

St Benedict's Parish Arcadia



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR C

21 & 22 DECEMBER 2024

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Drop down dew from above, you heavens,
and let the clouds rain down the Just One;

SUNDAY HOLY MASS PRAYER

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord,
your grace into our hearts,
that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son
was made known by the message of an Angel,
may by his Passion and Cross
be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.
Who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

SELF REFLECTION: GOD'S PRESENCE

In Luke 1:39-44, we witness the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth, two women filled with joy and anticipation of the miraculous events unfolding in their lives. When Elizabeth hears Mary's greeting, her baby leaps in her womb, and she is filled with the Holy Spirit. This passage highlights the power of God's work even in the unborn, affirming His presence and plan in the world.

1. *How can I be more aware of God's presence in my life?*
2. *Am I open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit?*
3. *How can I show more joy and gratitude for God's blessings?*
4. *Do I recognise and celebrate God's miracles in my life?*
5. *How can I build stronger relationships with others in faith?*

Lord, help me recognise Your presence in my life every day. Open my heart to the guidance of Your Holy Spirit and fill me with joy and gratitude for Your blessings. Teach me to see Your miracles, both big and small, and to celebrate them with others. Strengthen my faith and relationships, and guide me to live according to Your will. Amen.

Love

The Fourth Sunday of Advent



PARISH MASS TIMES

Weekends:

Saturday 7:00pm Vigil
Sunday 9:00am
Sunday 10:30am



Weekdays:

Mondays to Thursdays 9:30am
Fridays 6:30pm Adoration
7:00pm Mass & Confession
(Reconciliation)
Saturdays 9:00am to 10:00am
Adoration & Confession (Reconciliation)

MONASTERY CHAPEL Masses

Sundays 7:00am
Daily 7:00am

Father Shansana will be away from the parish from the 3rd January 2025 and returning on the 22nd of January 2025.

Please contact Father Shansana for the following:

BAPTISMS
RECONCILIATION
FOR THE SICK
MARRIAGES
FUNERALS

Parish Priest:
Fr Shansana 0437 884 233



First Reading: Micah 5:1- 4 (JB)

A reading from the prophet Micah

Out of you will be born the one who is to rule over Israel.

The Lord says this:

You, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
the least of the clans of Judah,
out of you will be born for me
the one who is to rule over Israel;
his origin goes back to the distant past,
to the days of old.

The Lord is therefore going to abandon them
till the time when she who is to give birth gives birth.

Then the remnant of his brothers will come back
to the sons of Israel.

He will stand and feed his flock
with the power of the Lord,
with the majesty of the name of his God.

They will live secure, for from then on he will extend his power
to the ends of the land.

He himself will be peace.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm:

**R. Lord, make us turn to you;
let us see your face and we shall be saved.**

Second Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10 (JB)

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

I am coming to do your will.

This is what Christ said, on coming into the world:

You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation, prepared a body for me.

You took no pleasure in holocausts or sacrifices for sin;
then I said, just as I was commanded in the scroll of the book,
'God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will.'

Notice that he says first: You did not want what the Law lays down as the things to be offered, that is: the sacrifices, the oblations, the holocausts and the sacrifices for sin, and you took no pleasure in them; and then he says: Here I am! I am coming to obey your will. He is abolishing the first sort to replace it with the second. And this will was for us to be made holy by the offering of his body made once and for all by Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the servant of the Lord:
may his will for me be done.
Alleluia!

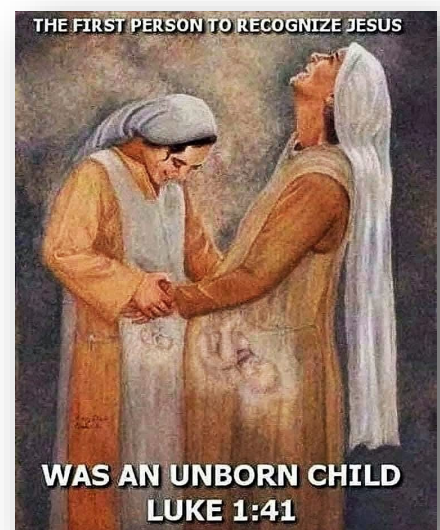
GOSPEL: Luke 1:39-44 (JB)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Why should it happen that I am honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?

Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



GOSPEL REFLECTION

4th Sunday of Advent, December 22

Micah 5:1-4 / Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19 / Hebrews 10:5-10 / Luke 1:39-45

Mary . . . entered the house of Zechariah. (Luke 1:39-40)

When you think of the Visitation of Mary, which is described in today's Gospel reading, you normally think she's going to see Elizabeth—and she is. But Zechariah was probably there as well, even though he would have been a silent presence. Just think how his inability to speak might have heightened his perception of what was going on around him. While we have no record of Zechariah's experience, we can imagine what this visit might have been like for him.

When Zechariah first saw Mary, worn from the journey but alive with excitement and hope, perhaps his heart leaped for joy just as his son did. Imagine his tired face and furrowed brow softening into a warm smile as he welcomed their surprise visitor!

When he heard Elizabeth call their young cousin “the mother of my Lord” (Luke 1:43), Zechariah could tell that something remarkable was going on. Any shock or doubt he might have felt at hearing his wife give Mary such a title would have dissolved as he remembered the angel's promise that his son would “go before” the Lord and prepare his way (1:17).

When Elizabeth praised Mary for believing what the Lord said to her (Luke 1:45), Zechariah's own faith might have been buoyed up and his anticipation kindled. Any regret at his own response to his heavenly messenger likely faded when he observed Mary's wholehearted surrender to the Lord's will.

Today, just a few days before Christmas, place yourself in the scene of the Visitation as a silent presence like Zechariah. Take some time to slow down your thoughts. Imagine Mary entering *your* house carrying Jesus in her womb. How does your heart respond to the sound of her greeting? Do you recognize Jesus in her? Can you praise God for Mary's faithful response to his word to her?

“Lord, help me to listen to what you're saying to me today.”

Source: Word Among Us India



SUPPORT VANUATU EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

Thousands of people have been severely impacted by the earthquake in Vanuatu. Please help provide emergency shelter, food and other essentials, psychosocial support to those who are experiencing hardship.



DONATE NOW

caritas.org.au/vanuatu
1800 024 413



Vanuatu Earthquake Appeal

Vanuatu has experienced two earthquakes within 24 hours impacting over 116,000 people and causing significant damage to buildings and infrastructure. The main hospital in Port Vila has sustained extensive damage and is overwhelmed by the mass casualties.

There are hundreds of people have been injured or trapped under rubble and at least 14 people deceased with the death toll expected to continue to rise. People remain fearful of further disaster, as Vanuatu is one of the most susceptible countries to natural disasters such as earthquakes, storm damage, flooding, and tsunamis.

This appeal will provide support to our on the ground partners who are ready to respond to the humanitarian requirements by providing emergency shelter, food and other essentials, psychosocial support, and recovery efforts.

Please

Donate today: <http://www.caritas.org.au/vanuatu>



POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER INTENTION FOR DECEMBER 2024

For pilgrims of hope

We pray that this Jubilee Year strengthen our faith, helping us to recognize the Risen Christ in our daily lives, and that it may transform us into pilgrims of Christian hope.

ST BENEDICT'S YOUTH GROUP

Youth Group Wrap-Up!

Thank you to everyone who joined in, supported, and made this year's Youth Group so special! A huge shoutout to **GABE WALL** and **JULES OZOLINS** for their incredible dedication in organising the youth sessions all year. Your hard work, creativity, and leadership made it fun, engaging, and memorable for all the youth and youth leaders.

Here's to another great year ahead!

YOUTH UPDATE SALT STARTER PACK

St. Benedict's Youth Group is excited to be considering the purchase of a Salt Starter Pack. The SALT Approach is a registered charity dedicated to promoting the Catholic faith through hands-on educational materials, helping children explore deep spiritual truths in an engaging and meaningful way.

The cost of the Starter Pack is \$2,500.00, with a retail value of \$2,825.00. We would greatly appreciate any donations to support this wonderful resource for our Youth Group. Your generosity is truly appreciated, and any contribution will make a difference. Thank you for your support!



The St Vincent De Paul Christmas Appeal has commenced. A big thanks to the people who have already kindly donated items.

We will be collecting donations of money and non-perishable food for the next few weeks, right up to Christmas. We would be appreciative of your support in this appeal. We have always been able to give our Local clients a much better Christmas with your generous giving. Envelopes are available around the church for donations, as well as our big buckets for any food, drinks and toiletries you may like to donate.

Thanking you in anticipation,
Rita, Lila, Marie & Karen
Arcadia Conference

VOLUNTEERS OF THE WEEK!

This week's volunteer of the week nomination goes to quite a few deserving people:

- **MIRKO JUTRISA & FAMILY** for donating the Chasuble.
- **AZZI BOYS** for helping with the Christmas tree and delivering the books to Hornsby (even though it was closed and had to bring them back—so sorry!)
- **SOPHIE REBULA AND ROSIE SAKKAL** for putting up the Christmas tree and decorations.
- **JASON SAKKAL** for mowing the lawn.
- **TANIA TASSONE** for cleaning the wall fans.

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you. Your support has been invaluable, and I truly appreciate all the help you've provided. Without your assistance, it would have been incredibly difficult to get everything done. Your efforts have made a significant difference, and I'm deeply grateful for your time, dedication, and willingness to step in when needed. Thank you again for everything – it means more than words can express.

God bless you all!



FLOWERS ROSTER HELP NEEDED FOR NEXT YEAR 2025

We are in need of more volunteers for the flower roster. The commitment is just once every 6 to 7 weeks. Your help would be greatly appreciated. Please consider lending a hand to help brighten our beautiful Church with flowers.
Thank you!

PARISH OFFICE HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Parish Office will be **closed from Monday, 23rd December 2024**, and will **reopen on Friday, 10th January 2025**. During the month of January, the office will only be open on **Fridays**.

For anything **urgent**, contact Paula at **0423 078 282**.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!



In Our Parish

(please let us know if you would like someone added here)

We welcome into God's family, all who were recently baptised.

We pray for the sick of our Parish, especially Joseph Guiana, Charlie Micallef, Brother Mario, Father Alberic.

**We remember in our prayers all our dearly beloved who have died,
Especially Vanessa Papandrea, Biagio Abignano, Phil Dailey, Brother Peter Hancock,
Brother Terry & Colleen Bennett ~ May they rest in eternal Peace.**





MEMORIAL MASS



In Loving Memory of

PASQUALE & ELISABETTA GAMBINO

**Sunday, 22nd December at 7:00pm
at the Parish Church**

Please join us for a special prayer service in memory of Pasquale and Elisabetta, as we come together to honour and remember them. Everyone welcome.

*Eternal rest grant to them O Lord,
and let the Perpetual Light shine upon them.
May they rest in Peace.
Amen.*

Please join us for supper afterwards at the parish meeting room.

Anna-Maria Gambino and family

CATECHISTS' NEWS

Wishing all Catechists and families a very blessed and safe Christmas and New Year!

If you are interested in knowing more about being a Catechist (Scripture teacher) or helper please feel free to talk to me, or Paula in the parish office or our priests, or any parish Catechist.

God bless,

Miriam Brown
srearcadia@gmail.com
Parish Catechist
Co-ordinator

NEW ROSTER

NOW AVAILABLE IN SACRISTY. Please pick up your copy with your name on it as soon as possible.

GALSTON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

(GCEA)

Message from our SRE Teacher Paul El-Chaar:

As the school year comes to a close, I'd like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the teachers and students at Galston High School in 2024.

It has been an absolute pleasure and privilege to be part of this community once again.

As I look forward to 2025, I'd like to reflect on the past year. It's been incredible to witness the students' growth in their spiritual journey, deepening their understanding of Jesus and His teachings through the Bible.

I'd like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Parents /Carers and the local churches for their ongoing support on this very important ministry. Your partnership has been invaluable, and I'm grateful for the commitment to the spiritual well-being of our students and constant prayers and support in my role as SRE teacher.

I wish you all a joyous Christmas season filled with love, peace, good health, and blessings. May the true spirit of Christmas be a source of inspiration and guidance throughout the year ahead.

Regards,

Paul El-Chaar
SRE Teacher
Galston High School

THOUGHTS TO INSPIRE

*"Let us not forget to thank God for the gift of Jesus, the greatest gift of Christmas."
~ Pope Francis ~*

*Lord, on this holy day,
we thank You for the gift of Jesus.*

*May His love fill our hearts with joy,
our homes with love and our lives with hope.*

Amen.

Source: majellan.com

ST BENEDICT'S MAKER'S TABLE

Thank you to all the ladies who have joined us for our Maker's Table workshops this year! We've had a lot of fun being creative together and discovered a few hidden talents! Our monthly workshops will start up again in February next year. Please let us know any suggestions for future workshops or if you're able to share your creative talent with us!

Martine 0458-533-250 Nerida 0425-834-017

CRAFT GROUP UPDATE

Please note that there will be no Craft Group meeting in December as it falls on Christmas Eve. We will resume our meetings as usual in January 2025.

Wishing everyone a wonderful Christmas!

ITALIAN ROSARY GROUP

Every **Monday 2.00pm.**
Everyone welcome.



For more details call

Angela Egiziano on 9652 1358.

CRAFT GROUP

The quilting and craft group will meet every **4th Tuesday** of the month at 10.30am in the parish meeting room.

All Welcome.

(NOT ON IN DECEMBER)

CCC PRAYER GROUP

**Prayer Group resumes
January 8, 2025.
Merry Christmas all!**



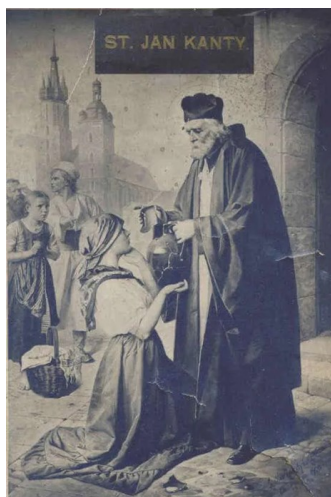
For more details call
Mary Camilleri on 0403 116 987.

SAINT OF THE WEEK

Saint John of Kanty (Cantius), Priest

C. 1390-1473

Feast Day: December 23



Patron Saint of:

Teachers, students, priests, pilgrims, Lithuania, and Poland

Jan Kanty (John Cantius in English) was born in 1390 in the small town of Kęty, in the Kingdom of Poland. Kęty is about ten miles south of Oświęcim, which the Nazis renamed Auschwitz, the location of the largest and most horrific concentration camp in World War II.

Young John proved to be intelligent and devout, receiving his early education in his hometown. Around age twenty-three, he enrolled in the Kraków Academy where he studied philosophy. During John Cantius' studies, he was introduced to *Devotio Moderna* (Modern Devotion) that emphasized personal devotion, humility, and conversion through meditation upon Sacred Scripture and prayer.

Around 1418, John earned his doctorate in philosophy. He taught philosophy classes at the Kraków Academy while studying theology. Upon completing his studies, John was ordained a priest and became rector at the school of the Canons Regular of the Most Holy Sepulcher in Miechów, about twenty-five miles north of Kraków, where he served for about eight years. The Canons Regular followed Saint Augustine's Rule. With no printing press, one of Father John's duties was to work as a copyist of Scripture and books through which he grew in an intimate knowledge of Sacred Scripture. He also copied Saint Augustine's works, inspiring his deep love of Augustinian philosophy and theology. Father John copied more than 18,000 pages of text that still exist.

In 1429, Father John accepted a position at Kraków Academy where he became a beloved professor of Sacred Scripture, philosophy, and theology. He had a reputation for making complex philosophical and theological concepts accessible to his students, combining depth with clarity and practical application. He earned a doctorate in theology, becoming head of the Philosophy Department, and eventually, head of the Theology Department.

Besides being an excellent professor, Father John cared for his students' spiritual needs with compassion and concern. He was known as a powerful preacher and a defender of orthodoxy. One raging debate in the Church was conciliarism, an assertion that the pope should submit to Church councils' authority. Father John became a staunch defender of the papacy, with a profound effect upon his colleagues and students.

Father John also became well-known and well-loved in Kraków for his generosity and love of the poor. Whatever he had was theirs, minus the meager amount he required for his own needs. One story relates that he even gave away his shoes to a poor person. When asked why he was going barefoot, he replied that a poor person needed his shoes more than he did.

Father John's prayer life was greatly enhanced by his penitential life. He slept on the floor and ate very little. He made four 1,800-mile pilgrimages to the Holy Land, carrying his one sack of belongings. Many miracles were attributed to his intercession by those who visited his tomb. These later miracles drew pilgrims from across Europe to the university's Collegiate Church of Saint Anne, where he was buried.

Saint John Cantius, though a great intellectual, your humility, deep faith, and genuine love for those to whom you ministered had a lasting effect upon your community and upon all of Poland. Please pray that I will imitate your virtues so that I, too, will one day be counted among the saints. Saint John Cantius, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You. Amen.

Source: mycatholic.life

PIETY SHOP NEWS

A Heartfelt Thank You

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all who have supported the Piety Shop. This journey has been truly beautiful and rewarding, filled with learning and meaningful connections with so many wonderful parishioners.

A special thank you to Rosie Sakkal, Mary Aboud, Nerida Woodbury, Paula El-Chaar and Jules Ozolins for their unwavering support and dedication to the Piety Shop. Your help has been invaluable.

Merry Christmas! May the Lord Jesus bless you all and keep you safe and protected throughout the New Year.

With love,
Lila Bacha

Note: The Piety Shop will be **closed from Monday 23rd December** and will reopen early February 2025.

Thank you for your support and generosity!

MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSES FOR ENGAGED COUPLES

Engaged Encounter

Engaged Encounter provides you with deeper insights into each other and into married life. We give you a chance to spend time together to strengthen and enrich your relationship. For further information, visit our [website](#). Choose any of the coming Weekends: **22-23 Feb 2025; 17-18 May 2025; 16- 17 Aug 2025.**

SmartLoving Engaged: Online Marriage Preparation

Consisting of nine lessons, you progress through the course at your own pace, doing the couple activities as you go. There is an option for a married Sponsor Couple from your community to accompany you through the course. <https://smartloving.org/broken-bay>

CHRISTMAS NOVENA

Preparing the Way for the Lord

December 16 - 24

Let's Pray Together



The Christmas Novena, beginning on December 16, is a powerful time of prayer and preparation leading up to Christmas Day. It allows individuals to focus on the anticipation of Christ's birth, reflect on the meaning of the Incarnation, and spiritually prepare their hearts for the celebration of Jesus' coming into the world. Praying this novena provides intentional time to grow closer to God, seek guidance, and renew one's faith amidst the busyness of the season. It also connects individuals with the universal Church in a shared journey of prayer, reflection, and hope.

You can find Christmas Novenas online that typically include prayers, Scripture readings, and meditations for each day. They may focus on themes like faith, hope, joy, gratitude, and humility, mirroring the journey leading up to the celebration of Jesus' birth.

Praying the novena doesn't have to be rigid—it can be simple and sincere. Whether you pray it alone, with family, or as part of a prayer group, the goal is to allow the time of prayer to draw you closer to God and help you enter the Christmas season with a renewed heart.

Parish Roster

PLEASE JOIN US FOR MORNING TEA
AFTER THE 9AM MASS

NEXT WEEKEND'S ROSTER

28/12/24 TO 29/12/2024
HOLY FAMILY - YEAR C

	SATURDAY 7.00pm	SUNDAY 9.00am	SUNDAY 10.30am
Acolyte		Nigel M	
Reader1	Edyn V	Lorraine D	Doug M
Reader2	Daniel V	Ann L	Sandra M
Prayers	Natasha S	Judy H	Lorna B
TV		Jules O	Teresa G
Music		Karina S	Melanie H
Music		Noelle T	Keith W
Music		John T	Don R
Music			
Morning Tea		Mary A	
FLOWERS	Souraya K		



Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers,
we really appreciate it!

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

SAFEGUARDING MISSION STATEMENT

We the people of St Benedict's Parish are committed to fostering a community of safety and care for all people, especially for children and others in the community who are vulnerable. Our commitment is underscored by our faith in Jesus Christ.

If you have a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, tell someone who can help. These people in our parish can help: Fr Shansana 0437 884 233 - Lorraine Dailey 0416 081 882 - Office for Safeguarding 8379 1605.

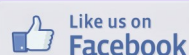
For all parish OH&S and Safeguarding Children matters Contact:
Lorraine Dailey on 0416 081 882.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS:

Mondays & Fridays: 9.30am to 2.30pm

(Closed from Monday, 23rd December 2024, and will reopen on Friday, 10th January 2025. During the month of January, the office will only be open on Fridays. If urgent call Paula on 0423 078 282)

Parish Office: 02 9653 2312
Address: 2 Fagans Road, Arcadia 2159
Email: arcadia.parish@bbcatholic.org.au
Website: www.bbcatholic.org.au/arcadia
Parish Priest: Fr Shansana Samarasinghe OSB
Email: sanshanasamarasinghe@yahoo.com
After hours: 0437 884 233
Facebook: stbenedict sarcadia



CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

CHRISTMAS

Christmas Eve
Tuesday 24th Dec 2024
7.00pm & 11.30pm
(Midnight Mass commences 11.45pm)

Christmas Day
Wednesday 25th Dec 2024
9.00am & Latin Mass 10.30am

FEAST OF HOLY FAMILY

Saturday Vigil 28th Dec 2024
7.00pm
Sunday 29th Dec 2024
9.00am & 10.30am
4.30pm Latin Mass



NEW YEAR'S DAY

Feast Mary the Holy Mother of God
Wednesday 1st Jan 2025
9.30am

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

Sunday 5th Jan 2025
9.00am & 10.30am
4.30pm Latin Mass

FEAST BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Sunday 12th Jan 2025
9.00am & 10.30am
4.30pm Latin Mass

MONASTERY CHAPEL

Daily as usual
7.00am



LEBANON CRISIS APPEAL

Communities are being devastated by conflict and economic instability. Please help provide families with food, water, and medical care.



DONATE NOW

caritas.org.au/lebanon
1800 024 413



PARISH BANK DETAILS for
ONLINE only donations:
BSB: 062 784 Account: 100002141
Account Name: Catholic Parish of Arcadia Bank:
CBA—Catholic Development Fund

MONASTERY: 02 9653 1159
121 Arcadia Rd, Arcadia 2159