

## Reflection

**Joy, Praise, Happiness and Witness** are the key words of the First Reading, the Response, the Second Reading and the Gospel. If we take these words home in our minds and hearts, we have captured the sense of the advent celebration. To express the Lord's year of favour and joy, Isaiah seeks new words to convey the great enthusiasm of the people. He uses similes of an overjoyed bride and groom, the fresh and fruitful earth and people leaping for joy. While he prophesies the first coming of the Lord we may justly interpret his words for the second coming of the Lord. We have the sense of now but not yet, he has come but yet to come.

The response to the reading is not a psalm but the words of Mary from Luke's Gospel – the **Magnificat**. It is a hymn of thanksgiving to God for his mighty deed for Mary and also and especially for the poor and lowly.

The Entrance Antiphon: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice," sets the tone, the name and the colour of the day's liturgy "**Gaudete**". Rejoice and be happy, Christmas is a week away!



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**Parish Secretary: Colette Porter**  
Admin Assistant: Marianne Kelly

**Parish Office Hours**  
Tuesday - Friday : 9am - 1pm  
St Mary's Parish Centre  
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**Community Coordinator: Julie Moyle**  
Email: [pcc@stmarysechuca.org.au](mailto:pcc@stmarysechuca.org.au)

### PARISH MASS TIMES

**Weekend Mass Times: 16th & 17th December**

**Saturday: 6:00pm Mass**  
**Sunday : 9:30am Mass**

**Weekday Masses: 18th - 22nd December**

**Wednesday: 12.00pm Mass**  
**Friday: 9.00am Mass (Church)**

**Weekend Mass Times: 23rd & 24th & 25th December**

**Saturday: 6:00pm Vigil Mass**  
**Sunday : 9:30am Mass 4th Sunday of Advent**  
**6:00pm Christmas Family Mass**  
(St Joseph's College, Oak Centre)  
**10.00pm Christmas Vigil Mass**  
**Monday: 9.30am Christmas Day Mass**

**Reconciliation:** Approach Fr. Novie Before Mass  
**Baptism:** Every Second Sunday of the Month  
**Weddings:** By Appointment with the Parish Priest  
**Ladies' Group:** Every Tuesday 2pm (Parish Centre)  
**Men's Group:** Every Saturday 9am (Parish Centre)  
**Playgroup:** Every Friday 9am (Parish Centre)  
During school terms

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Yorta Yorta Nation. This land is sacred, this land is gift, this land is thousands of years old. We acknowledge the immense beauty of this land and the dreams of the Yorta-Yorta People. We pay our respects to elders past and present and acknowledge the lessons the Yorta-Yorta people teach us about care, respect and justice for mother earth. We remember their story as we journey together in a spirit of hope, justice and peace.

If you wish to assist in "further supporting the Parish" we offer different ways of giving... direct debit, credit card or planned giving envelopes. Please ring the office for more details.

PARISH BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS are as follows:

St Mary's Echuca  
BSB Number: 083-543  
Account Number: 45-782-9206

**Child Safety: Through our policies and practices, we protect the right of children to feel safe and to be safe. We promote the well-being and inclusion of all children. For more information, contact the parish office and look for the Child Safety Officer Mel Slattery.**

# PARISH NEWS



## Advent and Christmas Celebrations

- 6th December 2023**  
12 Noon Advent Anointing Mass
- 10th December 2023**  
Christmas BBQ and AGM  
9:30 am Mass  
Followed by BBQ and Christmas Raffle  
BYO Drinks and Picnic Rug
- 19th December 2023**  
Advent Community Reconciliation  
7:00 pm Liturgy
- 23rd December 2023**  
6 pm Vigil Mass
- 24th December 2023**  
9:30 am Sunday Mass
- 24th December 2023**  
6:00 pm Christmas Family Mass  
(St. Joseph's College, Oak Centre)  
10:00 pm Christmas Vigil Mass  
(Church)
- 25th December 2023**  
9:30am Christmas Day Mass

During Advent 2022, all Australian dioceses were invited to take up special collections for the people of Ukraine. Money raised was used to support the evacuation of people from frontline territories; food packages for people in need; shelters for internally displaced persons. Though we are now faced with the horror of the war in Gaza the people of Ukraine continue to endure a war that the world is forgetting. At the Bishops Conference's November 2023 meeting, bishops were asked to again consider if an appeal could be taken for the people of Ukraine during Advent.



**To this end we will have a special collection on the 16/17<sup>th</sup> December to donate to the Advent Appeal for Ukraine. Funds will again be directed to *Mudra Sprava* via the Eparchy of Sts Peter and Paul. You might need to remember to bring some cash to Mass.**  
- Parish Justice Team

Dear Members of the Parish, I share the news of Colette Porter's resignation from her role as Parish Secretary. We deeply appreciate her steadfast dedication and devoted service to our parish community. Colette's impact has been significant, and we wish her the very best in all her future pursuits.

- Fr Novie

**Join us for a gathering this Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2023, following the 12noon Mass in the Parish Meeting Room, as we celebrate Colette's service with a friendly get-together.**

Dear Beloved Parishioners,

As most of you know, I have resigned from my current position of Parish Secretary. It was not an easy decision to make as I have loved working here at the Parish.

I would like to thank each and every one of you for your love and support over the years and for all of the prayers for my family. I would also like to thank Fr Des, Fr Pompeyo and Fr Novie, it has been a pleasure to work for all of you. To the former PSG team, a dedicated team, meeting together weekly to achieve the best outcomes for our Parish/Parishioners, it was a dynamic team, an honour to be part of. The counters, baptism team, maintenance team, liturgy members, Sr Cletus, Sr Cecilia and Sr Margaret who I've worked closely with, thank you. And of course, Colleen and Christine, who helped me grow into my role, supported me and loved me through every year of work here. I will miss you all, your visits, your smiles. You have no idea how many times you have brightened my day. Thank you, it has been a great pleasure working for you all.

Please continue your kindness and support to Fr Novie and Marianne in the coming months.

We have an amazing Parish, please keep supporting and praying for your Parish. As Christine Sebire taught me, "keep your oars rowing in the same direction and never lose sight of the lighthouse because He is the light always there for you in the storm".

Love and God Bless, Colette xox



## Parish Opening Hours Christmas Season

**PLEASE NOTE THE OPENING HOURS DURING CHRISTMAS SEASON WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:**

<b>18 - 22 December:</b>	<b>Monday -</b>	<b>Office Closed</b>
	<b>Tuesday -</b>	<b>9am to 1pm</b>
	<b>Wednesday -</b>	<b>9am to 1pm</b>
	<b>Thursday -</b>	<b>9am to 12pm</b>
	<b>Friday -</b>	<b>Office Closed</b>

After Christmas Day and throughout January, office hours will only be available on Thursdays between 9am and 1pm.

If you need any help from the office, feel free to reach out to us via email at [admin@stmarysechuca.org.au](mailto:admin@stmarysechuca.org.au). For urgent matters such as Anointing and Funerals, don't hesitate to contact Julie Moyle at 0409 826 336.

FR. NOVIE AND THE ENTIRE STAFF EXTEND THEIR GRATITUDE FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR PARISH DURING 2023. WE WISH YOU A BLESSED AND MEANINGFUL CHRISTMAS, AS WELL AS PEACE AND PROSPERITY IN THE UPCOMING NEW YEAR. MERRY CHRISTMAS TO EVERYONE!

Are you in Echuca over Christmas? We need people to take on roles eg, lector, minister of the Eucharist, etc. at our 10pm Mass Christmas Eve and our 9.30am Mass Christmas morning. If you would like to do this please place your name on the list at the back of the church or let the parish office know or message Mary Atkins 0428515588.

**We hope you can be a part of our Christmas celebrations.**

## PARISH CALENDAR (December)

19th December - St Mary's Staff Mass 11.00am  
Community Reconciliation Liturgy 7.00pm  
in the Church

22nd December - Office closed.

26th December - Fr Novie away for 4 weeks

28th December - Office open from 9.00am to 1.00pm

January.

The office will only be open on a Thursday from 9.00am to 1.00pm.



### Mass this Sunday.

Join us in celebrating Sister Cecilia's remarkable Diamond Jubilee of Profession, celebrating her dedication to religious life since she took her vows.

Please gather for a casual get-together after Mass to honour and congratulate Sister Cecilia on this significant milestone.

Your presence will make this celebration even more special.



### ROSTERS: This Week - 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> December

#### Commentators/Lectors:

6.00pm: Christine Sebire  
Carol Purdon, Chris Lee

9.30am: Barb Green  
Win Lavery, Rob Morris

#### Ministers of the Eucharist

6.00pm: Nick Lee  
9.30am: Julie Moyle, Catherine Lindner

#### St Anne's Church Cleaners: 14<sup>th</sup>

Cecilia Merrigan, Barb Green, Kerry McLoughlan

Setting up the Church: 16<sup>th</sup> Mary Atkins

Setting up the Church: 17<sup>th</sup> Noela Boyer

Baptism Preparation: Sarah Byrne

Counters: 19<sup>th</sup> Roma Bowman, Margaret Hart

Hospital Visiting: Kym Bridges

Gardening: Jim & Prue Galea, Rose Quinn

### ROSTERS: Next Week - 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> December

#### Commentators/Lectors:

6.00pm: Tania Dixon  
Carla Chisholm, Terry McKitterick

9.30am: Rachel McAsey  
Lauren Gould, John Vagg

#### Ministers of the Eucharist

6.00pm: Ruth Phillips  
9.30am: Adrian Costello, Bernie Oliver

#### St Anne's Church Cleaners: 21<sup>st</sup>

Kay Westblade, Eileen Pineo, Bev Stapleton

Setting up the Church: 23<sup>rd</sup> Christine Sebire

Setting up the Church: 24<sup>th</sup> Rachel McAsey

Baptism Preparation: Sarah Byrne

Counters: 27/28<sup>th</sup> Pat Whyte, Adrian Costello

Hospital Visiting: Noela Bridges

Gardening: Jim & Prue Galea, Rose Quinn

People for the 6.00pm, 10.00pm (24<sup>th</sup>) and 9.30am (Christmas Day) Masses will be notified.

### YOUR PRAYERS PLEASE

**Sick:** Julio and Nati Acebron, Eileen Anderson, David Baker, Bruno Barbera, Monica Beckwith, Dan Carey, Howard Clark Jnr, Pat Davey, John & Chloris Dignan, Anne Dodd, Caroline Farley, Bernadette McClelland, Fred Molluso, John Monigatti, Margaret Oman, Murray Perrett, Beatrice Phillips, Peter Phillips, Meredith (Maddick) Ryan, Patricia Voegel, Jodie Walton, Jayden Williams.

**Anniversaries:** Hilda Woolnough, Patricia Kay, Fortunato Oliveri, Nancy Goldrick, Anne Kirchoffer, Agostino Coulturi, George Jasper.

**Deaths:** Dennis Carter

**First Reading**     Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11

**A reading from the prophet Isaiah**

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,  
for the Lord has anointed me.  
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,  
to bind up hearts that are broken;  
to proclaim liberty to captives,  
freedom to those in prison;  
to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.  
'I exult for joy in the Lord,  
my soul rejoices in my God,  
for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation,  
he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity,  
like a bridegroom wearing his wreath,  
like a bride adorned in her jewels.  
'For as the earth makes fresh things grow,  
as a garden makes seeds spring up,  
so will the Lord make both integrity and praise  
spring up in the sight of the nations.'

**The word of the Lord.**

**Thanks be to God.**

**Second Reading**     1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

A reading from first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things  
give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you  
to do in Christ Jesus.  
Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of proph-  
ecy with contempt; think before you do anything - hold  
on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.  
May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and  
may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and  
body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has  
called you and he will not fail you.

**The word of the Lord.**

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation**

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

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

**Alleluia!**

**Responsorial Psalm**     Luke 1:46-50, 53-54

**R. My soul rejoices in my God.**

My soul glorifies the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.  
He looks on his servant in her nothingness;  
henceforth all ages will call me blessed. **R.**

The Almighty works marvels for me.  
Holy his name!  
His mercy is from age to age,  
on those who fear him. **R.**

He fills the starving with good things,  
sends the rich away empty.  
He protects Israel, his servant,  
remembering his mercy. **R.**

**Gospel**     John 1:6-8, 19-28

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

A man came, sent by God.  
His name was John.  
He came as a witness,  
as a witness to speak for the light,  
so that everyone might believe through him.  
He was not the light,  
only a witness to speak for the light.  
This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews  
sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who  
are you?' he not only declared, but he declared quite  
openly, 'I am not the Christ.' 'Well then,' they asked 'are  
you Elijah?' 'I am not' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?' He  
answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We  
must take back an answer to those who sent us. What  
have you to say about yourself?' So John said, 'I am, as  
Isaiah prophesied:

a voice that cries in the wilderness:

Make a straight way for the Lord.'

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they  
put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising if  
you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the proph-  
et?' John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands  
among you unknown to you the one who is coming after  
me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.' This hap-  
pened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where  
John was baptising.

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Next week: 4th Sunday of  
Advent  
23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> December Year B  
1st Reading:  
2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16  
Responsorial Psalm:  
88:2-5, 27, 29  
2nd Reading:  
Romans 16:25-2  
Gospel:  
Luke 26-38**

