

Prayer Points from 24 December - 20 January

Christmas and New Year

- Thanksgiving and praise to God for the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ, on Christmas Day, through which he brought light into the darkness (John 1:1–14).
- That we, along with Mary, the mother of Jesus, magnify (glorify; praise highly) the Lord and rejoice in God our Saviour, as we remember his birth this Christmas season (Luke 1:46-47).
- That we may glorify God in whatever we do, as we look forward to the New Year, and reflect on the past year to know what we can do better (1 Corinthians 10:31).
- Thanksgiving to God for establishing David's throne forever, from whom our Lord Jesus Christ has descended (1 Samuel 7:16).

Regarding Natural Disasters and Conflicts

- For all the people living in North Queensland, in places such as Cairns, Machans Beach, Mossman, and Wujal Wujal, who are experiencing devastating floods at the moment. We pray that God would deliver them all to safety and provide for all their needs (Psalm 29:10).
- That God would bring peace and protection to the people in Ukraine and Russia, Israel and Palestine, many parts of Africa (such as Ethiopia), the Middle East (such as Afghanistan), and any other part of the world that is experiencing the grief and pain of war (Isaiah 9:7).

For the Sundays of January – in addition to the above, and drawing on the Prayer of the Church and other relevant themes

- To thank God for disclosing to us the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ through the apostles' witness, and found in the prophetic writings (Romans 16:25-27).
- For God's protection over all families who are travelling throughout the holidays, and that God would give them refreshment during their breaks from work or study (Psalm 121).
- That God guides our government, so that it may deal with the world's problems wisely, prioritise those who are truly in need, and promote godly virtues (Romans 13:1–7).
- That God blesses and protects our emergency services workers, who risk their lives and wellbeing for the sake of others (Acts 20:25).
- That God comforts the sick and the poor, with his light and his truth (Psalm 43:5), and that they learn to trust in the power of prayer, because of God, who answers us according to his will (James 5:13-16).
- That God fills the body of Christ, the Church, with the Holy Spirit, so that it stands as a light on a hill for others to see and know that in the Church they can experience God and his light (Matthew 5:14-16; John 13:35; Ephesians 3:14–21; 5:23).
- For the sick or unwell and their carers, including Robert Coombe, Graeme Elphick, Marlene Kahl, Ron Koelman, Roma Linke, Gina Mielke, Karina Musimbi, Nick Urbon, Dale Voigt, Robert Walden, and Cheryl Zucker (Isaiah 41:10)

The Darkness Has Not Overcome the Light

By Vicar Sean Hotinski

John says that Jesus is the True Light, who came into the world, and who shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:5, 9). The word that some English Bibles translate as “overcome” was originally from the word “katalambanó” in the Greek of John 1:5. This word is used by Mark to describe a boy who was “seized” by a demon and thrown on the ground, whom Jesus afterwards healed (Mark 9:18). It is also used to describe the woman who was “caught” in adultery (John 8:4), whom Jesus saved. Its basic meaning is to “lay hold of” or “seize”.

In our world today, we know that there is a lot of darkness. Sometimes, it feels like the darkness has overcome the world, or that we ourselves have been overcome by the darkness of our sins, as was the demon oppressed boy and all the people in the account of the woman caught in adultery. But John starts his Gospel by telling us that the darkness has not overcome Jesus—in fact, it cannot overcome him. We know this, because “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5, ESVUK). Light, by its very nature, dispels darkness. So, if God almighty himself is Light, and John starts his Gospel by calling Jesus God (John 1:1–3), we know that Jesus will always shine in the darkness.

When we face challenges or setbacks in life, we can remind ourselves that Jesus is still shining in the darkness, and that he continues to shine in our hearts, through faith in him. Near the end of Jesus’ ministry, Jesus said to his disciples that in the world you will have tribulation, “But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Jesus has already won the battle between light and darkness, by overcoming the darkness through the light of his divine love. If we are on his side, and remain there, then we are on the side of victory and will never be overcome by the darkness, because Jesus is our light and salvation. Thanks be to God. Amen.

How does Jesus’ light overcome darkness in your life today?