



## St Michael's Catholic Parish Traralgon

**St Michael's Vision Statement:** Inspired by Jesus Christ, we are a welcoming Catholic Community seeking to enrich lives. Come and join us!

**St Michael's Mission Statement:**

To provide opportunities for parishioners –

- to grow in holiness
- to discover and live out their personal and community call to mission to live as Catholics who effectively transform society.

www.smpt.org.au  
email: sec@smpt.org.au

**Statement of Commitment to the safety of children and adults at risk:** Central to the mission of St Michael's Parish is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children, young people and adults at risk and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

Please contact our Safeguarding Officers Shane Reid or Sally Darby on 5174 2060 if you have any concerns.

### St Michael's Parish Information

**Fr Aju Varghese** Parish Priest  
Parish Centre 5174 2060  
Priest's Residence: 5174 6765

**Deacon Tony Aspinall**  
Email: deacontony8@gmail.com

**St Michael's Parish Office**  
Telephone: 5174 2060  
Address: 35 Kay Street, Traralgon  
PO Box 103, Traralgon 3844

Office hours –  
Tues to Friday 9:00am to 4:00pm  
Parish Secretary: Catherine Hill  
Email: sec@smpt.org.au  
Sacraments / Youth: Jenifer Hanratty  
Email: sacraments@smpt.org.au

**After office hours** - in case of an emergency please call 0499 162 313 and leave a message and your contact details. All non-urgent calls should be made during office hours.

**Baptisms:** Six weeks notice required

**Weddings:** Six months notice required

**Parish Pastoral Council:** Lia Di Corleto, Chairperson, Fr Aju, Steve Kimani, Greg Imhagwe, Watson Gomez, Jenifer Hanratty, Judi McLaughlin, Thomas Mathew, Amanda Reid, Jodie Ware, Michelle Charlton, and Doug Doherty.

### Our Schools:

**St Gabriel's School** 5174 5515

Principal: Mrs Michelle Charlton

**St Michael's School** 5174 3295

Principal: Mrs Jodie Ware

**Lavalla Catholic College** 5174 5272

Principal: Mr Ryan Greer

Kildare Campus 5174 8111

St Paul's Campus 5174 7355



### NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY by Mary Coloe PBVM

Who are you?

John 1:6-8, 19-28

*A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, to speak for the light.* This Sunday again focuses on John the Baptist and the question continues – who are you? This is the question being asked in the early communities. Who was John? How can we understand his mission and its connection to the mission of Jesus? The questioners put to him the names of key Jewish figures who were expected to come in the final days – the Christ, Elijah and the Prophet. 'The Christ' is a Greek translation of the Hebrew title, 'the Messiah'. This was someone in the line of David who was expected to come at in the end-times to restore the Kingdom of David. Elijah was one of the great prophets who was believed to have been taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot and would return at the end of time. The Prophet refers to a promise made to Moses that God would raise up in the future, a prophet like Moses to lead the people. Some thought John fitted one of these hoped-for figures. But John turns down these roles, and instead speaks of himself as 'the voice' and he is described as a witness.

Later in John's Gospel, John describes himself as 'the friend of the bridegroom' (3:28-30). In those days, the friend of the bridegroom was the one who went to the home of the prospective bride and he was the voice and witness of the bridegroom. It was the friend who extolled the virtues of the bridegroom to the bride's father in the hope that the father would give permission for the marriage. The friend then made all the negotiations about the dowry, the day of the wedding etc. The friend was totally focused on the desire of the bridegroom. This is how John describes his relationship to Jesus – John is the friend, the best man; Jesus is the bridegroom. In this way John reveals one of the earliest images of Jesus in the Gospel of John – Jesus is the long awaited bridegroom of Israel, the manifestation of God's covenant love and desire. Immediately after John's witness, the first public action of Jesus is to participate in a wedding and provide abundant wine, which was in fact the role of the bridegroom. As Christmas approaches, we might spend time to consider the coming of God to us through this image of love, desire and anticipation associated with a wedding. Those who have experienced this, as brides, grooms, other participants, may recall that time and consider that this very human experience of love, betrothal marriage, is a glimpse into God's love and desire that led to the coming of Jesus.

John knows his place in God's scheme. He humbly attests that there is another, even greater, who is coming. This is John's greatness, to know and accept the particular role he is given for the Kingdom. For some this can take years of searching and pondering. We don't know what John was doing before this ministry, and it seems that Jesus only began his mission around the age of thirty. As Christmas draws near, may it be a time of quiet reflection on the particular gifts God has given to me, and what particular way I may further God's kingdom.

| Mass Times       |  |
|------------------|--|
| Tuesday Dec 19   | 9:30am Mass<br>9:30am Liturgy @ BUPA<br>10:45am Mass @ Margery Cole<br>11:00am Mass @ O'Mara House<br>6:00pm Advent Reconciliation |
| Wednesday Dec 20 | 11:00am Reconciliation<br>11:00am Exposition<br>12:00pm Mass   |
| Thursday Dec 21  | 9:30am Mass*   |
| Friday Dec 22    | 9:30am Mass  |
| Saturday Dec 23  | 5:00pm Mass  |
| Sunday Dec 24    | 9:30am Mass<br>7:00pm Family Mass<br>11:00pm Midnight Mass   |
| Monday Dec 25    | 9:30am Christmas Day Mass  |

*\*Thursday morning mass will return to St Michael's Church until February 2024.*

**PLEASE PRAY FOR:** those who have died recently including and those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Gerhard Reiss, Kerrie Jenkin, Maureen Rutter, Fergus Darmody, William Hardbottle, Rogelio (Junior) Trinidad, Mons John Allman. *Lord, let your perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.*



**WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:** including Ann-Maree Daly, Gary Donchi, Bernadette Formaran, Fr Frank Freeman, Carolyn Gleeson, Jacqui Granville, Barbara Greaves, Ellen Hammond, Jenny Hansch, Robert Hazelman, Imogen Hillier, Joyce Martin, Ivy May, Deborah Mc Kerchar, Ben Melenhorst, Maree Morris, Henry Polo, Joan Riggall, Theresa Rosello, Jerry Templer, Damiano Tripodi, Sharon Veleff, George Walkan, Roy Ward, Victoria Rohli, Fr John Speekman, James Whitty, John Waanders, Peter Dal Pra, Jane Eric, Rose Xuereb, Manuel Xuereb, Peter Lorinc, Don Barnes and all those we hold dear in our hearts.

*Please let the office know if you, or anyone you know would like a visit from one of our parishioners, Fr Aju or Deacon Tony.*

**CHRISTMAS AT OUR AGED CARE HOMES:** Last Thursday we celebrated the advent season with Mass at Dalkeith with Father Aju. This week we celebrate at BUPA with Deacon Tony on Tuesday at 9:30am, at Margery Cole with Father Aju at 10:45am and Father Peter at O'Mara House at 11am. You are all invited to join in and celebrate with our older parishioners, I am sure they would love to see you.



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY:** It is Father Aju's birthday this Saturday December 16. Everyone is invited to help him celebrate this Sunday **December 17** after the 9:30am Mass with morning tea in the Mary MacKillop Hall. All are welcome!

**CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE:** Thank you to everyone who has already returned their gifts to the St Vincent de Paul Giving Tree. It is not too late to support this wonderful initiative which provides donated Christmas gifts to children in need. Final gifts will be collected this **Sunday December 17** so please ensure any other gifts that have been purchased are returned to the church by then.



| This Week's Events           |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Tuesday December 19</b>   |  |
| 9:30am                       | Christmas Liturgy @ BUPA, BUPA Aged Care           |
| 10:45am                      | Mass @ Margery Cole, Yallabee Assisted Living      |
| 11:00am                      | Mass @ O'Mara House, Mecwacare O'Mara House        |
| 6:00pm                       | Advent Reconciliation, St Michael's Church         |
| <b>Wednesday December 20</b> |  |
| 11:00am                      | Reconciliation, St Michael's Church                |
| 1:00pm                       | Church Cleaning, St Michael's Church               |
| <b>Thursday December 21</b>  |  |
| 6:00pm                       | Christmas @ Mick's Kitchen, Mary MacKillop Hall    |
| <b>Sunday December 24</b>    |  |
| 6:30pm                       | Christmas Carols, St Michael's Church              |
| 7:00pm                       | Christmas Eve Family Mass, St Michael's Church     |
| 10:30pm                      | Christmas Carols, St Michael's Church              |
| 11:00pm                      | Christmas Eve 'Midnight Mass', St Michael's Church |
| <b>Monday December 25</b>    |  |
| 9:30am                       | Christmas Day Mass, St Michael's Church            |

**BAPTISMS:** This weekend we welcome for Baptism, **Oakley Eade** and **Kobi Eade**, children of Liam and Kristy Congratulations and welcome to our Parish! Our next Baptism Preparation Meeting will be held on **Tuesday January 16 at 7pm** in the church. Please contact the parish office for more information and to register your interest.



**ST MICHAEL'S ICON WRITING GROUP:** On Wednesday our Icon Writing Group brought their finished icons to be blessed with the holy oil of Bethlehem. For several years now a small group of people from around The Valley have been meeting every second Wednesday of the month to 'write' icons. These are images of Jesus, Mary, the angels and the saints. Each sacred icon is a point of encounter between us and God. It is a window into heaven and reveals some of the glory that is to be. If you are interested in joining the group or finding out more please contact the parish office.

**END OF TERM:** Wishing all our school staff and children a happy, holy and safe Christmas, and a restorative and enjoyable holiday. Staff return to our Schools on Monday January 29, 2024. Please check the school's websites for dates for students return to school.

-St Michael's Primary School:  
www.stmtraralgon.catholic.edu.au  
-St Gabriel's Primary School,  
www.stgrtraralgon.catholic.edu.au  
-Lavalla Catholic College  
www.lavalla.vic.edu.au.



**CWL AWARDS:** Congratulations to our Grade 6 students **Luka Beange** from St Gabriel's Primary School and **Candice Bramwell** from St Michael's Primary

School who are the inaugural winners of the Catholic Women's League Traralgon Branch Award. Both students were chosen for the award having demonstrated compassion and leadership, and for endeavouring to live by the virtues Dr. Sr. Mary Glowrey was known for- patience, honesty, loyalty, selflessness, humour, prayerfulness and humility. Mary Glowrey was the first president of the Catholic Women's League, which was founded in 1916 to provide assistance for those who needed it. Mary's aim was to improve the social and economic inequalities that women faced. She was called by God to help the women and children in India and she became the first female Catholic Sister to practise as a Doctor of Medicine. Mary Glowrey was said to radiate Christ by word and example, devoting her life to helping those in need. Sister Mary's cause for canonisation opened in 2010 and she may become Australia's second saint. Luka and Candice are worthy winners of this award and we wish them all the best for their future endeavours. Congratulations and well done to you both!

### Christmas Mass Times 2023:

**RECONCILIATION:** Tuesday December 19  
6:00pm – 7:30pm

**CHRISTMAS EVE:** Sunday December 24  
7:00 pm Family Mass,  
with Carols from 6:30pm

11:00pm 'Midnight' Mass  
with Carols from 10:30pm

**CHRISTMAS DAY:** Monday December 25  
9:30am Mass (No evening Mass Christmas Day)



**CHANGES OVER THE CHRISTMAS BREAK:** The office will be closed for the Christmas break from 12pm Thursday December 21 and reopen on Tuesday January 09 at 9am. RCIA will resume on Tuesday January 16. CWL will return on Tuesday January 30. Mick's Kitchen will reopen on Thursday February 01. The Charismatic Prayer Group will return on Thursday February 8. There will be no 5pm mass on Sunday December 24 or Monday December 25, otherwise Mass times will continue as normal during this period. Thursday morning mass will be in the church not at St Gabriel's Primary School. We thank everyone for their support throughout the year and hope everyone has a joyful and peaceful Christmas break.

We look forward to catching up with you all in the new year.



**Mick's Kitchen:** Mick's Kitchen will host a special Christmas dinner on Thursday December 21 at 6pm from the Mary MacKillop Hall. All are welcome. It is a chance to celebrate and reflect on the past 12 months with our volunteers and guests. We are grateful to all the support we have received this year, particularly from our parishioners and the team at St Vincent de Paul, Baker's Delight, Banjo's Bakery, Traralgon Aged Care, Traralgon Centre Plaza, and Latrobe City Council.



**2023 ADVENT APPEAL FOR UKRAINE:** This Advent, parishes around Australia are raising money to support people in the war-torn Ukraine through the work of *Mudra Sprava* (Wise Action), a Patriarchal Charitable Foundation in Ukraine. The organisation has three focus areas: Evacuation of people from frontline territories; Food packages for people in need; Shelters for internally displaced persons. To read more about how the funds from Australia supported people in Ukraine last year, go to <https://tinyurl.com/mts7xvch>. We will hold a leaving collection next weekend on **Saturday December 23 and Sunday December 24** to help raise funds. You can also drop your donation into the parish office during the week.

**DIOCESAN MISSION COUNCIL:** On Sunday December 10 at the 9.30 am Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral, Sale, Bishop Greg Bennet commissioned sixteen members of the new Diocesan Mission Council (DMC). The members, drawn from across the Diocese, will assist Bishop Greg in investigating, discerning, and proposing practical priorities and strategies for the development of the Diocese's mission and pastoral life. During the Rite of Commissioning, members pledged to, "accept the call to serve co-responsibly and with discernment the animation and renewal of Christ's mission of sharing and proclaiming the Gospel in a synodal way." Our very own Bev O'Brien has responded to the call and will be sharing her voice from the Traralgon and the wider Valley region. Congratulations Bev, and thank you for your service.

#### STEWARDSHIP MATTERS:

*"Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." – 1 Thessalonians 5:16 - 18*

This scripture reading sums up Stewardship. "Rejoice always" means place your trust in God; He will provide all that you need. "Pray constantly" means prayer should be a running conversation with God throughout the whole day, every day. "Give thanks in all circumstances" means even in bad situations, thank God. Suffering a little bit helps build empathy for others in similar situations and shows our dependence on God.

| Rosters for December 23 – 25, 2023 |                     | 4th Sunday of Advent Year B and Christmas |                |                 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---|----------------|-----------------|
|                                    | Lector              | Commentator                               | Usher/Welcomer | Musicians       |
| <b>Saturday Dec 23 5:00pm</b>      | W & J Gomez         | M Noone                                   | C Payne        | Zahra & Kevin   |
| <b>Sunday Dec 24 9:30am</b>        | C McLure & R Diaz   | M Wilkinson                               | D & P Dal Pra  | Diamente Family |
| <b>Sunday Dec 24 7:00pm</b>        | M & Z Hanratty      | A Taylor                                  | M Giddens      | Jane & Simon    |
| <b>Sunday Dec 24 11:00pm</b>       | B O'Brien & S Grout | T Denny                                   | Volunteer      | Filipino Choir  |
| <b>Monday Dec 25 9:30am</b>        | W & J Gomez         | Volunteer                                 | Volunteer      | Jane & Simon    |

**First Reading** Is 61:1-2 10-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

*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 61:10

**(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

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

*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** Lk 3:4 6

*Alleluia, alleluia!*

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;*

*he sent me to bring Good News to the poor.*

*Alleluia!*

**Gospel** Jn 1:6-8. 19-28

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

*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.



|  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Readings for the 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent Year B |                             |
| First Reading:   | 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14 16 |
| Second Reading:  | 1 Romans 16:25-27           |
| Gospel:  | Luke 1:26-38                |