

WELCOME TO

# ST BRENDAN'S CATHOLIC PARISH



St Brendan's Parish is a Child Safe community. We promote the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all and a zero tolerance to child abuse.

**Third Sunday of Advent, Year B**

**17 December 2023**

## First Reading Is 61:1-2.10-11

*I exult for joy in the Lord.*

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.'

## Responsorial Psalm

Lk 1:46-50, 53-54. R. Is 61:2

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

1. 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.)
2. The Almighty works marvels for me.  
Holy his name!  
His mercy is from age to age,  
on those who fear him. (R.)
3. He fills the starving with good things,  
sends the rich away empty.  
He protects Israel, his servant,  
remembering his mercy. (R.)

## Second Reading 1 Thes 5:16-24

*May you all be kept blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

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 prophecy 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.

## Gospel Acclamation Is 61:1 (Lk 4:18)

*Alleluia, alleluia!*

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

*Alleluia!*

## Gospel Jn1:6-8.19-28

*There stands among you, unknown to you, the one who is coming after me.*

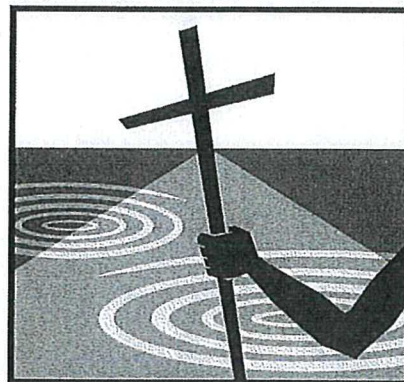
A man came, sent by God.  
His name was John.  
He came as a witness,  
as a witness to speak for the light,  
so that everyone might believe through him.

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 prophet?' 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 happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.



## Reflection by Greg Sunter

This week's gospel should sound very familiar. It is the gospel of John version of the passage used in last week's liturgy, which came from the gospel of Mark. Again it recalls the ministry of John the Baptist but it is given the particular slant of the gospel of John. Aside from the greater focus on the conversational interaction, it presents John as a 'witness'. This is perhaps more typical of the John gospel emphasis on personal encounter with Jesus. Rather than acting as something of a herald, as in last week's account, here John the Baptist is witnessing 'to speak for the light'. He makes a very clear distinction between himself and the Christ, his mission is simply to point towards the light; the Christ.

Our common understanding of the word 'witness' tends to be related to legal situations: providing a witness statement or acting as a witness to a fact in court. The use of witness in this gospel carries a different connotation: to provide witness through action and lifestyle that draws others to wonder about and perhaps come to accept the motivating belief. It is this understanding of witness that all Christians are called to provide. We are called to witness to our beliefs in the way that we live our lives, engage with others and hold to certain truths. Of course, there are some Christians who believe that their witness needs to be more obvious and more clearly stated. They feel that providing witness, or testimony, to their faith through spoken proclamation has a greater potential to change lives. Whether we choose to witness through our words or through our actions it is essential that both words and actions have integrity; that there is no clash between what we proclaim and the way we live.

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# ST BRENDAN'S PARISH NEWS



121 Knight Street, Shepparton  
 Phone: 5821 2633 | Email: shepparton@sandhurst.catholic.org.au  
 Website: sheppartoncatholic.org.au  
 Facebook: sheppartoncatholic  
 Parish Priest: Fr Joe Taylor  
 Priest in Residence: Fr Joseph Kunnackattu  
 Associate Priest: Fr Jackson Saunders  
 Deacon: Francois Baguma  
 Office Manager: Diane Teitzel  
 Child Safe Officer: Jason Giuliani Ph: 5821 2633  
 Office Hours: Mon to Fri 9am - 2pm



*Christ in community ...  
 the heart of our faith*

**Recently Deceased:** Patricia Gleeson (sister of Denise Hoskin), Maria Rosa Gullo, Edward Portelli

**Anniversary:** Noreen O'Keefe, Irene Breeze, Mary Gangi, Mary Vescio, Alan Appleton, Johanna Steeghs, Winifred Grace

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We turn our hearts and minds to the people of the Yorta Yorta nation, who have occupied this country for thousands of years. We pay respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and commit to walking alongside Aboriginal Australians in truth and justice.

### Readers & Commentators December 23 & 24, 2023

6pm	Sr Bing	C. Segrave
8am	M. Keenan	D. Keenan
11am	P. Chalkley	P. Crane

### Masses between Christmas and New Year

Tuesday, December 26	NO MASS (Boxing day)
Wednesday, December 27	5.00pm (Time change)
Thursday, December 28	9.15am
Friday, December 29	9.15am

## Anniversary Celebration



St Brendan's Parish will host a celebration of Fr Joe's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination to priesthood on Sunday, May 19, after the 11am Mass.

All are welcome. Please save the date.

Fr Joe has also requested that he would like married couples, who celebrate 50 years of marriage next year, to join him in celebrating this occasion.

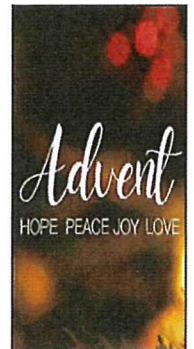
Also religious who are celebrating 50 years.

Please see Fr Joe, if this applies to you.

### SACRISTAN ASSISTANCE

Could all sacristans who are available over Christmas, please add their names to the Mass roster on the bulletin board in the sacristy. At the moment most spots are empty! Thank you

**Anointing Mass: 11.00am,  
 Tuesday, December 19, 2023.**

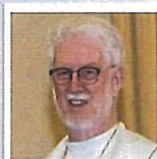


## Misa de Gallo, 16-24 December

Join us for our nine novena Masses, held each day at 6am as we prepare for Christmas. There will be live music each morning with breakfast served afterwards. This is a great way to enter more deeply into the Advent season.



Saturday, December 16, with Fr Rene



Sunday, December 17, with Fr Joe



Monday, December 18, with Fr Jophin



Tuesday, December 19, with Fr Joseph



Wednesday, December 20, with Fr DJ



Thursday, December 21, with Fr Novie



Friday, December 22, with Fr Ruel



Saturday, December 23, with Bishop Shane



Sunday, December 24, with Fr Jackson

6.00am, St Brendan's Church, 121 Knight Street, Shepparton

Our Faith and Light community 'pop up market' has now been and gone. A big thank you to all who supported the market this year, we raised \$1445.00.

This money will help the Faith and

Light community to organise activities for everyone in 2024, Merry Christmas to all. Gail Jelliff



A **Parish Expo** to celebrate St Brendan's Parish Feast Day will take place on Sunday, May 5, after the 11am Mass.

At this occasion, we will also launch our new vision statement and logo.

Please save the date. More details will be announced in the new year.

### Weekend Mass Times

Saturday Vigil 6pm

Sunday 8am & 11am **PRAYING with CHILDREN**  
SUNDAY LITURGY

*Syro Malabar Rite:* Wednesday 6.00pm, Saturday 8.30am, Sunday 5.30pm

**Rosary**— The Rosary is prayed in the Marian Chapel after weekday Masses and after the 8am Mass on Sunday.

**Holy Hour with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:** Thursdays 7pm to 8pm and Fridays 5pm to 6pm

### Weekday Mass Times

Tuesday to Friday 9.15am

**Reconciliation** Saturday 9.45am to 10.30am (in the Church)

## Calling all Kings, Shepherds and Angels

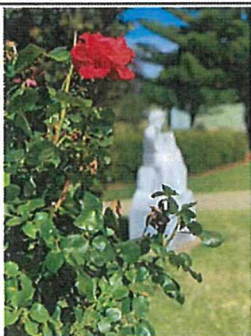
We are encouraging as many children as possible to come dressed as either Kings, Shepherds or Angels at the **5pm Christmas Eve Mass held at St Brendan's Church.**

We ask that you contact Leanne Pellegrino via email on [lpellegrino@sbshepparton.catholic.edu.au](mailto:lpellegrino@sbshepparton.catholic.edu.au) if your child/children would be happy to participate in our beautiful up and coming Liturgy.

A short rehearsal will occur at 3pm on Friday December 22. Thank you! *Christmas Liturgy Team*



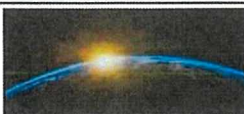
**St Francis Statue:** We are beginning to beautify the garden around St Francis with some seating, shrubs and a communal veggie garden. If any of you 'green fingers' would like to help with the setting up of the communal garden, this would be much appreciated. Please make contact with Kathy Hunt, Gavin Doherty or Fr Joe.



A portion of the **collections over Christmas** will be shared between the following causes:

- ◇ Voice for Silent People
- ◇ Monsignor Gerard Kalumba Seminary, Uganda
- ◇ St Mary's Church, Derimbat, Manus Island

**Food for Faith:** Sr Hilda Scott shares some very practical ways to bring our life situations in to the stable in Bethlehem. Jesus wants us to be part of his story. He invites us into the Christmas story each year to help us understand that he loves us. He wants to give us all that is good.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puUIACGjlzQ>



## ALPHA RETURNS IN 2024!

Alpha is a series of sessions that freely explore the big questions of life.

It's an opportunity to get connected, discover more about the Christian faith, and share your thoughts in a friendly environment. If you or a friend are interested in exploring your Christian faith further, contact:

Marie Fontana 0435 899 830 or visit [www.alpha.org.au](http://www.alpha.org.au)

## A message from Bishop Shane Mackinlay..

Having received recommendations from the College of Consultors last week, I am pleased to announce a number of decisions relating to clergy and seminarians.

### Clergy Appointments

As a result of priests moving to a new parish, several associated responsibilities are no longer practical, and I have made the following new appointments:

- Vicar Forane of the Goulburn Valley Deanery: Fr Jophin Joy ALCP/OSS (commencing 13 January 2024)
- Supervising Priest of the Rushworth Parish: Fr Rene Ramirez RCJ (commencing 24 January 2024)

### 'Come and See' Program

Abishek Mandanu and Anil Madanu, who I met during my recent pastoral visit to India, will undertake a three month 'Come and See' program in the Diocese in early 2024. During this time, they will visit the seminary and several parishes to gain an experience of ministry in Australia. Following this, a decision will be made about whether they commence as seminarians for the Diocese.

### New Seminarian

I have accepted Ryerson De Lai, from Sacred Heart Parish, Tatura, as a seminarian for the Diocese.

He will commence formation at Corpus Christi College in February 2024.

I am grateful for the willingness of these priests and aspiring seminarians to make themselves available for service in the Diocese, and I ask you to join me in offering them your prayerful support.

Yours sincerely,

+Shane Mackinlay





Emmanuel is about God with us,  
not God over us.  
Not God judging us.  
Not God condemning us.  
God with us in this wonderful, complex,  
sorrowful, joyful thing we call life.  
God with you and me.  
God with us and them.  
God here. God now.  
Just as you are. Just as we are.  
Just as they are. Jim Quillinan




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## ST BRENDAN'S CATHOLIC PARISH 121 KNIGHT ST SHEPPARTON. PH 5821 2633 2023 Christmas Mass Times

### RECONCILIATION

- Thursday 21 December, 5.00-6.00 pm
- Saturday 23 December, 9.45-10.30 am

### WEEKEND MASS TIMES (4th Sunday of Advent)

- Saturday 23 December, 6.00 pm
- Sunday 24 December, 6.00 am - Misa de Gallo
- Sunday 24 December, NO 8.00 am Mass
- Sunday 24 December, 11.00 am

### SUNDAY 24 DECEMBER - CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES (in St Brendan's Church)

- 5.00 pm - Children's Mass
- 6.30 pm - Family Mass
- St Mary's Church Dookie - 7.00 pm
- 8.00 pm - Syro-Malabar Mass
- 11.00 pm - Late Mass

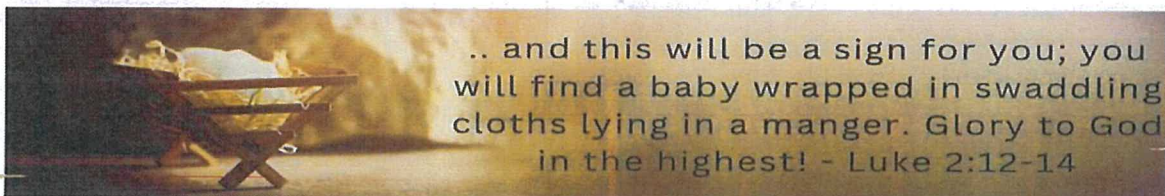
### MONDAY 25 DECEMBER - CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES

- 8.00 am & 11.00 am

### MONDAY 1 JANUARY 2024 - NEW YEAR'S DAY MASS

- 10.00 am

The parish office is closed Monday December 25 - Monday January 1



.. and this will be a sign for you; you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths lying in a manger. Glory to God in the highest! - Luke 2:12-14



**ST BRENDAN'S CATHOLIC PARISH**  
**121 KNIGHT ST SHEPPARTON. PH 5821 2633**  
**2023 Christmas Mass Times**

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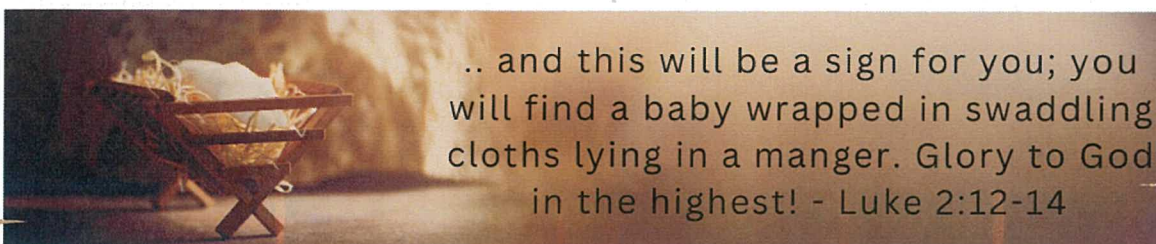
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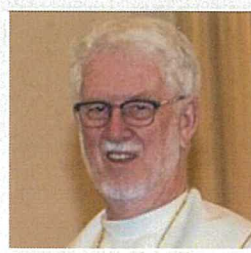
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# Misa de Gallo, 16-24 December

Join us for our nine  
novena Masses,  
held each day at  
6am as we prepare  
for Christmas.  
There will be live  
music each morning  
with breakfast  
served afterwards.  
This is a great way  
to enter more  
deeply into the  
Advent season.



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with Fr Rene



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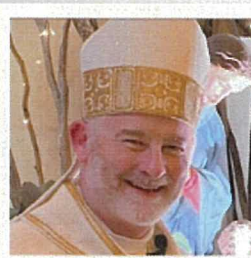
Wednesday, December 20,  
with Fr DJ



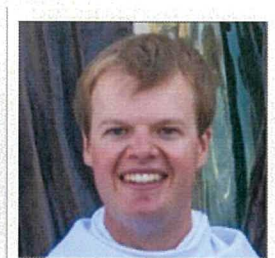
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with Fr Jackson

6.00am, St Brendan's Church, 121 Knight Street, Shepparton

# PRAYING *With* CHILDREN

## SUNDAY LITURGY



3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent Year B

17 December 2023

**“There stands among you,  
unknown to you, the one who is  
coming after me.”**

### Something to Think About

In today's gospel, the people ask John the Baptist to tell them who he really is. If somebody asked you to tell them who you really are, what would you say?

### The Story

In today's gospel, the people ask John the Baptist who he really is, and why he is baptising people. John says he is not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet. John tells the people that he is preaching and baptising in order to prepare for someone else who is coming after him. We know that the person John is talking about must be very special, because John doesn't even feel worthy to untie that person's sandals. We know that the person John was talking about was Jesus.

### The Scriptures

#### A reading from the holy gospel according to John 1:19-28

The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and temple helpers to ask John who he was. He told them plainly, "I am not the Messiah."

Then when they asked him if he were Elijah, he said, "No, I am not!"

And when they asked if he were the Prophet, he also said "No!"

Finally, they said, "Who are you then? We have to give an answer to the ones who sent us. Tell us who you are!"

John answered in the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"I am only someone shouting in the desert, 'Get the road ready for the Lord!'"

Some Pharisees had also been sent to John.

They asked him, "Why are you baptising people, if you are not the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet?"

John told them, "I use water to baptise people. But here with you is someone you don't know. Even though I came first, I am not good enough to untie his sandals."

John said this as he was baptising east of the Jordan River in Bethany.

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

### Video

Click to watch the video.

[Are You Ready for Christmas?](#)



## Group Discussion

John helped the people to recognise Jesus in their midst.  
What are some of the signs of Jesus' presence that you have experienced in your life?  
What do these signs tell us about God and God's love for us?

## Praying For Others

*Leader:* Let us pray now for the leaders of our Church, our world, for those in our community and for our own needs.

*Reader 1:* We pray for the people of God. Lord hear us.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

*Reader 2:* We pray for those who try to do what is right. Lord hear us.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

*Reader 3:* We pray for all who are hurt. Lord hear us.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

*Reader 4:* We pray that we will make our hearts ready for Jesus. Lord hear us.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

*Reader 5:* We pray that we will be confident in telling others about Jesus. Lord, hear us.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

*Invite the children to pray for their own special intentions.*

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* Loving God, listen to the prayers we make in the name of Jesus.

**All: Amen.**

## Prayer



Four, three, two, one,  
Count the weeks till Jesus comes.  
Each week we add another light,  
Our hope for Jesus growing bright.  
We pray, we share, we do our part,  
To welcome Jesus to our heart. Amen.

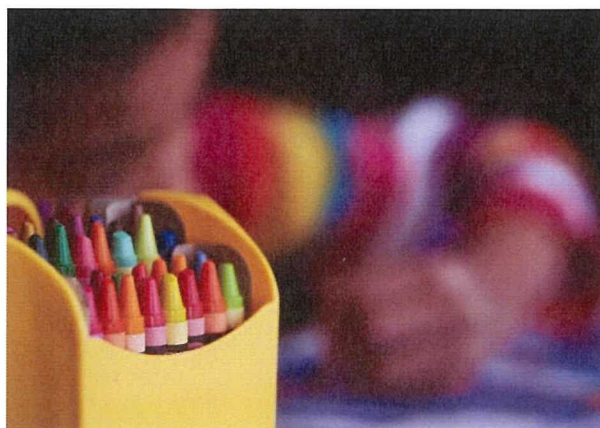
## Group Activity

*You will need: paper, pens or pencils, stickers or other decorative items, envelopes (optional).*

John had an important job in telling people that Jesus was coming. For this week's activity imagine you have met a person who doesn't know about Jesus yet. It is your job to tell them about Jesus in time for Christmas!

You could tell them one of your favourite bible stories about Jesus. You could tell them about a time you felt Jesus walking with you in your life. You could tell the person about the joy that comes from knowing Jesus. Remind them that Jesus loves them too!

Write a letter, or draw a picture that you could give to that person to introduce them to Jesus.

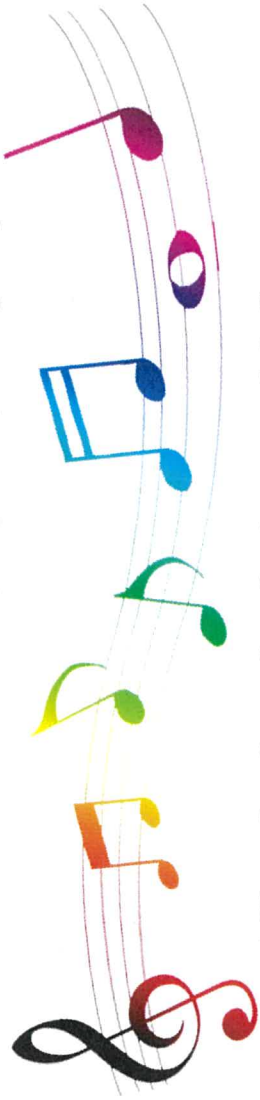




**ALWAYS BE JOYFUL!**

**CHRIST IS COMING**

MAKE UP A TUNE AND SING THESE WORDS



**CHRIST IS COMING  
THIS IS GOOD NEWS  
JOY NOT SADNESS  
PEACE NOT FIGHTING  
LOVE FOR ALL**

**SING OUT THE GOOD NEWS**



# THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**WAY  
OF  
HOPE**

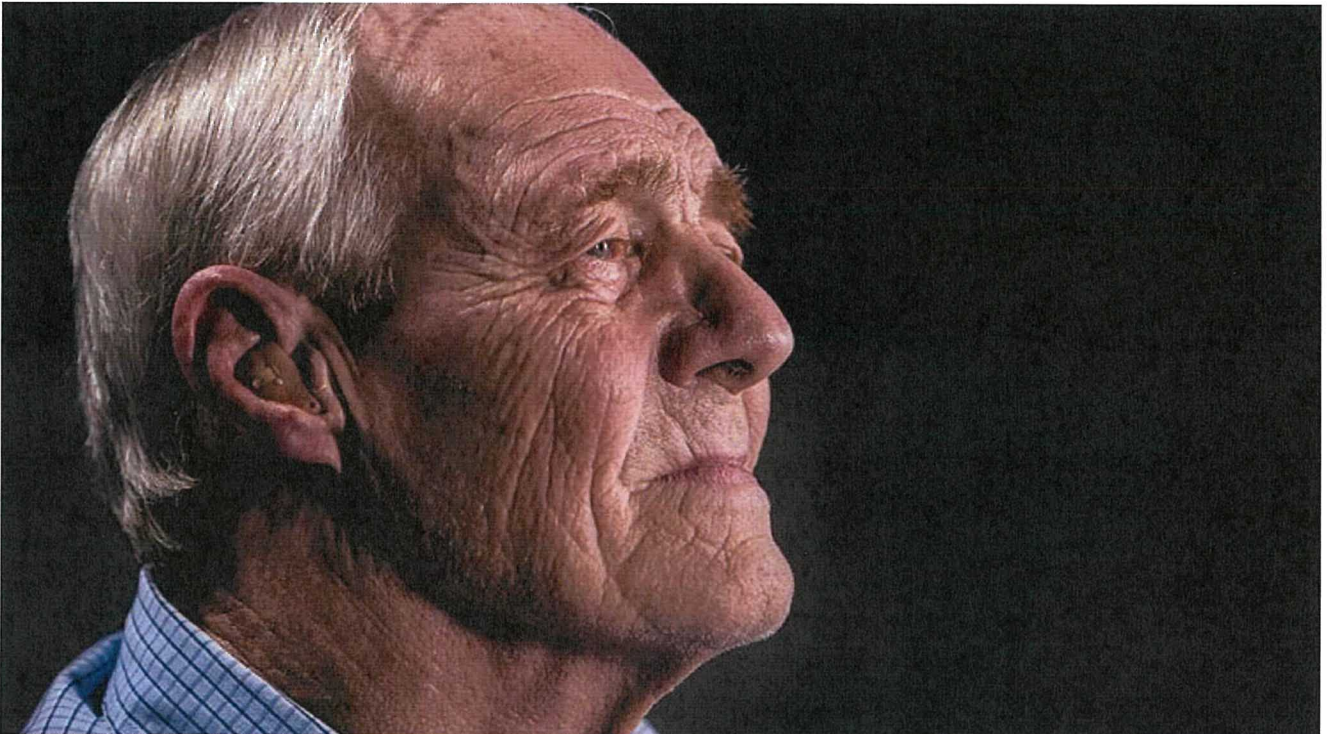


**WAY OF TRUST AND LOVE**

Reflection and Prayer for Advent 2023 in the Jubilee Year in Honour of St Therese of Lisieux.

# From The Readings

**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. *Isaiah 61:1-2*



**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 prophecy 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. *1 Thessalonians 5:16-24*

**A man came, sent by God. His name was John.** He came as a witness, to bear witness to the light ... So he said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied: A voice of one that cries in the desert: Prepare a way for the Lord. Make his paths straight!' ... 'I baptise with water; but standing among you -- unknown to you — is the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandal.' *John 1:6, 23,26-27*

# From Pope Francis and Saint Therese of Lisieux

**... the blind hope that I have in his mercy ... That is my only treasure.**

(Therese of Lisieux, quoted in: *The Way of Trust and Love*, 62)

**What most attracts God's graces is gratitude** because, if we thank him for a gift, he is touched and hastens to give us ten more, and if we thank him again with the same enthusiasm, what an incalculable multiplication of graces! I have experienced this: try it yourself and you will see! My gratitude for everything he gives me is limitless, and I prove it to him in a thousand ways.

(Therese of Lisieux, quoted in: *The Way of Trust and Love*, 111)

**The memory of my faults** humiliates me and leads me never to rely on my own strength, which is only weakness; but still more, the memory of them speaks to me of mercy and love. When, with filial trust, we throw our faults into the devouring furnace of love, how could they not be completely burned away?

(Therese of Lisieux, quoted in: *The Way of Trust and Love*, 99)

**In the Story of a Soul ...** To describe [her little way], she uses the image of an elevator: "the elevator which must raise me to heaven is your arms, O Jesus! And for this, I had no need to grow up, but rather I had to remain little and become this more and more". Little, incapable of being confident in herself, and yet firmly secure in the loving power of the Lord's arms.

(Pope Francis, *C'est La Confiance*, 15-16)

**Prayer for me is an upward leap of the heart**, an untroubled glance towards heaven, a grateful and loving cry from the deepest depth of sorrow as well as from the height of joy. Its supernatural grandeur enlarges the soul and unites the soul with God.

(Therese of Lisieux, *The Story of a Soul*)

## FOR THINKING AND TALKING

- **What words or phrases stand out for you in these readings and insights of Pope Francis and Saint Therese?**
- **What insights might you take with you on your own journey?**

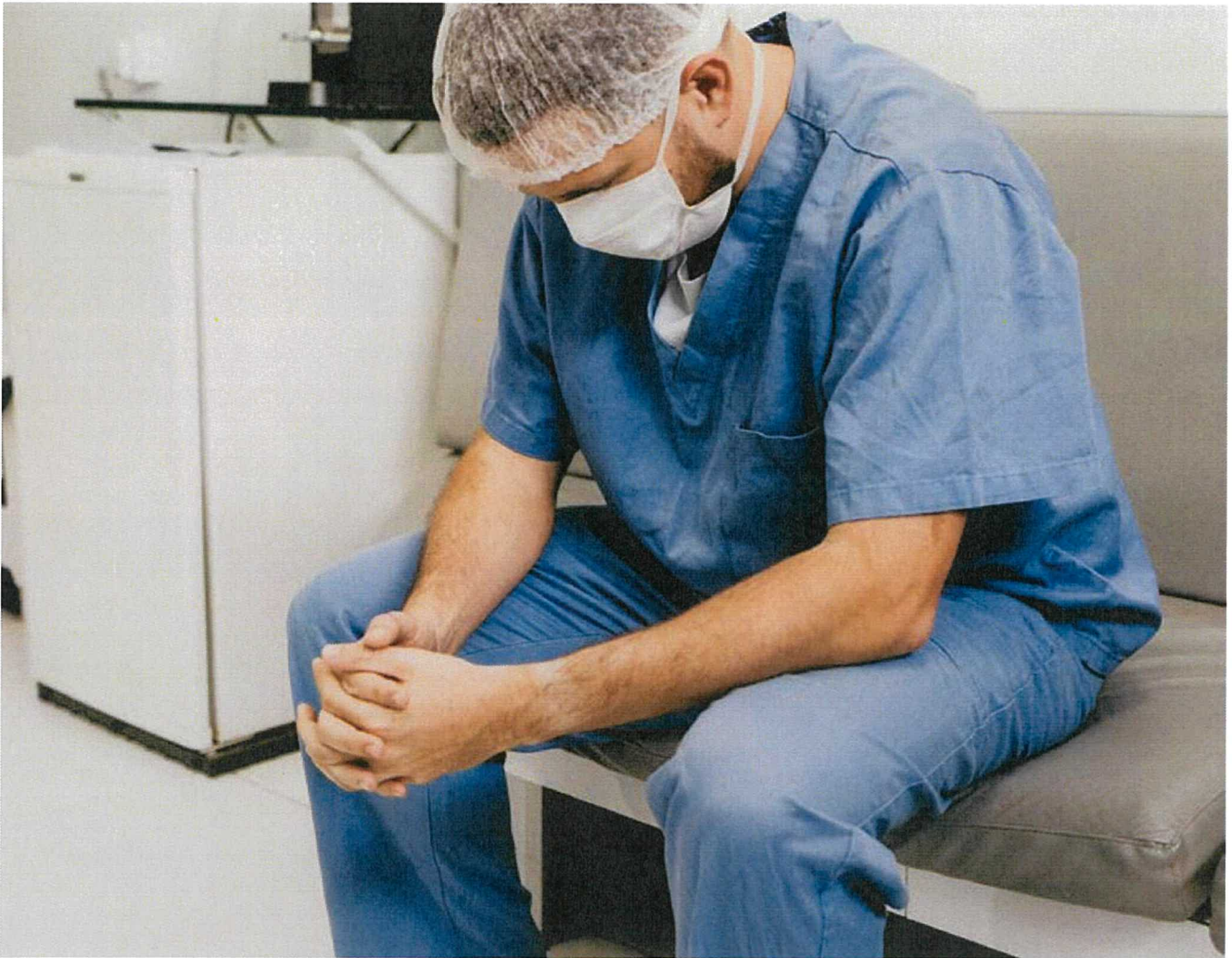
# PRAYER

## A prayer of Saint Therese

**O my God!**

I ask You for myself  
and for those whom I hold dear  
the grace to fulfil perfectly Your holy will,  
to accept for love of You  
the joys and sorrows of this passing life,  
so that we may one day  
be united together  
in heaven for all eternity. Amen.

*(Adapted from Therese of Lisieux, Carmelite of Boston: [www.carmelitesofboston.org/prayer](http://www.carmelitesofboston.org/prayer))*



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