



St Kevin's Catholic Parish

26-44 Herlihys Road, Templestowe Lower



Mass Times

St Kevin's: 5.30pm Saturdays

9.15am Sundays

St Gregory the Great: 6.00pm Saturdays

9.00am, 10.30am and 5.00pm Sundays

Reconciliation at St Gregory the Great every

Saturday morning at 9.30am

Parish Priest: Fr Charles Balnaves

Assistant Priest: Fr Anton Aseervathampillai

Business Manager: Mr David Hii

Pastoral Worker: Mrs Ana Saro

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VISION STATEMENT

St Kevin's Templestowe Parish is a Catholic community called by God and trusting in Jesus. We aspire to care for and connect with the wide world and to be hospitable and generous so that all may live life to the full.

Year A

Fourth Sunday of Advent

20/21st December, 2025

Our Presider today is: Fr Charles Balnaves



From the desk of the PP...

ALPHA: 28th January start! I was reflecting on the past two years of Alpha with somewhere near 100 people having participated. Two people out of the 100 felt they gained nothing from Alpha – though what they needed and wanted was something more like faith formation to deepen an already deep faith.

The other participants, including me, gained something, even though most of us are also people of deep faith. Some had a real 'coming to Jesus' moment. Most were already Catholic but found their understanding of Jesus enriched and their faith strengthened. Five have begun their journey with Christ in an intentional way with two still preparing for baptism/confirmation next Easter.

I give thanks for the encounter with the Holy Spirit all these participants have had. Hallelujah!

Alpha changes everyone who participates because it is grounded in spending time with Jesus our Saviour. Sometimes there is change in seemingly small ways. Sometimes change in immediately significant or major ways. But always Jesus and his Holy Spirit change us when we spend time with them.

Please take a moment. Think. Discern. Who do you know that would benefit from some relaxing time with Jesus? Please invite them or let me know and I can invite them.

Christmas 2025 and New Year 2026: Thank you to each of you who is part of the parishes to which I am called to be shepherd. Thank you for the faith you bring to your life and the presence of Christ Jesus in St Greg's and St Kevin's. I pray you will have a most graced and joyful Christmas and New Year.

We live in uncertain times. We live amidst uncertainty and indeed, as the Bondi Beach murders showed, there is danger. But that is nothing new. Just look at the times that lay beside and behind the writings that make up the Bible. I grew up with the start of the Cold War and the Bay of Pigs and the Red Brigade and the PLO. A few of you have been around long enough that grew up with the Great Depression and WW-II.

Christ Jesus our Lord is the only certainty we have. The certainty that we are loved and cared for amidst all the joys and hardships and uncertainties of life.

The more **you** can be an intentional disciple of Christ, reaching out to the world with love, the more we can bring Jesus' love into reality in the world around us. Then we can foster peaceful co-existence of all peoples, recognising that all are created in God's image of love and mercy.

Sanctuary Modification: I am still open to your thoughts and ideas. Nothing is final. I have asked for quotes on the cost of making modifications -we shall see what that brings forward.

Columbarium (sacred space for interring the ashes of our family / friends): Having recently called a halt to plans for a columbarium, we suddenly received enough expressions of interest that it has become appropriate to go the next steps and seek a Planning Permit and confirm construction costs. This will proceed over the coming few months and then we will seek final approvals if it still looks like a robust need for the parish.

God bless, Fr Charles



What’s happening in our Parish this week?...

Saturday	5.30pm	Mass
Sunday	9.15am	Mass
Tuesday	8.15am	Adoration
	9.15am	Mass
	1.00pm	Needlecraft Group
Wednesday	5.30pm	Christmas Carols
	6.00pm	Christmas Eve Mass
	9.00pm	Christmas Eve Mass
Thursday	9.00am	Christmas Carols
	9.15am	Christmas Morning Mass
Friday	9.30am	Adoration at St Gregory the Great Church
Saturday	5.30pm	Feast of the Holy Family Mass
Sunday	9.15am	Feast of the Holy Family Mass



We pray for Better Health:

Alexandra Bateman, Alan Benn, Federico Aspromonte, Peter Ryan, Eugenia Pozzebon, Aileen Kent, Ruth Shiel, Rachel Hally, Vin Natoli, Bob Ulehla, Dot Sharkey, Shirley Loo, Lianny Susanto, Jewly Wylie, David Cullen, Peter Ryan, Julie-Anne Oldfield, Dylan, Shane, Lyn Murphy, Marie Cameron, Peter Zeantti and Tony Whelan.

Anniversaries:

John Rowland (3rd), Nina Luca, Dorothy Childers and Albert Oates

Recently Deceased:



Fr Charles’ Prayer Intention for this Week: For the Jewish People of Australia, and especially those directly affected by the shootings at Bondi Beach: that they will know God’s love and care and that we will seek to grow our own acceptance of them.

Feast Days this week:...

25th December Christmas Day!

26th December St Stephen
Died confessing Christ and seeking divine mercy for those who were stoning him. Remembered for preaching with wisdom and the Spirit, as one ‘full of grace and power’ who did great wonders and signs among the people.

27th December St John
Probably the ‘disciple whom Jesus loved’ of the Fourth Gospel and, according to ancient tradition, the author of this Gospel and also of three letters and the book of the Apocalypse. Remembered for his contemplative reflection on the life and death of Jesus and for his emphasis in Christian love.

LITURGYROSTER

Fourth Sunday of Advent – 20th/21st December 2025

1st Read: Isaiah 7: 10-14 2nd Read: Romans 1: 1-7 Gos: Matthew 1: 18-24

Time	Commentator	Lector	Special Ministers
5.30pm	Pauline Erickson	Tasha Vercauteran	Anne Maguire Lynne O’Brien
9.15am	Paul Polidano	Bernard Butler	Carmel Shiel Tony Robinson Pat Rowland

Christmas Eve/Day - 24/25th December 2025

1st Read: Isaiah 52: 7-10 2nd Read: Hebrews 1: 1-6 Gos: John 1: 1-18

Time	Commentator	Lector	Special Ministers
6.00pm	Fiona Watson	Bernard Butler	Anne Maguire Lynne O’Brien Maryanne McNamara
9.00pm	Margaret Turner	Tony Byrne	Kaye Byrne Bredenia Raquel Lyn Murphy
9.15am	Frances Johnson	Pauline Erickson	Raffaella Dinelli Adrian Teo Lyn Robinson



Are you planning on coming to Christmas Eve Mass at 9.00pm?

Why not stay for a while afterwards and celebrate together with our parish community. Please bring your own drinks and a plate to share (Fr Gerry loves Christmas Cake).

We will also be celebrating Fr Gerry’s 80th birthday at this event.

This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate, meet new friends and catch-up with old ones.



Christmas/New Year Mass Times 2025

24 th December - Christmas Eve	5.30pm Carols
	6.00pm Mass
	9.00pm Mass
25 th December - Christmas Day	9.00am Carols
	9.15am Mass

Please note: this is the only Mass on Christmas Day

31 st December - New Year’s Eve	6.00pm Mass
(at St Gregory the Great)	
1 st January - New Year’s Day	9.15am Mass

Days of Solemnity... (important Feast Days)

Thursday, 1st January (New Year's Day)– Mary, the Holy Mother of God

Mass will be celebrated @ 9.15am

Weekend of 3rd/4th January – The Epiphany of the Lord

Masses will be celebrated @ 5.30pm on Saturday and 9.15am on Sunday morning.

January: The parish offices (at both St Greg's and St Kevin's) will remain open over the Christmas/New Year period and over January 😊. Fr Charles? He will be around – catching up on things, thinking, and taking things a little easier but still available. So if there is something you are thinking about doing over this time – you need to let us know so we can plan it – and I know what is happening.

Fr Charles



Our Alpha program is returning in January next year.

Are you or anyone you know searching for life's big questions? Do you wonder: is there more to life than this? Why am I here? Who is Jesus? If you have questions about life, faith and meaning, join our Alpha program in February. There's a seat for you at the table. Alpha is friendly, fun and relaxed. We ran the program this year. It was great, so we are running again next year. If you would like to find out more, please grab one of the leaflets with the details near the entrance or contact the parish office.

Archbishop condemns 'collective complicity' in Bondi attack at Reconciliation Mass

Archbishop of Melbourne Peter A Comensoli has condemned the Bondi massacre as a 'wicked act' carried out by two gunmen, but in a culture of hostility towards Jewish people. The Archbishop led a Mass of Reconciliation at St Patrick's Cathedral that brought together Catholics, members of Melbourne's Jewish community, and people of other Christian denominations and faiths in an act of healing after the mass shooting at the Hanukkah beach picnic in which 15 people were killed and dozens injured. At several points in the service, the Archbishop paused to explain elements of the Catholic liturgy for those unfamiliar with the tradition. The neighbourly gesture included an invitation to come forward for a blessing during Communion. In his homily, which he prefaced by saying it would be 'unpolished' but 'from the heart', Archbishop Comensoli directly addressed the violence and shared his anger about the societal attitudes that contributed to it. He rejected the image of a lone attacker—the idea in some quarters that this was an out-of-the-blue aberration—and called the violence a collective failure. 'It is true there were two gunmen who massacred our Jewish brothers and sisters on Sunday evening,' the Archbishop said. 'Yes, individuals perpetrated this wicked act, but it has taken a collective of people to foster that act. And it is this truth that I think we all need to acknowledge today. 'Violence that took place on Sunday came out of violence that took place in speech and in reflective thoughts.' He pointed to the ongoing need for security at Jewish institutions as proof of this broader complicity. 'Because there are security guards, protective services required at every shul, synagogue, Jewish school ... requirements brought about by the seeds planted by many, not by the few. This sense of 'a lone gunman' is untrue. Let us acknowledge that and act accordingly.' Archbishop Comensoli said the wounds of Sunday's dead and injured were wounds of the soul of humanity, and the blood spilled a signifier of our common humanity. He indicated we should put aside any notion that 'they are not one of us', because 'indeed, they are one of us. They bleed the same blood. The blood that flows through them flows through us.' That was symbolised, he said, by the queues of people giving their blood the day after the attack, so that the wounded might live. 'In the face of calculated hatred and terrifying violence, we must reject knowing silence and calculated indifference. We must choose to be present, to pray, and to stand in solidarity.'

An Advent Prayer

*Lord of Light and Promise,
As the candles of Advent glow against darkness,
we lift our hearts in waiting and wonder.
You are the dawn that breaks upon our night,
the Word made flesh who dwells among us,
the Hope that does not disappoint.
Teach us to watch with Mary's trust,
to serve with Joseph's quiet strength,
to rejoice with shepherds who heard the angel's song.
May our waiting be active —
in mercy shared, in forgiveness offered,
in care for creation and compassion for the poor.
Come, Emmanuel,
into our homes, our hearts, our world.
Make us bearers of your light,
until the day when all creation sings:
"Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth."*

Amen.

Philippines School Collection Loyo Elementary School

We are working to improve the lives of children and families in the Philippines through our Friendship School program.

The community of Loyo Elementary is grateful for our donations.

If you would like to make a difference you have the option to use this QR code to make a donation.

We thank you in anticipation of your generosity.



A Pilgrims of Hope prayer card is available for you to take: pick up your copy from the Gathering Space.

With the Parish Pastoral Council and Liturgy Group, we seek to bring this truth of being Pilgrims of Hope into everything we do. This truth informs and enlivens all that we seek to implement as disciples of Christ to the world around us.




For information on our Parish School please contact:

St Kevin's Primary School
Phone: 9273 9999

Responsorial Psalm

May the Lord come in; he is king of glory.
Response to Prayers of the Faithful
Lord, hear our prayer.

REFLECTIONS ON THE READINGS OF THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

First Reading	Second Reading
<p><u>Isaiah 7:10-14</u></p> <p>A reading from the prophet Isaiah</p> <p><i>The virgin will conceive.</i></p> <p>The famous words at the end of this reading are quoted in today's gospel passage from Matthew, but in a whole new context.</p> <p>The story here is that, in time of war, Isaiah is trying to persuade King Ahaz to trust in God rather than in politics. Isaiah promises him a sign that his royal house will be preserved. A child will be born, a son and heir, who will be a living sign that God is with his people, protecting the nation.</p> <p>The mother is a young woman (here 'maiden') without the suggestion that she is a virgin. A Greek version of the text uses the word for 'virgin' and it is this reading that Matthew chooses in the gospel. Joseph is addressed as 'Son of David' making a connection with the 'House of David' in this reading. Paul also writes to the Romans that Jesus was a descendant of David.</p>	<p><u>Romans 1:1-7</u></p> <p>A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans</p> <p><i>Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, is the Son of God.</i></p> <p>There is a formality to the opening of Paul's letter to the Romans which demands a deliberate style of proclamation. Paul preaches Good News, that is, Jesus Christ, the one promised from of old.</p> <p>A contrast is drawn between his human nature (descended from David) and the order of the Spirit. It is by the Spirit that he is proclaimed Son of God, a reality which is finally revealed in power in his resurrection.</p> <p>Christ is the source of Paul's mission to call the nations to Christ. The passage concludes with a beautiful blessing of grace and peace upon those who hear the call and who belong to Christ. <i>Taken from 'Break Open the Word'</i></p> 

Social Justice Action
St Kevin's Parish, Templestowe

Joy and hope of Hanukkah shattered in Bondi, for Jewish and all other good people of the world

We warmly embrace our Jewish sisters and brothers in their profound loss and suffering at Bondi last Sunday, and together with many others around the world share grief and sense of profound despair. Our prayers continue, particularly for those whose lives have been stolen, and families left mourning, and increasingly fearful. Joy and hope have been hijacked by terrorists, whose murderous mission has not only failed, but instead has freshly energised positive responses, and bravery, towards a much needed better world. We similarly embrace and support growing numbers of innocent victims of continuing immoral and mindless warfare and genocide in various parts of the world. Though high emotion is understandable, and human, let's move beyond counter-productive finger pointing.

As David Leser suggests (Opinion Piece, The Age, 16 December 2025) "All this finger-pointing before we've even had a moment to collectively mourn the dead and injured. How about we pause and consider the two lasting images that the December 14, 2025, Hanukkah massacre presents us with? One is of two men in black shooting innocent people; the other is of a man in white – an angel with the perfectly Muslim name of Ahmed al Ahmed – running towards the gunman. Who do we choose to be in the midst of this national tragedy? The ones who pick up the guns – figuratively or literally – to cause harm to others, or the ones who run towards danger to save them."

Over several years, via Manningham Interfaith Network I've been collectively privileged to visit and share with others - from Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Sikh, Islamic and other local Faith Traditions. Through the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry I've similarly discovered strongly shared values with First Nations Peoples, and found that while practices vary, high human values mostly don't. Nor is being religious a pre-requisite for sharing Christ-like human values. So Peace and security are possible, but there's essential need to first listen, learn, and speak out, with respect, with faith. - **John Costa SJA**



Blank burnable CDs

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