

Catholic Parish of Blackiriars

Under the care of the Dominican Fathers



Issue 05

VERITAS

25 December 2022

HOLY ROSARY CHURCH

Parish Priest

Fr Mannes Tellis OP

(To contact Please Text)

0414 396 532

Dominican in residence

Br Francis McKinnon OP

Holy Rosary Church

Cnr Phillip Avenue &
Antill Street, Watson ACT

Postal Address

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Office Hours -

Monday, Tuesday,
Thursday, Friday
9am to 12.30pm

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www.facebook.com/Holy-Rosary-Parish-Watson

Mass Times

Monday - NO Mass

Tuesday & Thursday
8.00am

Wednesday & Friday
5:30pm

Saturday - 9:00am
Vigil - 5:pm

Sunday - 8:00am, 10:00am,
5:00pm

Reconciliation

Saturday
4pm - 4.45pm

Adoration - Holy Hour

Friday's 6pm - 7pm

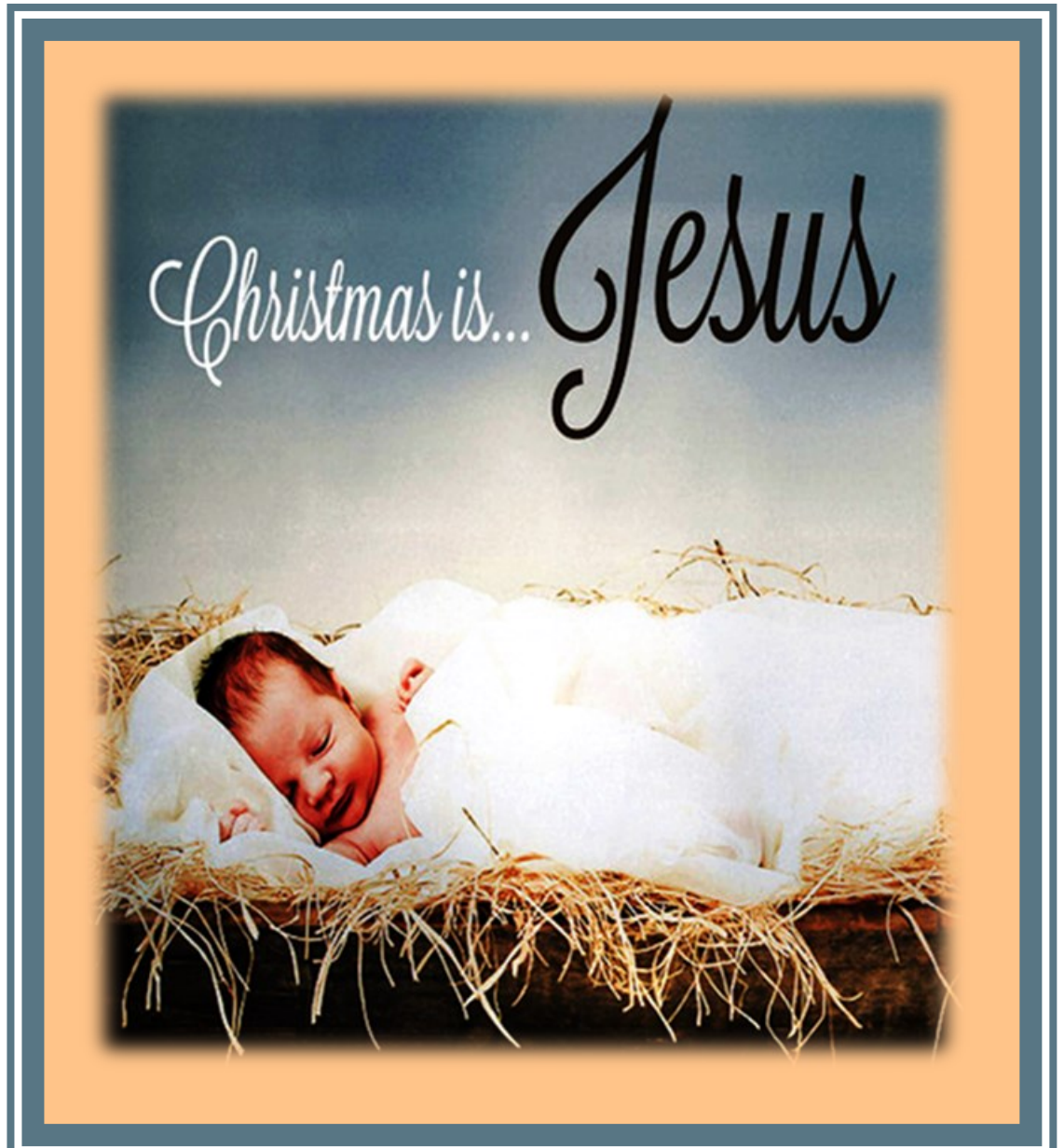
Pray the Rosary

Before 10am Mass on Sundays

ACU MASS - 12pm Wednesday

If you are in Urgent need of a Priest
out of office hours call - 6248 8253

Christmas Day



PARISH BULLETIN - DEADLINE for notices is

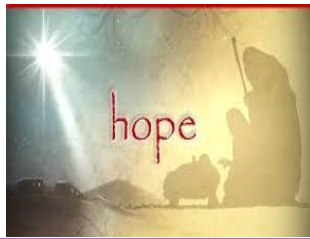
NOON TUESDAY

Please contact the office Ph. 6248 5925

or Email: watson@cg.org.au

Christmas Eve

5:00pm



FIRST READING

First Reading: Isaiah 62:1-5

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

For Zion's sake I will not be silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not grow weary, until her integrity shines out like the dawn and her salvation flames like a torch. The nations then will see your integrity, all the kings your glory, and you will be called by a new name, one which the mouth of the Lord will confer. You are to be a crown of splendour in the hand of the Lord, a princely diadem in the hand of your God; no longer are you to be named 'Forsaken', nor your land 'Abandoned', but you shall be called 'My Delight' and your land 'The Wedded'; for the Lord takes delight in you and your land will have its wedding. Like a young man marrying a virgin, so will the one who built you wed you, and as the bridegroom rejoices in his bride, so will your God rejoice in you.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Responsorial Psalm: 88:4-5. 16-17. 27. 29

For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

'I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn to David my servant:
I will establish your dynasty for ever
and set up your throne through all ages.'

Happy the people who acclaim such a king,
who walk, O Lord, in the light of your face,
who find their joy every day in your name,
who make your justice
the source of their bliss.

'He will say to me: "You are my father,
my God, the rock who saves me."
I will keep my love for him always;
for him my covenant shall endure.'

For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

SECOND READING

Second Reading: Acts 13:16-17. 22-25

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When Paul reached Antioch in Pisidia, he stood up in the synagogue, held up a hand for silence and began to speak:

'Men of Israel, and fearers of God, listen! The God of our nation Israel chose our ancestors, and made our people great when they were living as foreigners in Egypt; then by divine power he led them out.

'Then he made David their king, of whom he approved in these words, "I have selected David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will carry out my whole purpose". To keep his promise, God has raised up for Israel one of David's descendants, Jesus, as Saviour,

SECOND READING

Cont...whose coming was heralded by John when he proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the whole people of Israel. Before John ended his career he said, "I am not the one you imagine me to be; that one is coming after me and I am not fit to undo his sandal".'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

Tomorrow the wickedness of the earth
will be destroyed:

the Saviour of the world will be our king.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

A genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham:

Abraham was the father of Isaac,
Isaac the father of Jacob,
Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,
Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah, Tamar being their mother,
Perez was the father of Hezron,
Hezron the father of Ram,
Ram was the father of Amminadab,
Amminadab the father of Nahshon,
Nahshon the father of Salmon,
Salmon was the father of Boaz, Rahab being his mother,
Boaz was the father of Obed, Ruth being his mother,
Obed was the father of Jesse;
and Jesse was the father of King David.
David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,
Solomon was the father of Rehoboam,
Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa,
Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat,
Jehoshaphat the father of Joram,
Joram the father of Azariah,
Azariah was the father of Jotham,
Jotham the father of Ahaz,
Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,
Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh,
Manasseh the father of Amon,
Amon the father of Josiah;
and Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and his brothers.
Then the deportation to Babylon took place.
After the deportation to Babylon:
Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel,
Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,
Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud,
Abiud the father of Eliakim,
Eliakim the father of Azor,
Azor was the father of Zadok,
Zadok the father of Achim,
Achim the father of Eliud,

Cont...Eliud was the father of Eleazar,
Eleazar the father of Matthan,
Matthan the father of Jacob;
and Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband
of Mary;
of her was born Jesus who is called Christ.

The sum of generations is therefore: fourteen from Abraham to David; fourteen from David to the Babylonian deportation; and fourteen from the Babylonian deportation to Christ.

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph; being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son
and they will call him Emmanuel,
a name which means 'God-is-with-us.' When Joseph
woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told
him to do: he took his wife to his home and, though
he had not had intercourse with her, she gave birth
to a son; and he named him Jesus.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

THE ANCESTORS OF JESUS

Quite recently it became fashionable to state that one had convicts as ancestors. Within Australian society this revelation was the closest thing to being Aussie royalty. Rather than admit to being from the "establishment" to celebrate the convict past of one's family was seen to be more authentically Aussie, more authentically for the battler, the underdog.

Jesus' was for the underdog, the sinner, and even the downright nasty. Jesus' human family, whom we've read about at great length tonight, was distinctly shady in part. The complex and sometimes sordid background to Christ's human family runs as an interesting contrast to Jesus' divine life. Our Christmas feast narrates how God became man and dwelt amongst us. This extraordinary genealogy reveals that indeed God enters a particular family and all was not rosy. To understand then the importance of this genealogy and its symbolism for our feast let us look at some of Jesus' distant relatives.

Things start off pretty well. Abraham the forefather of Jesus human family was a man of great faith and a firm believer in God's promises. Isaac is the initial promise of God to Abraham and his wife Sarah. Both are elderly and never thought they'd ever have children, but God brings about the impossible and gives the gift of a child to this faithful couple. It was the birth of Isaac that cemented Abraham's trust in the Lord. This trust was tested when God suddenly ordered that

Cont...offered in sacrifice. Thankfully it was just a test. Symbolically though Isaac represents Jesus who is also the only son of the father who was sacrificed.

Our genealogy then narrates that Isaac begot Jacob. It is with this ancestor of Jesus that things begin to get hairy. In order to get the family inheritance, along with the conniving of his mother Rachel, Jacob fools his blind father Isaac that he is his older brother Esau. Isaac is initially weary of this ruse but Jacob manages to convince his decrepit father he is indeed the right son. Jacob steals the inheritance and moves on. Thankfully Jacob and Esau make up, but the deed had been done.

Jacob was a busy boy and had twelve children. One of his sons, Judah, who is also mentioned in the genealogy, accidentally slept with his daughter in law Tamar, who had been widowed. She had been promised to Judah's youngest son after her husband's death but that never eventuated. To take revenge on Judah Tamar bizarrely seduced Judah disguised as a prostitute. She bore Judah two sons, Perez who is also named in the genealogy.

The next important people we meet in Jesus' genealogy are Boaz and Ruth. Their love story is told in the Book of Ruth. Ruth was a widow and a foreigner, a Moabite, that is she was not an Israelite, a pagan if you will. She had been good to her mother in law Naomi after Ruth's husband died. Naomi then entrusted Ruth to her kinsman Boaz who loved her and took care of her. Ruth is explicitly mentioned in the genealogy to highlight that Jesus' ancestors were not all Jews. Ruth is also important because she had a child called Obed. Obed was the father of Jesse who was the father of King David. Ruth then is the great grandmother of David.

David was a mixed bag as far as the ancestors of Jesus were concerned. He started off as a nobody, the runt of the litter. When the prophet Samuel came to Jesse's place to choose Israel's new king David was not even presented by his father as he was considered too young. Yet, David was the Lord's anointed making his debut in fine form killing the Philistine giant Goliath. David's star rose then and he was considered a fierce rival of the incumbent king Saul. Saul envied David's success and on a number of occasions sought to kill him. Finally Saul was killed in battle and David was acclaimed king.

Yet with success comes hubris. David's weakness was for the ladies. By the time he'd spied the beautiful Bathsheba sunbaking on her rooftop David had two or three wives. It was lust for Bathsheba that saw David capitulate. Not only did David become an adulterer, but he became a murderer as well. When Bathsheba was found to be with child by David, David ordered Bathsheba's husband Uriah, a soldier in David's army, to sleep with his wife so that it might be thought that Uriah was the child's father. Uriah however, who is portrayed as a model of virtue, did not go back to his house but rather sleeps at the door of King David's throne room emphasising Uriah's fidelity to the king. When David found out Uriah had not visited his wife, to cover his sin, David orders his general Joab to put Uriah in the thick of the fighting so he may be killed, and indeed he was.

Christmas Eve 9:00pm

FIRST READING

First Reading: Isaiah 9:1-7

The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone. You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase' they rejoice in your presence, as men rejoice in your presence, as men rejoice at harvest time, as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.

For the yoke that was weighing on him, the bar across his shoulders, the rod of his oppressor, these you break as on the day of Midian. For all the footgear of battle, every cloak rolled in blood, is burnt and soon consumed by fire.

For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders' and this is the name they give him: Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.

Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end, for the throne of David and for his royal power, which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity. From this time onwards and for ever, the jealous love of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Responsorial Psalm - Sung

Today, today a Saviour has been born;
a Saviour has been born to us.
He is Christ the Lord,
Christ the Lord,
Jesus Christ the Lord.

Sing a new song to the Lord.
Sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord.
Sing to the Lord, bless his name!

Refrain

Proclaim his help day by day.
Tell among the nations his glory.
Tell of his works, tell of his works,
and his wonders among
all the peoples.

Refrain

Let the heavens rejoice
and earth be glad,
let the sea and all within it thunder praise.
All of the land, all that it bears:
rejoice at the presence
of the Lord.

Refrain

SECOND READING

Second Reading: Titus 2:11-14

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything

Cont...that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Come, Holy Spirit of Life
And fill the hearts of your people
and enkindle in them
the fire of your love.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25

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Isaac the father of Jacob,
Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,
Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah, Tamar be-
ing their mother,
Perez was the father of Hezron,
Hezron the father of Ram,
Ram was the father of Amminadab,
Amminadab the father of Nahshon,
Nahshon the father of Salmon,
Salmon was the father of Boaz, Rahab being his
mother,
Boaz was the father of Obed, Ruth being his mother,
Obed was the father of Jesse;
and Jesse was the father of King David.
David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had
been Uriah's wife,
Solomon was the father of Rehoboam,
Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of
Asa,
Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat,
Jehoshaphat the father of Joram,
Joram the father of Azariah,
Azariah was the father of Jotham,
Jotham the father of Ahaz,
Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,
Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh,
Manasseh the father of Amon,
Amon the father of Josiah;
and Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and his
brothers.

Then the deportation to Babylon took place.

After the deportation to Babylon:

Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel,
Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,
Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud,
Abiud the father of Eliakim,

Cont...Eliakim the father of Azor,
 Azor was the father of Zadok,
 Zadok the father of Achim,
 Achim the father of Eliud,
 Eliud was the father of Eleazar,
 Eleazar the father of Matthan,
 Matthan the father of Jacob;
 and Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband
 of Mary; of her was born Jesus who is called Christ.

The sum of generations is therefore: fourteen from Abraham to David; fourteen from David to the Babylonian deportation; and fourteen from the Babylonian deportation to Christ.

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph; being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

*The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son
 and they will call him Emmanuel,
 a name which means 'God-is-with-us.' When Joseph
 woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told
 him to do: he took his wife to his home and, though
 he had not had intercourse with her, she gave birth
 to a son; and he named him Jesus.*

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

THE ANCESTORS OF JESUS ...Continued

Cont...As punishment for David's sin the son Bathsheba bore passed away not long after birth. David had learnt his lesson.

David passed the baton of leadership to his son Solomon who was also a child of Bathsheba. Solomon as we know was famed for his wisdom and initially he was a good king, even being given the honour of building a fine temple to God in Jerusalem. However as the years grew on Solomon became a political animal and sought about cementing alliances with neighbouring kingdoms chiefly via marriage. Solomon also inherited his father's lust. Solomon had numerous wives and concubines. Since many of these women came from different lands and worshipped different gods Solomon went about building temples to all sorts of deities eventually turning his back on the God of his fathers. Despite all the material and spiritual advantages Solomon had he died in apostasy from the faith of Abraham, and his father David.

The other ancestors of Jesus who follow on from Solomon, such as Solomon's son Rehoboam, were a mixture of good and bad. Due to Solomon's apostasy it was predicted the kingdom of Solomon would be divided. Solomon's son Rehoboam sadly presided over this division.

Cont..There was a civil war and the result was Solomon's domain was split. A northern kingdom named Israel and a southern kingdom called Judah eventuated and this division paved the way for future disasters.

St Matthew's genealogy uses some of the names of the kings of Judah as ancestors of Jesus. Kings such as Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah were rare exceptions that tried to reignite faith in the God of Abraham. Other kings mentioned in the genealogy were murderous disasters such as Abijah, Joram, Manasseh (who was particularly sadistic) and Amon.

As this history lesson comes to its conclusion there's one particular thing we can learn and that is Jesus, who is eternally God, and yet deigned to become human, did not enter history in some kind of lily white pristine world, nor did he come from a family that was particularly 'holy'. As we've seen there were some saints but a good deal of sinners in the family line. Despite Jesus' coming into the dark reality of human nature, as evidenced by his complex ancestry, he comes to redeem us. Christ's coming in this feast of Christmas manifests God's plan to reconcile us with himself and to give us hope, that even though we are sinners, even though we're not always the best, there is a divinely inspired optimism. This optimism is found in the baby born in Bethlehem for us and our salvation. Indeed as the prophet Isaiah foretold long ago:

*A child is born for us, and a son is given to us;
 his sceptre of power rests upon his shoulder,
 and his name will be called Messenger
 of great counsel: he is Christ the Lord.*

God love you all.

Fr Mannes OP

PARISH PRAYER

For those who have died let us always remember and pray for all the souls of the faithful departed, may they rest in Christ's Peace. Let us also pray for the recently deceased in our parish and community, and for their loved ones, that they may be consoled by God's Tender Love and Divine Mercy.



Let us pray for the sick, dying and housebound of our parish and community, our families and friends, the elderly, lonely, downhearted; the poor, destitute, oppressed; unemployed, homeless, helpless, addicted, prisoners, sinners and those who have no one to pray for them; for caregivers, ministers to the sick, those in nursing homes and hospice care and those in or recently released from the hospital.

Our sick

Mary Martin, Anne Corver, Barbara Wilson, Una Bell, Mimma Gia, Philip Bailey, Veronica Cornelly, Sue King, Rosa Maria Santos, Ursula Ramsay, Beth Delos Santos, Carmel Slammon, June Pollard, Pamela Sandy, Terry Stephens, Fr Ellis Clifford, Joe Schimizzi, Awny El-Ghitany, Peter Catlin, Elizabeth Webster, Maureen Blood, Anthony Parsonage, Lily Copeland, Neville Caulfield, Una Ford, Suzanne Brown, Alphonsa Bankovsky, Maggie & Dennis McKeon, Michelle Brotohusodo, Brian & Fr Rafael Cabezon OP

Recently Deceased - Gabriel Savas, Romano Ippoliti

Anniversaries

Bill McManus, Labib Jazrawi, Nawall Affas, Teresa Paul, Vivian Lynda Ruiz, Br R. C. Whiting

Christmas Day



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Entrance Antiphon - C.f. Isaiah 9:5

A child is born for us, and a son is given to us;
his sceptre of power rests upon his shoulder,
and his name will be called Messenger
of great counsel.

FIRST READING

First Reading: Isaiah 52:7-10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

How beautiful on the mountains, are the feet of one
who brings good news, who heralds peace, brings
happiness, proclaims salvation, and tells Zion,
'Your God is king!'
Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices, they shout for
joy together, for they see the Lord face to face, as he
returns to Zion. Break into shouts of joy together, you
ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord is consoling his people,
redeeming Jerusalem.
The Lord bares his holy arm in the sight of all the
nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the
salvation of our God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Responsorial Psalm: 97:1-6

All the ends of the earth
have seen the saving power of God.

Sing a new song to the Lord
for he has worked wonders.
His right hand and his holy arm
have brought salvation.

The Lord has made known his salvation;
has shown his justice to the nations.
He has remembered his truth and love
for the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.
Shout to the Lord all the earth,
ring out your joy.

Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp,
with the sound of music.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
acclaim the King, the Lord.

All the ends of the earth
have seen the saving power of God.

SECOND READING

Second Reading: Hebrews 1:1-6

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

At various times in the past and in various different
ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the Son that

Cont...he has appointed to inherit everything and
through whom he made everything there is. He is the
radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his
nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful com-
mand; and now that he has destroyed the defilement
of sin, he has gone to take his place in heaven at the
right hand of divine Majesty. So he is now as far above
the angels as the title which he has inherited is higher
than their own name.

God has never said to any angel: You are my Son, to-
day I have become your father, or I will be a father to
him and he a son to me. Again, when he brings the First-
born into the world, he says: Let all the angels of God
worship him.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

A holy day has dawned upon us.
Come you nations and adore the Lord.
Today a great light has come upon the earth.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Gospel: John 1:1-18

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

In the beginning was the Word:
the Word was with God and the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things came to be, not one thing had
its being but through him.
All that came to be had life in him and that life was the
light of men, a light that shines in the dark, a light that
darkness could not overpower.
A man came, sent by God. His name was John.
He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the
light, so that everyone might believe through him.
He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the
light.
The Word was the true light that enlightens all men;
and he was coming into the world.
He was in the world that had its being through him,
and the world did not know him.
He came to his own domain and his own people did
not accept him. But to all who did accept him he gave
power to become children of God, to all who believe
in the name of him who was born not out of human
stock or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God him-
self.

The Word was made flesh, he lived among us,
and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only
Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.
John appears as his witness. He proclaims:
'This is the one of whom I said: He who comes after me
ranks before me because he existed before me.'
Indeed, from this fullness we have, all of us, received -
yes, grace in return for grace, since, though the Law
was given through Moses, grace and truth have come
through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; it is
the only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart, who
has made him known.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Communion Antiphon - C.f. Psalm 97:3

All the ends of the earth
have seen the salvation of our God.

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FREED FOR JOY

Christmas.

*Fr Richard Finn OP directs our attention
to the infant Jesus as Prince of Peace
and source of our joy.*

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light." At last, the journeys' end. For there have been different paths. Mary and Joseph, having travelled down from Galilee, at last arrive weary into Bethlehem. The shepherds, making their way down from the hills in the surrounding countryside, will soon reach the stable. A few more days and the magi will have crossed far greater distances, followed the star to this same end. And at the end of these three journeys, the child who is the glory of God and peace to men and women.

Each of these journeys captures or reflects something of even longer, harder, travels. In Mary and Joseph we see something of Israel's journey towards the Promised Land. This was the exodus journey out of slavery through a wilderness beset with trials, the darkness of infidelity to the covenant, the persecution of the prophets, dark days of foreign invasion and the desecration of God's holy nation. Encapsulated in the magi's pilgrimage, lies the gentiles' long search for God, the darkness of idolatry, and perhaps the guiding light of reason. And, then, the shepherds who live in the fields, a journey made by the homeless and migrant labourers, by the marginalised outsiders who contend against the darkness of both material deprivation and social exclusion.

All find their journey's end in the Christ child. It isn't simply that each of these travels finish at the same point, but in this common ending the travellers themselves find a new commonality. What does the angel say? 'I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people.'

That's why Isaiah can prophesy that 'all the footgear of battle, every cloak rolled in blood, is burnt and consumed by fire.' For the child in the cradle is the Prince of Peace, the one in whom enmity and social injustice is to be overcome by God's grace, by the forgiveness of sins. As St. Bernard of Clairvaux once wrote, God 'could say from the beginning: "My thoughts are thoughts of peace, not of affliction."' Father, Son and Holy Spirit live in perfect peace. But we do not think like this, live like this, "for who has known the mind of the Lord and who has been his counsellor? Therefore the thought of peace came down to be a work of peace: the Word became flesh and now dwells among us.'

As we worship this child, sing God's praises this Christmas, we can know with relief that God has acted to save us from ourselves, to heal us of our many conflicts. And look again at where we find this new unity in Christ – in 'a joy to be shared by the whole people.' Christian unity is found and founded in that shared joy which is the presence within and among us of the Holy Spirit.

Cont...Of course, we can sometimes be nervous of joy, and with some reason. After all, there are those who are tempted to whoop it up regardless of others, of their sufferings. The ghetto-blasters and the i-pod can each be symbols of a joy that is sought in isolation from neighbours, either deafening for, or deaf to, those around us. Some look for joy in the oblivion of alcoholic excess or drug-induced euphoria, stepping out from a mundane world they find empty or just not enough. In the process they grow less and less capable of life in the real world. Perhaps more common is a fear of disappointment, a sort of scar tissue which forms over our various hurts, a wariness about joys that will inevitably be soured, so we stop short of a happiness we fear to lose.

Christianity is sensitive to this last fear, already knows that the crucifixion is implicit in the nativity. It's not accidental that there's no room for the Christ-child at the inn: rejection meets his very arrival. But the joy of the Holy Spirit runs through, runs beneath, real sufferings, real grief, like an underground current that at the right time breaks surface and overflows, giving new hope in place of despair. It wells up in faith, trust in God's infinite goodness, His providence. It issues today in a joyous festival, a liturgy that practises for the endless and perfect joy of heaven.

There's a personal journey that still continues, and each community has its journey as well, as we struggle for friendship, for the discipleship asked of us by the Christ child. But we see in this first Christmas the grace which now draws us to into the eternal joy of God's presence. At Christmas we practise for that joy as we give thanks and praise. The angels are our models: their singing is the template for the heavenly life in which we shall rejoice in God, and with God. We journey on with new heart and purpose as the angelic chorus rings in our ears.

"A SON IS GIVEN TO US " (Isa. 9:5)

To Watson Parish and the Parishioners!

May the God Child who comes to us as promised will shower upon us a rain of HOPE that sustain us in our journey and will make us a seed of LIGHT in our world that is wounded and in need of HEALING.

Wishing you ALL the best of Christmas Blessings and a year full of ADUNDANCE and PROSPERITY!

Greetings From the Dominican Sisters with the children of Timor Leste

**Ever grateful for your untiring support
for our mission**



These are our girls in the Internado whom Watson Parish is supporting. There are 48 girls this time.

PARISH RENEWAL 2022

Parish renewal continues to be a focus in Blackfriars Parish, with several initiatives taking place in 2022.

Earlier in the year, Holy Rosary Church and Holy Cross Anglican Church organised a series of get-togethers for kids under the banner of the Holy Roundabout Youth Group.

In the lead up to Easter, both face to face and online Lenten preparation programs were run, with the latter including both Holy Rosary and Holy Cross parishioners.



While 2020 and 2021 saw adult Alphas being run, this year saw a Mums and Bubs Alpha in the parish centre. Following this, a Women's Faith Circle was launched and continues to meet fortnightly (see contact details on the back of the bulletin).

In October, a submission was made by a group of Blackfriars parishioners on a proposed Diocesan Pastoral Council, following invitations in the bulletin for input on the proposal.

Leading up to the Feast of Christ the King, and foreshadowing next year's 60th anniversary of the establishment of the parish, was an invitation to pray for continuing renewal of the parish. The six-week period of prayer for parish renewal then lead into Advent, during which both online and face to face programs have been run.

The parish has also been recognised for leadership in faith-based activities beyond the parish, for example hosting and organising an online *Laudato Si'* dialogue and the Nativity Festival held at Holy Cross Church.

This is a time of change and uncertainty but also an opportunity for further renewal initiatives, and for ongoing growth and sharing in parish faith life. If you have any thoughts on parish renewal in 2023, please feel free to share them with the parish office.

We wish you a very happy, safe and holy Christmas. We also take this opportunity to wish you a peaceful New Year in which we hope you consider taking part in our parish renewal endeavours. Thank you to Fr Mannes and the parish office for their support during the year.

Parish Renewal Team

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Father God,
When your precious Son
became a tiny baby
in a stable in Bethlehem in poverty
and simplicity,
you changed our world.
As we imagine those surroundings,
we join with the shepherds and the
wise men in wonder and praise.
We thank you for our material lives,
praise you for our spiritual lives,
and trust in you for our eternal life.
Amen.



Thank You



In another year of many challenges it's good to recall that despite all the negativity the Christmas story gives us hope. God taking on a human nature is at the heart of our celebration, this is good news because God is not above our torment, our sorrow, our dismay.

Rather than magically making all sorrows disappear God embraces it and transforms it into a way to transcend the purely earthly condition.

As we move on to a new year I would like to thank you all for your support to the parish and I pray that your Christmas and New Year may be blessed by the babe of Nazareth.

With Br Francis, and members of the Parish Team, I would like to thank all parishioners for your generosity and help during the year.

We have a huge list of people to acknowledge.

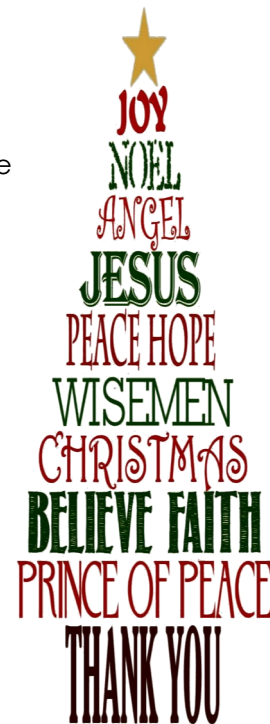
'Thank You' to members of the Parish Finance Council.

'Thank You' Members of the Renewal Team.

'Thank You' to the Acolytes, Readers, Musicians & Choir, Catechists, Counters, Pastoral Care, Social Function members, Flower Lady, Maintenance, St Vincent de Paul, Altar Linen / Sacred Vessel Carers, Prayer & Reflection Groups, Sausage Sizzlers, Garden Crew and all the other quiet achievers who contribute to the life of our wonderful Parish!

God love you all. You're all in my prayers.

Fr Mannes OP



TO LOOK AT THE WORLD WITH NEW EYES

'Now of course, the birth of any baby is a remarkable and beautiful thing; the love between husband and wife, or between parent and child, is truly a sign that points us towards the source of that love which is God himself, the mystery of love at the heart of all existence. If we are able to see a new-born child, or witness the love that passes between two people, and not be moved to tears of joy, then it is because life has hardened our hearts too much.

'But the shepherds know that in this particular child, in this particular time and place, they are encountering something much more. The angels have told them that this child, wrapped in swaddling cloths, is Christ, the Lord, the Saviour of the world. Their little glimpse of heaven has encouraged them to go back to look at the world with new eyes, to see the real meaning of events that look, outwardly, perfectly ordinary.'

Excerpt by Fr Richard Ounsworth OP