

★ CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

SATURDAY
24th December
 6:30pm - Children's Mass
 9pm - Christmas Eve Mass

SUNDAY
25th December
 9am - Christmas Day Mass

***Christmas Carols at
 all Masses 15 mins before commencement.**



THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM
 the guide which led the wise men to baby Jesus

Christmas COLOURING FUN



ST PETER'S CATHOLIC PARISH

Rochedale ♦ Springwood

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MESSAGE FROM FR BAIYI

Welcome to St Peter's Catholic parish, and in joining us to celebrate Christmas, the birthday of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Christmas is a very important festival for all Christians across the globe. Culturally, many non-Christians celebrate the feast as a family reunion and friend-gathering day. Whether in the West or in the East, the importance and influence of Christmas becomes more obvious and evident year by year - for Christians as well as for non-Christians. This significant Christian solemnity brings us joy, happiness, togetherness and most certainly, religious reflections each year. It enriches our life, strengthens our hope, deepens our love for God and for people, and enhances our relationship with God and with people. Now is the time of the year again to welcome our Lord and Saviour. It is a wonderful time to feel joy and to celebrate.

Over 2,000 years ago, when the appointed time had been fulfilled, God sent his only begotten Son to us as the one who would bridge the huge chasm that had opened between heaven and earth, between God and humanity. That was Jesus Christ. The chasm started with Eve. Eve did not have full trust in God about his command: "You may eat of all the trees in the garden. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you are not to eat; for the day you eat of that you shall die." (Genesis 2:17) Under the temptation of the serpent, Eve ignored the command and Adam followed her. This distrust indicates that Eve and Adam did not have full love for God, since if one has full love for another, he/she will have full trust in the other person. From then forward, the love of humankind for God continued to become weaker, and the distrust in God became greater. In the end, a big chasm of distrust was formed between heaven and earth, God and humanity. Such a chasm of distrust could be bridged by love, and only by love, nothing else.

During his public ministry, Jesus showed his great and unconditional love for people by healing them, teaching them, feeding them and at the end, dying for them on the cross. These acts of selfless generosity and compassion began the great awakening of humankind to such deep and unconditional love. The understanding of such great love has inspired humanity to feel and think, to reflect and to begin to take actions founded on love. This is the way that the chasm is being bridged and the way that humankind has been walking back to God, who is love.



PRESENTS
 represent God's gift to the world

Without Jesus, the whole process would not have started. That is why Jesus is so important and his birthday is so significant. While we are celebrating Christmas, the first coming of Jesus Christ, we should try to understand and reflect on the meaning and importance of this feast. We can do this as we read the scriptural passages carefully-selected for Christmas Masses before we go to church and listen to them with great reverence during the Mass.

We can listen and sing the beautiful Christmas hymns and songs during and outside of the Mass. Then we can take what we have learned from these joyful expressions and celebrations into everyday life and practice them. By doing so, we are preparing ourselves for his second coming. This will be the best way to celebrate Christmas.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a happy, fruitful, and blessed Christmas.

May God bless all of you.

The journey of my faith-seeking

BY KELLY CHEW

My name is Kelly Chew, a Malaysian Chinese who grew up in a Taoist family. Since I met my ex-husband (a cradle Catholic) back in 2003, I have been attending weekly Sunday Mass for the past 19 years. However, I was only baptised recently on 9th October 2022 by Bishop Tim, at St. Peter's Catholic Parish. You may ask, why did it take me so long to decide to be baptised?

Even though my ex-husband is the person who introduced the Catholic faith to me, I did not become a Catholic because of him. We have a lot of differences in values. After moving to Brisbane in 2015, during one of the Sunday Masses at St. Edward's Church, Fr. Marce said that our relationship with God is a direct relationship. We should not allow anyone to interfere in our direct relationship with God. It was an enlightening moment for me as I realised that it was me who allowed someone else to be the barrier in getting to know more about God and build direct relationship with God. From that day onwards, I knew that I could have a direct relationship with God and become more open to God's words.

Unfortunately, my marriage did not work out. For the wellbeing of our two daughters, we sadly separated after careful considerations. After the separation, I prayed to God really hard for his guidance. During this period, the verses from Matthew 18:8-9 "If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter into life maimed or crippled than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into eternal fire..." kept appearing in homilies, Bible readings, RCIA discussions, and Alpha videos. I know God is answering my prayers through these verses, which really gave me peace in the decision about my marriage.

However, there was still a lot of resentment, hatred, grudges and bitterness within me. One day, I was invited to an Inner Healing Retreat, organised by Shalom World. I went there with my friend who is also working on the Chinese interpretation of Shalom Tidings Magazine. It was during this retreat that I learned about the true meaning of "forgiveness". The power of forgiveness prayer was amazing. It cleared out all the resentment, hatred, grudges and evil thoughts within me during the prayer and gradually I felt feathery lightness.

It was at that moment that my sadness faded and I was filled with joyful laughter and a "bright white diamond crown" appeared at the top left in my vision (my eyes were closed during the prayers). Instantly, I believed she was Mother Mary. Suddenly, there was a voice behind

me that said "Someone in this room is experiencing the presence of our Mother Mary". I recognised that the voice was that of the speaker who presented the topic on forgiveness. Not long after that, I heard the priest repeat the same statement: "Mother Mary is present in this room. Someone here is experiencing the presence of Our Lady Mother Mary". My joyful laughter got louder when I saw Mother Mary in her white gown visiting my garden and my house. The speaker also described exactly what appeared in my vision! I knew in that moment the speaker could see my vision. The house in my vision wasn't my existing house, it was my dream house. After the retreat, I met the speaker in a friend's house. I asked him how he could see my vision. He told me that he had no memory of it - he believes it wasn't him who saw my vision, but the Holy Spirit.

My joyfulness was more than words could describe. I know that God has answered my prayer by giving such a clear sign to me. Not only that, He also sent 2 people to verify the presence of Mother Mary in my vision. As I am an auditor by profession, God knew that only verifiable evidence would convince me. From that moment, I decided to be baptised as I promised God.

I started to look for parishes that run an RCIA program. However, as the schedule didn't fit well, I didn't proceed further and at the same time the pandemic commenced in early 2020. When Gerard Lai (my nephew) was undertaking internship at St Peter's Parish in 2021, I started to attend Sunday Mass here and expressed my interest in the RCIA journey to Fr. Baiyi and Josephine Cullen. The RCIA team was very helpful and walked with me in my faith journey. In the beginning of the RCIA journey, I had a lot of challenging questions. I would like to take this golden opportunity to thank Fr. Baiyi for explaining well and clearing out most of my doubts. After a year on the RCIA journey, I was baptised on 9th October by Bishop Tim at St. Peter's Church. My life has been renewed as a Catholic.

I know God has a plan for me. Through the Holy Spirit, He revealed that the purpose of my life is to be a true daughter of God, enjoy life by serving God and do what God has planned for me. From now on, I surrender my life to God and let Him be my guide to execute the plan that He designed for me.

Alleluia!



THE CANDLE shines brightly and shows us that Jesus is the light of the world

CHRISTMAS RECIPE

Black Forest Christmas fool

A simple, quick and indulgent dessert you can rustle up in 10 minutes. If you want to make a non-alcoholic version, use a can of cherries in syrup instead

INGREDIENTS

500ml double cream

½ tsp vanilla extract

2 tbsp icing sugar

250g Christmas cake or rich fruitcake

390g jar of black cherries in kirsch, drained, reserving the liquid for drizzling

50g dark chocolate, chopped

METHOD

Whisk the cream with the vanilla and icing sugar until it just holds its shape. Crumble the cake into six glasses, then top with a few cherries, a dollop of cream and a drizzle of the kirsch. Scatter over the chopped chocolate.



THE CHRISTMAS WREATH

the shape of a circle reminds us of God's endless love

MESSAGE FROM THE YOUTH COORDINATOR

Having to adapt to two new youth ministry coordinators in one year is no small feat, but I can confirm that the parish has made me feel so welcome and loved since being appointed in July! Even in just half a year, we have up to so many exciting things! Some of my favourites include Ignite Conference, making Father's day cards, forming a football team at the World Youth Day festival and meeting and getting to know you all! What a blessing the Brisbane Catholic community is that we have been able to grant the youth opportunities to learn more about their faith in different settings. It was so fulfilling taking a group to Ignite Conference and watching the Lord work in them and bless

them with the Holy Spirit! I'm so excited for all that is still to come this year, but also where 2023 will take us. I would like to extend a huge thank you for all the support, prayer and friendship everyone has shown me, and feel so blessed to be part of this community. God will continue to bless you and work in you if you just welcome Him in, so let's welcome Him in. Let's give glory to His name, and give thanks to Him. Have a safe, holy and fun Christmas season, and I pray that wherever you are, you welcome God in because He can do amazing things. Merry Christmas and God Bless.

Chloe

St Peter's has two Youth Groups: One for High School students and one for young adults aged 18 to 35 and both groups meet fortnightly for a variety of activities. Contact Chloe on youth.stpetroch@bne.catholic.net.au or on Instagram [@rochedaleyouth](https://www.instagram.com/rochedaleyouth) if you are interested in more information.

Youth will be taking a short break over the Christmas holidays, but we will be back on the **4th and 5th of February** for young adults and high schoolers!

Are you wondering about your faith or thinking about becoming a Catholic?

Our Parish of St Peter's (at Rochedale) is a living story of welcoming new members to begin and continue their journey of faith in the Catholic tradition. You are welcome to 'Come and See'. Please contact the Parish Office to arrange a meeting as your first step to hear about the support our Parish can offer you. We are companions on your journey. Phone: **33414421** | Email: stpetroch@bne.catholic.net.au | Website: www.stpetersrochedale.org.au