



Catholic Parish of Whanganui

Third Sunday of Advent

14 December 2025



NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

Monday 15 December

9.00am C/s Holy Family

Tuesday 16 December

9.30am Mass Holy Family

12.05pm Mass St Marys

Wednesday 17 December

12.05pm Mass St Mary's

Thursday 18 December

12.05pm Mass St Mary's

Friday 19 December

11.20am Reconciliation
St Mary's

12.05pm Mass St Mary's

Saturday 20 December

9.00am Rite I St Mary's

9.30am Mass St Mary's

5.30pm Sun Vigil Mass
Holy Family

Sunday 21 December

9.30am Mass St Mary's

5.30pm Mass St Mary's

Upcoming Events

Tuesday 23rd December

5.30pm Reconciliation Rite I
St Mary's

Wednesday 24th December

11.00 Reconciliation Rite II
St Mary's Church

PARISH CONTACT DETAILS

Parish Office

Jo Boulton 06 345 3872

admin@cpow.co.nz

Parish Priest

Fr Craig Butler 021 272 4401

Assistant Priest

Fr John Roberts 027 634 6877

Hospital Chaplain

Norma O'Connor 027 233 4557

Youth Minister

Rain Shore 021 256 0608

MAKING SENSE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

During the week, I read an article about John the Baptist which has helped me make sense of who he was and why Jesus considered him least in the Kingdom of Heaven. The following is an adaptation of work by the Irish Dominican College.

John the Baptist was known for his fire and passion. Jesus said of him, that he was one of the greatest man who ever lived. At the same time, he also said "*the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he*" On the surface this seems confusing. Membership of this new community does not depend on the qualities that John had. If not, then what does it depend on? John was 100% adult male; he was the original Iron John, hard and demanding. He lived on the edge of society, not integrated with it, eating wild food and dressed in camel hair. There are many people like him and, there always have been. John presents a straightforward, two-dimensional image, lacking in depth (and humour). The missing essential ingredient in his makeup is paradox. There are some Christian preachers (especially on television) whose persona is exactly like John's.

The 19C philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard identified three stages in the spiritual development of a person - the aesthetic, the moral, and the spiritual. The first stage (that of beautiful thoughts and feelings) is not sustaining in the long term. Most people grow (usually through a crisis) into the second stage - the stage of moral awareness. But, after coming to know your own weakness and the ambiguity of your motives, you learn that it's impossible to be a moral person if you are attempting *only* to be a moral person. Those who are aware begin to realise that their religion has become *self-righteous, judgmental, resentful, even hypocritical*. This crisis has the potential to open a self-aware person to deeper spiritual reality. When you can no longer disguise your failure, you learn the wisdom of failure - you begin to understand the Cross of Christ. Slowly we begin to trust less in our own efforts and trust more deeply in God.



Jesus, like John, came from the desert and appeared at the edge of society. But unlike John, he spent time with sinners and outcasts. He created a new kind of society in which the values of the old are inverted: eg where success gives way to failure, where the first will be last and the last will be first, where, unless you become like a little child, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven and perhaps most importantly, we can only come to real life through death. These paradoxes are at the centre of Christian life. If John had lived he would probably have embraced the new community and its paradoxes; he would not have run from Calvary as the others did; it was never in his nature to be a reed shaken by the wind. His raging fire would long since have been transformed into intense love, his judgments into compassion.

Today is Gaudete Sunday and we are invited to Rejoice - because the Lord is near. We need a break during this penitential season. I'm not sure whether John would have allowed for much rejoicing. In these next 10 days leading up to the celebration of Christ's birth and our preparation for his return at the end of time, the church gives us a day of reprieve. Please use today to do something joyful as a reminder that our faith calls us to rest from time to time and enjoy one another and this beautiful world. Fr Craig

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Tuesday 23 December St Mary's Rite I Reconciliation 5.30pm

Ranana Christmas Mass 6.00pm (Carols 5.30pm)

Wednesday 24 December St Mary's Rite I Reconciliation 11.00am

St Mary's Christmas Eve Mass 7.00pm (Carols 6.20pm)

Holy Family Christmas Eve Mass 9.30pm (Carols 9.00pm)

Thursday 25 December St Mary's Christmas Day Mass 9.30am

Kaiwhaiki Marae Christmas Day Mass 10.00am



CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH- No one needs to be alone on Christmas Day. There will be a shared lunch on Christmas Day from 12pm to 2pm in St Marys Hall for any parishioners who will be spending Christmas Day on their own.

Please share this with anyone who you feel would benefit from joining us. If you could email Mary at thomasandmarythomas@gmail.com or ring/text Mary on 027 4649487 and RSVP your spot and what you will be bringing so we can ensure we have a variety of food.

GOOD POSTURE During the week our bishop, John Adams created a video about our posture during Masses. I.e. whether we should stand or kneel during the Eucharistic Prayer. Up until relatively recently, this has not been an issue. Please find enclosed a link to this video here. [Liturgical Posture in the Diocese of Palmerston North - Tūmanako](#) If you don't have access to a computer, we have enclosed a transcript of his talk. Bishop John is asking us to meet with others to discuss this issue so he can make a fully informed decision. He has given us a process including encouraging us to make use of the Synodal process as part of our deliberations. The details are clearly outlined in the statement. I will run a seminar on the subject of the Synodal Process I learnt here in NZ and in Rome last year. Fr Craig

The Parish Council met last week. We reviewed the insights from the parish survey as we develop a draft strategic plan. Youth ministry support and community-building initiatives are being further reviewed. We received an update on the future planning for Te Rau Oriwa Marae and our bicultural journey.. The AGM reminded us of the many gifts alive in our parish and the insights shared by parishioners.

Saint Vincent de Paul Christmas Raffle Results Thank you to all Parishioners who supported The Holy Family Conference of St Vincent De Paul by purchasing tickets in our Christmas Raffle. We are pleased to say all winners have picked up their prizes and were delighted with their wins. 1st # 174 Brigette 2nd #450 Stephen Gudsell 3rd #502 Tony Conder 4th #513 Tony Conder 5th #248 Corey Humphreys 6th #588 Kath 7th #498 Lynne Cromarty 8th #286 Tony Haddock May peace, love and joy fill your homes this festive season.



SVPD Religious Christmas Cards are for sale at The Vinnies Shop \$5 per pack of 5 cards

BIBLE DIARIES 2026- will be available to purchase in December at Holy Family 13th Dec. St Mary's 14th Dec. They contain all the gospel readings for every day of the year with accounts of the lives of the Saint for day, daily prayers. Hard cover only \$20 each cash. Please see Kathleen Orsborn

Holy Family Christmas Choir: Practices for our Christmas Eve Mass will continue next Wednesday, 17 December at 7pm at Holy Family. All singers and musicians welcome- spread the word, the more the merrier!

Singers for Christmas Masses are invited to practice at St Mary's at 7 pm on Sunday 21st Dec. All welcome.

GAUDETE SUNDAY AND THE JUBILEE FOR PRISONERS -This Sunday is both Gaudete Sunday and the Jubilee for Prisoners. This Sunday after Mass, you are invited to collect a bookmark with a cell number from one of the 3 prisons in our diocese and pray for the person in that cell. We also invite you to pray for our prison chaplains who minister to those in prison. Let us recall anew this Sunday of Advent, the joy the free gifts or mercy and love that God extends to us all. We pause to ponder again how much we both require and desire the grace of God to abound in us, so we are free from those things that hold us back from the realisation of our full dignity and freedom. Read reflections from our prison chaplains here - [Seeing Christ in Prison: Voices from Our Chaplains - Tūmanako](#)

DWELL ADVENT SERIES | Dwell Advent Series | Third Week of Advent. The Dwell Advent Journey continues. Week 3, Gaudete Sunday, invites us to notice the quiet joy that rises from recognising God's goodness in our lives, following Mary, whose Magnificat overflowed with gratitude. How might you open your heart to the quiet joy God wants to give you? May this season draw each of us closer to Christ. Download the pdf at <https://tumanako.pndiocese.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Dwell-Third-Week-of-Advent.pdf>

COLUMBAN CALENDARS 2026 are available at the office. \$15 each

HOMELESS HUB OUTREACH - The SUMMER roster for next week is Maureen Downs Team. Further information contact Maureen 027 491 2168 or Pat 027 491 9637

JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP - WILL RETURN 22ND FEBRUARY 2026
SENIOR YOUTH GROUP - WILL RETURN 22ND FEBRUARY 2026



RECENTLY DECEASED: Jackie La Pouple

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES: Eileen Hoskins, Doris Lewis, Elizabeth Palmer, Brian Hyland, Angeline Haami, Valarie Smith, Neil Macdougall Joy McGonigle, Faith Haddock, Bernadette Thompson

TODAY'S READINGS First: Isaiah 35.1-6a, 10 Second: James 5.7-10 Gospel: Matthew 11.2-11

NEXT SUNDAY 21 December First: Isaiah 7.10-14 Second: Romans 1.1-7 Gospel: Matthew 1.18-24