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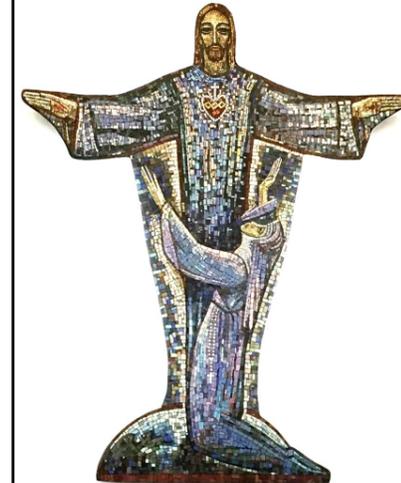
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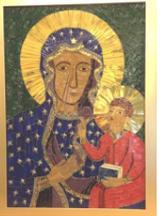


Our Parish is under the Pastoral Care of the Order of St Paul the First Hermit (known as the Pauline Fathers) who for more than 630 years are renowned Custodians of the Miraculous Icon of Our Lady of Jasna Gora, Poland.



Parish Priest
Fr. Wojciech Sliwa

Assistant Priest
Fr. Jeremy Santoso



Ordo Sancti Pauli Primi Eremitae

PARISH OFFICE:
1-5 Chetwynd Rd, Merrylands NSW 2160
Postal Address: PO Box 757, Merrylands.
Tuesday - Friday: 9:30am - 3:30pm
Phone: 9637 2526 9637 2014
Fax: 9637 2442
Email: parish@stmm.org.au
Website: stmm.org.au

PARISH GROUPS CO-ORDINATORS:

Parish Pastoral Council:
♦ Chair: Fr. Wojciech Sliwa & Belinda Tippetts
♦ Secretary: Rita Jacobson
parishcouncil@stmm.org.au

Finance Committee:
♦ Chair: Tony Bougoide
♦ Secretary: Priscilla Newman
financecommittee@stmm.org.au

Fundraising Committee:
♦ Mike Jacobson - 0438 590 136

Sacraments:
♦ Monique Kairouz
sacraments@stmm.org.au

Acolytes / RCIA
♦ Peter Carroll - 0414 070 082

Safeguarding Officer:
♦ Alexandra Azzi
safeguarding@stmm.org.au

Catechists:
♦ Sonia Abi-Rached

Music:
♦ Kerry van der Linden

Readers:
♦ Suzanne Mifsud

Scripture Study:
♦ Gwen D'Silva

YOUTH GROUP:
♦ Fr. Jeremy Santoso
Pauline Junior/Teen: Rita Elbayeh/Rita Jacobson

Legion of Mary:
♦ Merwyn D'Souza - 0478 109 569

Playgroup:
♦ Kathy-Lynn Azzi - 0416 225 815



WEEKEND MASSES:

Saturday: 6:00pm Vigil

Sunday: 7:30am
9:00am
10:30am
6:00pm

WEEKDAY MASSES:

Monday: 9:15am

Tuesday: 9:00am & 7:00pm
Wednesday: 9:00am & 7:00pm
Thursday: 9:00am
Friday: 9:00am & 7:00pm
Saturday: 8:30am

PRAYER: HOLY FATHER-POPE FRANCIS

MONTHLY INTENTION: DECEMBER

For persons with disabilities

We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.

FIRST FRIDAY:

11:00am: Maltese Mass
06:30pm: Confession
07:00pm: Holy Mass, Stations of the Cross followed by Exposition

ADORATION OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT:

Thursdays-Eucharistic Adoration: 9:30am - 2:30pm
4th Sunday of the month: 1:00pm - 1:30pm - Divine Mercy Devotions
1st Friday of the month: approx. 8:30pm - midnight

VESPERS- SUNDAY EVENINGS

5:15pm - 5:45pm

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) SESSIONS- SUNDAY MORNINGS

9:00am Mass followed by session 10:00am - 11:00am

DEVOTIONS:

♦ Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help (Succour)
Wednesday: after morning Mass
Wednesday: 6:00pm before 7:00pm Mass (Marian Movement Cenacle)

♦ Veneration of the Holy Face of Jesus:
Tuesday: 7:30pm - 8:30pm

♦ Divine Mercy Devotions
4th Sunday of the month: 1:00pm - 3:00pm, 3:00pm - Holy Mass

BAPTISMS: 1st & 3rd Sundays of the month

RECONCILIATION: Tues - Fri 8:30 - 8:55am
Sat 8:30am - 9:30am and 4:30pm - 5:30pm

MARRIAGES: By appointment only (6 months required)

SICK CALLS: 9637 2526 - option 3 - any time



Please remember to switch off your mobile phone

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

'Console my people, console them' says your God. 'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for, that she has received from the hand of the Lord double punishment for all her crimes.' A voice cries, 'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low, let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley; then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion. Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem. Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God.' Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him. The prize of his victory is with him, his trophies all go before him. He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

(R.) Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

- 1. I will hear what the Lord God has to say, a voice that speaks of peace, peace for his people. His help is near for those who fear him and his glory will dwell in our land. (R.)
2. Mercy and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have embraced. Faithfulness shall spring from the earth and justice look down from heaven. (R.)
3. The Lord will make us prosper and our earth shall yield its fruit. Justice shall march before him and peace shall follow his steps. (R.)

SECOND READING

2 Peter 3:8-14

A reading from the second letter of St Peter

There is one thing, my friends, that you must never forget: that with the Lord, 'a day' can mean a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises, as anybody else might be called slow; but he is being patient with you all, wanting nobody to be lost and everybody to be brought to change his ways. The Day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire and fall apart, the earth and all that it contains will be burnt up. Since everything is coming to an end like this, you should be living holy and saintly lives while you wait and long for the Day of God to come, when the sky will dissolve in flames and the elements melt in the heat. What we are waiting for is what he promised: the new heavens and new earth, the place where righteousness will be at home. So then, my friends, while you are waiting, do your best to live lives without spot or stain so that he will find you at peace.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all people shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mark 1:1-8

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way. A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight, and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

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

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.

MEDITATION

John's baptism was for repentance - turning away from sin and taking on a new way of life according to God's word. Our baptism in Jesus Christ by water and the Spirit results in a new birth and entry into God's kingdom as his beloved sons and daughters (John 3:5). The Lord Jesus comes to baptize each one of us in his Holy Spirit so that we may walk in his truth and holiness and radiate the joy of the Gospel to all we meet. God's word has power to change and transform our lives so that we may be lights that point others to Jesus Christ. Like John the Baptist, we too are called to give testimony to the light and truth of Christ. Do you point others to Jesus Christ in the way you live, speak, and treat others? Lord, let your light burn brightly in my heart that I may know the joy and freedom of your kingdom. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and empower me to witness the truth of your Gospel and to point others to Jesus Christ.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS 17 DECEMBER 2023 Third Sunday of ADVENT (Year A) Is 61:1 - 2; 10 - 11; 1 Thess 5:16 - 24; Jn 1:6 - 8, 19 - 28

OUR PARISH PRAYER Father, pour out Your Spirit upon the people of this parish so that inspired by Your word, nourished at Your table and graced by Your empowering love, our lives may be devoted to the service of our brothers and sisters and the building up of Your Kingdom. May our parish community truly be, for this place and time, the Body of Christ Your Son, through whom we make this prayer. Amen

CHRISTMAS MASS 2023 Sunday - 24 December 6:00pm - Family Mass (children are welcome to come dressed as shepherds, angels or kings) Monday - 25 December 12:00am - Midnight Mass 07:30am, 9:00am, 10:30am NO Evening Mass

CHRISTMAS CONFESSIONS Tuesday - 12 December 7:30pm (after 7pm Mass)

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES This Sunday, 10 December 2023 couples celebrating their wedding anniversary are invited for a special blessing at the 10:30am Mass. We wish all these couples God's blessings and graces.

AT ST. MARGARET MARY'S PARISH Children's Liturgy of the Word Every 3rd Sunday of the Month, (17 December 2023) there will be a Children's Liturgy during the 10:30am Mass. All children are welcome to attend.

Simbang Gabi Dawn Mass at 5:00am St. Margaret Mary's Parish 16 - 24 December 2023 Simbang Gabi is a Filipino Christmas tradition. It is a series of nine dawn masses on the days leading to Christmas. It begins on 16 December & ends on 24 December. ALL ARE WELCOME

Why We Believe - Dr. Brant Pitre Answering Common Questions about the Catholic Faith Every Wednesday after 7pm Mass inside the church. Brant James Pitre who is an American New Testament scholar and Distinguished Research Professor of Scripture at the Augustine Institute. Purgatory and Prayers for the Dead? Where is Purgatory in the Bible? Why do Catholics pray for the dead?

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION THURSDAYS 9:30am to 2:30pm The Lord invites us to take some time out of our busy lives to spend some time with Him in quiet adoration, prayer and reflection. The Blessed Sacrament is exposed after morning Mass every Thursday until 2:30pm. ALL ARE WELCOME

SCRIPTURE STUDY You are invited to experience the joy of "the Word of God" in a weekly discussion meeting on Thursdays at 7pm at St. Margaret Mary's Pastoral Centre. For further queries, contact Gwen on 9632 9097

RCIA PROGRAM RCIA is an ongoing Apostolate in this Parish. The RCIA Apostolate consists of a dedicated team of volunteers who have received instructions to guide anyone who wishes to join the Catholic Church through weekly preparations classes and regular Mass attendance. If you know of anyone who wishes to enter the Catholic Faith, who has been baptised in another Faith or unbaptised and wishes to complete the Sacraments of Initiation in the Catholic Church; Please see our Priests after Mass during the weekends or contact the RCIA Coordinator Peter Carroll on 0414 070 082 or the Parish Office.

STMM PIETY SHOP We request our Parishioners to support our Parish Piety Corner Shop with their generous purchase. A variety of Advent & Christmas decorations and Piety Shop gift cards are available for purchase. GOD'S WORD 2024 for a special price of \$22 and Christmas Devotional Candles for \$12 (limited stock available) Purchases may be done from the Parish Office as well during working hours.

WEEKLY CHILDREN'S BULLETINS All children are encouraged to take a copy of The Kid's Bulletin. (on the table outside the Church). A great resource to educate our Catholic kids to learn about their faith every week.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Reuben Dias, Shelly Barnes, Robbie Barnes, Therese Nicolas, Hermie Alves, Mary Callagja, Rita Figredo, Chau Tran Chon Chau Maria, Salam Awkar, Leila Rouhana, Charles Zammit, David O'Connor, Marcelina Domingo, Jacqueline Parr, Cheryl Fortini, Margaret Falzon

SUNDAY COLLECTIONS

First Collection (Priests) Account: Order of St. Paul The First Hermit Merrylands BSB: 062 202 Account Number: 10869892 Second Collection (Parish) Account: Merrylands Catholic Church BSB: 067 950 Account Number: 00438 Last weekend First Collection was \$2431.65 Last weekend Second Collection was \$3498.10 Thank you for your continued support and generosity. God bless.

VOICES NEEDED FOR CHRISTMAS VIGIL MASS

We are seeking Children & Adults to join the Choir and be part of our festive celebration for the Christmas Vigil Mass at 6pm on 24 December 2023. Please contact Kerry at k.dainer1@gmail.com

CONGRATS YEAR 6 GRADS

Loving God, bless these Year 6 graduates, every one, and fill them with the Spirit of your love. Lord, grant our graduates humility, grace, and peace. Give them your direction as they navigate their lives each day and wisdom to know what the next steps are for their lives.

Christmas Celebration Let's celebrate the true meaning of Christmas! Sunday, December 17 after the 6pm Vigil Mass at St Margaret Mary's school grounds

- * Free admission (donations welcome)
* Free sausage sizzle, soft drinks, bottled water, tea & coffee (donations welcome)
* Raffle draws (tickets \$2 each now on sale)
* Christmas traditions from other lands
* Your favourite Christmas carols
* Special visit by Santa, with treats for the youngsters
* Coin tosses - children & adults
* Mystery auction
* Playground equipment (primary school children only)
The next volunteer helpers' meeting will be on Monday, 11 December at 7pm in the Pastoral Centre. All welcome - no experience necessary!

HELP THE POOR THIS CHRISTMAS MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY FOOD COLLECTION

Our Parish is collecting food items for the Sydney chapter of the Missionaries of Charity. Help to brighten the lives of those whom society has forgotten by donating non-perishable food items for Christmas hampers. Please note: Food items must be in their original sealed packaging, and marked with a Best Before or Use By Date after 29 February 2024. Cash donations will also be gratefully received. Food donations can be placed in the marked baskets and cartons in the church, Piety Shop or Parish Office during office hours.

MASS TIMES 01 - 31 JANUARY 2024

- 09:15 am - Monday
09:00 am - Tuesday to Friday (NO Evening Weekday Masses)
08:30 am - Saturday
06:00 pm - Saturday (Vigil)
07:30 am, 09:00am, 10:30am - Sunday
06:00 pm - Sunday

ALL DEVOTIONS, ADORATIONS & EVENING MASSES WILL RESUME ON 1st FEBRUARY 2024