

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

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

You will conceive and bear a son.

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT / B

24 DECEMBER 2023

THE ANNUNCIATION

On the eve of Christmas, today's Gospel reminds us of how the birth of Jesus is possible. Luke's narrative describes God sending the Angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee. It is a familiar story to us, yet nothing of it is in our realm of experience.

This event is reported in a series of stories paralleling the annunciation and birth accounts of John the Baptist and Jesus. The narrative will present John as herald of the arrival of Jesus as Messiah when the time of his public ministry arrives, fulfilling God's promise.

Rightly this is an account of God's activity via Gabriel announcing first to Zechariah and then to Mary. Here is a moment bathed in God's grace. God's incarnation will occur in a natural human manner, born of a woman. Yet take a focus on Mary and imagine again the appearance of an angel. No surprise that she might be perplexed (Luke 1:29). Yet Mary responds, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." (v. 38).

Mary also hears of her cousin Elisabeth's fortunate conception and sets off to see her. Their meeting, the centrepiece of the double annunciations and births, reveals these two women in embrace, together they usher in the birth of the Son of God. Today, the focus is on Mary's embrace of her mission but she is part of a larger story, God's story. Mary is a courageous woman who in the face of an impossible challenge steps forward in faith.

Dr Rosemary Canavan

FIRST READING

2 Sam 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16

A reading from the second book of Samuel
The kingdom of David will be established for ever in the sight of the Lord.

Once David had settled into his house and the Lord had given him rest from all the enemies surrounding him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'Look, I am living in a house of cedar while the ark of God dwells in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go and do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you.'

But that very night the word of the Lord came to Nathan:

'Go and tell my servant David, "Thus the Lord speaks: Are you the man to build me a house to dwell in? I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel; I have been with you on all your expeditions; I have cut off all your enemies before you. I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall dwell in that place and never be disturbed again; nor shall the wicked continue to oppress them as they did, in the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel; I will give them rest from all their enemies. The Lord will make you great; the Lord will make you a House. And when your days are ended and you are laid to rest with your ancestors, I will preserve the offspring of your body after you and make his sovereignty secure. I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me and your throne be established for ever."'

■ The word of the Lord.

RESP PSALM

Ps 88: 2-5, 27, 29. R. cf. v. 2

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

1. I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord; / through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth. / Of this I am sure, that your love lasts



for ever, / that your truth is firmly established as the heavens. **R.**

2. 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one; / I have sworn to David my servant: / I will establish your dynasty for ever / and set up your throne through all ages.' **R.**

3. He will say to me: 'You are my father, / my God, the rock who saves me.' / I will keep my love for him always; / for him my covenant shall endure. **R.**

SECOND READING

Rom 16:25-27

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

The mystery kept secret for endless ages is now revealed.

Glory to him who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery kept secret for endless ages, but now so clear that it must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things to be. He alone is wisdom; give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

■ The word of the Lord.



**ST ANDREW & ST AGNES
TWINNED CATHOLIC PARISHES**
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Sunday 9 am
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Masses Tues, Wed, Fri: 7 am Thurs: 9 am
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Sunday 10 am
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Also available by appointment
Principal: Rose André
Sacred Heart School Matraville: 9311 2995



Our Parishes acknowledge and honour the Bidjigal and Gadigal People as traditional custodians of this land, that we stand on.



4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Go Make Disciples, The Mission Plan for the Archdiocese of Sydney



Please pray for the Faithful Departed:

Recently Deceased: Jeanne Mirabitor, Doris Bonanno, Ian Vernon, Steven Fehir, Evaristo Pinto, Allan Hart, Paul Blackmore, and all those who have died from the Covid-19 Virus.



Anniversary: Maureen O'Brien, Malcolm Calum MacDonald, Dolores Blackmore, Annamaria Chovan, Joan O'Grady, Sylvia Fontanilla, Mary Cauchi, John Debono, John Donovan, Robert Franke, Anthony Rotta, Peter & Winnie Blyth, Joseph Panetta, and Carolina Sounios,

Deceased: Agnes Brisbane. All the souls in Purgatory

The Sick: Maureen Maron, Barry Dalton, Sandra Russell, Bishop Peter Ingham, Ange Portelli, Ha Oi Lan, Mario Assini, Sam Strano, Josephie Regan, Mary Vella, Beatriz Visperas, Michael Victor, Marcus O'Dean, Angela Beveridge, Merley Nate Fien, John Sarniak Thomson, Heracleo & Mamerta Dela Torre, Santa Viselli and Ernie Ross. Pray for the sick, the dying, the poor and homeless in our parishes, and those suffering from Covid.

Prayers for: Bridie Culleton and care of the World Environment.

Where will Fr. John be celebrating Mass next weekend?

Saturday - 30 December 2023 - 5.00pm St Andrew's (Livestreamed)
Sunday - 31 December 2023 10.00am St Agnes'

From the Pastor's Desk



**Greetings dear parishioners and visitors of our
Twinned Catholic Parishes of St Andrew &
St Agnes Malabar-Matraville.**

Is it all systems go as we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Advent. I suppose you have had your running shoes on this last week. On Sunday afternoon we celebrate Christmas Eve Masses, so little time to buy anything more for our Christmas festivities. Thanks for your attendance on this Sunday and we look forward to seeing you again at our Christmas Masses. Regarding our Children/Family Christmas Vigil Masses particularly our 4.00pm, St Agnes' Vigil Mass, all are welcome it is a Christmas Mass.

Many thanks to all those who assisted in giving at our Annual Vinnies Christmas Appeal at both Parishes of St Andrew's & St Agnes'. I wish to pass on a message from the President (Chris Norton) of St Andrew's Conference of St Vincent de Paul Society. "The Malabar Vinnies Christmas Hamper deliveries were an absolute success last weekend. Thank you everyone for your much needed donations under the Jesse Tree, particularly in our much-stressed economic world. Special thanks to Julie Wright and Julie Lippmann in their great work organising and packing hampers (and the ladies who wrapped all the Christmas presents), and then organising their delivery by volunteer drivers to over 60 homes.

Christmas has been made special for this group of people who were so appreciative of these gifts and just as importantly that as a church and school community we are thinking of them."

Looking forward in celebrating with you all at the choicest and blessed time of Christmas. Please bring along someone who may not have been to our Parishes of Malabar—Matraville for some time or a new person at Christmas this year.

Fr John

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

St Andrews' Malabar

Christmas Eve (Sun) 5.30pm (children & family) & 7pm
Christmas Day (Mon) 9am

St Agnes Matraville

Christmas Eve 4.00pm (children & Family) & Midnight
Christmas Day 10am

CHRISTMAS RECONCILIATION TIMES

St Andrew's Malabar

Sat 16 Dec. 4pm—4.45pm

St Agnes' Matraville

Sat 23 Dec 4.30 pm—5.15pm

Volunteers Needed St Andrew's—All Christmas Masses—Second Readers and Offertory

A message from the Archdiocese of Sydney: Child sexual abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with crimes are the police. If you, or anyone you know, have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office at (02) 9390 5810 or safeguarding.enquiries@sydneycatholic.org. You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support



Congratulations to **Alan and Robyn Little** who will celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on Friday the 29th December 2023.

Funeral for the late Jeanne Mirabitor, Thursday, 28 December, 10.30am, St Agnes', Matraville