John the Baptist Parish

Mount Street, Bonnyrigg Heights

(incorporating Bonnyrigg Heights, Green Valley, Edensor Park, Abbotsbury, Cecil Hills, Elizabeth Hills & Elizabeth Park)

Parish Administrator: Rev Fr James McCarthy
Email: pp@johnthebaptist.org.au

Assistant: Rev Fr Phan Nguyen
Email: curate@johnthebaptist.org.au

Deacon: Rev Mervyn Francis
Email: info@johnthebaptist.org.au

Youth Ministry Co-ordinator: Joe Sullivan
Contact: The Parish Office on 9823 2572
Email: josephs@johnthebaptist.org.au

Parish Pastoral Centre:
45 Mount Street, Bonnyrigg Heights, 2177
Presbytery: 9823 2572
Fax: 9822 9954
Email: info@johnthebaptist.org.au
website: www.johnthebaptist.org.au

Parish Secretary: Leanne Lang
Bookkeeper: Yvonne Smolinski
Accountant: Michael O'Mara

Office Hours: Tuesday- Friday 10am to 4pm

MASSES THIS WEEK

PSALTER 3

'Prayer of the Church'
prayed at John the Baptist
10 minutes before weekday Masses
Morning and Evening Prayer

Monday - No Mass
St John of the Cross, priest, doctor
Tuesday - 9:10am and 7:00pm
Wednesday - 7:00pm
Thursday - 9:10am
Friday - 9:10am
Saturday - 9:10am

SUNDAY 19/20 DEC
(Fourth Sunday of Advent)

Saturday Vigil Mass: 5:30pm

Sunday Masses :
8:00am, 10:00am, 5:30pm

1st Sunday of Month:
5:30pm Youth Mass
4th Sunday of the Month:
5:30pm Mass in Tagalog

Reconciliation:
Saturday 4.15 - 5.00pm

Reflection Questions

- If I could ask John the Baptist, "What should I do?" he would say to me…..
- If I ask Christ, "What should I do?" he would say to me…..
- I am most willing to ask Christ the question, "What should I do?" when…..
- I resist asking this question when…..
- For me, being baptised in the Holy Spirit means…..
- For the world, it means…..

Third Sunday of Advent (Year C)
12th & 13th December, 2015

This Sunday we celebrate the third Sunday of Advent and I must admit one of my favourite Sundays of the year. Today is also known as Gaudete Sunday. The term Gaudete refers to the first word of the Entrance Antiphon, "Rejoice". Rose vestments may be worn today to emphasize our joy that Christmas is near, and we also light the rose candle on our Advent wreath. Advent is not a time of repentance but it is a time of preparation and longing for the coming of the Saviour at Christmas. Just as little children are getting excited as they await Santa Claus, we Christians too are excited at the gift of the Christ child at our Christmas Feast. The Church, through the change of colour, wants us to be excited and pray and prepare earnestly for this most special gift.

St. Athanasius, one of the early Church Fathers, spoke about the great gift of Jesus in this way: "Christ was made man that we might be made God." What he means is that God, through the incarnation and birth of the baby Jesus broke into the world and wanted to form a unique loving relationship with each of us so that by his life, death and resurrection we might be drawn to a special relationship with God both in this life and to our eternal home in heaven. How could we not be excited by that!

In the Gospel people are seen directing questions to John the Baptist: "What must we do?" "How must we act?" John gives them clear directions about the way the just should act. He exhorts people to a spiritual renewal; to be just, to be generous and to be honest in all their dealings. John is baptising people who wish to repent from their sinful way of life. John, as great as he was among the people, is seen as pointing to one who is to come and who is greater than he. "I baptise you with water but someone is coming who ... will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

I am sure the people had little real knowledge of what John was speaking about. The Jewish people were awaiting a messiah to save them, though many thought this might be a material intervention to save them from Roman rule. John, however, is speaking about the messiah that we know, Jesus the Christ. His Baptism is not just one of repentance, but one that draws us in to the family of God as sons and daughters. Our Baptism by water is an outward sign of that inward grace that changes us and enables us to attain eternal life with our Heavenly Father in Heaven. How could we not be excited today as we once again look forward to celebrating the Great Christmas Feast.

Have we prepared well? Are we praying? Are there things we need to confess. Do we need to be more kind, more honest or more generous?

Saint Paul tells us how we should act as Christians as in Philippians we read: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." In the coming weeks let us truly make the effort required to 'Prepare the Way of the Lord' for this Christmas.

Michael Toohey

Your Prayers are requested for the following, for whom Mass will be offered:

Sick: Sebastian AGUIAR, Maria KONTREC, Eduiges CAMPOS, Jose BRITO, David SULLIVAN, Bishop George PHIMPISAN, Fr Paul STENHOUSE, Fr John B CHIANG, Ray CLARKE, Maila CORKILL, Fahed JREISAT, Emmanuel ARAPA, Bishop Geoffrey ROBINSON, Facunda MARTINO (7 years), Luis MARTINO, Anna MILLZARSKI, Bogdan MILLZARSKI, Justin ZERAFA, Cherish ADINA (1 year), Carmen SPITERI, Audrey SPITERI, Christine TRIGAS, Crystel SACOBOS, Eugene KLEIBERT, Dora BADINO, Guido BADINO, Sue SHERMAN, Emmanuel POLJAK

Recently Deceased: Joe CAMILLERI, Amparo PEDRO

Death Anniversary:

Other: Chrispina AMORES, Cornelio AMORES,

WIN THE WAY TO WORLD YOUTH DAY IN POLAND VIA PRAGUE IN JULY 2016

CCD Sydney supports Parish Catechists and is holding a competition for current Year 9 & 10 **public school** students to win free pilgrimages to World Youth Day 2016.

To enter, handwrite 300-500 words (or submit artwork with a reflection) about why you would like to go to WYD as a pilgrim, then have your entry endorsed by your Parish Priest and contact CCD Sydney on 9307 8330 asap or email office@ccdsydney.catholic.edu.au for parental permission form and further information.

SUNDAY 13TH DECEMBER the Jubilee Holy Door of Mercy at St Mary's Cathedral will be solemnly opened at the 10:30am Cathedral Mass celebrated by Archbishop Fisher. All are welcome to attend. A holy door is an ancient part of a Jubilee Year and is a way of participating in the journey of God's pilgrim people to the mercy of God.

WEDNESDAY 16TH DECEMBER
FOR LOVE ALONE, A NIGHT FOR SINGLE YOUNG WOMEN (18-35) who want to discover more about Consecrated Life. The program includes Dinner, Holy Hour, screening of the film For Love Alone and conversations with consecrated women from various communities. Details: Wednesday, 16 December at 5pm. JPII Student Centre, 150 City Rd. Darlington NSW 2008. Cost: Free but RSVP is essential by 01 December usydchaplaincy@gmail.com. This is an event co-hosted by the University Catholic Chaplaincies and the Vocation Centre to celebrate the Year of Consecrated Life.

THE ARCHBISHOP ANTHONY FISHER OP SYRIAN REFUGEE APPEAL. The Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP Syrian Refugee Appeal is the official appeal of the Archdiocese of Sydney. It's an opportunity for all Catholics to respond generously to the needs of Syrian refugees fleeing persecution. If you can offer support, large or small, please call the appeal hotline on **1800 690 302** or visit **catholiccare.org/Syria.**

Quiet Achievers – Night of Recognition 2016.

Many elderly Maltese have voluntarily contributed much of their time to help the community. The awards given on the Quiet Achievers – Night of Recognition 2016 are designed to honour these volunteers. If you know someone that fit this category why not nominate them. The criteria for this award and further details are on the Church noticeboard.

TEEN TALK GAVEL CLUB
(Public Speaking for Students in Years 5 - 12)
will meet again this Sunday 13th December at 11:30am in the Parish Hall.

YOUTH CORNER

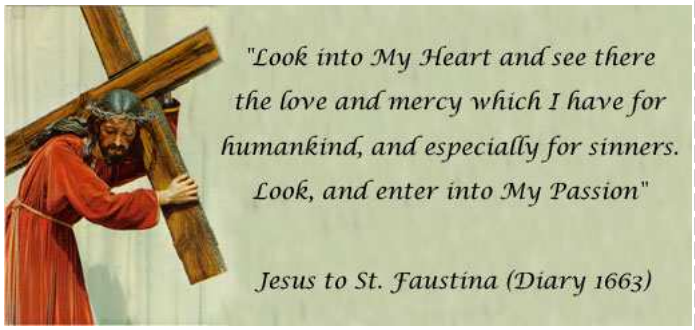
YOUTH FAMILY MASS

Attention all High School aged and older students and their families!

The next Youth Group Family Mass will be held at 5.30pm on Sunday 3rd January, 2016.

All are welcome to attend!

For more information on the activities and Youth Groups below see the WYD/Youth Group bulletin board or Joe on 9823 2572 or email Joe at josephs@johnthebaptist.org.au



Jordan and Galilee

Thank you to all those who came to our Christmas parties on Friday! It really was a great way to end the year and I thank you all for making it the year that it was. It was a lot of fun for me and I hope you all felt the same way about it as well. Thank you to all parents and others who came along at various stages throughout the year to help me out. A huge thank you must go out to Silvana Scamardella for being there 100% of the time and for all the selfless efforts she put into youth group, assisting with the food especially! I wish you all a holy and a very Merry Christmas and safe holidays as well. Until next year, God Bless all!! ☺

Christmas Encounter for Young Adults

As we begin the Year of Mercy called for by Pope Francis, join us for an evening of live music and catechesis, followed by a pilgrimage through the newly opened Holy Door of St Mary's Cathedral, and the opportunity to see the stunning Lights of Christmas projected onto the Cathedral facade!
Thursday, 17 December, 6pm-9pm at St Mary's Cathedral.
(The evening begins outside the Eastern Doors of the Cathedral, closest to Cathedral House).
We begin in the Eastern courtyard of the Cathedral with a light supper at 6pm and live music from local talent - Gus and Iggy, who will be performing for the very first time since their album release. Inside the Cathedral, Gary Pinto (Catholic singer-songwriter and vocal coach for X-Factor) will be sharing his experience of mercy, accompanied by music and song. The Archdiocesan Vocations Director **Fr Epeli Qimaqima** will then prepare us to walk through the Holy Door and receive the special Jubilee Year Indulgence. The night will conclude with Gary Pinto singing publically on the steps of the Cathedral with the Artes Christi Singers before the Lights of Christmas begin. See more on https://www.facebook.com/events/425625607636294/

Youth Prayer Intentions and Mass

All the youth and young adults of JB Parish are invited to the weekly Wednesday night Mass to pray for specific intentions (which will change each week). There will be a chance to celebrate Mass, pray for the intention during the Holy Hour as well as some time for fellowship with other youth. So please join us this Wednesday 16th December at 7:00pm as we pray for the following intention: **For the homeless and the poor, that they will be looked after especially during this Christmas Season.** If you would like to offer an intention one week, please contact Joe to do so. Come along all you young people for a chance to pray the rosary, celebrate Mass, worship Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration.

Antioch meet every Sunday evening from 6:30-8:30pm at JB Parish Hall. Come and join us for some great talks, participate in sharing, music, prayer and more! All youth from 16-24yo are more than welcome to attend! Hope to catch you all there!

PARISH SACRAMENT INFORMATION

Baptisms are usually held on Sundays. It is necessary to make a booking through the parish office and attend a Baptism Preparation session with either Fr James, Fr Phan or Deacon Mervyn. The Baptism will be pencilled in, and will only be confirmed once you have attended a Baptism Preparation session.

Sacrament of First Penance/Reconciliation/Confession: Took place on November 10, 11, 12 and 13.

First Holy Communion: Took place on Saturday 6th and 13th June, 2015 and Sunday 7th and 14th June, 2015.

Confirmation: Took place on 19th and 20th September, 2015.

Please keep watching this space for changes or updates or call the Parish Office.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

The hamper boxes need to be **returned** to the Parish Meeting Room **no later than Sunday 13th December.**

Thank you for your assistance at this time of the year.

Members, John the Baptist Conference, St Vincent de Paul Society.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY – THANK YOU FOR 2015

To all our Children's Liturgy Leaders and Helpers of 2015.

The community of John the Baptist would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank you for the commitment and care you have given the children of our Parish. Thank you for sharing your faith with our children and helping them in their journey of faith, to know and love God more.

May the peace and joy of Christmas be with you and your family. God bless you.

Please let Angela or your co-ordinator know (as soon as possible) whether you would like to continue being a Children's Liturgy Leader in 2016. If anyone is interested in joining the team please contact Angela Galdas on 9606 8403.

After your final Children's Liturgy for the year, please leave your folder and photocopies for 2015 in the Children's Liturgy cupboard.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

A parish our size relies on the great work of many volunteers. We currently need assistance with parish housie (once a month on a Saturday afternoon between 12 and 4.30pm) selling the tickets and reconciling the prizes and paperwork. There is also a need to get some walkers to do a letter drop in the lead up to Christmas in our parish.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS EVER MASS: Children wishing to participate in the children's Christmas Eve Mass, please attend a rehearsal on Monday the 14th of December at 4:00pm in the church. Please contact Rosalie 0404276332 or Silvana 0417197357 if you have any questions .

CHRISTMAS MASS HELPERS

We are in need of Readers, Eucharistic Ministers, Altar Servers, Wardens, Welcomers, Musicians, Setting up and Cleaning up Helpers. If you can assist please place your name and contact number on the sign up sheets on the Church noticeboard. Thank you.

Ministries Next Week 19/20 Dec	Sat 5.30 pm	Sun 8.00 am	Sun 10 am	Sun 5:30 pm
READERS:	A Dionysatos A Pace	S Hely J Finucane	N Laureti N Debuisson	M O'Mara A Watts
EUCHARIST MINISTERS:	T Grane P Grana M Abela J Abela D Rotonda B Empeigne G Luppino	L Barilla R Imbert L Barbara J Finucane	G Dunn H Fenech M Lavorato J Sullivan C Goodyer Delicia Vella J Vella G Zangari M Velardi	

UPCOMING PARISH & WESTERN DEANERY EVENTS

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Christmas Memorial Mass: Wednesday 16th December at 7:00pm (please bring a photo of your loved one)

Reconciliation:

Saturday 12th December	9:40am - 10:40am
Thursday 17th December	6:00pm - 7:00pm
Saturday 19th December	9:40am - 10:40am

Christmas Eve: 5:30pm Children's Mass
8:00pm
Midnight

Christmas Day: 7:30am 9:00am 11:00am

SECOND RITE OF RECONCILIATION ALL SAINTS LIVERPOOL
Wednesday 16th December at 7:30pm
Thursday 17th December at 9:45am

FRIDAY 18TH DECEMBER
A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION! Celebrate the beauty and wonder of Christmas with the St Mary's Cathedral Choir and Chamber Orchestra including congregational carols and music. Friday, 18 December at 7.30pm St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. Tickets available online at www.cityrecitalhall.com/events/st-marys-cathedral or 02 8256 2222.

'COME AND SIT WITH THE LORD' CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

Every Tuesday at 8pm. Give 20 minutes of your busy day to Jesus and experience the difference in your life. Held in the Church chapel. Duration time is approximately 30 minutes. For further information, contact Frances on 0438 213 313.

Bereavement Support Group: Will be back next year, so please watch this space for the commencement date!
Our parish has a group to assist people who have lost someone dear to them whether it has been recently or a while ago to help them cope with their loss. The group meets monthly on Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm in the Parish Centre. This group will be fairly informal but we will have resources to guide us through. If you need any information please do not hesitate to contact Josie on 9607 3973. You are able to join this group at anytime.

BIBLE STUDY: Every **Thursday 10am - 11am** Gathers in the **Church Meeting Room** (after the 9:10am Mass and Rosary). For further information please contact Meding on 9823 7121 or 0410 177 673.

Pope Francis weekly tweet @ Pontifex.
" May the Jubilee of Mercy bring us all closer to God's goodness and love."

PLANNED GIVING ENVELOPES 2015/2016 are now available for collection from the Parish Office.

If any Parishioner is interested in joining our Planned Giving Envelopes there will be clipboards available for you to place your names on the request forms. If you wish to have your contribution direct debited there are also yellow Standing Authority forms available. Thank you for your support.

PARISH HOUSIE: Every Saturday 2pm – 4:30pm at the Liverpool Catholic Club.

Think about your choices. Gambling More, enjoying less? For free and confidential information and advice about problem gambling, contact **Gambling Help 1800 858 858** www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au

RAISE YOUR VOICES!

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

Responsorial Psalm: Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

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

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

3rd Sunday of Advent, Year C — 13 December 2015

First Reading Zep 3:14-18

A reading from the prophet Zephaniah

With gladness the Lord will rejoice over you.

Shout for joy, daughter of Zion,
Israel, shout aloud!
Rejoice, exult with all your heart,
daughter of Jerusalem!
The Lord has repealed your sentence;
he has driven your enemies away.
The Lord, the king of Israel,
is in your midst;
you have no more evil to fear.
When that day comes, word will come
to Jerusalem:
Zion, have no fear,
do not let your hands fall limp.
The Lord your God is in your midst,
a victorious warrior.
He will exult witha joy over you,
he will renew you by his love;
he will dance with shouts of joy for you
as on a day of festival.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Is 12:2-6 R. v.6

(R.) Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

1. Truly, God is my salvation,
I trust, I shall not fear.
For the Lord is my strength, my song,
he became my saviour.
With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation. *(R.)*

2. Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to
his name!
Make his mighty deeds known to
the peoples!
Declare the greatness of his name. *(R.)*

3. Sing a psalm to the Lord
for he has done glorious deeds,
make them known to all the earth!
People of Zion, sing and shout for joy
for great in your midst is the Holy One
of Israel. *(R.)*

Second Reading Phil 4:4-7

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians

The Lord is near.

I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness. Let your tolerance be evident to everyone: the Lord is very near. There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation Is 61:1 (Lk 4:18)

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

Gospel Lk 3:10-18

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

What, then, must we do?

When all the people asked John, 'What must we do?' he answered, 'If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same.' There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and these said to him, 'Master, what must we do?' He said to them, 'Exact no more than your rate.' Some soldiers asked him in their turn, 'What about us? What must we do?' He said to them, 'No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!'

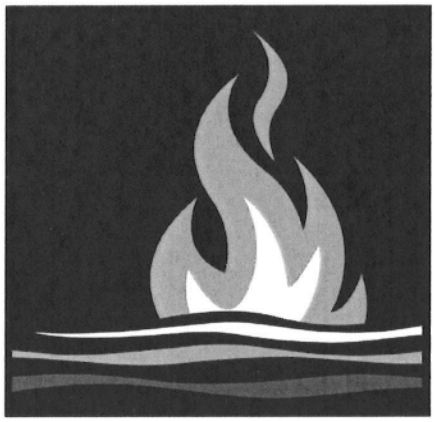
A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.' As well as this, there were many other things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

by Greg Sunter

Is it any wonder that there was a growing sense among the people that John might be the Christ? His teaching in the first part of this week's gospel might just as easily have come from the mouth of Jesus. It demonstrates for us just how much John was preparing the way



for Jesus: even his teaching was in line with what Jesus would later say. In this instance, the people gathered around John (presumably having been baptised by him) are asking how they should live out their new-found conversion of heart. John's response to the three groups is about the need for generosity and justice. It is about not taking more than your share when someone else does not have sufficient. To the crowd of people, he instructs them to give away a second tunic to someone who doesn't have one at all and to share their food with those who are hungry. To the tax collectors, he cautioned them to collect no more than what they were supposed to. Tax collectors made their profit by overcharging taxpayers. Together with the fact that they worked for the Roman occupiers, this made tax collectors one of the most despised groups in society. John's caution to them is to be just in their dealings. He also cautions the soldiers against intimidation and extorting money from the people to supplement their pay. The themes of justice and hospitality that will echo throughout the gospel of Luke are clearly evident in this episode with John. When the people start to talk about him being the Christ, John is quick to point them to the one who is still to come; the one who will share with them more fully the love of God and the fire of the Holy Spirit.

The psalm responses are from the English Translation of the **Lectionary for the Mass** ©1981 International Committee on English in the Liturgy Inc.(ICEL). All rights reserved. The psalm texts, from **The Psalms, A New Translation,** ©1963 by The Grail, England and used by permission of the publishers. The scriptural quotations are taken from the **Jerusalem Bible**, published and copyright 1966, 1967 and 1968 by Darton Longman and Todd Ltd and Doubleday & Co Inc, and used by permission of the publishers.

© **Creative Ministry Resources Pty Ltd**
All use must be in accordance with your user licensing agreement.