

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

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

Christmas Day

25 December 2025

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?

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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.	<p>We remember in our prayers:</p> <p>Sick: Cecily Agnew, Michael Agnew, Sienna Baker, Eunice Benn, Lorraine Cooper, Valerie Diputado, Fleur McAlister, Joanne Perrett, Jen Phillips, Carmel Tope, Sharon Wood. Bring healing, comfort, and peace to their bodies. Send strength to their carers.</p> <p>Anniversaries: Pamela Davy, Tony Ernst, Mary Bonser, Kath Deaves.</p> <p>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.</p>
NEXT WEEK'S SCRIPTURES The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph 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>	

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PARISH CONTACTS			
Parish Administrator	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: Allan Humphreys
St Patrick's Parish PLEASE PHONE THE PARISH OFFICE FOR BOOKINGS OF PARISH CHURCHES (5507 4048)			
Singleton	St Patrick's Church	Queen Street Singleton 2330	
Broke	Immaculate Conception Catholic Church	Wollombi Street, Broke	
Glendon Brook	St. Paul's Catholic Church	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 David Crawford	K-12 Office: 02 6578 9600	Email: admin@singleton.catholic.edu.au
Rosary Park Catholic School	Principal: Mr Ashley Borg	K-6 Office: 02 4938 1541	Email: admin@branxton.mn.catholic.edu.au

MASS ROSTER – SUNDAY 28 DECEMBER 2025						
	Branxton Saturday 6pm	Greta Sunday 8.15am	Singleton Sunday 7am	Singleton Sunday 10am	Singleton Sunday 6pm	Counters 9.30am Tuesday
Welcomer	E Bendeich	D & J Clarke	C Langford	J Dries	J Dries	J Woolley
Commentator		A Humphreys	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	H Rapp	
Readers	J Stafa M Thomas	D Clarke	S Bates N Alexandroy	L Stevenson H Sapitula	H Rapp O Brackenrig C Brackenrig	
Prayers		A Humphreys	H Duldulao	Donna	A Skardon	
Offertory	K Jones K Jones	Cecilia Helena	J Tindale E Thomas	VOLUNTEERS NEEDED	VOLUNTEERS NEEDED	
Extraordinary Minister		N/A	J Dunn	T Cochrane	C Tysoe	

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
22 December	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 & Evangelist</i>	28 December <i>THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH, YEAR A</i>
OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE CLOSED		
8.00am Mass St Patrick's Singleton	6.00pm Mass St Patrick's Singleton	7.30pm Christmas Vigil Mass 12.00am Christmas Midnight Mass St Patrick's Singleton	10.00am Christmas Day Mass St Patrick's Singleton	NO MASS St Patrick's Singleton	9.00am Novena 9.20am Mass St Patrick's Singleton 6.00pm Mass Glendonbrook	7.00am Mass 10.00am Mass 6.00pm SCAE St Patrick's Singleton
	9.20am Mass St Catherine's Greta	5.30pm Christmas Vigil Mass St Brigid's Branxton	8.00am Christmas Day Mass St Catherine's Greta		6.00pm SCAE St Brigid's Branxton	7.50am Rosary 8.15am Mass 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 contact the Parish Office for a Welcome Pack, complete and return the Member forms and one of our welcoming team will contact you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Our parishes acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, the Wonnarua people, who have walked upon and cared for the land we meet on 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.

Parish Office Holiday Hours

The Parish Office will close from 3pm 24 December 2025 and re-open at 9am on Tuesday 6 January 2026.

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and thank you for another enjoyable year in my position as Parish Secretary! *Erica Janssen*

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. *Mercia Thomas*

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. *Mercia Thomas*

St Patrick's Anniversary Mass

There will be no Anniversary Mass in January. January and February Anniversaries will be commemorated at our Mass on 1 February 2026.

We invite you to join us to bring your intentions and pray the Novena before Mass each Saturday morning from 9am. If you would like to join the roster of leaders for the Novena, please contact the Parish Office or speak with Frieda King.

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".

Sisters of Faith Dinner 2026

You are warmly invited to our Sisters of Faith Dinner on Wednesday 11 February 2026 from 6.30-9.00pm for an evening of friendship, reflection, and inspiring conversation that nourishes both heart and soul in the Victor Peters Suite, 841 Hunter St, Newcastle West. For more information on this popular annual event to purchase tickets, follow the links on the event page <https://mn.catholic.org.au/event>

Help Alleviate Poverty with Your Used Postage Stamps

The Mary Mackillop International Mission runs education programs for Peru's poor children and training programs for poor mothers to learn useful crafts to earn an income. Funds are raised for the mission by selling used postage stamps. Cut your stamps from envelopes leaving a margin around the edge and send to *John Altham, 17 Boronia St, Kyle Bay NSW 2221*.

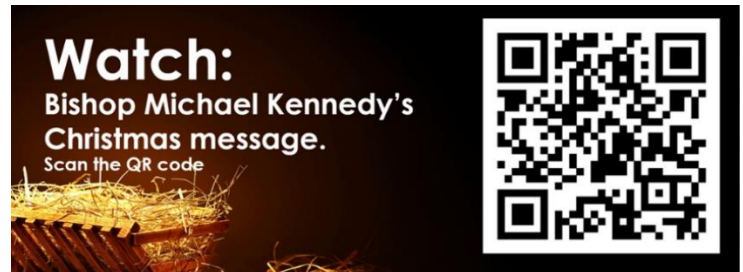
Bishop Michael's Christmas Message

'As we light the candles, sing carols, share meals and laughter, let us remember: the glory of Christmas shines brightest in our welcome. In the way we open our doors and our hearts.

So, to every family, every household and every single one of you: Welcome home. Welcome to the place where you are loved and accepted. Welcome to the embrace of Christ and his Church community.'

You can watch Bishop Michael's message by scanning this QR code or by going to <https://mn.catholic.org.au/christmas-2025/>

If you are travelling in the Maitland-Newcastle diocese this Christmas, you can find your closest Mass time by visiting <https://mn.catholic.org.au/christmas-mass-times/>



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 Australia: Be a light in the darkness this Christmas

This Christmas, Caritas Australia are inviting Australians to "be a light in the darkness" for families who are living through the trauma of war, displacement, and poverty. The intensity of the conflict in Ukraine has increased and more people are experiencing displacement and poverty. But with your support, we can bring hope to these families. Our partner, Caritas Ukraine are on the ground working hard to prepare food kits, emergency shelter kits and psychosocial assistance to families facing adversity.

Donate today at <https://www.caritas.org.au/christmas-appeal/be-the-light-in-darkness/>

Catholic Mission – Give the Gift of Education this Christmas

Christmas is a season of giving—and for children like Maleda in Ethiopia, your gift can change everything. While most children are preparing for festive joy, Maleda is struggling to be heard. Born deaf, she faces daily rejection and isolation. But there is hope—the Co-Action Deaf School offers her a place to learn, belong and thrive. With your generous support, Catholic Mission can restore and strengthen this vital school and give children the future they deserve. As we prepare to celebrate Christmas with family and friends, let us not forget those on the peripheries. Pope Leo XIV recently reflected that "for the Christian faith, the education of the poor is not a favour but a duty. Children have a right to knowledge as a fundamental requirement for the recognition of human dignity." (Dilexi Te, 72) To donate go to <https://www.catholicmission.org.au/>

2026 Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Course

The CPE Introductory course is run over a period of five weeks (each Monday), commencing on Monday 2 February 2026 at Mackillop Parish, Charlestown from 9am to 4pm. Topics covered include Pastoral Care, Listening, Self-Awareness, Grief, Healing & Illness and Community. The course is also a pre-requisite for anyone considering a role in hospital chaplaincy.

Enquiries for this course can be directed to Fr. Roger Zohrab rzohrab@bigpond.com

Find out more about Clinical Pastoral Education <https://www.nswccpe.edu.au/hunter-cpe-centre>

Glory to God in the Highest

AND ON EARTH PEACE TO PEOPLE OF GOODWILL

Christmas comes to us this year with heavy hearts. The joy of the season is overshadowed by the pain, shock, and grief caused by the senseless violence associated with the Bondi tragedy. Lives were lost, families shattered, and a nation left asking questions for which there are no easy answers. In such a moment, it may feel difficult - even inappropriate - to speak of peace, joy, or goodwill. Yet it is precisely in times like these that the true meaning of Christmas must be proclaimed most clearly.

At Christmas we do not celebrate a distant or detached God. We celebrate Emmanuel - God with us. God enters our world not in power or spectacle, but in vulnerability. The child born in Bethlehem comes into a world already marked by fear, injustice, and violence. The first Christmas was not peaceful in the way we often imagine it. It took place under occupation, amid danger, poverty, and the threat of death. And yet, into that darkness, God chose to plant the fragile but unstoppable seed of peace.

The angels proclaimed, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of goodwill.*" This peace is not merely the absence of conflict. It is the deep peace that begins in the human heart—when fear gives way to compassion, hatred to mercy, and despair to hope. The tragedy we have witnessed reminds us how urgently our world needs this kind of peace.

Christmas calls each of us to become messengers of peace. Not by grand gestures, but by the daily choices we make: to reject violence in all its forms, to speak words that heal rather than harm, to listen rather than judge, to notice those who are struggling and refuse to look away. Peace begins when we allow Christ to be born anew in our hearts - when we let his love disarm our anger and his mercy soften our hearts.

May this Christmas not be an escape from reality, but a transformation of it. May the Prince of Peace reign in our hearts, in our communities, and in our nation. And may we, strengthened by hope, carry the light of Christ into every place where darkness still threatens, so that peace may truly dwell among all people.

I wish you all Merry Christmas



2025 CHRISTMAS COLLECTION

There is only **ONE** collection taken at each Christmas Mass, and this year it will be used to help fund two projects in Odisha, India through the Missionary Society of St Thomas the Apostle.

Entrusted with the *mission ad gentes* work in the State of Odisha under the Archdiocese of Shamshabad, the Missionary Society of St Thomas currently serves across nine mission centres. Their work is carried out through the *Jyoti Marg Educational and Charitable Trust*, dedicated to the cultural, educational, and social upliftment of those in the most interior villages.

They envision a compassionate society where everyone—regardless of caste, age, or religion—has access to healthcare and education. This year, we invite your support for two vital programs at their **Social Action Centres in Laxmipur and Kundra**:

Empowerment at the Little Flower Social Action Centre, Kundra

Under the direction of Fr. Tony Kizhakkemuriyil, their tailoring program empowers women from poor farming families to earn a sustainable livelihood. Following the success of training 25 women this year, they are launching a new 3-month session in Dangarappalli village for 20 participants. Most are illiterate and struggle to meet basic needs; this skill allows them to work from home and support their families.

Funding is needed for: *Tutor Salary* for 3 months; *2 Sewing Machines*; *Materials* (Cloth, thread, etc.); *Refreshments and Travel*. With the total goal being **\$1000 AUD**.

Rural Health-Care Program, Laxmipur Social Action Centre

Under the direction of Fr. Binish Kuzhiyadiyil, two sisters from the Medical Sisters of St. Joseph (MSJ) run the centre's dispensary, providing life-saving care to children, women, and the elderly in remote areas. From medical camps to home visits, and preventive care for children and the elderly, they provide the only healthcare many of these villagers will ever receive.

Funding is needed for: *Medical Tools*: Haemoglobin machine, Nebulizer, Glucose strips and *Clinical Items*: Wheelchair, Injection & Dressing trolleys, rubberized bed sheets, and color-coded waste bins. With the estimated cost being **\$1950 AUD**.

Donations can be made via the **collection plate** at Christmas Mass, use the **EFTPOS** machine at St Patrick's Church or you can click the **DONATE** button on the parish website <https://singletoncatholicparish.org.au/> to find details on how to donate electronically to HOPE TREE GROUP.