

04 JANUARY 2026
FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY



**ALEXANDRA
 CATHOLIC
 PASTORAL AREA**
[St John the Baptist
 (1924) Alexandra;
St Peter's
 (1932) Omakau;
St Dunstan's
 (1903) Clyde;
St Patrick's
 (1892) St Bathans;
Our Lady of Peace
 (1910) Roxburgh]

Readings next Sunday: Baptism of the Lord
 (1) *Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11* (2) *Titus 2:11-14,3:4-7*
 (3) *Luke 3:15-16,21-22.*

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THE JUBILEE 'YEAR OF HOPE' 2025 concludes this Sunday, symbolised by removal of the 'Pilgrims of Hope' banners from the sanctuary areas of our churches. Jubilee Years occur on a 25 year cycle, dedicated to a particular theme; the next 'Year of Jubilee' will be 2050.

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Died Recently:
Anniversaries about now: Bill Chapman; Margaret Welnoski.
 'May they rest in peace.'

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A NEW YEAR RESOLUTION – To allow ourselves to be amazed – [William J O'Malley S.J. (1931-2023) encouraged people to cultivate a sense of awe and wonder and to appreciate the gift of creation and life.]

"Isn't it amazing that every single object in the universe circles something else? Is this just 'accidental'? But if so, how do you get order and predictability out of an accident? Are the laws of physics just an accident? How do you get 'law' out of 'luck'?"

Isn't it amazing, that if I had ten cards, the probability of drawing them in consecutive order, from Ace up to ten, is one in a billion? Is it likely, therefore, that the human being, infinitely more complex in the number of permutations and combinations possible from the millions of genes that comprise us, could have evolved by pure 'luck'?"

Isn't it amazing that if the earth's crust was 3 meters thicker, there would be no atmosphere?

Isn't it amazing that if the earth was not tilted at 28 degrees, there would be no seasons?

Isn't it amazing that our intelligence, unique to the human species, creates hungers in us that we cannot find in other species? For example, we want to know not just the 'how?' of things, but also the 'why?'"

HEALTH CENTRAL URGENT CARE CENTRE: This is a walk-in medical service for locals and visitors, Mon-Sun, 8am to 6pm, for non-life-threatening illnesses and injuries. 105-107 Tarbert St, Alexandra. See the flyer on the church foyer noticeboards for more information.

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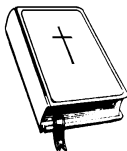
HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE

**"The Lord bless you and keep you.
 The Lord let his face shine on you
 and be gracious to you.
 The Lord lift up his countenance
 upon you, and bring you peace."**

(From the first reading for New Year's Day, Numbers 6:24-26)

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SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS SUNDAY
 (1) *Isaiah 60:1-6.* The oracle of Isaiah prophesies that representatives of the nations of the world would travel to the Holy City following a guiding light and would bring gold and incense and myrrh to contribute to the worship of God.
 (2) *Ephesians 3:2-3,5-6.* Paul's letter to the Church of Ephesus expresses God's unveiled plan in clear terms: *"the Gentiles are...co-partners in the promise of Christ Jesus through the Gospel."*
 (3) *Matthew 2:1-12.* If the Magi (foreigners and pagans) could recognize and offer Jesus considered respect as the King of Jews, so we should know that there is nothing in our lives that discounts us from also being able to come to Christ.



There were three groups of people who reacted to the epiphany of Christ's birth. The first group, headed by King Herod, tried to eliminate the him; The second group, the priests and scribes, ignored him; The third group, represented by the shepherds and the Magi, came to adore him, as Christians' who emulate their humility continue to do so today.

MASS TIMES THIS COMING WEEK: No Mass Monday to Wednesday in Alexandra; Mass as usual Thursday onwards.

'TAP-n-GO' FACILITY: For people not on Planned Giving, cashless, or visitors to our local churches, offerings can now be made by using the pay-wave 'Tap n Go' facility available in the Alexandra church (at 9am Sunday Mass), or at St Dunstan's church in Clyde (during the rest of the week). Simply select a displayed option and wave a credit or debit card or capable phone over the facility. **Thank you for your support.**

VATICAN NEWS (www.vaticannews.va)

***Pope Leo: Jubilee Year 'a powerful sign of a new world'.** In a homily delivered at the final liturgy of the year, Pope Leo reflects on "the mystery of Christ, which points to a plan for human history" - a plan that stands in stark contrast to "armed strategies, concealed beneath hypocritical rhetoric."

***Pope: The new year is 'a journey to be discovered'.** At his first public Mass of 2026 on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, Pope Leo tells believers that Mary has revealed the 'unarmed and disarming' face of God. With Mary's co-operation God arrived amongst us "naked and defenceless", a "new born in a cradle. ... He does this to teach us that the world is not saved by violence but by tirelessly striving to understand, forgive, without calculation and without fear. ... In Mary's divine motherhood two 'unarmed realities' come together: that of God, who renounces every privilege of his divinity to be born in the flesh, and that of a human person who, trustingly and fully, embraces God's will."

***Bishop Dolan: Faith and science both necessary to care for mental health.** As the ongoing mental health crisis presents a significant pastoral challenge for the Church, US Bishop John Dolan of Phoenix calls for true support for people, rather than over-simplifications or quick solutions, highlighting the need for both pastoral care and professional support. He also firmly rejected any opposition between faith and science. "We don't want to compete. We want to go down the same road together, faith and science," Bishop Dolan said, stressing that psychiatry and psychology are not a threat to faith. "God gave us the wonderful gift of science," the goal being, he concluded, "deeper self-knowledge and growth rooted in the awareness of being beloved children of God."

LOVE OF GOD AND NEIGHBOUR - A treatise by St Augustine on the Gospel of John.

'Love God and your neighbour - We must always ponder these words, meditate them, hold them in our minds, practise them and bring them to fruition. As far as teaching is concerned, the love of God comes first; but as far as doing is concerned, the love of our neighbour comes first. Whoever sets out to teach you these two commandments of love must not commend your neighbour to you first, and then God, but God first and then your neighbour. You, on the other hand, do not yet see God, but loving your neighbour will bring you that sight. By loving your neighbour you purify your eyes so that they are ready to see God, as John clearly says: If you do not love your neighbour, whom you see, how can you love God, whom you do not see?'

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SUNDAY MASSES

Omakau St Peters (Saturday), 6pm
Alexandra St John the Baptist, 9am
Roxburgh Our Lady of Peace:, 11am.

WEEKDAY MASSES

Alexandra:
Tuesday: 5pm
Wed, Thurs, Sat: 9am
Friday: Noon



Roxburgh:
Wednesday 5:15pm (in presbytery):

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RECONCILIATION (Rite I)

Alexandra: Saturdays 9:30-10am;
Otherwise on request.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

(March, June, September, December)

Alexandra: First Friday Mass (noon)

Roxburgh: First Wednesday Mass
(5:15pm, in presbytery)



EXPOSITION and BENEDICTION

Alexandra side chapel, Fridays 11:30-11:50am.

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PARISH CONTACT DETAILS

Parish Priest: Fr Brendan Ward.
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Catholic Social Services: 0800 277 669 (toll-free); 03 448 5385 (Mon-Thu).
Parish Website: www.alexcatholic.nz
Diocese Website: www.cdd.nz.