

**13/14 DECEMBER 2025
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

REFLECTION

Today is the third Sunday of Advent - Gaudete Sunday - the word comes from the Latin *Gaudium* meaning "gladness", "delight", or "spiritual joy" and Joy is the theme for this Third Sunday in Advent. It is not a shallow emotion or a fleeting happiness that depends on circumstances. Rather, it is a deep, abiding gladness rooted in God's goodness and presence. We might call it *the joy of the soul*. It's the kind of joy that can exist even in sorrow, that can sing even in darkness, that can hope even when the heart is heavy. Joy in this Christian sense, is not escape from suffering - it's the discovery of God's presence *within* it. To be joyful, then, does not mean we are smiling all the time. It means that deep within us, we know we are held by God, and the His promises will not fail. True joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). It flows from love, humility, and gratitude.

We are getting closer to Christmas - the Lord becoming flesh, God born in our midst. The eternal enters time, the infinite takes on finite. Almost seems like an oxymoron. The *Creator becomes the creature*. But this is the mystery of our faith. Advent reminds us that God's nearness is not a metaphor, it's a reality. The Almighty stoops low. The divine takes on the dust of the earth. Isaiah's words are a comfort to the weary: "Be strong, fear not! Here is your God. He comes with vindication, with divine recompense He comes to save you." He speaks to those who have weak knees and trembling hands - to those who are tired, afraid, or uncertain. God's message is simple: *Do not fear, I am coming to save you.*

Seeds need time to germinate. They need to be watered, nourished, and cared for before they bear fruit. So it is with our souls. Spiritual growth is a process - sometimes hidden, sometimes slow - but always moving toward the harvest.

John was the greatest born of woman, Jesus says, yet *"the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."* Why? Because John prepared the way, Christ fulfills it. John pointed to the dawn; Christ is the rising sun. Through Jesus' redemptive love, the gates of heaven are flung open, and grace is poured out for all.

Life often feels like an oxymoron: joy amid pain, peace amid turmoil, light amid shadow. But these contradictions are the soil where true faith grows. Joy isn't the absence of suffering - it's the awareness that *God is with us in it*.

We are called to be a people of joy, a people of hope. That means trusting in God's plan even when it doesn't make sense. It means finding delight not only in what God gives, but in *who God is*. Joy doesn't deny the cross, it transforms it. Joy doesn't erase hardship, it redeems it. So, when life feels like a contradiction, remember the greatest contradiction of all, the Almighty born as a helpless child, became our salvation. As Advent draws toward its fulfillment, let us take Isaiah's words to heart. *Be strong, Fear not.*

Let us take James's counsel, *Be patient*. And let us take John's example. *Prepare the way of the Lord*. God is working -quietly, faithfully, joyfully - within the contradictions of our lives.

So be strong. Be patient. Be prepared.
And above all -*rejoice in the Lord always.*

extracts from the writings of

Deacon Christopher Wagner and Rev. John P. Cush

**ANGEL TREE IN CHURCH
THIS IS OUR GIVING TREE FOR**



**THOSE LESS
FORTUNATE THAN OUR-
SELVES PLEASE MAKE
SURE THAT YOUR GIFTS**

**ARE GIVEN IN TO THE PARISH OFFICE NO
LATER THAT TOMORROW 15TH
DECEMBER AS DE PAUL HOUSE NEED
TIME TO SORT AND DELIVER THEM!**

De Paul House are also looking for some Christmas Treats for the food parcels i.e. nice biscuits, tinned fruit, packs of Chippies, popcorn etc. (**NO** Mince Tarts/ Christmas pud's not suitable for their clients.) ***Please be as generous as you can..*** De Paul House is supporting over 157 families, 325 children and 240 adults and seniors. Bringing Christmas cheer will only happen if our supportive community will do whatever they can. Donations can be made now up until 15th December. See noticeboard for more details and ideas!

'Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD' (Prov.19:17)



FAMILY LIFE INTERNATIONAL NZ

Join our Mission to serve Life & Family. FLI NZ are seeking an Operations Manager to support the daily operations of our pro-life, pro-family mission. Ideal for someone with strong organizational Abilities, solid business skills and a heart for service. Express interest to Michelle Kaufman michelle@fli.org.nz Or visit fli.org.nz/join-our-team

You are cordially invited to A Thursday Scripture Reflective Study Series on **THE BIBLE** and the **SACRAMENTS** continues on:

Thursday 11 December 2025, at 10:15 am - 11:30 am Venue: Foley Centre, St Mary's Northcote Please register (for free) at the Parish Office or RSVP to adultformation@stmarysnorthcote.org.nz or text 'attending' to 0225807851

ON SALE FROM THE PARISH OFFICE
St Columban Art Calendars 2026 \$12 ea.
Face of Christ Cards \$10 pack of 10
Advent Daily Scripture Reflections \$8 ea.
And the popular 2026 Bible Diary \$20

STILL URGENTLY NEED

Projectionist for 8.30 & 10.30am Christmas Day!! **PLUS** Coordinators and projectionists for January!!!!

**ADVENT RECONCILIATION
PROGRAMME 2025**

7.00pm Tuesday 09 December Torbay
7.00pm Wednesday 10 December Orewa
7.00pm Thursday 11 December Takapuna
7.00pm Tuesday 16 December Northcote
7.00pm Friday 19 December Beachhaven
7.00pm Wednesday 17 December Glenfield

**WARM CONGRATULATIONS TO
Gracia NASRUN**

Presented with a *Tu Kahikatea Award* By Bishop Steve for an outstanding contribution to our youth!

DATES TO NOTE

Saturday 13th December

Vigil Mass 5.30pm - Anointing Mass

Sunday 14th December

10.30am Mass - Anointing Mass

Tuesday 16th December

7.00pm - Rite II Reconciliation

Friday 19th December

Last Friday this year for all day Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction

Last day this year for Parish Office (answerphone and emails will be checked regularly during the holiday period)

Wednesday 21st January

Parish Office reopens 8.30am

Friday 13th February

All day Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction resumes

Sunday 15th February 2026

Cultural Day

**CALLING ALL YOUNG ACTORS
WE NEED YOU!**

For our children's Christmas Plays. Please send name, gender and age, along with preferred Mass 6pm Vigil or 8.30am Christmas Day to office@stmarysnorthcote.org.nz Practice days/times to be advised

**SAVE THE DATE – 14 FEBRUARY 2026
4 PM – 6 PM | PRAISE IN THE PARK**

Join us for a free two-hour Catholic event beside the fountain at Mission Bay Beach with Praise and Worship, personal testimonies and Eucharistic Adoration. If you can assist with sponsorship or practical help on the day, please email aucklandccr@gmail.com

**ST FRANCIS DE SALES & ALL SOULS
PARISH, DEVONPORT**

Has constructed a columbarium on the grounds of the church in Albert Road, Devonport. Parishioners from neighbouring parishes who are interested in purchasing a niche (single or double) are invited to make enquiries. More information is available on the Devonport website (www.devonportcatholic.org.nz/Columbarium) or forms are available on the website or from the St Mary's parish Office. Alternatively you can contact: Mike Simpson - 0212838040; Kath Petrie - 021620805; Alan Light - 0211589306 or the columbarium administrator Sarah - 0212883300.

DE PAUL HOUSE

needs on going help in addition to the extras for Christmas. Support for families and seniors in need, basics like Bedding/towels, new or nearly new single/double duvet inners, pillows, beds, tables, chairs anything that turns a house into a home!. Thank you to St Mary's community of caring.

CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRE - THREE PART-TIME ROLES:

The Catholic Enquiry Centre (an agency of the NZ Catholic Bishops Conference) is expanding its digital outreach in 2026 and is seeking passionate, faith-filled people to join the team.

Digital Ministry Specialist (Content & Platform) oversee CEC’s website and social media, creating content that helps people explore faith.

Digital Ministry Specialist (Media Production) create short videos, testimonies and reels introducing Catholic faith and traditions.

Resource & Enquiry Support Officer respond to enquirers and coordinate the dispatch of printed resources across Aotearoa.

All roles are part-time and may be remote or Wellington based.

Expressions of interest to carly@catholicenquiry.nz by Friday 9 January 2026. Roles may be filled sooner for the right person.

PRISON CHAPLAINCY VACANCIES

Two part-time chaplains have occurred, if you are interested in exploring serving in such positions, please contact Joh Metherell

john.metherell@cda.org.nz Auckland (Paremuremo) & South Auckland

Correction facilities are looking to employ two suitable qualified persons as members of Tira Tūhāhā. To view the full position description please go to www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz under Dio Services & Staff Vacancies

ST JOSEPH’S GIFT SHOP.

Prepare for Advent and Christmas Come see us at our new location in Albany Village (Opposite Albany Toyota) or visit us online at www.stjosephscentre.co.nz (09) 489 5613

St Josephs Gift Shop Supplying quality Christian & Catholic products for every need 253 Dairy Flat Highway, Albany, Auckland 0632

CATHOLIC CARING FOUNDATION CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Please give a gift to help families and people in need. Support the Caring Foundations Appeal through your donations and prayers. Your donations will have double the impact! *“Blessed are you who are poor for yours is the kingdom of God”*. Take home a donation card, or visit www.caringfoundation.org.nz or call (09)360 3012.

SCHOLARSHIP FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDY

Bishop Steve, Catholic Bishop of Auckland, is pleased to call for applications for the Ruth Miller Scholarship for theological study. This scholarship will be available for those currently teaching or intending to teach in a Catholic School, for a theology paper. More info. scholarships@cda.org.nz

Please pray : For the elderly and frail and the sick in our parish, especially, Philip, Yohann, Linda F, John McC, Megan S, Peter D, Peter C, John W, Mary L. Shannon, Owen B, Susan C, Brian, Katya, S Perry, Kathy M, Matthew S, Ronald B, Syrel C, Billy G, M. Angus C, Keira, Max W, David P, Yvonne S, Andrew C, Lauren S, Fe T, Jamie S-W, Adam S, James F, Lu P, Caroline C, Connie B, John H, Emily D, Sebastian C, Lucia, Anselmo S, Victoria R, Huda AW, Hilda P, David K, Maria O, Alice C, Najla, Petros A, Jocell D-V, Luca M, Maselino L, Ann C, Letalie V, Yvonne P, Helen McBride, Aesop N, Patricia W, Elizabeth S, M O’S, Jason P, Maria & Andre T, Chike E, Ted H, Emily G, June B, John R, John S, Patricia Maunsell, Mary G, Cath S

DAILY READINGS

Monday			
Reading	Numbers	24: 2- 7,15-17	Ps. 25
Gospel	Matthew	21:23-27	
Tuesday			
Reading	Zephaniah	3: 1- 2,9-13	Ps. 34
Gospel	Matthew	21:28-32	
Wednesday			
Reading	Genesis	49: 2,8-10	Ps. 72
Gospel	Matthew	11:28-30	
Thursday			
Reading	Jeremiah	23: 5- 8	Ps. 72
Gospel	Matthew	1:18-24	
Friday			
Reading	Judges	13: 2- 7,24-25	Ps. 71
Gospel	Luke	1: 5-25	
Saturday			
Reading	Isaiah	7:10-14	Ps. 24
Gospel	Luke	1:26-38	
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT			
1st Reading	Isaiah	7:10-14	Ps. 24
2nd Reading	Romans	1: 1- 7	
Gospel	Matthew	1:18-25	

NOTICES FROM THE DIOCESE

Scripture Focus this Advent You are invited to prepare for Sunday Mass by reading and reflecting on the Scripture we will hear that weekend.

Fr Frank Bird SM has been helping people through his Living Word project. As the name suggests it is an invitation for Catholics & others to allow the Word of God to shape their lives. Resources available from www.livingtheword.org.nz/pray

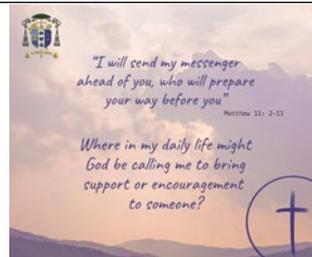
Catholic Kiwi Podcast 6 episodes of the NZ Catholic Bishops Conference’s new Podcast series now released, sharing stories of faith, ministry and mission of Kiwis and visitors to our shores. Guests include Carmelite Sister Lauren of the Cross. Tim Wilson, broadcaster and Archbishop Paul Martin SM. More episodes will be released before Christmas to complete series 1, with season 2 set for 2026. Search “Catholic Kiwi Podcast” on YouTube or Spotify now.

Latest edition of the NZCBC newsletter now available <https://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/NZ-Catholic-Issue-9.pdf> It can also be downloaded from the front page of the diocesan website.

Welcome everyone to a time of reflection on Pope Leo XIV’S recent Apostolic Exhortation ‘Delexi Te’ meet on ZOOM 7 to 7.40pm Wednesdays in Advent. Register with dianna@cda.org.nz

Bishop Steve invites everyone to celebrate the Closing Mass of the Year of Jubilee. On 4th January 2026 at the Cathedral 11am. All Welcome.

Property Officer-St Patrick’s & St Joseph’s Cathedral Auckland part-time Property Officer (10 Hrs a week), maintenance of Cathedral building and grounds to a high standard of safety and cleanliness. Duties include Inspections, liaising with Contractors, minor repairs, ensuring security & compliance requirements are met. Need trades background, practical maintenance, self motivation. Must have NZ residency/valid NZ work permit. Full description www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz Dio Services, Staff vacancies **Wings.Nga Parirau** have you tried praying and meeting with others in small groups from the comfort of your own home and table? It’s all good! Reflection with Pope Leo XIV Dilexi Te, Wednesday evenings 7pm on Zoom. Lectio Divina, ponder Sunday Gospel, Saturdays 7pm on Zoom. Contact Dianna Fouhy, Faith Formation Team, CDA dianna@cda.org.nz



“I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you” Matt. 11: 2-11

Where in my daily life might God be calling me to bring support or encouragement to someone?

CHURCH CLEANING
20 Dec. Valdez Family
27 Dec. Hoa Nguyen
ALTAR LINEN
14 Dec. Birgitte R
21 Dec. Jan S

YOUNG ADULTS GROUP 2025!

Meets on the first Sunday of every month at 6pm in the Foley Centre (immediately after 5pm Mass). We are now in recess until February 2026 HAPPY HOLIDAYS! Anyone between the ages of 16-25 is most welcome. Come along and meet other young adults in the parish and learn more about our amazing Catholic faith.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS - TIME TABLE

13 Dec.	Anointing Mass	5.30pm
14 Dec.	Anointing Mass	10.30am
16 Dec.	Reconciliation Rite II	7.00pm
24 Dec.	Usual Tuesday morning Mass	9.15am
	Children’s Play	6.00pm
	Christmas Vigil Mass	6.30pm
	Carols	11.20pm
	Midnight Mass	12.00am
25 Dec.	Children’s Play	8.15am
	Christmas Mass	8.30am
	Christmas Mass	10.30am

Dec. 26 and thereafter we revert to the usual timetable
Monday to Saturday 9.15am Saturday Vigil Mass 5.30pm
Sunday 8.30am, 10.30am, 5.00pm.