

Diocese of Broken Bay

Parish Priest: Fr Jim McKeon
Jim.McKeon@bbcatholic.org.au

Assistant Priest: Fr Aldrin Valdehueza
Aldrin.Valdehueza@bbcatholic.org.au

Our Lady Help of Christians'

31 Oxford Street, Epping

St Gerard Majella's

543 North Rocks Road, Carlingford

Phone

02 9876 2853

Website

eppcarl.org.au

Email

eppcarl@bbcatholic.org.au

Giving

Click here for:

[Weekend Mass Times](#)

[Weekday Mass Times](#)

[Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament](#)

[Sacrament of Reconciliation](#)



Readings

22 DECEMBER 2024

Micah 5:1- 4
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-44

25 DECEMBER 2024

Isaiah 52:7-10
Hebrews 1:1-6
John 1:1-18

29 DECEMBER 2024

1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28
1 John 3:1-2, 21-24
Luke 2:41-52

5 JANUARY 2025

Isaiah 60:1-6
Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6
Matthew 2:1-12



The Catholic Parish of Epping & Carlingford



22 DECEMBER 2024 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

25 DECEMBER 2024 THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

29 DECEMBER 2024 THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH

5 JANUARY 2025 THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

YEAR C

Welcome! If this is your first time here with us, or your first time back in a while, we're really glad you're here. Our parish family is all the richer for having you with us, and we hope that you will be enriched by being with us too. In these pages are invitations to help you find the best way to come and make OLHC Epping and St Gerard's Carlingford your church home.

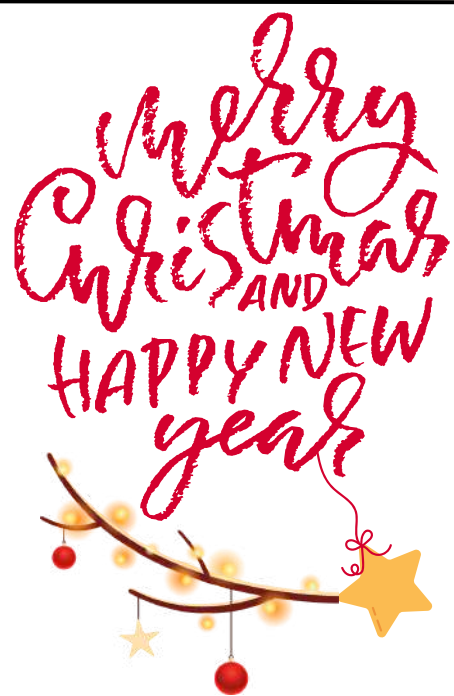
Hope is the gift of Christmas. When we think life is too hard or the future too uncertain and we want to give in, God comes from Heaven to earth to be with us, to walk with us and show us the way. Pope Francis has asked us to make 2025 a Jubilee Year of Hope so you'll be hearing much more about hope in the year ahead.

Thank you to every parishioner who has contributed their time, their talent and their generosity to build up the life of our parish. Together we have worshipped and served God and shared the good news of Jesus Christ with the world.

~Fr Jim McKeon

First time here? Some information for you: **Toilets** at St Gerard's are in the building directly behind the church. Toilets at OLHC are accessed from the street on the other side of the tree. **Communion:** If you are Catholic and usually receive Communion you can come forward to any minister to receive the Body of Christ on your hand. If you are not Catholic, or for children who have not yet prepared for First Communion come forward with your hands crossed on your heart to receive a blessing. **Giving:** If you'd like to support our parish financially there are a few ways to do this. There are two money boxes at the back of St Gerard's and the middle of OLHC. Pastoral Revenue / First Collection supports the priests of our parish and diocese, and the Church Account / Second Collection supports all the ministries of our parish which you read about in this newsletter. A tap & go machine at the entrance to the church gives a donation to our parish. *Thank you for your generosity.*

Worship together: As Catholics we live our faith in many ways, but the heart of our faith is always our gathering together for Mass each week. We have four weekend Masses at each of our churches. **OLHC Epping** has Saturday at 5pm and Sunday at 8.30am, 10.15am and 7pm. **St Gerard's Carlingford** has Saturday at 6pm and Sunday at 7.45am, 9.30am and 5pm. This gives lots of options for people's busy lives! Everyone is welcome at every Mass, and we have a particular focus on families with school aged children at the 9.30am Mass, and



on teenagers and young adults at 5pm Sundays at St Gerard's. We know that some people find noise and crowds difficult, and for them the 7.45am Mass at St Gerard's is a quieter, gentler Mass which might be a comfortable place to be. Come and join more than 1000 people who come for worship every weekend.

Getting Involved: Everybody has some gift or talent to offer to the service of God in the Church. Keep an eye out in this bulletin in the new year for some new opportunities to get involved. **To our hundreds of existing volunteers – thank you for all you have done this year.** We'd like to thank you in person at our **annual Volunteers Mass and Dinner on Tues Feb 18th**. Look out for an invitation from your ministry coordinator early in the new year.



Christmas can be tough and sometimes we need help: CatholicCare is the social care agency of our diocese. They offer services for domestic and family violence, homelessness, parenting, relationship counselling, aged care, foster care and emergency relief. Take a flyer from the back of the church or go to www.catholiccaredbb.org.au. For counselling contact 1800 324 924. The priests of the parish are always available. The parish office 9876 2853 diverts to either Fr Jim or Fr Aldrin after hours. The St Vincent De Paul Society offers practical assistance to people in financial need. Call the Hornsby regional office on 9477 5022 during office hours and they'll arrange for two of our local Vinnies volunteers to come and visit you at home.

Social Justice: It is part of our Catholic faith that we are committed to social justice, that is, the transformation of society into a place where God's justice takes place. In 2024 our parish social justice group has focused on environment (recycling and Clean Up day), supporting Jesuit Refugee Services (jrs.org.au) and partnering with Parramatta Women's Shelter and Prison Fellowship. We're also a partner of the Sydney Alliance (sydneyalliance.org.au) which will give us access to a broad coalition of civil society groups working together for the common good.

IN 2025

W e l c o m e !

In 2025 **we welcome back Fr Joey Frez** to our parish. Bishop Anthony has appointed Fr Joey as diocesan Director of Vocations and also to live at Carlingford presbytery and to assist in the parish when he is able. We also welcome seminarian **Matthew French** who will be on pastoral placement in the parish whilst continuing his theological studies.



Welcome to Holly Lawton, our new Youth Ministries Coordinator. Holly is a long time member of our parish and a present member of the Antioch youth group. She is also studying Law & Business at Macquarie University. Holly will take up the role on January 13th, and will be contactable on Holly.Lawton@bbcatholic.org.au and 0404 710 588.

Youth ministry enquiries can be directed to Fr Jim until January 13th. More news on our youth ministry within the bulletin on Page 5.



New OLHC Building: We eagerly await the handover of the new parish building, carpark and school in the coming months once services are installed and commissioning takes place. We are looking forward to new underground carparking via Cambridge St through which the church and parish centre can be accessed via stairs or elevator. The new hall and meeting rooms will host parish functions including children's liturgy, playgroup, morning teas, a monthly seniors Mass, a new weekly community dinner, young adult groups, bible study and prayer groups and much more. It will also be available for hire.



There's some other projects we look forward to progressing in 2025, including the air conditioning of OLHC Church, safety rectification of the OLHC choir loft, and an accessible ramp to the back of St Gerard's Church.

Christmas Mass Times



OLHC Epping

- Christmas Eve - 5pm Family Mass
- Christmas Eve Vigil Mass - 9pm (carols 8:30pm)
- Christmas Day - 8:30am & 10:15am

St Gerard's Carlingford

- Christmas Eve - 6pm Family Mass
- Christmas Eve Vigil Mass - 10pm (carols 9:40pm)
- Christmas Day - 7:45am & 9:30am

There are no evening Masses on Christmas Day

Past Calendars



Wanted: Old calendars in good used condition to be used in creative reflection and art activities. Any theme welcome - from puppies to motorbikes, to art prints, scenery, portraiture, figures (no nudity), still life, florals, or Religious art, scripture reflections, poetry or inspirational quotes.

A box will be placed in the foyer of the churches to collect the calendars after Christmas. Thank you in advance!

Parish Team

Parish Secretary

Marcella Letteri Ph: 9876 2853

Email: Marcella.Letteri@bbcatholic.org.au

Business Manager

Deacon Richard Houwing Ph: 9876 2853

Email: Richard.Houwing@bbcatholic.org.au

Admin. Assistant

Michael Davies Ph: 9876 2853

Email: Michael.Davies@bbcatholic.org.au

Coordinator of Sacramental Programmes, Children's Ministries & Parish Communications

Lynn Siau Ph: 9876 2853

Email: Lynn.Siau@bbcatholic.org.au

Youth Ministry Coordinator (from 13th Jan 2025)

Holly Lawton Ph: 0404 710 588

Email: Holly.Lawton@bbcatholic.org.au

New Parishioner Engagement Coordinator - St Gerard's

Belinda Shi Ph: 0414 753 362

Email: Belinda.Shi@bbcatholic.org.au

Pastoral Worker - OLHC (till 25th Dec 2024)

Simone Noel Ph: 0414 753 799

Email: Simone.Noel@bbcatholic.org.au



Please note parish email address for general enquiries:

eppcarl@bbcatholic.org.au

parish@eppcarl.org.au is now obsolete.

Updating your contact details for the Parish Office:

Please contact our Parish Secretary, Marcella Letteri, if you need to update your contact details, for eg: mobile number, email address, home address. You can either pop in to the parish office to see Marcella in person, contact her using details above.

Baptism Announcement

We're excited to share in the joy of announcing the baptism of 2 children into the parish. Harriet and Charlotte Maria were baptised into Christs' family over the past month.



To further mark this special occasion Robert Leasa (Grandfather of Charlotte) was also received into the church at the same mass.



Happy 40th Wedding Anniversary to Tom and Julie Ashtalosh:

Our romance began when we met playing volleyball for the University of Sydney in 1981. We were married by Fr John Alt at St Michael's Church in West Ryde on 15th December 1984. We moved to Carlingford in 1996 where all our children attended St Gerards primary school then St Patricks Marist College, Dundas.

Tom & Julie were blessed at the 9.30am Mass on Dec 22nd.



FIRST RECONCILIATION 2025

Enrolment for First Reconciliation will commence on Thursday, 23rd January 2025. In our Diocese of Broken Bay, children who have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and who are in Year 4 or above are invited to enrol. First Reconciliation is generally prepared for in Term 1, before enrolment of First Eucharist.

Enrolment information will be emailed to all who celebrated Confirmation in 2024 at our parish and to all who have previously enquired and are on the email list.

Our Sacramental Programme is advertised through the parish website, bulletins, announcements at Mass, both parish school newsletters, catechists and word-of-mouth. If you know of anyone who may wish to enrol their children, please feel free to spread the word for us and have them drop me a line (contact details below).

You can also join our Kidz Facebook group to keep up to date with all our Kidz ministries using this link: www.facebook.com/groups/255948268913440/ or via the QR code shown here:



Please remember also, that we have the "LOOK" Kidz Bulletin and colouring sheets for your young children to help them engage during Mass. Feel free to take and remember to return the twistable crayons after Mass!

As always, please feel free to send me an email if you have any questions.

Lynn Siau - Lynn.Siau@bbcatholic.org.au or phone Parish Office 9876 2853
Coordinator of Children's Ministries, Sacramental Programme & Parish Communications

Kidz Word resumes 2 February 2025

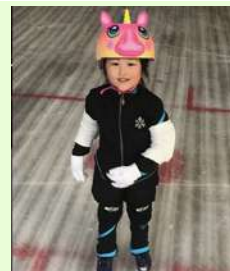
Kidz Word is taking a break during the school holidays. The parent leaders deserve a **HUGE** round of applause for all they have done to support this ministry.

At OLHC we have been constrained by the lack of a meeting space to have Kidz Word. This will be overcome soon in 2025 and Team Kidz Word can't wait to make this happen!

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM ST GERARD'S PLAYGROUP



Thank you for a fantastic year of fun and cheers. See you all in 2025! ~Belinda Shi



MACQUARIE ICE RINK

RECOMMENDS WEARING A HELMET, KNEE AND WRIST GUARDS

Thank you to our junior altar servers. To say thanks, we're taking them **ice skating at Macquarie on Thurs Jan 23rd**. Invitations and a Christmas card are available in the sacristy, or contact the parish office if you were unable to pick one up.

COMMUNICATIONS

Article submission deadline: If you would like to submit an article from your ministry for inclusion in the next edition of our parish bulletin, please send it to Lynn.Siau@bbcatholic.org.au before **10am on Wednesday 8th January 2025**. Kindly understand I am unable to accommodate late submissions. Please send in a Word document. Photos or graphics are acceptable in PNG or JPEG format. Please note that PDFs will have to be reformatted and the clarity of your notice will be compromised. Do provide an email address, a contact name and number in your article. Thank you.

Other ways to connect:



eBulletin: If you know someone who would like to receive the electronic version of the bulletin, please forward this link for them to fill in via a desktop, the form on our website: bbcatholic.org.au/epping-carlingford/news-events/parish-newsletter

YOUTH MINISTRIES

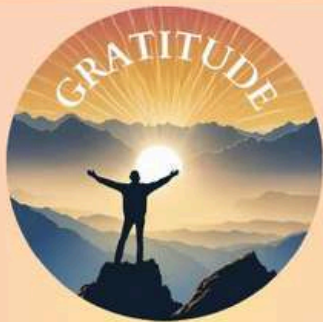
Youth group	Resumes in 2025 on...
Antioch (year 10-22 years old)	Sunday, 12th Jan 6-8pm St Gerard's meeting room
Cana (year 7-9)	Friday, 31st Jan 7:30-9pm St Gerard's parish hall
Emmaus (23-30years old)	Tuesday 4th Feb, 7-8:30pm St Gerard's meeting room

Emmaus will move to OLHC Epping once the new building is available.



Antioch Weekend 2025

"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever."
Psalm 107:1



Place: St Gerard's Church grounds, 543 North Rocks Rd, Carlingford
Dates: Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th February
Times: Saturday 10am-10pm, Sunday 10am-9pm
Cost: \$50
Age: Year 10 to 23 years old

For more information please contact:

Fr Jim Jim.McKeon@bbcatholic.org.au

Parent Support: Cres - 0490 472 258 | Lui - 0468 476 009

SCAN to Get Tickets



<https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1321692>

Enjoy talks, discussions, music, prayer and food.
We can't wait to see you there!

Antioch Weekend Retreat: Every year we launch our year with a two day retreat of inspiration, prayer and fun for young people in Year 10 up to age 23. That this youth group has been going continuously for 40 years is evidence of what a powerful and life changing experience the Antioch Weekend and the community which it forms is. This year's retreat is on **Feb 15th & 16th here at St Gerard's.**

Go to [trybooking.com/events/landing/1321692](https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1321692) or use the QR code on the left for information and registration.

5pm Sunday night Mass at St Gerard's is our youth-led Mass where all the ministries are led by our young people. The after Mass BBQ will be taking a break and will recommence later in January.



Cana is going to Laser Tag at Macquarie on **Tues Jan 21st**. This is for Years 7 - 9. Contact Jim.McKeon@bbcatholic.org.au for a permission form, or take one from the back of the church.

Contact the parish office on 9876 2853 for youth ministry related enquiries, or check out the parish website for more details: <https://www.bbcatholic.org.au/epping-carlingford/groups-ministries/children-and-youth/youth-ministry>

MORE PARISH NEWS

50+++ PRE-CHRISTMAS LUNCH: We had such an enjoyable luncheon at 'The Ranch'. 17 of us gathered. We gave the venue top marks, not to mention the fantastic company. Christmas blessings to all. See you in 2025.



THE DECEMBER HEALING MASS: All those present benefited greatly, both spiritually and physically. Fr Aldrin offered a beautiful Mass in an intimate setting. A common space that becomes a sacred space.

A Christmas lunch was provided by the generosity of many - and you could do nothing else but give thanks to God. See photo on the right. We are indeed fortunate people.

See you again on the first Tuesday of February 2025. Christmas blessings to all.

~Love from 'The Healing Mass Team at St Gerard's



Pictured here: Carol Nichols & Simone Noel

T H T F H F F T F G N T T H T

Have you spotted our bespoke parish aprons yet? They are blue and boast our very own parish logo! How did we manage THAT you ask??? From where did so many matching aprons come? How can so many of them have been embroidered so quickly? Didn't this break the hospitality budget???

We thank **the Shi family** for donating our light denim aprons. We also thank a very generous lady for purchasing the computerised embroidery template of our logo. It is one that we may use again and again... Who knows? We may have our own T-shirts or tea towels soon! 😊 **Carol Nichols** not only purchased the design but is also in the process of decorating 25 aprons... We are so grateful Carol!

Logos and aprons don't automatically make our church a more welcoming place to worship, I know, but together with all our efforts, smiles and prayers, those little touches CAN make such a difference! They build community.

~Simone Noel

GIVING

BACK TO SCHOOL! Mums4Refugees NSW, a local charity of mums and carers, collects new school supplies for refugee and asylum seeker children. These kits, distributed by Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Parramatta, provided over 120 backpacks to students last year.

This year, NEW items will be collected until **January 19th** so that the supplies can reach young people in a timely fashion before the new school year. The aim is to collect at least 100 kits (50 primary and 50 high school). Items needed include:



- * Erasers/rubbers (primary & high school)
- * Coloured textas (primary)
- * Coloured pencils (primary & high school)
- * Glue sticks (primary & high school)
- * Rulers (primary)
- * Pencil cases (primary & high school)
- * Small scissors (primary)
- * Highlighter pens (upper primary & high school)
- * Black and/or blue ballpoint pens (primary & high school)
- * Maths kit (upper primary & high school)
- * 96 and 128-paged lined notebooks (high school)
- * 5mm graphed maths notebooks (high school)
- * Scrap books (primary school)



These items can be found in many local shops, with OfficeWorks, Big W and Kmart having a particularly large selection. **Please note that we already have a supply of new pencils to cover at least 100 kits.** Boxes will be placed in both churches as usual, from the 12th January, and will be collected the weekend of 18/19th Jan.

~With much thanks from the Parish Social Justice Team



The local **Saint Vincent de Paul** conference thanks the Parish and the school for their overwhelming support for the St Vincent de Paul Christmas Hamper appeal.

The Society was able to provide hampers to 46 families they had assisted this year consisting of approximately 200 shopping bags of Christmas supplies. See photo of some of the bags in the meeting room.



Each school class provided a huge hamper for a family and the Parishioners gave a large bag of food items for each of our other clients. All so, a special thanks to all those who assisted with sorting and delivering the hampers.

On top of this the Carlingford and Epping community so far have donated a generous amount towards the Christmas appeal. This wonderful effort demonstrates the truly Christian Charitable commitment of our parish.

~Jeff Allen, President of Carlingford Conference St Vincent de Paul Society

OUR FAITH FORMATION TEAM

As part of the Epping-Carlingford parish's **five pillars of missionary discipleship**, the Faith Formation Team focuses on **Pillar 1 – Connect, and Pillar 4 – Grow**. The team supports spiritual growth by developing and sustaining programs that deepen faith, encourage discipleship, and foster community. These programs are offered in various formats, including small group meetings, Zoom meetups, video-dinner discussions, year-round or 4-12 week sessions, and community events like Pentecost praise and worship gatherings. The team currently consists of: Gail Gill, Joanna Mak, Lynne Slocombe, Marie Black, Mery Auwyang, Philip Senger, Leon D'Sylva, Regina Soeryanto and Vivienne Saverimuttu.

We are re-capping some of the programs that are running or was done in 2024:

- **The Bible Timeline** runs throughout the year - held Tuesday evenings 7pm on Zoom. For more information, contact phillip.senger@eppcarl.org.au
- **Reflection and Meditation on Sunday's reading** runs during school term. It is a small group gathering held Friday mornings 10.15am at St. Gerard's meeting room - contact mariefblack3@gmail.com

Term 1

- **Lenten groups** ran for 5 weeks prior to Easter, held at different times through the week at OLHC and St. Gerard's.
- **Spiritual exercise** – a second series ran for 5 weeks, held at different times through the week at OLHC and St Gerard's. The Spiritual Exercises, created by St. Ignatius Loyola, are meditations and prayers designed to deepen one's relationship with God. They are often experienced as a daily-life retreat with prayer and spiritual guidance but have been adapted for modern needs.

Term 2

- On Saturday, May 18th, the parish celebrated **Pentecost** at St. Gerard's, organised by the Faith Formation Team. After the Vigil Mass, the Holy Rosary was recited in seven languages, followed by Adoration, spirit-filled worship led by youth, testimonies, and a supper with food donated by parishioners.
- **Testimonies:** *Pentecost Night was a beautiful and solemn event. The multilingual rosary was very meaningful, and it was wonderful to see the youth participating with praise and worship songs. Their involvement made the event even more special.* ~Dennis Carpio

Term 3

- **Metanoia:** 10 half hour episodes on Formed by Fr Dave from Wild Goose. Metanoia is an 11-part series exploring spiritual conversion through repentance, transforming how we see Jesus, the Father, ourselves, and others. A follow-up to The Wild Goose, it deepens understanding of Jesus' message and invites viewers to grow in faith.
- **Testimonies:** *My experience with Metanoia was very positive. The guests were all very friendly and I enjoyed the dinner provided each week. I learnt more about my Catholic faith and the videos were informative. It has made me more enthusiastic about my faith and with attending Mass and has been helpful to me as a recent convert to Catholicism a year ago.* ~Alexander

Our **Alpha Group 1 (2021), with Denis and Maureen**, wishes you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! May the Prince of Peace bless you this festive season. Stay safe and cool!

~Regina Soeryanto



FOR LEASE

NEW STUDIO APARTMENT AVAILABLE MID JANUARY: BEECROFT (in family home). One large room, one smaller room. Furnished, kitchenette, bathroom. Garage space, own entrance. **Suit single person only.** Private and self-contained. Enquiries: Pat 0407 908 640



Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, Alleluia!

I am the servant of the Lord;
may his will for me be done.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, Alleluia!

A holy day has dawned upon us. Come you nations and adore the Lord. Today a great light has come upon the earth.

WEEKEND MASSES

Epping	5:00pm Vigil, 8:30am, 10:15am and 7:00pm (Youth)
Carlingford	6:00pm Vigil, 7:45am, 9:30am (Family/Children) and 5:00pm (Youth)

WEEKDAY MASSES

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	
EPPING	-	6:00pm	-	-	-	8:00am	
CARLINGFORD	9:30am	-	9:30am	9:30am	9:30am	-	

EXPOSITION OF THE EUCHARIST: Epping Tuesday 5:00-6:00pm and Saturday 8:30-9:00am
Carlingford Thursday 10-10:30am

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: Epping Tuesday 5:00-6:00pm and Saturday 8:30-9:00am
Carlingford Thursday 10-10:30am and Saturday 5:15-5:45pm, **OR BY APPOINTMENT at either church**

BAPTISMS AND WEDDINGS: BY APPOINTMENT

POSTAL ADDRESS FOR THE PARISH OFFICE: PO Box 369, Epping NSW 1710

ST GERARD'S PRIMARY SCHOOL: PH - 7256 2140 Email - sgc@dbb.catholic.edu.au

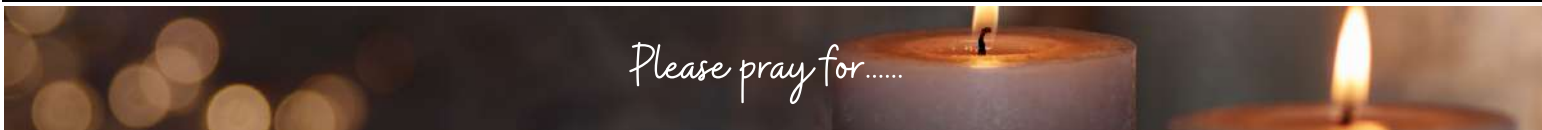
OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS' PRIMARY SCHOOL: PH - 9868 3322 Email - olhc@dbb.catholic.edu.au



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here



ATTENTION PLEASE  ***There is no Healing Mass in January. We look forward to offering a additional monthly healing mass / seniors Mass at OLHC once the new building is available next year.***



For those who are sick and suffering (new requests):

- Ken Leslie
- Leonie Oliver
- Jema Oshana
- Sr Rosalie Carlon
- Guy Chan
- Louis Yeung (Goretti's brother)

- Lillian Chan
- Margaret Hall
- Roslyn Rodriguez
- Anita Hoffman
- Elizabeth Barton (we ask for your continued prayers for Elizabeth as she is still very ill, as well as for her husband, Charles, please.



Our parish Prayer Ministry also has a private group on Facebook where you can post your requests directly or email us to do so. Please feel free to join this private group if you would like to pray for someone or for your own intentions: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2660800900909668> or via QR code on the right.



Lord, in Jesus your Son, you restored to us the gift of Everlasting life. Grant that life to:
Recently deceased - Alan Flanagan (91-year-old brother of Betty Connors), David Pickering, Fr Michael O'Toole, Michelle Patterson, Maria Wang, Nick Papallo, Bryan Smith

Anniversaries & Remembrance - Giovanni Alibrandi (1st year anniversary - husband of Tindara), Neville Wilkins, Maryanne Whealing, Patrick Thornton, deceased members of Hurney & Waddell families