



# Catholic Parish of Whanganui

## Second Sunday of Advent

### 7 December 2025



#### ADJUSTING OUR OWN EXPECTATIONS

*John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' This was the man the prophet Isaiah spoke of when he said: A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight. This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. When he saw a number of Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them, 'Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming?' Matthew 3*

Before we talk about the birth of Jesus, we need to talk about his cousin, John the Baptist. Like many religious people of his time, John expected the messiah to come with power. John's concern was justice and repentance. In his preaching, he warned people of an approaching time of reckoning and expected the longed-for messiah to come precisely as a violent fire, a winnowing fan that would separate the bad from the good and burn up the former with a righteousness that came straight from God. When he heard reports of Jesus gently inviting sinners in rather than turning them away, John was scandalized. That kind of a messiah didn't fit his expectations, or his preaching. That's why Jesus, in sending a response to him, invited John not to be scandalized by him. John hadn't wanted a gentle, vulnerable, peace-preaching messiah. He wanted bad people punished, not converted. But, to his credit, once he saw how Jesus' power worked, he understood, he accepted a deeper truth and then stepped back in self-effacement. He pointed people in Jesus direction with the words:



*Alexandre Cabanel 1823-1889*

He must increase and I must decrease. *I'm not even worthy to untie his scandal strap!* We too can be slow to understand. Like John the Baptist, our impatience for truth and justice makes us want and expect a messiah who comes in earthly terms, strong and powerful, banging heads together so as to rid the planet of falsehood and evil. If we are honest, we too want the kind of messiah we see in action movies. Charles Bronson, Sylvester Stallone, Bruce Willis, Superman, Drax or Wolverine - depending on your era. There are so many to choose from! But, that's not the Christmas story, nor the messiah revealed to us in it. An infant lying in the straw in Bethlehem wasn't going to out-muscle anyone. He just lay there, in all innocence relying on his earthly parents, preparing for that day when he would speak the truth and announce the Reign of God to all who would listen. That's still how God meets us, speaking the truth quietly, and in gentleness. Like John, we too need to adjust our expectations if we're going to encounter the real messiah and follow him.

#### NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

##### Monday 8 December

9.00am C/s Holy Family

##### Tuesday 9 December

9.30am Mass Holy Family

12.05pm Mass St Marys

##### Wednesday 10 December

12.05pm Mass St Mary's

2.00pm Anointing Mass  
St Mary's

##### Thursday 11 December

12.05pm Mass St Mary's

7.00pm Reconciliation Rite II  
St Mary's

##### Friday 12 December

11.20am Reconciliation  
St Mary's

12.05pm Mass St Mary's

##### Saturday 13 December

9.00am Rite I St Mary's

9.30am Mass St Mary's

5.30pm Sun Vigil Mass  
Holy Family

##### Sunday 14 December

9.30am Mass St Mary's

5.30pm Mass St Mary's

#### PARISH CONTACT DETAILS

Parish Office

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[admin@cpow.co.nz](mailto: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

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Freya Ferrer and her family. Freya was baptised at St Mary's Church on Saturday 29th November.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Adilisi Tulia who was received into the Church with full communion on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November.

 **SVDP** The Holy Family Conference of St Vincent de Paul will be selling their Christmas Raffle before and after all Masses for the next three weeks. There are several lovely prizes. Tickets are \$2 for one or \$5 for three. We would like to thank the Parishioners who have supported us throughout the year and for supporting this raffle as well.

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

**SPRING CLEAN-** Holy Family at 9.00am and St Mary's from 8.00am on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December. Please let us know if you can help. Also could someone offer to make scones for the workers 😊

**BIBLE DIARIES 2026-** will be available to purchase in December at Holy Family 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Dec. St Mary's 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> 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

**DWELL ADVENT SERIES** | Second Week of Advent- Week 2 of Advent is here, and the Dwell Advent Journey continues. This simple resource is designed to help us slow down, pray with Scripture, and make room for Christ in the busyness of December. Each week includes a short Gospel reflection, a Marian prayer, and a gentle invitation to live our faith in everyday moments. Week 2 invites us to prepare a way for the Lord through love, gentleness, and service within our relationships — following Mary, who carried Christ into the life of Elizabeth with joyful readiness. Download the pdf at <https://tumanako.pndiocese.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Dwell-Second-Week-of-Advent.pdf>

Where is the Lord inviting you to “prepare the way” in your relationships?  
May this season draw each of us closer to Christ.

**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](mailto: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.

**CATHOLIC MASS TIMES APP** As we approach the Christmas season, many individuals who do not regularly attend Mass, or those visiting family around the country, will be searching online for Christmas Mass times and locations.

One of the most common platforms people use is the Catholic Mass Times app. Travellers, seekers, and returning Catholics find this a quick and convenient way to find the nearest parish.

The app is free to download and update via Apple and Android app stores, or at <https://catholicmasstimes.com/>

**SCRIPTURE FOCUS THIS ADVENT** | Living the Word. You are invited to prepare for Sunday Mass by reading and reflecting on the Scripture we will hear that weekend. Marist priest Fr Frank Bird has for several years been helping people make those preparations through his Living the Word project. As the name suggests, Living the Word is an invitation for Catholics and others to allow the Word of God to shape their lives. You can download the resources, and access other rich content, at [www.livingtheword.org.nz/pray](http://www.livingtheword.org.nz/pray)

**FOOD FOR FAITH ADVENT 2025** Daily reflections for those seeking greater maturity of Christian Faith in preparation for Christmas. Sign up to receive daily emails during Advent at [www.foodforfaith.org.nz](http://www.foodforfaith.org.nz)

**Annual Sick & Retired Priests Special Collection | Sunday, 30 November 2025**

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

**HOMELESS HUB OUTREACH** - The SUMMER roster for next week is Marianne Vine's Team. Further information contact Maureen 027 491 2168 or Pat 027 491 9637

**JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP** – If you are year 5-8. Come along at 4-5.30pm on a Sunday at Saint Mary's Church Hall.

**SENIOR YOUTH GROUP** – If you're year 9-13 come along on a Sunday night 6.30-8.30pm Saint Mary's Church Hall.

**YOUNG ADULTS GROUP** Our meetings are on Thursdays 7-9pm. 8 Glasgow Street Whanganui



**RECENTLY DECEASED:**

**DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES:** Eileen Hoskins, Doris Lewis, Elizabeth Palmer, Brian Hyland, Angeline Haami

**TODAY'S READINGS** First: Isaiah 11.1-10 Second: Romans 14.4-9 Gospel: Matthew 3.1-12

**NEXT SUNDAY 14 DECEMBER** First: Isaiah 1-6a, 10 Second: James 5.7-10 Gospel: Matthew 11.2-11