



## HOLY EUCHARIST PARISH

1A Oleander Drive, St Albans South 3021

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### SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD YEAR A 31 DEC. 22 & 1 JAN. 23

#### REDEMPTORIST COMMUNITY

**Acting Mission Leader**

Fr Vinsensius (Lovin) Lolo CSsR

**Parish Priest**

Fr Vincent Long Pham CSsR

**Assisting Priests**

Fr Joseph Hieu Xuan Nguyen CSsR

Fr Oche Matutina CSsR

Fr Patrick Corbett CSsR

**Parish Secretary**

Mary-Lucy Atonio PH: 9366 1310

**Parish School Principal**

Michael Bonnici PH: 8312 0900

**Filipino Chaplain**

Fr Joselito Asis

**South Sudanese Chaplain**

Deacon George B.P. Meat

#### MASS TIMES

- ♦ **Tues-Fri:** 9:00am
- ♦ **Saturday:** 6:00pm  
7.30pm Vietnamese
- ♦ **Sunday:** 9:00am, 10:30am,  
6:00pm  
12:00pm Vietnamese

#### Other Masses

- 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Sun. Sudanese Mass 3pm
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sun Samoan Mass - 2.00pm
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sun Filipino Mass - 3.00pm

**PARISH OFFICE CLOSURE:** Please note that the Parish Office will be closed after Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022 and will be opened again Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

**SACRAMENTS:** There will be no sacraments in the month of January, the next Baptism will be on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2022.

**FOODBANK: REOPENING ON FRIDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY 2023 TAKING THIS TIME TO WISH YOU ALL A SAFE AND MERRY CHRISTMAS**

#### THE LIVING WORD

**First Reading: Numbers 6:22-27**

*They are to call down my name on the sons of Israel, and I will bless them*

The Lord spoke to Moses and said, "Say this to Aaron and his sons: "This is how you are to bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace." This is how they are to call down my name on the sons of Israel, and I will bless them."

**Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 66 (67):2-3,5,6,8**

**May God bless us in his mercy.**

O God, be gracious and bless us and let your face shed its light upon us. So will your ways be known upon earth and all nations learn your saving help.

**May God bless us in his mercy.**

Let the nations be glad and exult for you rule the world with justice. With fairness you rule the peoples, you guide the nations on earth.

**May God bless us in his mercy.**

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. May God still give us his blessing till the ends of the earth revere him.

**May God bless us in his mercy.**

**Second reading Galatians 4:4-7**

*God sent his Son, born of a woman*

When the appointed time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, to redeem the subjects of the Law and to enable us to be adopted as sons. The proof that you are sons is that God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts: the Spirit that cries, 'Abba, Father', and it is this that makes you a son, you are not a slave any

more; and if God has made you son, then he has made you heir.

**Gospel Acclamation Heb1:1-2**

Alleluia, alleluia!

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; now he speaks to us through his Son. Alleluia!

**Gospel Luke 2:16-21**

*The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found the baby lying in the manger*

The shepherds hurried away to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about him, and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds had to say. As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen; it was exactly as they had been told. When the eighth day came and the child was to be circumcised, they gave him the name Jesus, the name the angel had given him before his conception.

#### REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL

**By Sister Veronica Lawson rsm**

The celebration of Mary as Mother of God has very ancient roots. Mary was venerated in the East from the early third Christian century as theotokos, a Greek term that means God-Bearer. This designation for Mary was affirmed by the Council of Ephesus in 431 CE. The subsequent Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE, in the face of arguments to the contrary, declared that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine, and that Mary could rightly be called theotokos. The title "Mother of God" is a loose equivalent of the designation theotokos. It affirms the Christological affirmations of Chalcedon and

reminds us of the fullness of the humanity and the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth. It also reminds us of the extraordinary role of Miriam of Nazareth in the mystery of the Incarnation. At Christmas, the liturgy invites us to focus on Luke's story of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth and John's reflection on the Word made Flesh. Today's liturgy shifts the focus ever so slightly to Mary, through whose "yes" the mystery of the Incarnation is realized. Today's gospel takes up the Lukan account of the birth of Jesus. Mary has given birth to her son, wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, a feeding place for animals in the lower level of the house. An angel has announced the good news to shepherds who are tending their flocks in the fields. The shepherds, having listened to the proclamation of the angel and to the heavenly host that joins the angel, set out in search of the child. They find Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger, just as the angel has told them. The shepherds, outcasts in their society, have become the agents and proclaimers of the good news of salvation.

The all-knowing narrator tells us that Mary treasured or carefully preserved all these happenings and pondered them in her heart. A little later, we hear the story of the twelve-year-old Jesus going up to Jerusalem with his parents for Passover and staying behind in the temple where he teaches the teachers. Mary and Joseph listen to his explanation about remaining "in his Father's house" or "being about his Father's business" though they fail to understand. The narrator tells us that "his mother treasured all these things in her heart." While a different Greek verb is used for "treasured" in this passage, the meaning is the same as in today's gospel passage. Mary has to struggle to comprehend the ways of God in her life. She is presented as a grace-filled woman forever pondering the mysterious ways of God. As the New Year begins, we too are called to "ponder" and to treasure "all these things" in our hearts, trusting that their power will transform our lives even if, like Mary and Joseph, we do not always understand..



## THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS IS FAR FROM OVER

I don't know about you, but Christmas has always been my favorite holiday. From the decorations and lights to the baking and wrapping, there is just something nostalgic about the anticipation of Christmas. I remember as a small child finding such joy in the many parties and Christmas plays that foreshadowed all that was to come on Christmas mornings.

Yet, still to this day, I find myself often feeling disoriented at the end of all the family traditions and festivities. After the gifts are given, the songs have been sung, and the final family members have all headed home, there seems to be an abrupt conclusion to December's celebration as we turn our attention to the New Year. In many ways, we can miss the significance of this season and misplace the purpose of all our preparations if we are unable to slow down and intentionally set aside time to celebrate the gift of Christ's first coming.

The joy of Christmas is far from over in light of the abundance that Christ offers, so let us take time to revel in the reality of Christ's humanity and reflect on the good news of the Gospel, which begins with the birth of Jesus our Savior.

### The Christmastime Season

Did you know, based on the Church calendar, Christmas Day is not the conclusion of the celebration of Christ's birth but the beginning of a 12-day celebration? Deeply rooted in Christian history, the church year, also known as the liturgical calendar, contains six sacred seasons of spiritual formation throughout the calendar year. Observed by several Christian denominations around the world, the Church calendar provides the body of Christ with specific times of year to reflect on both the grand narrative of the Gospel story and the stories of God's work through their lives today.

Christmastime, also known as Christmastide, describes the church calendar's season of celebration for Christ's first coming. Falling on the heels of the season of Advent, Christmastime is the second of the six observed seasons. Unlike the 25 days of Advent, Christmastime is a season contained within 12-days and historically marked by feasts and celebrations. This season starts on the 25th of December and ends on the 5th of January, the beginning of Epiphany. Within these 12 days, there is an emphasis on giving thanks and a focus on daily celebrating the significance of Christ's birth.

In light of all 2020 has brought us, both collectively and individually, celebrating this season may look very different for many of us. We may be far from family and friends, but despite the unwanted distance, I hope that no matter where we find ourselves this holiday season, we may take time to intentionally celebrate our Savior.

### The Good Gift of Christ

Growing up in a Christian home, I learned at a young age about the hope of Jesus and the gift of His birth in the Christmas story, yet it was not until I was about twelve years old when my perspective truly shifted.

I remember one specific Christmas, anticipating the joy my presents would reveal on Christmas morning only to experience a less-than-satisfying aftermath. The monetary gifts I had received did not live up to my expectation, nor did I see much

use for them. But at that moment, as a young girl, I remember my value of Christmas forever-changing. I came to the reality that the earthly gifts I had received were simply a representation of who Christ was to me. These gifts were freely given with love and consideration, regardless of my childish ungratefulness.

Oh, how often we can see this same pattern in the way we view the gift of Christ. We come to Jesus at times questioning His love for us, unsatisfied by how His blessings have been bestowed on us. Yet, when we pause long enough to think about the fulfillment of God's word through Christ's life, we are bound to rediscover the abundance of His love for us.

Maybe you have also found yourself disappointed by what you expected to bring you joy in this life, this season, or even this very day. Discouragement has a way of making us feel as though God has indeed forgotten us. And when we become confused and disconnected, we can easily forget the good news of the Gospel and the gifts that Jesus came to offer. So, let us look back to scripture so that we may reorient our souls to the sweet news of our Savior and recapture the wonder of the gift we celebrate this very season.

### **The Wonder of Jesus' Birth**

In Luke 2:1-7, The birth of Christ is recorded. And then in verses 8 through 12, it says this:

"And shepherds were living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'"

The angel's proclamation to the shepherds that day would forever change history. For the words of the angel confirmed the prophecies of Isaiah, fulfilling the promise of God's sign in the arrival of Immanuel.

The birth of Christ is the greatest news we could be given because it is a standing invitation to experience the love of God. One of the most quoted verses of the Bible says that "for God so loved the world that He gave us His Son, that whoever believes in Him will have everlasting life (John 3:16).

Being fully man and fully God, Jesus, our Messiah, Immanuel, God with us, was sent from the Father to be among us, so that He might save us and provide for us eternal life with God. For in the truth of Jesus' birth lies the fulfillment of God's promise to be with us and go before us. It is in this confirmation we can trust that what is even now still undone will one day be made complete in the return of Christ. What joy this can bring to even the weariest of souls.

The foundation of the Christmastime celebration is anchored in the good news of Christ's birth. So the question is this: is Christ's birth good news for us today? If so, how do we respond to this gift of all-surpassing love? A love that sees us, values us, and gave its very own life for us?

### **The Pathways to Celebration**

In looking back to the story of Scripture, we read of two re-

sponses of celebration for the gift of Christ. In Luke 2:15-20, the story of the shepherd's continues saying,

"When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.' So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."

What beautiful examples of celebration. For both Mary and the shepherds' responses to Christ's birth embody a spirit of joyful celebration and provide us with pathways for cultivating the same gratitude and praise in our own lives this season. For Mary, it says she treasured and pondered the experiences surrounding the birth of her baby boy, the Savior of the world. Mary's celebration was expressed through the silence of meditation and moments of personal reflection. In contrast, the shepherds responded with shouts of praise and thanksgiving as they shared the news of Christ's birth with those around them.

What would it look like to practice these pathways through this Christmas season? Maybe, celebrating this gift begins with starting your day by being with Jesus- reflecting on the gravity of His grace and the gift of His sacrifice. Or, maybe it is singing songs of praise or writing prayers that recount the promises of God's faithfulness through Christ's fulfillment. For in these practices of praise, we can renew our hope and cultivate our gratitude.

So, as we continue to daily celebrate the abundance found in Christ our Savior in this season, I pray we will take time to personally ponder who Jesus is to us and give thanks and praise to God for the gift of his very own Son.

***By Carley Marcouillier***

***Continued from last week's Bulletin***

### **Where Is Jesus in the Present?**

Jesus fulfilled His mission to pay the penalty for our sins. After dying on the cross, God raised Him from the dead, and He ascended into heaven. God exalted Jesus to the highest place and gave Him the name above all names (Phil. 2:9). Today He reigns in indescribable glory.

"I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: 'Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and

now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades” (Revelation 1:12-18).

### Who Is the Jesus of the Future?

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He promised His disciples He would prepare a place in heaven for us so that we can be with Him forever (John 14:2-3). He will return for His bride, the church. Then we will reign with Him forever (Rev. 3:21). Our future is secure in Christ. Look how the apostle John describes our glorious future with Christ.

“I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, ‘Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.’ And the one sitting on the throne said, ‘Look, I am making everything new!’ And then he said to me, ‘Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.’ And he also said, ‘It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega — the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children’” (Revelation 21:3-6).

### What Does This Means for Us Today?

Jesus is called Immanuel, God with us (Isaiah 7:14). He dwells in the hearts of every believer. Consider how Paul’s words apply to us who are still alive on earth.

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Jesus is no longer the babe in a manger. He is our King and our life. His life in me changes everything! The Christian life isn’t me trying to be more like Jesus. It’s letting Jesus express His life through me.

Because Jesus became poor, we are incredibly rich. Because He died for us, we need no longer fear death. My father is more alive today than when he carried

me on his shoulders as a young man. The hope those double rainbows offered so many years ago still lives. No matter what lies ahead — Immanuel is with me.

*By Debbie W. Wilson*

## THANK YOU AND FAREWELL



It is with a heavy heart that we say a farewell to Fr Oche Matutina CSsR who has been with us almost three years. We cannot thank you enough for his ministry that he has done for us. We will miss working with him and wish him all the blessings. Fr Oche will celebrate a thanksgiving Mass on the Weekend Masses 7—8 January 2023 in our church. Then he will take a short break before moving to Bourke (*Bourke is a town in the north-west of New South Wales, Australia*) to do mission over there. Please join us in thanking him.

### READERS/COMMENTATOR/ COORDINATOR/EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

During this time, weekday Masses Tuesday - Friday at 9.00am we continue to use people who normally volunteers to Read if they are available otherwise volunteers needed. Please see the priest before Mass if you wishes to do so. Weekend Masses volunteers needed if the choir doesn’t have people to Reader. Thank you for you cooperation.

### CHOIR GROUPS

**Saturday 7th January 2023**

\* 6pm — Samoan Choir

\* **Sunday 8th January 2023**

\* 9am - Charlie Schembri

\* 10.30am — St Francis Choir

\* 6pm - Volunteer Choir

### CLEANING ROSTER

Week starting 3 January 2023 -  
Group 8 - Samoan Community -  
Akenese Tuliutu

### LET US PRAY FOR

#### The Sick

Pam Norris, Alfred & Pauline Storace, Manel Pandithakoralege, Dominica C., Wasana Fernando, Marko Dorinko, Arnord Fernandez, Ash Dominic Marguerite, Rachel Piskon, Toni Antonowicz, Linda Ratbone, Anna, Maria Kim, Yulette Tanner, Jessie Spiteri, Stella Sandle, Frank, Doris Carabott.

#### Anniversaries

Ivica Krizmanic, Jan & Elizabet Danicek, Maria Lojdova, Jan & Jovan Vala, Stefan Kolek, Tony Mizzi, Family Attard, Family Zammit, Family Caruana, Family Grech, Bruce McLean, Joseph Formosa, Carmelo, Mary, Henry, Giuzeppa Faraci, Sunta Germani, Joseph & Franc Xiberras, Angelo Cassar, Mac-co Ngo Van Thinh, Lucia Huynh Thi Kim Hue, Phero Ngo Minh Truong, Maria Huynh Thi Thanh Kieu, Phero Le Nghia, Matta Le Thi Linh, Phero Le Quang Tuan, Theresa Nguyen Ngoc Giang Thu, Dominico Le Ngoc Son, Mary Camilleri, Richard Curmi, Iro & Jessie Vella, Angela Chircop, Peter Disco, Wayne Camilleri, Bartolo family, Brincat & Galea family, Maria Vu Thi Yeu Thuong, Vincent Duong Kham Su, Michael Alphonsus Schiller, Peter Do Van Tri, Inne Maria Le Thi Bien, Mollie Rise (Marie), Raymond Abela and All Souls

### SAFETY FOR ALL

Holy Eucharist Parish is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children, young people and vulnerable adults.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Holy Eucharist parish respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the land on which we reside and worship.*

### VOCATION VIEW

Mary, Mother of the Priest Jesus, is especially Mother to all Priests. Pray to Mary to ask her guidance in your life.

All information used in accordance with the terms of our privacy policy.