

St. Joseph's Catholic Church Oatley

PO Box 105 (21C Frederick Street) Oatley 2223

Rev Paul Hilder – Parish Priest

Mrs Nicky Rodrigues – Parish Secretary (Tues, Thurs & Fridays)

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Parish website: www.stjosephschurch.com.au

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Oatley

Mrs Kylie Brakel – Principal Phone: 9580 6588

Schedule of Masses		Baptisms	By appointment (usually Sunday, 11am)
Saturday	5 pm (Vigil for Sunday)		
Sunday	8 am, 10 am		
Monday	8am (Rosary 7:45)	Confessions	Saturday 4:00-4:45 pm
Tuesday	8 am (Rosary 7:45)		
Wednesday	8am (Rosary 7.45)	Exposition	Thursday, 9am to 11:45am (with benediction at 11:30am)
Thursday	12 Noon (Rosary 11.45)		
Friday	8 am (Rosary 7:45)		
Saturday	8 am (Rosary 7:45)		

24th December 2017 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

Masses and Prayers: Corinne Spruce (rec dec), Eric William Spruce (dec), Len Elliott & Madge Archer (rec dec), Karen Smith (14/12), Marie McCarthy (ann., 25/12), John Francis Hannon (28/12), members of CWL, and those who are sick, including, Terri & Chris Sarno, Marcella Hill, Carole Tesoriero, Ray Byers. Mass for Hollis & Connors Families.

Christmas Masses at St. Joseph's at Oatley

Sunday, 24th December: 5 pm Vigil Mass in the Church.

7 pm Mass in the undercroft of the school (Children's Mass but all welcome.)

Midnight Mass: Starting with carols at 11.30 pm.

Monday, 25th December: 8am (dawn Mass); 10 am

Tuesday, 26th December: 9am (Feast of St. Stephen).

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

The Jewish Festival of Hanukkah was instituted by Judas Maccabeus on the 25th day of the Jewish month of Chislev (i.e. 25th December). The story of the Feast and its institution is told in the Bible.....1 Maccabees 1:54, Daniel 9:27-11:31; 2 Maccabees 10:5.

After the death of Alexander the Great in 323BC, the Seleucid Kings became masters of Asia Minor. One of these kings, Epiphanes the Fourth, began a campaign of persecution against the Jews. He desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem and erected over the altar of Holocausts an altar where pagan sacrifices were offered. This act, referred to in the Bible as "The Abomination of Desolation" is mentioned both in the First Book of Maccabees and in the Book of Daniel. It took the form of a sacrifice in honour of the pagan god, Zeus Olympios, and was carried out on the 25th December, 168BC. Three years later, Judas Maccabeus, after his first victories, purified the sanctuary, built a new altar and restored the Jewish sacrifices on the same day, 25th December, 165BC, exactly three years after the profanation of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes. It was then decided that the Feast of the rededication of the Temple should be observed on the 25th December each year. The feast is mentioned only once in the New Testament. In St. John's Gospel we are told, "It was the time when the feast of the Dedication was being celebrated in Jerusalem. It was winter and Jesus was in the Temple walking up and down in the Portico of Solomon" (John 19:22-23).

The celebration of Hanukkah lasted for eight days and was a most joyful feast. Apart from the ceremonies in the Temple, green branches of trees and palms were carried around as a sign of joy and joyful hymns were sung. The feast was also characterized by the use of lamps. Lamps were lit on the last day of the feast. On this account, the Jewish historian, Josephus, also calls Hanukkah the "Feast of Lights".

The 25th December is now our Christmas Day. We too celebrate with great joy. The Christmas Tree with its lights and decorations remind us of the procession of branches and palms and the lighting of the lamps on the eight days of the feast. St. John, in the Prologue to his Gospel, gives prominence to the birth of Our Lord as "That life was the light of all people, a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower. The true light that enlightens all people; and He was coming into the world".

Jesus, the Messiah, is the true Temple and His sacrifice on the Cross replaces all others.

THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

During the last week of Advent and during the Christmas Season, a feature of our churches is the Christmas Crib. This custom reputedly goes back to St. Francis of Assisi, who is thought to have made the first model of the Crib at Greccio in 1223. The figure of the Child Jesus is placed in the manger during the first Mass of Christmas on Christmas Eve, and the figures of the Magi are added on the Feast of The Epiphany (6th January).

The Crib in our Church was lovingly constructed over many months by Mr. Alan De Silva. It wonderfully captures all the wonder and mystery of the Christmas message.

Please take time to visit it over the Christmas period and pray for peace and harmony in our families and in the world.

Collections Last Week

1st: \$795	2nd: \$445	Envelopes: \$1454
Money Counters Roster	Sun 19 Dec and 26 Dec Lynne Ekholm Leo Sullivan	
	Sun 2 Jan 2018 Marcia & Brian Smith	

Parish Liturgy Roster

	Acolytes and Ministers	Lectors	Altar Servers	Mass Wardens
Sat 23 Dec 5pm	Sam Attard	Nathaniel Gleeson	Emma D Martha K	Bill Quigley
Sun 24 th Dec 8am	Tom Ryan	Jean DeVine	Luke & Marc S	Tom Ryan
Sun 24 Dec 10am	Phillip Merrick	Danny Klepac	Rory & Abbie G	Maureen Owens
Children's Liturgy		Rosary Leader	Altar Society	
Sun 24 Dec		Marcia Smith	Marcia Smith Marg Vella	
School Holidays				