



St Peter's  
CHURCH SOUTHPORT

*Key Notes for Advent & Christmas 2023*



# Prepare the way...

If Advent is a season of preparation and penitence we must surely ask, what is it that we are making ready for? Or, because we sort-of know the answer to this question before we ask it: “just for whom are we waiting for?”

The coming of the Christ child, of course. Yet we should be careful here. If we isolate the birth of Christ from the rest of his ministry, we do run the risk of mis-emphasis. Yes, the birth of the Son of God should certainly hold our attention and yes, it does warrant all the excitement that we see writ large in the face of children as they race to unwrap their presents on Christmas Day. But it is only part of the story of the “Good News.”

To avoid the mis-emphasis of making Christmas Day the only thing we are waiting for, we do need to do some real digging. ‘Waiting’ and ‘Expecting’ were powerful themes in the lives of the faithful Jews of Jesus day, and no doubt these expectations were reinforced by the words of the prophet Isaiah and the apocalyptic visions in Daniel. So, what were the disciples themselves expecting, what were they waiting for? They too were very much part of that first century Jewish mindset and would have been familiar with the prophecies of Isaiah and the warnings of Daniel. We might say that the one for whom they were waiting had clearly arrived and had wrought great miracles in their midst. Surely now the ‘waiting’ was over? Well, they would soon come to understand that they had grasped only half of the story.

Early Christians, those of the first centuries, would come to adopt a ‘two-fold’ understanding of just what was expected and what should be expected. Scholars often refer to this as the “now-and-not-yet” approach. Clearly with the birth of Christ and his ministry, his death, and his resurrection something had happened. This much is clear. What is less clear to us (but quite clear to the early Christians) is that something was yet to happen through which the Kingdom of God (already begun inaugurated by the victory of the cross) would reach its ultimate goal: the renewal of heaven and earth.

The key phrases here are: something had happened, and even more was yet to happen. The birth of God-incarnate followed by a remarkably ministry is not the story of a wise teacher who was born in obscurity and made a name for himself, and there we leave it. Rather, even as early as Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians (early 50s AD) we learn about the now-and-not-yet-fully-inaugurated Kingdom of God through the exultation of Jesus, Israel’s Messiah.

Yes, I know that too much theology can, just like too many Christmas mince pies, give us heartburn. It is just that for years I have seen many look forward to Christmas as if it is an end-in-itself, as if to say that after we have opened all the presents and eaten all the mince pies it is all over. Thankfully (for my waistline's sake) that part of things is over for a year, but much, much more importantly we await the coming of the kingdom (“Thy Kingdom come”). We are people of the now-and-not-yet, not the once-a-year!

As we prepare this Advent, let us make ready for the King and the Kingdom.

A blessed Christmas to all

from *Fr Don and Jill*.



*The Feast of St Andrew*



# *The Baptism of Ava and Savannah*



*Anglicare Eucharist & Carols: Wednesday 29 November*





# For All the Saints

## Nicholas ~ December 6

Bishop of Myra

St Nicholas, the *real* 'Father Christmas.'

We know almost nothing about Nicholas, other than that he was a fourth century bishop of Myra in Lycia, Asia Minor (Southwest in modern day Turkey). However, his reputation as a wonder-worker and a ninth century biography made him one of the most popular of the saints the world over. He became the patron saint of various groups: sailors, children, apothecaries, perfumiers, pawnbrokers, and unmarried girls.

The patronage is in most cases associated with one of the miracles he is said to have performed. Nicholas is said to have saved three distressed young women from a life of prostitution by gifts of gold for their dowries. The three bags of gold are said to have suggested the three golden balls hung up by pawnbrokers outside their shops. He restored to life three boys murdered in a tub of brine by a butcher, and he rescued sailors off the coast of Asia Minor. The connection with perfumiers stems from perfumes associated with his shrine.

To us, Nicholas is best known as the patron saint of children. There are many stories told about Nicholas' goodness to children. He fed them when they were hungry, healed them when they were ill, and cared for those treated badly by people. The Dutch custom of giving presents to children on St Nicholas' Day was taken by the Dutch to America, where the name Santa Claus developed from the Dutch "Sinte Klaas". The custom of presents from Santa Claus eventually became associated in many places with Christmas rather than St Nicholas' own feast day. That is how St Nicholas came to be Father Christmas. He is also a patron saint of Russia.





# Lucy ~ December 13

Martyr, Syracuse

At the beginning of the fourth century, the Roman Empire was facing a crisis, and the authorities attempted to recall the empire to the traditional Roman standards, customs and religion, with the consequent rejection of such recent innovations as Christianity. Systematic persecution of the church began in 303. Among those killed was Lucy of Syracuse in Sicily. We have no other reliable information about her. Her following became widespread at an early date, and her name was added to commemorations in the eucharist in several rites. Many churches were dedicated in her name.

Sadly, Lucy's history has been lost and all we really know for certain is that this brave woman, who lived in Syracuse, lost her life during the aforementioned persecution of Christians in the early fourth century. Her veneration spread to Rome so that by the sixth century the whole Church recognized her courage in defense of the faith.

Because people wanted to shed light on Lucy's bravery, legends began to crop up. The one that has passed the test of time tells the story of a young Christian woman who vowed to live her life in service of Christ. Her mother tried to arrange a marriage for her with a pagan and Lucy knew her mother could not be swayed by a young girl's vow, so she devised a plan to convince her mother that Christ was the better partner for life. After several prayers at the tomb of Saint Agatha, Lucy saw the saint in a dream. St. Agatha told Lucy her mother's illness would be cured through faith, which Lucy used to persuade her mother to give the dowry money to the poor and allow her to commit her life to God.

While Lucy and her mother were grateful to God, the rejected bridegroom was deeply angered and betrayed Lucy's faith to the governor Paschasius. The governor attempted to subject her to a number of indignities, but the guards who came to take her away were unable to move her, even after hitching her to a team of oxen!

Lucy, whose name can mean "light" or "lucid," is the patron saint of the blind, since tradition has it that she was blinded before her martyrdom





# John of the Cross ~ 14 December

Mystic and Teacher

Saint John of the Cross was born Juan de Yepes y Alvarez, in Fontiveros, Avila, Spain in 1542. His father was employed by wealthy family members as an accountant, but they disowned him when he married a poor woman from the lower class. As a result of his family's poverty, John's family suffered greatly.

His father died when he was three, and his older brother, Luis died two years after that, likely because of malnutrition. John's mother eventually found work weaving which helped her to feed her family.

As a child, John was sent to a boarding school for poor and orphaned children. He was given a religious education from a young age and chose to follow a religious path, even as a child. He served as an acolyte at an Augustinian monastery. As he grew older, he went to work in a hospital while attending a Jesuit school.

In 1563, he was able to join the Carmelite Order and took the name, "John of St. Matthias." He made vows the following year, and was sent to the university in Salamanca to study theology and philosophy. He became an expert in the Bible and dared to translate the Song of Songs into Spanish, an act which was controversial since the Church forbade the translation of the Bible from Latin -a measure to protect the original meanings in the scripture.

## COLLECT OF ST JOHN OF THE CROSS

*O God, who gave the Priest Saint John an outstanding dedication to perfect self-denial and love of the Cross, grant that, by imitating him closely at all times, we may come to contemplate eternally your glory. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.*

After being priested in 1567, John encountered Theresa of Avila, a charismatic Carmelite nun. Theresa asked John to follow her. John was attracted by the strict routine followed by Theresa, a routine she hoped to reintroduce to her order, as well as her devotion to prayer and simplicity. Her followers went barefoot and were therefore known as the discalced Carmelites. On Nov. 28, 1568, Theresa founded a new monastery, and, on that day, John changed his name again to John of the Cross. Within a couple of years, John and his fellow friars relocated to a larger site for their monastery. He remained at this location until 1572.

In 1572, John traveled to Avila at the invitation of Theresa to become her confessor and spiritual guide. He remained in Avila until 1577. While there, he had a vision of Christ and made a drawing that remains to this day called, "Christ from Above." The little drawing shows Christ on the cross, looking down on him from above. The image has been preserved for centuries.

Around this time there were growing rifts within the Carmelite order and controversy between various monastic houses over the issue of various reforms. Some Carmelites, such as Theresa of Avila, felt the 'rule' has been softened of preceding decades, and she, along with John, sought to restore the original rule. The intervention of the Holy See as well as the political machinations of King Phillip II and his court, led to dramatic, even violent disagreement between the Carmelites.



St John of the Cross



*St John of the Cross, continued:*

In late 1577, John was ordered to leave the monastery in Avila and to return to his original house. He maintained, however, that his work of reform had already been approved by the Papal Nuncio (in effect, a higher authority), and for this reason John chose to ignore the lower order and stay. On December 2, 1577, a group of Carmelites broke into John's residence and kidnapped him. He was taken by force to the order's main house in Toledo. He was brought before a court and placed on trial for disobedience. He was punished by imprisonment.

A cell was made for him in the monastery that was so small he could barely lie on the floor. He was fed only bread and water, and occasional scraps of salt fish. Each week he was taken into public and lashed, then returned to his cell. His only luxuries were a prayer book and an oil lamp to read it by. To pass the time he wrote poems on paper that was smuggled to him by the friar charged with guarding his cell.

After nine months, John managed to pry his cell door from its hinges and escape. He joined Teresa's nuns in Toledo and spent six weeks in the hospital to recover. In 1579, he was sent to the town of Baeza to be rector of a new college and to support the Discalced Carmelites in Andalusia. In 1580, Pope Gregory formally authorized the split between the Discalced Carmelites and the rest of the order. This ended the rift within the order. At that time, there were about 500 members in the order living in 22 houses.

During the last few years of his life, John traveled and established new houses across Spain. In 1591, John became ill with a skin condition that resulted in an infection. He died on December 14, 1591. He is the patron of Contemplatives, mystics and Spanish poets and his feast day is celebrated on December 14.



*Christ of Saint John of the Cross* by Salvador Dalí, 1951



# St Thomas ~ December 21

Apostle, Martyr

Thomas is included as one of the Twelve in several lists of disciples in the New Testament (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:8; Luke 6:15). Thomas features at greater length at three significant points in the Fourth Gospel. There it is added that he is called “the twin”, though we never learn whose twin he is.

It was Thomas’s courage which led the disciples to follow Jesus to Judaea when they heard of Lazarus’ death. But it was the courage of a fatalist: “Let us also go, that we may die with him” (John 11:16). They rightly feared that the journey would cost Jesus his life. Thomas was wrong to think they would die with Jesus in Judaea, but die with him they all would. Then in Jerusalem if Thomas still knew Jesus must die, he did not know where Jesus was going and so could not know the way. This was the cue for Jesus’ announcement, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life!” (John 14:6). Thomas then heard that Jesus is the way to the Father, but he did not know the full truth about Jesus’ “life”. Told that the others have seen the Lord alive after his death, Thomas could not believe it. Only when himself confronted by the risen Jesus with his wounded hands and side did he make the definitive confession, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28). The scene ends not on this note, but with Jesus’ benediction upon believers to come: Thomas believed because he had seen, but blessed are those who, without seeing, nevertheless believe (John 20:29). Thomas is also named among the disciples who meet the risen Jesus in Galilee (John 21:2), but he takes no significant part in the scene that follows.

So the figure of Thomas serves in John’s Gospel to enlighten by means of his own inadequate understanding. He articulates the notion of dying with Christ, but without comprehending it; his ignorance of the way evokes Jesus’ definitive statement of it; and his doubting the resurrection leads to a final understanding of how to believe, which is then consolidated in a summary of the Gospel’s purpose, “that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31).





# PARISH DIARY DECEMBER 2023

## Sunday 3 December – Advent I ~ *Advent Wreath*

7:00 am	Holy Eucharist (BCP)
9:30 am	Holy Eucharist (APBA)
11:00 am	Baptism
5:45 pm	Holy Eucharist (BCP), BBQ, Turning on Christmas Lights

### Monday 4 December

10:00 am	'Coffee on Monday' – Parish Centre
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### Tuesday 5 December

6:00 pm	Choir Practice—New members' welcome
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### Wednesday 6 December

10:00 am	Holy Eucharist (APBA)
11:00 am	' <i>With Expectant Hearts</i> ' (via Zoom & Face-to-face)
1:30 pm	Funeral
6:00 pm	Parish Council

### Thursday 7 December

Midday	Holy Eucharist (APBA)
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## Sunday 10 December – Advent II ~ *Advent Wreath*

7:00 am Holy Eucharist (BCP)  
9:30 am Holy Eucharist (APBA)  
3:30 pm Gold Coast City Choir  
5:45 pm Holy Eucharist (BCP)

### Monday 11 December

9:00 am Holy Communion at 'Abri'  
9:30 am Holy Eucharist at St Vincent's, Villa la Salle  
10:00 am 'Coffee on Monday' – Parish Centre

### Tuesday 12 December

6:00 pm Choir Practice—New members' welcome

### Wednesday 13 December

10:00 am Holy Eucharist (ABPA)  
11:00 am 'With Expectant Hearts' (via Zoom & Facebook Live)

### Thursday 14 December

Midday Holy Eucharist (APBA)





**Sunday 17 December – Advent III**  
*(Advent Wreath & Christmas Tree Sunday)*

7:00 am Holy Eucharist (BCP)  
9:30 am Holy Eucharist (APBA)  
5:45 pm Holy Eucharist (APBA)

**Monday 18 December**

10:00 am 'Coffee on Monday' – Parish Centre (Last for 2023)

**Tuesday 19 December**

6:00 pm Choir Practice—New members' welcome

**Wednesday 20 December**

10:00 am Holy Eucharist (APBA)  
11:00 am 'With Expectant Hearts' (via Zoom & Face-to-face)

**Thursday 21 December**

Midday Holy Eucharist (APBA)





# Joy to the World!

## Sunday 24 December ~ Christmas Eve

7:00 am	Holy Eucharist (BCP)
9:30 am	Holy Eucharist (APBA)
7:00pm	'Blessing of the Crib' Service
11:30 pm	Midnight Mass

## Monday 25 December – Christmas Day

7:00 am	Holy Eucharist (BCP)
9:30 am	Holy Eucharist (APBA)
5:45 pm	Holy Eucharist (APBA)



# Midnight Mass

CHRISTMAS EVE - SUNDAY 24 DECEMBER  
11:30 pm



St Peter's  
CHURCH SOUTHPORT



# *Services after Christmas*

Tuesday 26 December

Choir in Recess

Wednesday 27 December

NO CHURCH SERVICES

Thursday 28 December

NO CHURCH SERVICES

**Sunday 31 December – Christmas I**

7:00 am	Holy Eucharist (BCP)
9:30 am	Holy Eucharist (APBA)
5:45 pm	Holy Eucharist (APBA)

*The candles in St Peter's are given  
in loving memory of:*

*Coral Flitcroft ~ 3rd December*

*&*

*Donald & Catherine Fairchild ~ 10th December*





# *Readings for Advent & Christmas*

{This edition of *Key Notes* covers all of Advent and Christmas Day. For this reason the readings appointed for each Sunday are not written out in full. If you would like these please contact Christine in the office.}

## **Advent I ~ 3 December 2023**

Isaiah 64: 1-9; Ps 80:1-7,17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; Mark 13:24-37

## **Advent II ~ 10 December**

Isaiah 40: 1-11; Ps 85:1-2,8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

## **Advent III ~ 17 December**

Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11; Ps 126 or *the Song of Mary* (APBA p 9); 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28; John 1: 6-8, 19-28

## **Advent IV ~ 24 December**

2 Samuel 7:1-11,16; Ps 89:1-4,19-27 (or *the Song of Mary*); Romans 16: 25-27; Luke 1:26-38

## **Christmas Eve (Midnight Mass)**

Isaiah 9:2-7; Ps 9; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2: 1-14

## **Christmas Day**

Isaiah 62:6-12; Ps 97; Titus 3: 4-8a; Luke 2: 8-20





GOLD COAST CITY CHOIR  
PRESENTS A

# Christmas CANTATA

*BY MICHAEL BARRETT & JOSEPH M. MARTIN*

AND OTHER SONGS

FRIDAY 8  
DECEMBER

6.30PM QLD TIME  
7.30PM NSW TIME

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH  
56 FRANCIS ST, TWEED HEADS

SUNDAY 10  
DECEMBER

3.30PM QLD TIME

ST PETER'S ANGLICAN CHURCH  
NERANG ST, SOUTHPORT

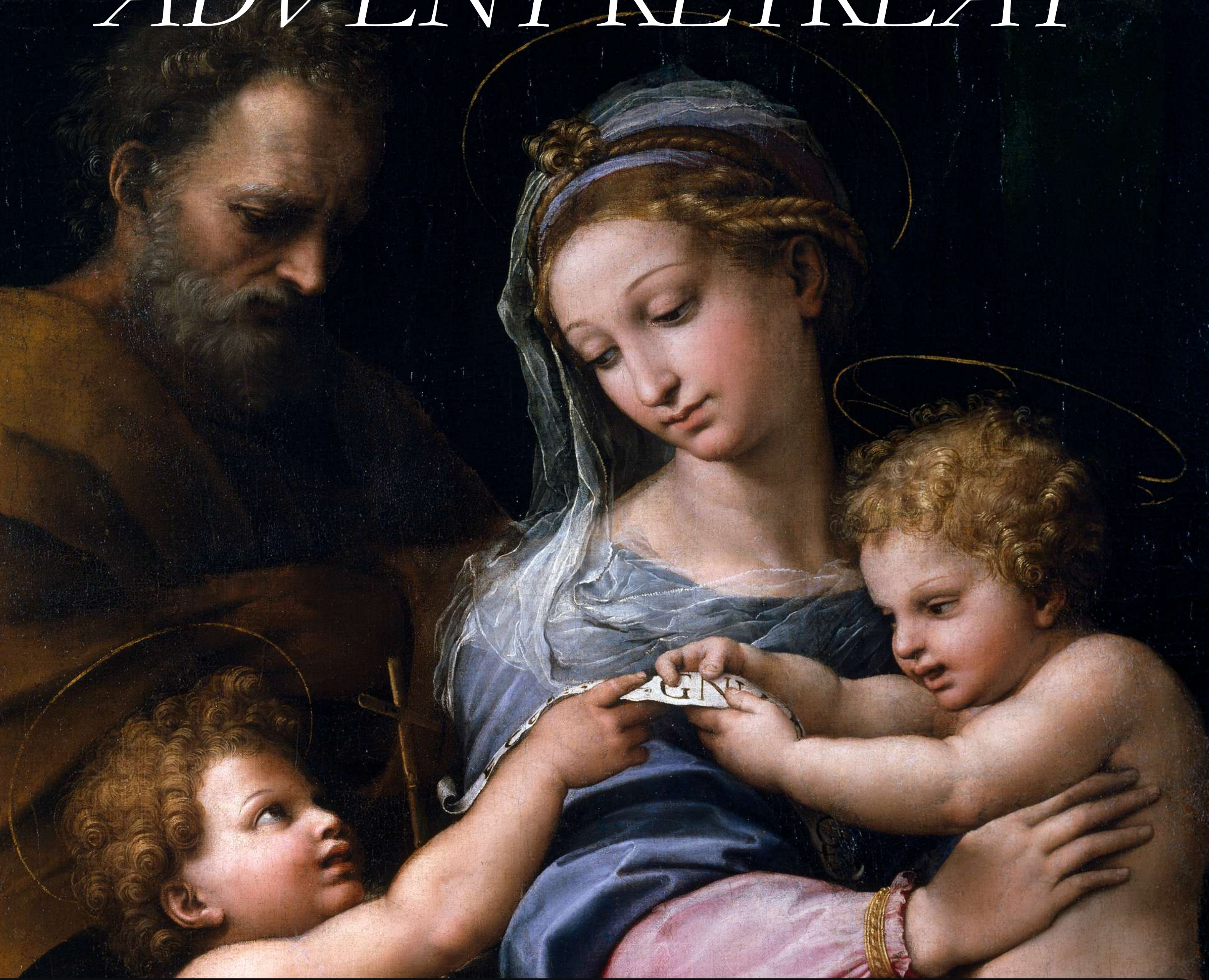
\$15 ENTRANCE - EFTPOS AVAILABLE



[WWW.GOLDCOASTCITYCHOIR.COM](http://WWW.GOLDCOASTCITYCHOIR.COM)



# ADVENT RETREAT



## “WITH EXPECTANT HEARTS”

You are invited to join us as we reflect upon what it means: “to allow God to come to birth in us”  
in daily reflection and weekly conversation as we await Our Lord's birth at Christmas.  
Our resource will be the Advent publication *WITH EXPECTANT HEARTS* (and this will be provided)



The “conversation sessions” follow Wednesday 10:00 am Holy Eucharist, from 11am to 12noon (face-to-face and online)

~ 6th, 13th & 20th December ~

*Facilitator:* Chris Kennedy (Spiritual Director in the Ignatian Tradition).



"St Peter's Church Southport, is a welcoming, hospitable community committed to the worship of God in beauty and holiness in the classical Anglican tradition."

You can find out more about us at

[www.stpetersgc.com.au](http://www.stpetersgc.com.au)

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**Parish Administrator**

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**Director of Music**

Mr. Luke Sharpe

[luke@stpetersgc.org.au](mailto:luke@stpetersgc.org.au)

**SERVICES**

**Sunday**

7:00am: Holy Eucharist (BCP)

9:30am: Holy Eucharist (APBA)

5:45pm: Holy Eucharist (APBA)

5:45pm: Choral Evensong

(2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month)

**Weekday Eucharist**

10:00am – Wednesday

12:00pm – Thursday

[stpetersgc.org.au](http://stpetersgc.org.au)

**Anglican**  
Church Southern Queensland