



# Newsletter for the Parishes of St Clare and St Francis Xavier

*In the care of the  
Franciscan Friars*

## 4th Sunday of Advent December 21st, 2008—Year B

**We warmly welcome all  
parishioners and visitors to  
today's Eucharist.**

Our responses today are:

Entrance Antiphon

Let the clouds rain down the Just One,  
and the earth bring forth a Saviour.

Psalm Response

For ever I will sing the goodness of the  
Lord.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the servant of  
the Lord: may his will for me be done.  
Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon

The Virgin is with child and shall bear  
a son, and she will call him Emmanuel.

**This week**

Like Mary who called on her elderly  
kinswoman when she was in need, call on  
someone who may need a visit.

"It is Christmas every time you let God  
love others through you... Yes, it is  
Christmas every time you smile at your  
brother and offer him your hand."  
Mother Teresa

"Christmas began in the heart of God. It  
is complete only when it reaches the  
human heart."

**MISSION STATEMENT**

We, the people of St Francis Xavier's  
& St Clare's parishes, seek to live  
Christ-centred lives, celebrating  
God's presence & our faith values  
through worship, outreach, service,  
justice & hospitality.

### The Lord is with you.

This week leading up to Christmas is the  
busiest time of the year for most of us.  
Trying to organise Christmas celebrations  
and summer holidays and finishing work  
means we are distracted and tired. It is a  
busy time for me too, and so trying to focus  
on Jesus and reflect on the presence of  
God can be a challenge to us all.

Two of the readings today draw our  
attention not just to the house of God, but  
to the God who is housed among us. In the  
first reading King David takes the initiative  
in offering to provide God a suitable  
dwelling place among his chosen people.  
Instead it is God who promises to establish  
a kingdom for David by raising up an heir  
after him. In the gospel we hear a  
contrasting story where the angel Gabriel  
was sent to Mary, and it is God who takes  
the initiative in establishing a divine  
dwelling place in a human womb. Instead  
of in stone and mortar, God found a house  
in human flesh and blood.

We struggle to find suitable gifts for family  
and friends, because they speak about our  
relationship to one another. It is not a  
question of God's presence in our lives, but  
it is a question of whether we are willing to  
open ourselves to house God. King David  
wanted to provide a place for God, but it  
was Mary who consented and surrendered  
herself totally to God's plan. God desires a  
place within us.

In this material world we can buy anything  
except love. We try to substitute love with  
things. It is easier to give things than to  
give ourselves to others. Sometimes we  
even fall into the danger of treating others  
as our possessions rather than as gifts. In  
our modern globalised world, where  
communication is so efficient, we still find  
many who are lonely. In our crowded cities  
there are many who are lost and forgotten  
and in our abundant world there are still  
people who are starving.

God chose Mary as a dwelling place in-  
stead of living in a place of stone and  
mortar. God desires a place within us.  
Mary gave Jesus to the world. How can  
you make God present in our world this  
Christmas and in the coming year?

*Fr Anthony ofm*

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This newsletter also available  
at: [www.scsfx.org.au](http://www.scsfx.org.au)

### READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

**4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**2 Sam 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16**  
*The kingdom of David will be  
established for ever in the sight  
of the Lord.*

**Rom 16:25-27**  
*The mystery kept secret for  
endless ages is now revealed.*

**Lk 1:26-38**  
*You will conceive and bear a son.*

**Monday**  
1 Sam 1:24-28; Lk 1:46-56

**Tuesday**  
Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Lk 1: 57-66

**Wednesday**  
2 Sam 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16;  
Lk 1:67-79

**Thursday—Christmas Day**  
**Friday—St Stephen**

Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59; Mt 10:17-22

**Saturday—St John**

1 Jn 1:1-4; Jn 20:2-8

### NEXT SUNDAY

**HOLY FAMILY**

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

Col 3:12-21

Lk 2:22-40

4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**Friars of the Parishes**

Fr Anthony Selvaraj ofm  
Parish Priest  
Fr Benignus Clowes ofm  
Assistant Priest  
Fr Bob Matthews ofm  
Assistant Priest

**Pastoral Associate**—Liz Clark

**SFX Parish Office Hours are 9.30 am to 4.30 pm**

**Monday, Wed, Thurs, Friday**  
**Parish Secretary**— Monique Waring

**St Clare's Parish Office Hours are as follows:**

**Wednesday & Friday**  
**9.00 am—10.30 am**  
**Parish Secretary**—Dianna Hardy

**In the event of needing a priest urgently, please telephone 9890 2231 at any time of the day.**

**Parish Pastoral Council**

Liz Allan	Liz Clark
Veronika Bellis	Dianna Hardy
Vince Fazio	Carmel Purdey
Anthony Kennedy	Monique Waring
Peter Leonard	
Trish Nicholson (Chair)	

**Next meeting : 5 February 2009**

**Liturgy Times—**

**PLEASE NOTE NEW TIMES**

**St Clare's**

**Sunday 9.00am**  
**Weekdays:**  
**Wed, Fri & Sat 9.00 am**  
**Confessions: Sat 9.30—10 am**

**St Francis Xavier's**

**Saturday Vigil 6.00 pm**  
**Sunday 8.00 am**  
**10.00am**  
**(Italian) 11.30 am**  
**5.00 pm**  
**Weekdays: Mon—Fri - 12 noon**  
**Confessions:**  
**Saturday 4.00—5 .00 pm**  
**other times by appointment in either Parish**

**Marriages and Baptisms**

Bookings can be made with the St FX Parish Office for each Parish, and celebrated in the church requested. This is to avoid double bookings. Anyone wishing to have a child baptised should give four to six weeks notice, so that the family can be visited & parents can attend a preparation course.

**Baptisms**

St Francis Xavier's—  
1st and 3rd Sundays of month only,  
12.30 pm  
St Clare's—2nd Sunday, 11.30 am

<b>SUNDAY 21 DECEMBER</b> FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT <b>12.30PM</b>	<b>MORNING TEA AFTER 10AM MASS, IN SFX RESOURCE AREA</b> <b>3 BAPTISMS AT SFX</b>
<b>SUNDAY 28 DECEMBER</b> HOLY FAMILY <b>3.00PM</b>	<b>WEDDING ST SFX</b>

*Do any of our senior parishioners need help putting up decorations? There are a number of 'elves' who would love to help you - & we can arrange to take them down in January. Please phone the Parish House if you would like some help.*

**PARISH WALKING GROUP**

Walks will resume for 2009 on Saturday 17 January - with an earlier starting time. We will meet at SFX Parish House at 8.30am.

**Overheard after the Reconciliation service this week. 'This is the first time I've ever come to church & been given money!'**



**"MY CHRISTMAS GIFT"**

In preparation for the birth of Christ, this Advent you are invited to consider what form your gift to the Christ-child will be in the way of service and ministry in the parish during 2009. Please prayerfully consider your own personal gifts and talents, and offer to share them with others next year.

**Forms are available in the church. Please complete & return them at Mass or to the Parish Office.**

**SFX Parish Office will close on Monday December 22 at 4.30pm & reopen on Wednesday January 14. Urgent messages can be left on the answering machine & one of the friars will respond as soon as possible.**

**LAST CHANCE BEFORE CHRISTMAS! FRANCISCAN CALENDARS ARE ON SALE AT SFX PARISH HOUSE—\$6 ea—A GREAT**

**EAST TIMOR ECO-PASTORAL PROJECT CHRISTMAS GIFT CARDS a thoughtful gift for that person who already has "everything"!** to support the people of Dotik in East Timor. Cards may be purchased through: Val Mooney 9898 2602, Helen Miller 9877 5760 or through Monique at the Parish House 9890 2231.

*From Fr Ben* **ITINERARIUM MENTIS IN DEUM**  
*St Bonaventure (1217-1274) joined the Franciscans, & later became the Minister General. His famous work "Itinerarium Mentis in Deum", (The Journey of the Mind to God) is greatly inspired by St Francis's sentiments, for instance: Ultimate power is not the power of might & force, but the power of attraction, the power of beauty. God does not force us; God draws us beyond ourselves, and is experienced as eminently desirable. St Bonaventure speaks of God as "beautiful": God is a dynamic, active God who captivates our desires, our affections, and so becomes our delight.*

**Christmas Mass Times**

**St Francis Xavier's**

**Wednesday 24th December**  
**6.00 pm FAMILY MASS (Carols at 5.30pm)**  
**9.00 pm MASS**  
**Midnight MASS (Carols at 11.30 pm)**

**Thursday 25th December**  
**9.00 am MASS**  
**10.30 am ITALIAN MASS**

**Sunday 28th December HOLY FAMILY**  
**6pm Vigil, 8am, 10am, 5pm**

**Thursday 1st January-New Year's Day**  
**12 Noon Mass**  
**(Followed by shared lunch - please bring a plate)**

**St Clare's**

**Wednesday 24th December**  
**7.00pm FAMILY MASS**  
**10.30pm MASS (Carols at 10.00pm)**

**Thursday 25th December**  
**10.00 am MASS**

**Sunday 28th December HOLY FAMILY**  
**9am**

**Thursday 1st January-New Year's Day**  
**9.00am Mass**



As members of this parish community, we pray for those who are baptized this week: Naomi Lawrence, Matthew Davis, Tyler Duong, Caitlin Brotherton; the sick: ; those who have died: Sr Dorothy Renton, Betty Dillon, Margaret Green; our RCIA candidates: Diana, Oliviah, & Garry. We continue to pray for rain.



The Society of St Vincent de Paul welcomes donations to the Giving Tree, which is on the wall in the west transept of SFX church & at St Clare's, for needy families in our community. Gifts should be labelled 'man/woman/child/baby/age from?-to?' Please do not indicate what the gift is on the card.

### My corner

As a mother, I have experienced the immense joys and sorrows of birth, growing up, success and failure, rejection, love, anxiety, belonging, closeness; all the challenges and demands of family life, all the hopes and dreams of someone who anticipates and prays for the best for her children. This year I have stood helpless and devastated watching a marriage dissolve and the distress and pain and sense of failure that my baby girl and her husband have had to deal with, as well as my personal anguish and the many questions that come with it. This year I have held my son as he mourned the loss of a baby through miscarriage, and I longed with all my heart to be able to 'make things right' for them. This year I have had my oldest grand daughter begin to share with me some of her hopes and dreams for secondary school and her life in the future. I've been blessed with the visit of 2 wriggly 5-year olds who wanted to hop into bed with me for a snuggle. I've held a sleeping baby and encouraged her sister as she began to learn to write. I've watched with pride as one daughter has become trim and fit and energized by her new-found wellbeing, and another has managed so well with returning to work and leaving her child, as her maternity leave ended. This year, I have thought a lot more about Mary—how a mother's life is like that. The ups and downs, the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears are still the same. Just as much as her child was a gift from God, so too are mine and yours. Like Mary, I marvel at God's goodness and generosity. Unlike Mary, I often find it too hard to say "Let your will be done unto me." I need to learn humility. I pray for her courage and her faithfulness and her strength. And I pray that all mothers (and fathers) have her patience in the next days as they await the birth of Christ, her son.

*Liz Clark, Pastoral Associate*

### R.C.I.A.

On Wednesday night our Easter group of newly baptised Catholic's had their last get together as they attended their first reconciliation. It was a very solemn and serious occasion for them. We were joined by two of our new R.C.I.A. candidates who were happy to hear of our new Catholic's experiences from last year up until they were baptised, and how becoming a Catholic has affected their lives. Julie, Warren, Rajna, Yi Qing, Nicole and Eddie's R.C.I.A. journey has now come to an end and we hope they will become an active part of our parish in the future.

We wish to say thank you to all who have contributed to the R.C.I.A. program over the past 18 months, especially Liz, Mary, Sponsors, Prayer Sponsors and the Friars who give us their time and unconditional love and support. *Merry Christmas to all ~ Lisa Norton.*

### ORIGIN OF THE CRIB

In 1223 St Francis of Assisi celebrated Christmas in the small town of Greccio in Italy. On that occasion, St. Francis had people come to Midnight Mass in a cave where there was an ox and an ass and a manger filled with straw. And the story went around that the Christ child appeared in the straw and Francis held the Babe of Bethlehem in his arms.

### 'SILENT NIGHT'

'Silent Night' was written in 1818, by an Austrian priest, Fr Joseph Mohr. He was told the day before Christmas that the church organ was broken and would not be prepared in time. He was saddened to think of Christmas without music, so he sat down and wrote three stanzas. Later that night the people in the little Austrian church sang "Stille Nacht" for the first time.

### 'BOXING DAY'

26 December came to be known as Boxing Day because money was collected in alms-boxes placed in churches during the festive season - and then distributed to the poor and needy after Christmas.

### TRUCE AT CHRISTMAS

At midnight on Christmas Eve 1914 firing from the German trenches suddenly stopped. A German brass band began playing Christmas carols. Early morning, the German soldiers came out of their trenches, approaching the allied lines, calling "Merry Christmas". At first the allied soldiers thought it was a trick, but soon climbed out of their trenches and shook hands with the German soldiers. The truce lasted a few days, and the men exchanged gifts of cigarettes and plum puddings, sang carols, and even played soccer.

**CHRISTMAS** speaks to the depths of our hearts. With the demands that press on us at this time of the year, we may feel we fall short in 'doing justice' to Christmas. This is not surprising as it celebrates the mystery of the Infinite One taking human form and coming to live with us - to let us know how deeply we are loved and how important each of our lives is. God's gift to us beyond words!

### ROSTERS

#### ST FRANCIS XAVIER'S

**DURING THE DECEMBER/JANUARY BREAK, EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF COMMUNION & MINISTERS OF THE WORD ARE REQUESTED TO VOLUNTEER AT MASSES AS REQUIRED**

#### Altar Linen

December 21 Irene Balchin  
December 28 Lucy Sanelli

#### Counters

December 21 P McLaughlin, G Kitch  
December 28 T&E O'Brien

#### Collectors 5pm

December 21 P Aldag  
December 28 A Cutts

#### Rosary Statue

December 21—La family, 4/1095 Whitehorse Rd  
December 28—M&L Soulsby, 7 Simpsons Rd

#### ITALIAN MASS

##### Commentator

December 21 G Amato  
December 28 J Adamo

##### Lettori

December 21 M Salamone, C Chessari  
December 28 V Peluso, N Tedone

##### Ministri dell'Eucarista

December 21 G Massarotti, D Amato  
December 28 M Casamento, G Tabacchiera

#### ST CLARE'S—DECEMBER 28

##### Ministers of the Word

9.00am ?, M Hardy, L Hardy

##### Extraordinary Ministers of Communion

9.00am J Murphy, A McGovern, F Fitzgerald  
D Hardy, T Shallvey, H Keown

##### Piety Stall—December 28

9.00am A Lindsey



**Ministers to the Sick** call on families during the week. If you or someone in your family is unable to come to Mass, please let us know at the office and we can arrange for a Minister to visit you at home.

Would parishioners please note that it is preferable if Mass intentions are brought to the Parish House and entered into the diary kept for intentions. This will avoid, as much as is possible, any disappointment, when 2 or more intentions are requested for the same Mass.

**We welcome all new parishioners. Please complete one of the blue forms at the back of the church, and place on collection plate/in box provided. A parish rep. will contact you to welcome you and advise you of the activities and organisations at St Francis Xavier's and St Clare's.**