY 29 DECEMBER 2024

	Branxton Saturday 6pm	Greta Sunday 8am	Singleton Sunday 7am	Singleton Sunday 10am	Singleton Sunday 6pm	Counters 9.30am Tuesday
Welcomer	E Bendeich	D & J Clarke	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	J Dries	J Dries	J Woolley
Commentator		M Ingold	G Cattermole		E Janssen	
Readers	P Conroy M Thomas	L Harrison	SCAE LEADER REQ P Boyd	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	T Janssen H Janssen N Janssen	
Prayers		M Ingold	P Boyd	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	E Janssen	
Offertory	J & K Zaragoza	D & J Clarke	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	
Rosary Leader		L Gorczyca				

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

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
23 December <i>St John of Kanty</i>	24 December	25 December <i>THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS) DAY</i>	26 December <i>ST STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR</i>	27 December <i>ST JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST</i>	28 December <i>THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS</i>	29 December <i>THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH, YEAR C</i>
OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE CLOSED		
<u>8.00am</u> Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>6.30pm</u> Vigil Mass <u>12.00am</u> Midnight Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>10.00am</u> Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>		<u>9.20am</u> Anointing Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>9.00am</u> Novena <u>9.20am</u> Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>7.00am</u> SCAE <u>10.00m</u> Mass <u>6.00pm</u> Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>
	<u>6.30pm</u> Vigil Mass <i>St Brigid's Branxton</i>	<u>8.00am</u> Mass <i>St Catherine's Greta</i>			<u>6.00pm</u> Mass <i>St Brigid's Branxton</i>	<u>7.35am</u> Rosary <u>8.15am</u> Mass <i>St Catherine's Greta</i>

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 or visit www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au for more information and resources.

Changes for December and January

Thank you to Fr John Tobin who will be saying Mass alternating with Greta and Branxton in December and January. Please check the Weekly Mass Diary for changes this week.

Parish Office Holidays: The parish office will be closed from 3pm Tuesday 24 December and re-open at 9am on Tuesday 7 January 2025.

Resumption of Communion from the Chalice

As of Sunday 1 December, communion in both species will be offered at all Masses in our Parishes. To facilitate this, Extraordinary Ministers of Communion are required for each Mass.

New Rosters are being prepared for St. Brigid's and St Patrick's. Please let us know if you still wish to be included on the roster by indicating on the sheet on the noticeboard if you wish to minister as Proclaiming the Word, Offertory Procession and we especially need Extraordinary Ministers of Communion.

Merry Christmas from St Brigid's Caritas Group

Wishing you peace and joy at Christmas and through the New Year. Thank you for your support during this year! St Brigid's Caritas, Branxton.

Chúc bạn bình an và vui vẻ trong dịp Giáng sinh và năm mới. Cảm ơn sự ủng hộ của bạn trong năm nay! St Brigid's Caritas, Branxton.

Christmas Gifts from Palms

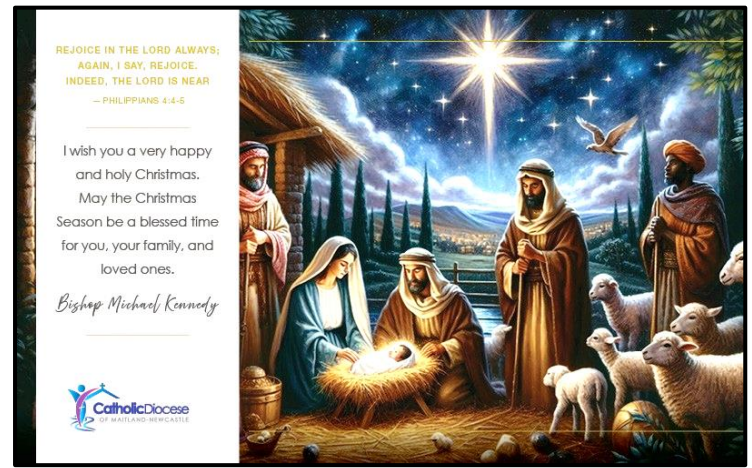
Are you looking to give something really special this year? Something that makes a tangible difference? Palms has the shop for you! Whether it be a GIFT directly supporting our overseas development program, or some unique Timorese GIFTS for your loved one's home, you'll find that perfect GIFT here! Just go to www.palms.org.au/donate/palms-gift-shop Happy shopping! And yes, your purchase assists the amazing communities overseas. Merry Christmas from Palms Australia!

God's Word Daily Reflections 2025

The ideal companion for the 2025 Holy Year. This edition contains the Bible readings set down for each day of the liturgical year with reflections by eminent spiritual writers. Designed to help you keep the word of God close to your heart in daily life. Make God's Word the foundation of your life, and empower you to pray, to live and to share your faith with others. **To order, complete one of the marked envelopes available at the church with your name, include your \$15 and place on the collection plate. Your copy will be sent to the church for you to collect. Copies can also be purchase from Parish Office.**

Bishop Michael's Christmas Message

Watch Bishop Michael's Christmas message at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaFVY2pKHq4>.



Christmas Activity Book for Children

Children are invited to grab an activity book and a packet of pencils from the back of the church to use during Mass and take home with them. We thank the Office of Mission and Evangelisation for providing these for our parishes.



Caritas – Global Gifts

You can make a **big difference** to the lives of people experiencing poverty. When you buy a Global Gift, your loved one gets a special card and you help raise much-needed funds for vulnerable communities around the world.

Your **gift of water** can help give vulnerable communities improved access to clean water for drinking, hygiene and sanitation. Your **gift of education** can help support adult literacy and numeracy classes to help break the cycle of poverty. Your **gift of food** can help vulnerable families like Maria's to avoid hunger and put food back on their table.

Buy for Christmas at <https://www.globalgifts.org.au/gifts/>

Christmas Mass Times Near You

To find a Mass Time near you, check out our 2024 Christmas Mass Times list go to www.mn.catholic.org.au and click the **Christmas Mass Times** box on the front page.

Or 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!

Caritas – Vanuatu Earthquake Appeal



Vanuatu has experienced two earthquakes within 24 hours impacting over 116,000 people and causing significant damage to buildings and infrastructure. The main hospital in Port Vila has sustained extensive damage and is overwhelmed by the mass casualties. There are hundreds of people injured or trapped under rubble and at least 14 people have died with the death toll expected to continue to rise. People remain fearful of further disaster, as Vanuatu is one of the most susceptible countries to natural disasters such as earthquakes, storm damage, flooding, and tsunamis. This appeal will provide support to our on the ground partners who are ready to respond to the humanitarian requirements by providing emergency shelter, food and other essentials, psychosocial support, and recovery efforts. Please Donate today: <http://www.caritas.org.au/vanuatu>

May Hope Fill Our Days!

This year, as we embark on the journey toward the Jubilee Year 2025, we are called to be pilgrims of hope—travellers with hearts open to God’s grace and hands ready to serve. Like the Magi who set out in faith, seeking the promised King, we, too, are invited to walk together, carrying the light of hope to a world yearning for peace, justice, and mercy.

The Jubilee, a time of restoration and liberation, echoes the message of Christmas: the proclamation of “good news of great joy for all people” (Luke 2:10). It reminds us to forgive debts, heal wounds, and unite as one human family under the love of Christ. As pilgrims, we are not solitary travellers, but a community bound by faith, hope, and charity.

2025 marks the 150th year of establishment of the Sisters of Mercy convent in Singleton and the 100th anniversary of the opening of the magnificent St Stanislaus Chapel within the convent grounds. The Singleton community is grateful to the Sisters of Mercy for the services they have provided over the years. Let us hope that those magnificent buildings which lay vacant now, will be put into use for the benefit of the community in the years to come.

This Christmas, let us recommit to the journey of hope, trusting in God’s providence and embracing the spirit of Jubilee. May our lives reflect the joy of Christ’s birth and radiate the peace that only He can bring.

Merry Christmas and blessings on our pilgrimage to the Jubilee Year!

Fr Thomas Chirackal



2024 CHRISTMAS COLLECTION - FREE MEDICAL CAMPS

There is only one collection taken at Christmas Masses, and this year it will be used to help fund **AYUSH free medical camps in villages in the Koraput District of Odisha, India.**

These communities face numerous health challenges due to the absence of primary healthcare centres and limited access to medical services. The residents often suffer from infections caused by contaminated water, malnutrition, anaemia, and other health issues, which remain unaddressed due to the lack of medical facilities.

AYUSH medical camps are temporary outreach units that offer treatment using indigenous systems of medicine, such as Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Homeopathy, Siddha, and Sowa Rigpa.

The primary goal of these AYUSH free medical camps is to provide free healthcare services, raise health awareness, and offer basic medicines to those in need. They plan to conduct two camps per month and the specific objectives of the camps are:

- **Vital signs check-up:** To identify common and prevalent health issues.
- **Health Education:** To provide guidance on hygiene practices, nutrition, and preventable diseases.
- **Provide medicines:** To provide basic medicines for common ailments and refer individuals for further medical care if necessary.

Key health concerns in these villages include:

- **Malnutrition:** Many children are underweight, have stunted growth, and suffer from anemia.
- **Infectious Diseases:** Respiratory infections, and skin conditions like scabies and impetigo.
- **Women’s Health:** Musculoskeletal issues, anemia, headaches, and dental problems.
- **Men’s Health:** Respiratory issues, orthopedic problems, anemia, and hypertension.

The request is for \$2500 to cover the costs of camps over the next four months. Funds will be used to cover doctor fees, medical staff, medicines, travel, food, awareness materials, and other related expenses to have a significant impact on the health and well-being of the villagers.

