



## ONE MISSION, TWO CHURCHES



Third Sunday of Advent, Year A - 14th Dec. 2025

### Parish Priest

Fr Alex Chow

### Parish Secretary

Sonya O'Farrell

Wednesdays,

Thursdays & Fridays

10am – 2pm

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### SUNDAY MASS

**Saturday Vigil:** 5pm (SL)

**Sunday:** 8:30am (SL),  
10:30am (ST),  
5pm (ST, Vietnamese)

### WEEKDAY MASSES

**Tues.** 6:30pm (SL)

**Wed.** 9.15am (ST)

*1st Wed Mass of Anointing  
@10am*

**Thurs.** 9.15am (ST)

**Fri.** 9.15am(SL\*),6.30pm (ST)

**Sat.** 9.15am (SL\*)

\*Rosary after Mass

### RECONCILIATION

SL: Tues 5:30 - 6:10pm

Sat 9:45 - 10:15am

Sat 4:30 - 4:50pm

ST: Fri 5:30 - 6:10pm

### EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT & EVENING PRAYER

SL: Tues 5:30 - 6:30pm

ST: Fri 5:30 - 6:30pm

### HOSPITALITY AFTER MASS AT ST. LUKE'S

Second weekend of each  
month - bring a plate to  
share (optional)

**Young Adult Group** - 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>

Wed. each month at 7pm  
at St Luke's Presbytery

Isaiah 7:10-14, Ps 23:1-10, Romans 1:1-7

Gospel Reflection: **Matthew 1:18-24**

*Meditation: Why did Jesus praise John the Baptist as the greatest person born of a woman and then in the same breath say that those who enter God's kingdom will be greater than John (Mt 11:11)? John is the last and greatest of the prophets of the old covenant. He fulfilled the essential task of all the prophets - to be fingers pointing to Jesus Christ, God's Anointed Son and Messiah. John prepared the way for the Messiah and he pointed others to Jesus the Messiah at the River Jordan when he exclaimed, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*

John saw from a distant what Jesus would accomplish through his death on the cross - our redemption from bondage to sin and death and our adoption as sons and daughters of God and citizens of the kingdom of heaven. When King Herod tried to silence John by throwing him into prison, John sent his disciples to Jesus after John had heard the reports about Jesus performing signs and wonders and speaking to people about the coming of God's kingdom. John wanted his disciples to hear and see firsthand what Jesus was doing to bring the kingdom of God to those who were receptive and ready to receive his message.

**Jesus the Messiah performs the signs of God's kingdom power:** Jesus confirmed for John that the miracles and healings which he performed were in direct fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies announced by Isaiah some 700 years previously. Isaiah had prophesied that when the Messiah would come to save his people he would "open the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf, the lame would leap, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy" (Isaiah 35:5). Jesus' miracles are a demonstration of the power of God's kingdom at work in the midst of his people. When God acts to save his people he turns their sorrow and weeping into joy and singing, and their fear and weakness into strength and hope.

**The greatness of John's life and witness of the Messiah:** When Jesus had answered the disciples of John, he in turn asked them a question. "Why did you go out in the wilderness to see John the Baptist?" "Did you go because you were hungry for the word of the Lord?" Jesus said that John was more than a spokesman for God. John was the faithful witness and friend of the bridegroom who pointed others to the coming of the Messiah in their midst. Jesus contrasted John with the image of a reed shaken by the wind. Unlike a reed which is weak and spineless and can be easily crushed or bruised, John stood as a pillar of strength and truth in the face of opposition and persecution. No demonic force could weaken or crush John in his unswerving trust in God and his word.

**Jesus offers us abundant life and joy to be his witnesses:** Jesus knew that what the Father in heaven had sent him to accomplish for our sake would supersede all that the prophets had done and foreseen in the past. Jesus' atoning death on the cross cancels the debt of our sins and sets us free to live as citizens of his kingdom. He gives us pardon, healing, and abundant life through his Holy Spirit, and the promise of unending joy with him in his everlasting kingdom.

John the Baptist paid the ultimate sacrifice of his life for speaking God's word and preparing the way for Jesus the Lord and Saviour of the world. The Lord Jesus offers us the same assurance of faith and the strength to stand against every force that would try to rob us of our conviction and courage to live and proclaim the good news of God's kingdom. Do you know the joy, strength, and power which Jesus gives to everyone who puts their trust in him and the power of the Holy Spirit? Ask the Lord Jesus to increase your faith and hope in his promises for you.

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Office (for both Churches): 17 Stevens Road Forest Hill Vic 3133 (St Timothy's)

Parish Office tel: 03 9412 8499; Presbytery tel: 03 9877 2292

St Luke the Evangelist, 46 Orchard Grove, Blackburn South

Email: foresthill@cam.org.au | Web: sttimothys.org.au / Email: blackburnsouth@cam.org.au | Web: blackburnsouth.org.au

**Next Week's Daily Readings 15 Dec - 21 Dec**

**MONDAY, Dec 15** Num24:2-7, 15-17 Ps 24:4-9 Mt 21:23-27

**TUESDAY, Dec 16** Zeph 3:1-2, 9-13 Ps 33:2-3, 6-7, 16, 18-19, 23 Mt 21:28-32

**WEDNESDAY, Dec 17** Gen 49:2, 8-10 Ps 71:1-4, 7-8, 17 Mt 1:1-17

**THURSDAY, Dec 18** Jer 23:5-8 Ps 71:1-2, 12-13, 18-19 Mt 1:18-24

**FRIDAY, Dec 19** Judges 13:2-7, 24-25 Ps 70:3-6, 16-17 Lk 1:5-25

**SATURDAY, Dec 20** Is 7:10-14 Ps 23:1-6 Lk 1:26-38

**SUNDAY, Dec 21** Is 7:10-14 Ps 23:1-6 Rom 1:1-7 Mt 1:18-24

**Fourth SUNDAY of ADVENT**

*(Taken from ORDO 2025, Liturgy Brisbane, ACBC 2024)*

**The Jubilee Prayer**



Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

**SOME USEFUL CATHOLIC RESOURCES:**

- PRAY AS YOU GO** (<https://pray-as-you-go.org/daily-meditation>)
- HALLOW** (<https://hallow.com>):#1 prayer Catholic App
- UNIVERSALIS** website and App. (<https://universalis.com/index.htm>)

**MINISTERS OF THE WORD**

Saturday 5pm SL  
 Sunday 8:30am SL  
 10:30am ST  
 5pm ST

**13 and 14 DEC**

Mia Perang  
 May McKeown  
 Joelle Roussety  
 Duong Tong, Thuy Vu & Loc Le

**20 and 21 DEC**

Lucy Ferris  
 Beryl Chelliah  
 Alfred Lee  
 Youth Group

**EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST**

Saturday 5pm SL  
 Sunday 8:30am SL  
 10:30am ST  
 5pm ST

Melina Barcellona  
 Beryl Chelliah  
 Anico Yee  
 Hoang Nguyen

Kevin Rogers  
 Kana Chelliah  
 Pat Kawalevski  
 Youth Group

**SLIDE OPERATORS**

Saturday 5pm SL  
 Sunday 8:30am SL  
 10:30am ST  
 5pm ST

Choir  
 Rosemary Donaldson  
 Manny Gonzalez  
 Toan Tran

Choir  
 David Prabha  
 Lee Min Yee  
 Theresa Nguyen

**SL WELCOMERS 13-14 DEC**

5pm Edna Lee  
 8.30am Marie Pekish  
 10.30am Volunteer

**SL CHURCH CLEANING**

20th Dec - Maree's team  
 Maree Moss, Lynda Kilroe-Smith,  
 Allen Leung & Serena Ng

**SL CHURCH FLOWERS**

No Flowers for Advent

**ST CHURCH FLOWERS**

No Flowers for Advent

**SL WELCOMERS 20-21 DEC**

5:00pm John Ryan  
 8.30am Janette Clark  
 10.30am Volunteer

**ST CHURCH CLEANING**

20th Dec @ 8am  
 Hoang Nguyen, Anico Yee, Dzung Vu, Trong Nguyen,  
 Toan Tran, Dao Dinh, Hieu Nguyen & Dieu Nguyen

**ST COUNTERS**

This week Team 1:  
 Owen Grealy & Anthony Yeo  
 Next week Team 2:  
 Raj & Violet Fonn

## WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

**All who are sick**, especially Sr June Dunford, Emilio Moreno Garcia, Kevin Ryan, Agatha Wink, Ronda Smith, Chris Leach, Dora Leung, Hazel Grealy, Josephine Alexander, Grace Dimattina, Kit Bing Fan, Kathryn Holmes, Stewart Davis, Mark, Margaret Hayes, Charmaine Bancroft, Marilene Japour, Paciencia Cabral and all those parishioners unable to be among us this weekend.

**All who have died**, especially Peter Lancashire & Barbara Powderly who died recently and for those whose anniversaries occur about this time especially Danny Carroll, Ivan Pereira, Sacha Soltys, Esme Brunton, Proserfina O'Raye, Timothy Le A Triet Nhan, Paul Le A Triet Sinh, Paul Le Auh Triet, Theresa Taylor, Xiao Meiling, Renza Paglia, Eunice Hasler, Betty Harrison, Beck Moreland, Sonia Shafton, John Carney, Barry White, Doris Cochrane & Andrej Kawalevski. May they rest in peace.

## POPE LEO'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR DECEMBER:

For Christians in areas of conflict. Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation, and hope.

**RITE OF ACCEPTANCE FOR R.C.I.A.:** The rite of acceptance for the enquirers who are attending our weekly R.C.I.A. sessions will be during Mass on Dec. 13.

**ADVENT PRAYER GROUP:** We warmly invite everyone to an Advent Reflection on Thursdays during Advent. The next one is on Thurs. 18th Dec. from 7 to 8pm at St Luke's church. The "In Holy Stillness" resource will be used, which can be purchased from the foyer of both churches.

**COLUMBAN CALENDARS & CHRISTMAS CARDS:** 2026 Calendars are on sale at the St Timothy's Piety Stall for \$9.00. Christmas Cards are also on sale. Packs of 5 cards are \$5.00 and \$10.00 for a pack of 10 cards. Calendars & cards are available at St Luke's for FREE in the church foyer.

**SAFEGUARDING ESSENTIALS TRAINING:** Thanks to those volunteers who attended the training at St Timothy's last Sunday. This training can also be done online via this link: [Safeguarding Essentials training module | Melbourne Catholic](#)

**HELPERS NEEDED:** We are in need of two volunteers to assist with light cleaning of the altar at St Timothy's (approx. once a month). Training will be provided. Please contact the parish office if you can help.

**LUKTIM YAM GATHERINGS:** Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> Dec. @ 7pm - Christmas Party (BYO food to share). Venue: St Luke's Presbytery, 46 Orchard Grove, Blackburn South

**NO MASSES ON DEC. 26<sup>th</sup>:** There will be **NO MASSES** on **Fri. 26<sup>th</sup> December**.

Resources ....

**MELBOURNE CATHOLIC:** [The promise of Advent](#)

**MAJELLAN MEDIA:** [Christmas Rush](#)

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## **STEWARDSHIP CORNER:**

*The First collection is for the priest and retired priests.*

*The Second collection is for parish expenses.*

**ST:** Last week's Presbytery Stewardship Total Collection: \$504.70

Last week's Church Stewardship Total Collection: \$351.60

Vietnamese Donation: \$250.95

**SL:** Last week's Presbytery Stewardship Total Collection: \$624.65

Last week's Church Stewardship Total Collection: \$442.45

## Parish Groups & Contacts

### **Volunteers and Rosters**

ST: Corrie Quimbo

SL: Margaret Gearon

### **Baptism Preparation**

SL: Mary Italiano

### **Vietnamese Community**

Hoang Nguyen

Andy Tran

### **Vietnamese Youth**

Theresa Nguyen

### **Parish Collection Preparers**

ST: Barry Silvester &

Michael Kawalevski

### **Stewardship Counters**

SL: Dale Dixon

Steve Kilroe-Smith

### **Parishes Safeguarding Committee**

Theresa Nguyen, Mary Italiano,

Darren McLean

Janette Clark

### **Parish history**

SL: Margaret Gearon

### **Parish Accountant**

Bernard Negline

### **SL: Hall Hire**

Sonya O'Farrell @ the

Parish Office – 9877 2292

### **Church Sacristan**

ST: Margaret King & Hoang Nguyen

SL: Greg Grant

### **Church Housekeeping**

ST: Margaret King

### **Church Cleaning & Flowers**

SL: Megan McLean

### **Church Linen**

SL: Beryl Chelliah

### **Parish Garden Maintenance**

ST: Des Connors, Leo Watson,

Anico Yee & Vietnamese Community

SL: Darren McLean

### **Parish Choirs**

ST: Miguel Ilagan & Theresa Nguyen

SL: Lina & Maria Mafi

### **St Vincent de Paul Conference**

For Assistance: 1800 305 330

(Monday to Friday 10am-3pm)

### **Parish Contacts:**

ST: John McCoy

SL: Margaret Gearon &

Steve Kilroe-Smith

**Entrance Antiphon:** Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.

**Response to the Psalm:** Lord, come and save us.

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, alleluia! The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring Good News to the poor. Alleluia!

**Eucharistic Acclamation:** When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

**Communion Antiphon:** Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

### Melbourne - January 4 to 11

**What is it?** A week long retreat into the powerful experience of the Holy Spirit, opening up possibilities for deepening faith, peace, healing, joy and freedom.

**Where:** Holy Cross Retreat Centre, Templestowe

**Who for:** 16 to 35 year olds

**What happens:** Opportunities for prayer, music, Catholic teaching and formation and engaging liturgy.

**More info.:** [summerschool.org.au](http://summerschool.org.au)



### CHILDREN'S LITURGY AT ST TIMOTHY'S

On Sunday 14th December, we will continue our Children's Liturgy group at the 10.30am Mass at St Timothy's. This will run on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of each month. Parents are welcome to accompany their children. No prior registration required. Please contact the parish office if you have any questions.



### MERCY NIGHT

St Luke the Evangelist Church

Tues. 16 December 2025

6:30pm Mass

7pm to Adoration &

8:30pm Reconciliation



Come, reflect and experience an evening of God's merciful and forgiving love in the God's presence and Sacrament of Reconciliation.

(Note: **NO 5:30pm Holy Hour on this date**)

### St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal (St Luke's)

Please place any non-perishable items in the bins in the church foyer. Cash donations can be placed in the Poor Box at the back of the church. If a receipt is required, please contact the conference President, Steve Kilroe-Smith or the treasurer, Laurie Peattie.

Thank you very much for your continuing support of the conference's works.

### ST TIMOTHY'S NEWS

The St James Coptic Orthodox Community, who have been sharing our church and parish hall this year, have bought the old Uniting church at 355 Whitehorse Road, Nunawading and will start there this weekend. We wish them all the very best in their new home.

The Vietnamese Community have decided to move to St Clare's in Box Hill North at the end of this year, after more than ten years at St Timothy's. Their last Mass here will be on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December at 5pm. We wish them all the very best for the future.

### ANNUAL CHRISTMAS HAMPER RAFFLE

Tickets are on sale for the St Luke's Christmas Hamper Raffle which will run in conjunction with the ACYF fundraising by our Young Adults Ministry. Donations for the hampers can be left in the labelled baskets in the church foyer. The proceeds will go towards the costs of sending our young parishioners to the recent ACYF as well as to our Care Group who look after funeral refreshments and food for Parish Outreach programs. Thanks in advance for your support. *Prizes include: A Coffee Espresso and milk frother, 4 bottles of good wine, Gift card including 2 Gold Class Hoyts tickets worth \$190 & mystery hampers.* Tickets are \$4 each or 3 for \$10 and are on sale at all Masses for the next two weekends. Card and cash payments are welcome.

### RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)

RCIA is a 5 month program for those who are interested and would like to know more about

the Catholic faith as well as the possibility to encounter Jesus Christ in a personal way. It is a journey together with other enquirers as well as parishioners. The RCIA program will continue on Tuesday, December 16th @ 7pm at St Luke's Presbytery, 46 Orchard Grove, Blackburn South. It will run until March 2026 with weekly meetings (1.5hrs) both in person and via Zoom. For more information or to join in please contact the parish office.



Jesus is  
coming to  
save us



3rd Sunday of Advent, Year A

Jesus told John the Baptist's followers to tell him all they had seen and heard. How did Jesus help the following people?

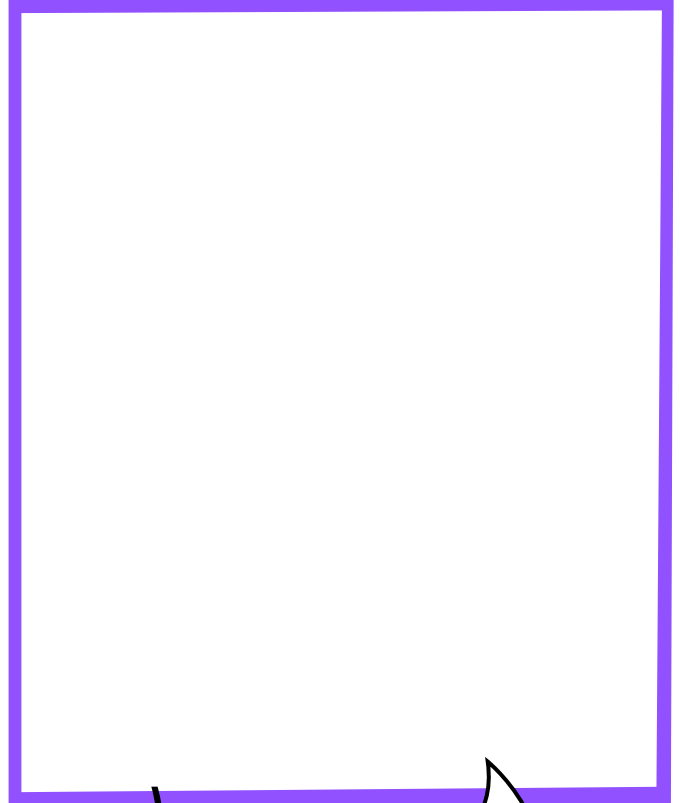
Draw Jesus bringing the good news to the poor

Blind People

Deaf People

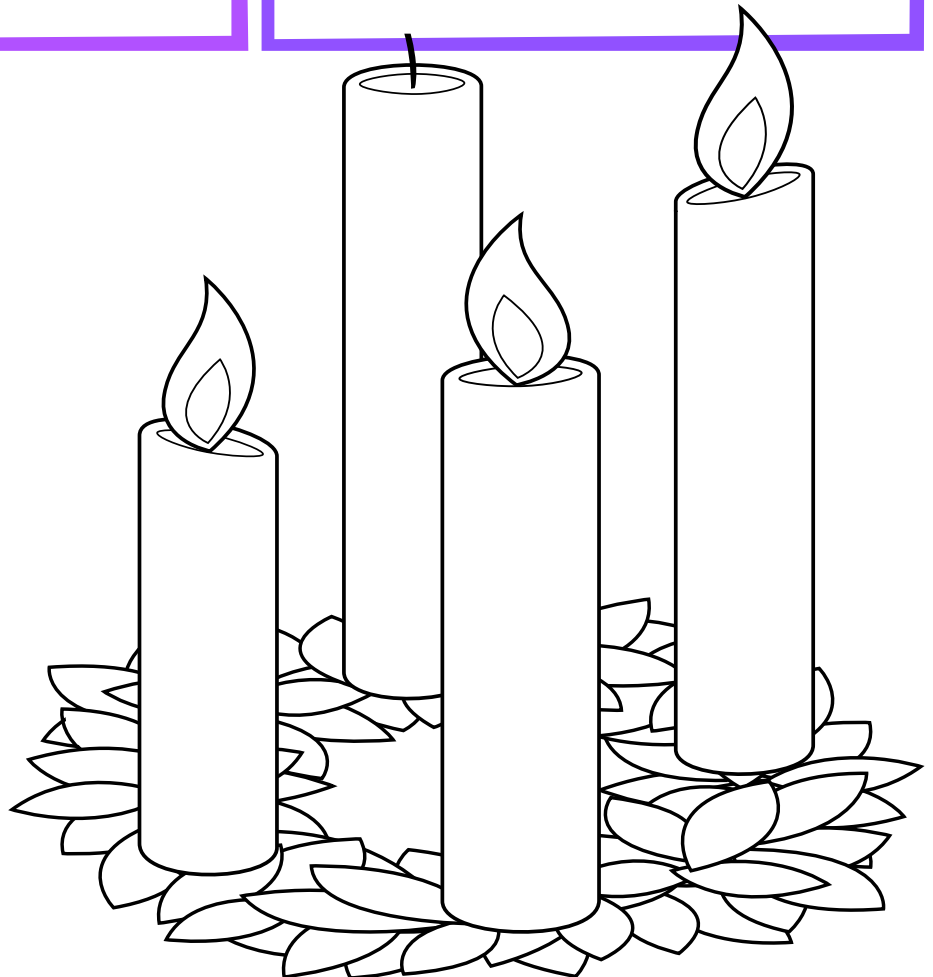
Lame People

Lepers



# Advent Wreath

Each Sunday during the season of Advent, we light a candle on the Advent Wreath. The candle which is lit on the third Sunday of Advent is pink. All the other candles are purple. Colour in the Advent Wreath.



# THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT – 14 DECEMBER 2025



## COLLECT

O God, who see how your people  
faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity,  
enable us, we pray,  
to attain the joys of so great a salvation  
and to celebrate them always  
with solemn worship and glad rejoicing.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

## READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

The performance of athletes at the Paralympic Games fills one with admiration. Events such as this have brought about a change of mindset in society. A person with a disability is no longer thought of as lacking something from the 'normal', or needing in some way to be 'fixed': they are 'differently-abled'. However, our assumptions and social prejudice can easily morph into marginalisation and discrimination. We value and respect every person no matter who they are, and we do not define people by their abilities or disabilities. We rejoice in difference and work for recognition and inclusion.

It is against this background that we need to understand Isaiah's vision of God's kingdom and Jesus' appropriation of these words to describe his own ministry. All are called to participate in the rejoicing in God's kingdom.

## A reading from the prophet Isaiah 35:1-6, 10

Let the wilderness and the dry-lands exult, let the wasteland rejoice and bloom, let it bring forth flowers like the jonquil, let it rejoice and sing for joy.

The glory of Lebanon is bestowed on it, the splendour of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, the splendour of our God.

Strengthen all weary hands, steady all trembling knees and say to all faint hearts, 'Courage! Do not be afraid.

'Look your God is coming, vengeance is coming, the retribution of God; he is coming to save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unsealed, then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy, for those the Lord has ransomed shall return.

They will come to Zion shouting for joy, everlasting joy on their faces; joy and gladness will go with them and sorrow and lament be ended.

## First Reading

The people are displaced and miserable in exile, but the prophet Isaiah sustains their hope with an oracle of a joyous return and restoration. The wasteland becomes a flowering garden.

Everyone, the weary and the faint of heart, all with their limitations and disabilities, will join in the singing and dancing. Every handicap will be undone in the new creation which the prophet is promising. Sorrow and lament will be ended and joy and gladness will go with them all.

Looking at the state of the world today, we too can become discouraged. This poem of courage and joy will speak to our experience and bring us consolation and trust in God.

It will be a joy for the reader to proclaim this prophetic poem and to offer people in today's world courage, hope and joy. The beginning and end should be more enthusiastic, with the middle section more reflective in tone. Try to convey the vision in an upbeat and positive way. Evoke a sense of wonder.

## Responsorial Psalm

Ps 145:6-10

**R.** Lord, come and save us.

or

**R.** Alleluia!

It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever, who is just to those who are oppressed. It is he who gives bread to the hungry, the Lord, who sets prisoners free. **R.**

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind, who raises up those who are bowed down, the Lord, who protects the stranger and upholds the widow and orphan. **R.**

It is the Lord who loves the just but thwarts the path of the wicked. The Lord will reign for ever, Zion's God, from age to age. **R.**

## Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 145/146 praises God for the unfailing help given to those in need. Whether we are oppressed or hungry or imprisoned, whether we are blind or bowed down or a stranger, God is there – always faithful, holding us up.

The response is taken from the fourth stanza of the first reading from Isaiah. Both texts honour God who is a constant source of help, strength and gladness. The psalm is a fine companion piece to the prophesy of Isaiah.

Well done, the proclamation of the psalm by the cantor/reader can stir the assembly to trust in God and be glad.

### **A reading from the letter of St James 5:7-10**

Be patient, brothers, until the Lord's coming. Think of a farmer: how patiently he waits for the precious fruit of the ground until it has had the autumn rains and the spring rains! You too have to be patient; do not lose heart, because the Lord's coming will be soon. Do not make complaints against one another, brothers, so as not to be brought to judgement yourselves; the Judge is already to be seen waiting at the gates. For your example, brothers, in submitting with patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

### **A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew**

**11:2-11**

John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?' Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor; and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.'

As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: he is the one of whom scripture says: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way before you. I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.'

### **Second Reading**

We have just heard from the prophet Isaiah who spoke of the joyful promise of liberation in a time of exile and who did not lose heart. Now the letter of St James urges us to wait as patiently as Isaiah did for the coming of the Lord. Four times the word 'patient' occurs in these few lines. Patient waiting is a key Advent theme.

James uses the example of a farmer waiting for rain – an image we understand all too well in Australia. As we wait, we are to treat one another well without judging others. Indeed, it is not only we who wait upon the coming of the Lord: God, our merciful judge, is already to be seen waiting for us at the gates!

The meaning of the text is clear and presents no problem for the reader. The threefold address, 'brothers', could be pronounced as 'brothers and sisters', 'beloved' or 'friends'.

### **Gospel**

It is interesting to see the pastoral advice that John the Baptist gives to various groups of followers: care for the needy; do not abuse your power. John's ministry was so well received that a feeling of expectancy began to arise in people's hearts. But John is humble and self-effacing before Jesus.

He contrasts his water baptism of repentance with Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire. This will inaugurate a whole new era of purification and transformation. Thus John is the perfect Advent prophet who directs our attention to Christ and who prepares our hearts for an encounter with him.

In responding to this gospel, we can make our own the thrice-repeated question: *What must we do?* How do we prepare to meet the Lord?

# CONCLUDING PRAYER

## **Solemn Blessing for Advent**

May the almighty and merciful God,  
by whose grace we have placed our faith  
in the First Coming of his Only Begotten Son  
and yearn for his coming again  
sanctify us by the radiance of Christ's Advent  
and enrich us with his blessing.

**Amen.**

As we run the race of this present life,  
may he make us firm in faith,  
joyful in hope and active in charity.

**Amen.**

So that, rejoicing now with devotion  
at the Redeemer's coming in the flesh,  
we may be endowed with the rich reward of eternal life  
when he comes again in majesty.

**Amen.**

And may the blessing of almighty God,  
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
come down on us and remain with us for ever.

**Amen.**

(Adapted from the Solemn Blessing for Advent, *The Roman Missal* p. 709)



*We proclaim a crucified Christ*

1Cor1.23

11 December 2025

To the People of God in Melbourne – Parishioners, Families, and Staff,  
my prayerful greetings to you in the Lord this Advent season.

With hearts full of gratitude and wonder, we give thanks for the remarkable grace that has flowed through our Archdiocese during the recent Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF), held and hosted here in Melbourne. For those few unforgettable days, our Church came alive with the vibrant faith of over 6,000 young pilgrims — a radiant sign of Christ alive among us.

Throughout the Festival, we witnessed a Church deeply alive: young people singing with joy, kneeling in reverence, seeking God's mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and uniting in the Eucharist with profound love. Their faces reflected hope, their hearts radiated faith, and their voices echoed the joy of knowing Christ. It was a living encounter — a testimony that the Church is young, and Christ is truly alive in the midst of His people.

To our parish communities, schools, families, teachers, and staff: thank you. Your support, encouragement, and faithful accompaniment opened the door for so many of our young people to walk this sacred journey. Whether you prayed from afar, volunteered, spread the word, or walked alongside our youth — your role mattered, and the fruits are already visible.

A special acknowledgment goes to the countless hands and hearts who made this Festival possible: to our clergy, volunteers, leaders, and organisers. Their efforts — most especially those of Festival Director Teresa Rhynehart and the Proclaim Team — bore witness to the unity, professionalism, and generosity that defines our Archdiocese.

To those who could not attend: seek out someone who did. Ask them what they saw, heard and felt. Let their stories renew your own faith.

As we look ahead to World Youth Day 2027, we carry with us the blessings sown during ACYF. May these seeds grow into deeper discipleship, vibrant vocations, renewed mission, and lasting holiness in every corner of our Church — in homes, schools, and parishes alike.

Let us continue to walk together, young and old, clergy and lay, rejoicing in what God is doing among us. May Mary, Help of Christians, accompany our young people always, and may the Holy Spirit fan into flame the gifts we have received.

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

**Most Rev Peter A Comensoli**  
Archbishop of Melbourne



ST. LUKES SCHOOL  
BLACKBURN SOUTH



# St Luke the Evangelist Blackburn South

## We are Taking Enrolments for All Year Levels

Book in for an Open Morning or a Personal Tour

SCAN TO  
BOOK A  
TOUR



St Luke the Evangelist Primary School Blackburn South  
9877 4023 | [www.slblackburnsth.catholic.edu.au](http://www.slblackburnsth.catholic.edu.au)



# IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST PAUL

TO GREECE & TURKEY (WITH ROME OPTION)



20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL –  
3<sup>RD</sup> MAY 2026

LED BY  
FR ALEX CHOW

14  
DAYS

PACKAGE PRICE: AU\$ 8,490\*  
per person (twin share)

OPTIONAL SINGLE  
ROOM SUPPLEMENT:

AU\$ 1,150

FULLY  
ESCORTED

\*Conditions apply. Subject to change.  
Price estimated based on group  
size of 20 pilgrims. Actual pricing  
will be known in late May 2025.

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*'Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres'. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)*

*'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)*

*'Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love'*

*(Ephesians 4:2)*

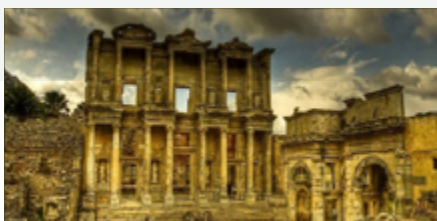
Such passionate, life giving, encouraging and hopeful words written by St Paul the Apostle. Come and join us for an extraordinary pilgrimage of Greece and Turkey and (optional Rome extension) as we follow the footsteps of St Paul and experience the contexts in which these passionate letters were written. It will be an opportunity of spiritual renewal, deepen our relationship with God as we reflect and experience the incredible journey of Paul, Apostle of the Gentiles.

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

REGISTER FOR AN INFORMATION SESSION at 7pm ON THURSDAY, 5th JUNE

\* Enjoy full travel briefing \* Meet your fellow Pilgrims \* Have your questions answered

CONTACT FR ALEX OR OLIVE TREE TRAVEL TO REGISTER & GET THE DETAILS



### NEXT STEPS

1. Register your interest and obtain a booking form from Fr Alex or Olive Tree Travel or by [CLICKING HERE.](#)
2. To secure your place, a deposit of \$500 per person is payable by 16th June 2025 (unless sold out prior)
3. Final balances will be due by late February 2026.



Ph. 1300 550 830 or 03 8488 9696  
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103A Gardenvale Road, Gardenvale Victoria 3185



### DAY 1 MONDAY 20TH APRIL

### DEPART AUSTRALIA

Depart Melbourne this evening on your Emirates flight to Dubai. On arrival, transfer to your connecting flight to Athens.

### DAY 2 TUESDAY 21ST APRIL

### ARRIVE ATHENS

Arrive in Athens today. Athens is the thriving capital of Greece but more importantly, we have entered into the world of the New Testament where St Paul and his companions established the first Christian communities throughout his four missionary journeys. On arrival in **Athens** we will be met and transferred to our centrally located hotel for the remainder of the day at leisure. Athens overnight (D)

### DAY 3 WEDNESDAY 22ND APRIL

### ATHENS - CORINTH – ATHENS

Journey out to **Ancient Corinth** where the Apostle Paul lived for almost two years, teaching the people the Word of God and converting many. We visit the ancient ruins and see the site where he preached the Gospel from the **Rostrum**. Also visit the Peirene fountain, and the 6th century BC **Temple of Apollo** before an outdoor Mass in this stunning pilgrimage setting. Finally we come to **Cenchreae**, the ancient port from where Paul said farewell to the believers and departed for Ephesus (Acts 18:18). Return to Athens in the late afternoon for dinner and overnight. (BD)

### DAY 4 THURSDAY 23RD APRIL

### ATHENS

When St Paul first came to Athens it was predominantly a city that worshipped pagan gods. St Paul was taken before the city council at the Areopagus Hill, a rough outcrop of limestone rock from which he preached the Gospel message to the Athenian philosophers (Acts 17:16-21). We begin our day with a tour of **Christian Athens** including the **Acropolis**, the **Areopagus** where St Paul delivered his famous sermon about the identity of "the Unknown God" (Acts 17:15-34) and the **Parthenon**. Continue for a visit the **Ancient Agora** and a bus tour to see the highlights of the city including the Kallimarmaro Stadium, dating back to 330 B.C. and restored for the first modern Olympic Games held here in 1896. Visit to the New Acropolis museum. Enjoy dinner and overnight in Athens. (BD)

### DAY 5 FRIDAY 24TH APRIL

### ATHENS – METEORA – KALAMBAKA

Depart this morning and travel north to the small town of **Kalambaka** built at the foot of the majestic grey rocks of **Meteora**. Marvel at this unique phenomenon of nature – 24 perpendicular rocks where 600 years ago Byzantine monks chose to worship God and build their Monastic community of Meteora. We visit two of the Byzantine Meteora monasteries. Among striking scenery and perched on top of huge rocks, the ageless monasteries of Meteora seem to be suspended in mid-air. The monasteries contain beautiful Byzantine art and offer an insight to the mystic world of the monks still residing there. Mass this evening, will be held in a private room at the hotel before dinner and overnight in Kalambaka (BD)

### DAY 6 SATURDAY 25TH APRIL

### KALAMBAKA – VERGINA – VERIA – THESSALONIKI

Depart this morning to **Vergina**, the first capital of the Macedonian Kingdom. Here we visit the "Vergina findings", treasures of Ancient Macedonia and the tomb of King Philip II of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great. A few minutes away is Veria, located on the ruins of **Ancient Beroea**, is one of Apostle Paul's stops. Here we see the Byzantine mosaic in the monument commemorating his preaching. Continue our drive to Thessaloniki. Dinner & overnight in Thessaloniki. (BD)

### DAY 7 SUNDAY 26TH APRIL

### THESSALONIKI

Today is for Thessaloniki exploration. Welcome to Greece's second city, founded in 315 BC, and where St Paul preached during the winters of 49-50AD and wrote the two epistles to the ancient Thessalonians. See the ramparts of the city, the triumphal Arch of Galerius and the Roman Agora where St Paul once preached. We shall visit St Demetrios' Church with its valuable mosaics and frescoes and will drive up to the upper town, which offers a marvellous view of the city. We will also have the chance to celebrate Mass at the Catholic Church. Dinner & overnight in Thessaloniki. (BD)

### DAY 8 MONDAY 27TH APRIL

### PHILIPPI – KAVALA – THESSALONIKI

Arise and journey along the ancient route of the Apostle Paul to nearby Philippi, named after Philip II, father of Alexander the Great. It was here that St Paul won his first European convert, a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira (Acts 16:12-40). Visit the Baptistery of Lydia for a beautiful outdoor Mass on the River Zygaktis, and renew

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our Baptismal vows. Visit the market place (where St Paul and St Silas were brought before the rulers) and the cistern which tradition identifies as the place where St Paul was imprisoned. We will also see the famous Acropolis, Basilica and the theatre. It was here that he established the first Christian Church in Europe. Visit the Octagonal church, an early Christian monument thought to be built on the site where St. Paul had established a house of prayer. Finally, we drive to the port in Kavala (Neapolis in New Testament times), where Paul landed with Timothy, Silas, and Luke. Return to your hotel in Thessaloniki for dinner and overnight. (BD)

**DAY 9 TUESDAY 28TH APRIL** **THESSALONIKI – IZMIR (SMYRNA) - KUSADASI** This morning, we depart Thessaloniki Airport for our flight to Izmir (via Istanbul or Athens). Upon arrival we will be met by our Turkish guide and commence our touring programme by visiting the Ruins of Ancient Smyrna, one of the 7 Churches. After the Agora visit we will drive to the coastal city of Kusadasi. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. (D)

**DAY 10 WEDNESDAY 29TH APRIL** **EPHESUS PILGRIMAGE** Today we visit the famous city of Ephesus. Ephesus, as we will see, is in a very good state of preservation and the overall existing view of this ancient city will make it evident that she was a wealthy, cultural, and commercial centre in the 1st century. Paul’s preaching in the area resulted with the uproar of the Guild of Silversmiths and the evangelisation of the whole province of Asia. Highlights include the ancient temple to the Roman Emperor, the ‘slope’ houses, the Library of Celsus, the Temple of Hadrian, the Fountain of Trajan, the brothel, and the large theatre in which the riot of Acts 19 took place. Not far from the theatre, we visit the Church of St Mary, where it is said that Mary spent the later years of her life. Celebrate Mass. Finally you will visit the restored remains of the 6th century Basilica of St John at Celcuk where a small church was originally built over the tomb of St John the Evangelist. Return to your hotel in Kusadasi for dinner and overnight (BD)

**DAY 11 THURSDAY 30TH APRIL** **KUSADASI - ISTANBUL** After breakfast at the hotel, we will depart for Izmir Airport to catch our flight at 10:00AM. On arrival, we will be met and transferred to old city to visit Basilica Cistern, the largest of several hundred ancient cisterns that lie beneath the city. We’ll also get to see one of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. This afternoon visit the Byzantine Hippodrome, the Blue Mosque and nearby Hagia Sophia (meaning ‘Holy Wisdom’). Built in 548 AD, Hagia Sophia was the greatest Church in Christendom until 1453 when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Empire. Onwards then to the Grand Bazaar, with over 4000 exotic tiny shops. Return to your hotel for dinner and overnight (BD)

**DAY 12 FRIDAY 01ST MAY** **ISTANBUL** Commence the day with a special morning cruise along the Bosphorus River, where you will sail past the Ottoman Palaces, Byzantine fortresses, Beylerbeyi Palace and Suleiman’s Mosque. An opportunity to celebrate Mass at a Catholic Church. Enjoy a brief visit to Topkapi Palace. After the visit, transfer to our hotel for dinner and overnight (BD)

**DAY 13 SATURDAY 02ND MAY** **ISTANBUL - AUSTRALIA** End your pilgrimage with a transfer to Istanbul Airport for your departure flight to Dubai. Transfer to your connecting flight back to Melbourne. (B)

**DAY 14 SUNDAY 03RD MAY** **ARRIVE AUSTRALIA** Arrive back to Melbourne this evening with wonderful memories from your pilgrimage!

\*\*

Itinerary subject to change \*\*

**Interested in continuing the Footsteps of St Paul and visiting other amazing sites in Rome?**

Instead of flying straight home from Istanbul, we will hold a limited number of seats out of Rome, allowing pilgrims to enjoy an independently arranged Rome Pilgrimage in the Eternal city and surroundings as organized with/by Fr Alex Chow.

Fr Alex has lived in Rome as a seminarian for 4 years. Fr. Alex has offered to assist pilgrims in finding

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modest but clean and comfortable accommodation. The Roman stay will consist of the following (depending on time availability):

1. Sites of St Paul: Basilica of St Paul Outside the Wall, Tre Fontana (where St Paul was imprisoned and executed), via Ostiense (where St Peter and St Paul met in Rome)
2. 3 major Pontifical Basilica: Basilica of St Peter, Basilica of Mary Major, Basilica of John Lateran
3. Churches of Saints of the Roman Canon: St Cosmos and Damian, St Clement, St Agnes in Agony, St Cecilia, St Bartholomew
4. Beautiful Rome: Colosseum, Rome Forum, Pantheon, Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain, Piazza di Popolo, etc...
5. Churches of the Passion of Jesus Christ: Church of the Holy Steps, Basilica of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, Basilica di Santa Prassede (Column of the Flagellation)
6. Elegant Churches: San Luigi dei Francesi (Caravaggio - calling of Matthew), Basilica of Saint Mary of Minerva (the tomb of St Catherine of Siena), Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria (Bernini's dramatic carving "The Ecstasy of Teresa."), Chiesa del Gesu.

**\*\*Olive Tree Travel will arrange your flight from Istanbul – Rome\*\***

### PRICE INCLUSIONS:

- Emirates Flight from Melbourne to Athens via Dubai and then return Istanbul to Melbourne via Dubai
- One way flight from Thessaloniki to Izmir
- One way flight from Izmir to Istanbul
- 11 nights in total: 7 nights in Greece and 4 nights in Turkey in hotel accommodation in twin share rooms.
- Breakfast and Dinner daily. Breakfasts and Dinners at hotels unless otherwise specified.
- All tips, gratuities and portorage (where available)
- Whisperer headsets
- All guiding and entrance fees as per the itinerary.
- Air-conditioned coach

### NOT INCLUDED:

- Drinks with meals
- Travel insurance
- Incidentals, laundry
- Lunches
- Turkey Visa – currently US\$66 and obtained privately before departure

### HOTELS (OR SIMILAR):

• Hotel Luwian	Athens	3 nights
• Hotel Amalia	Kalambaka	1 night
• Hotel Imperial Plus	Thessaloniki	3 nights
• Korumar Hotel	Kusadasi	2 nights
• Port Bosphorous Hotel	Istanbul	2 nights

### NEXT STEPS

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3. Final balances will be due by late February 2026.

### WHO TO CONTACT:

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 South and St Timothy Forest Hill  
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