

Catholic Parish of Blackfriars

Issue 5
25 December 2017
Year B

Under the care of the Dominican Fathers



VERITAS



HOLY ROSARY CHURCH

Parish Priest
Fr Kieran Adams OP

Assistant Priests
Fr Rafael Cabezon OP
Fr Bernie Maxwell OP

Holy Rosary Church
Cnr Phillip Avenue &
Antill Street, Watson ACT

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Office Staff
Jacquie Cortese
Jim Smith

Office Hours
Monday, Tuesday,
Thursday, Friday
9.00am—12.30pm

Parish Council
Andrew Blakey

Mass times
Wed 5.30pm
Tues & Thurs 6.45am
Fri 5.30pm

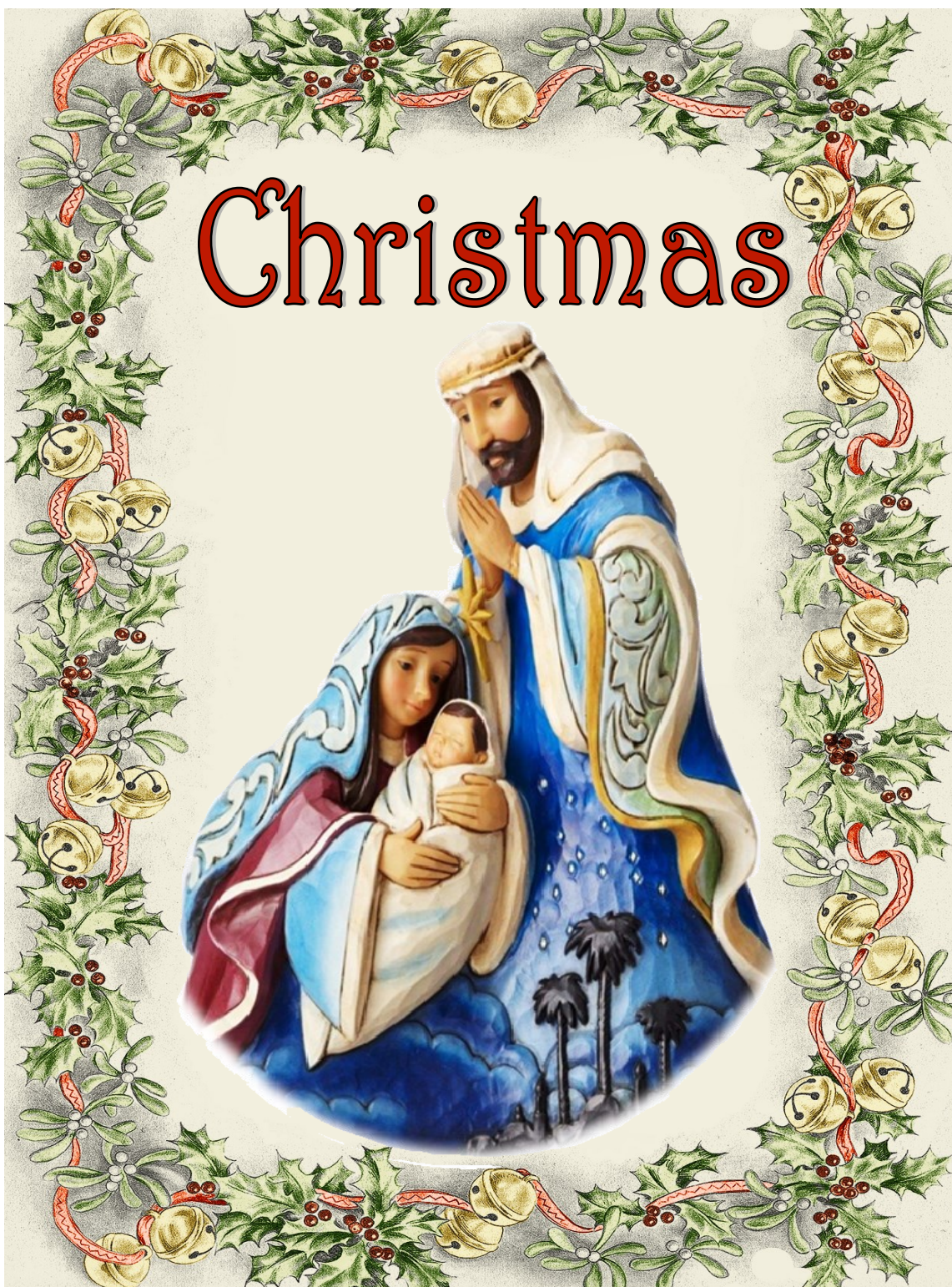
Saturday 5pm (Vigil)
Sunday 8am, 10am & 5pm

9am Mass Saturday & Public
Holidays
excluding Mondays

Pray the Rosary
Wed & Fri before 5.30pm Mass
Saturday after 9am Mass
and First Saturday each month
3.30pm

Reconciliation
Saturday 12pm—12.30pm
and 4pm—4.30pm

**If you are in Urgent need of
a Priest Call - 6248 8253**



A warm welcome is extended to guests & parishioners celebrating our Eucharist today.

ENTRANCE	A child is born for us, a son given to us; dominion is laid on his shoulder, and he shall be called Wonderful-Counsellor.
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!
COMMUNION	All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
READINGS	Isaiah 52:7-10 Hebrews 1:1-6 Gospel: John 1:1-5. 9-14

CHRISTMAS IN OUR PARISH

Every Christmas the Christ Child in the manger at Bethlehem invites us to stop and to pay attention to the things that are especially important in our lives: our loved ones, our family and friends - and our loving God who holds us in existence, 'in the palm of his hand'.

When Christmas is over, an excellent way to grow in faith and to develop one's relationship with God is to be part of our community as we celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays.
You will be most welcome!

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.**

OFFICE CLOSED

**The office will be closed from Friday 22nd Dec
until Monday 8th Jan. To contact a Priest
please call 6248 8253 any other urgent
matters 0448 737 700**

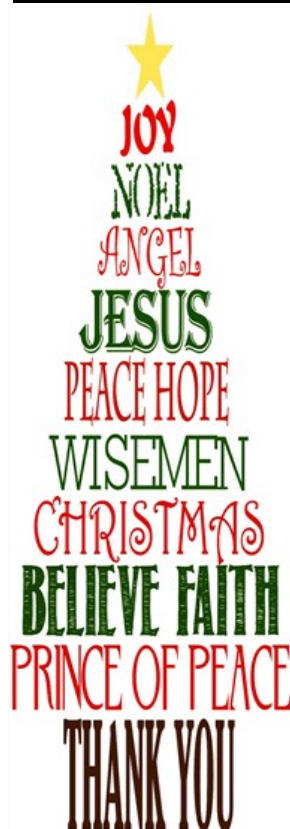
THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

Christmas love stops the cooking to hug the child. Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the husband. Love is kind, though harried and tired. Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way.

BEGINNING

Christmas began in the heart of God.
It is complete only when it reaches the heart of man. The hinge of history is on the door of a Bethlehem stable.

THANK YOU



THANK YOU

THANK YOU

Fr Kieran, Fr Rafael and Fr Bernie as well as members of the Parish Team 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 the members Parish Finance Council & Parish Pastoral Council, to the Acolytes, Readers, Eucharistic Ministers, School of Religion, Musicians & Choir, Flower Ladies, Pastoral Care Groups, Altar Linen Carers, Data Projector operators, Counters & Collectors, St Vincent de Paul members, Prayer & Reflection Groups, Social Function Organisers, Maintenance, Garden Care, BBQ helpers, Children's Christmas Mass & Crib Organisers, the four ladies that help in the office & all the other quiet achievers who contribute to the life of our wonderful Parish!

Merry Christmas to all.

CHRISTMAS

- Meister Eckhart

Christmas speaks to the depths of our hearts. With the demands which press on us at this time of the year, we may feel we fall short in 'doing justice' to Christmas. This is not surprising as it celebrates the mystery of the Infinite One taking human form and coming to live with us - to let us know how deeply we are loved and how important each of us is. It's God's gift to us beyond words! 'What good does it do if Christ is born in Bethlehem but is not born in our hearts?'

ARCHBISHOP'S CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The Archbishop's Christmas Appeal for 2017 is conducted at all Christmas Masses throughout the Archdiocese and will again have the funds raised split. Our support will continue for **the ecumenical Christmas Bowl appeal** and its work in Australia and beyond. Contributions will be made to support **Diocesan** projects locally, within Wilcannia Forbes Diocese as well as the Wilcannia Hub project, and globally, within the Dioceses of Otukpo, Nigeria and Tagbilaran, Cebu, Philippines for their Diocesan Seminary. Other endeavours will include support towards: **Providing** a school bus to transport young children to school from poor surrounding villages within the La Salette Matha Province in India and student assistance for those in need at Bethlehem University in the Holy Land.

PLEASE PRAY

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: Lynn & Richard Bale, Elizabeth Cronin,
Fr Ellis Clifford, Philip Bailey, Dion Convine,
Awny El-Ghitany, Edith Jensen, Mary Harrigan,
Patricia Zorzi, Maureen Blood, Charles Ryan,
Barbara Wilson, Anne Corver, Joebert Tabiola,
Joe Schimizzi, Alexia Harris, Mary Bui, Elsie Laughton,
Zelma McManus Maria Martiniello, Beth Delos Santos,
Rosa Maria Santos, Rosemary Denmead,
Elizabeth Webster, Mimma Giampietro,
Recently Deceased: Mollie Bouquet
Anniversaries: Bill McManus

POPE FRANCIS

Christmas is both a mystery of hope and of sadness, noting how the arrival of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem points us to the indifference of many in the face of those who are discarded. The same indifference is present in modern society "when Christmas becomes a feast where the protagonists are ourselves, rather than Jesus; when the lights of commerce cast the light of God into the shadows; when we are concerned for gifts but cold towards those who are marginalized,".

However, Christmas is also a sign of hope, because despite the darkness in our lives, God's light "shines out." His gentle light doesn't make us fearful, but rather, "God who is in love with us, draws us to himself with his tenderness, born poor and fragile among us, as one of us." Pope Francis encourages everyone to let themselves be challenged by Jesus, and walk toward him with trust from the part of us in which we ourselves feel marginalized and limited. Take time to pause and look at the crib where Jesus was born, imagining the "light, peace, utmost poverty and rejection" that accompanied his birth.

"Let us enter into the real Nativity with the shepherds, taking to Jesus all that we are, our alienation, our unhealed wounds. Then, in Jesus we will enjoy the flavour of the true spirit of Christmas: the beauty of being loved by God."

CHRISTMAS EVANGELIST

A man says to evangelist lady who is preaching in the street just before Christmas: "I know what YOU are! You're a 'happy clapper'". "Oh no I'm not!" she said. "I'm a Walkie Talkie!"



TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY

The first people to experience the coming of the saviour were shepherds, those lowly, uneducated ones who lived among the animals. They were not the only ones, of course, but they were the first to welcome the saviour.

It was no accident that such lowly people would be called in first to pay homage to the saviour. It is to the lowly, after all, that Christ came first as Lord and Redeemer. The circumstances of his birth testify to that: his mother "wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the place where travellers lodged."

Christmas is the great annual renewal of our being a Church filled with wonder at the nearness of God. The nearer we are to our God, the nearer we should become to those lowly ones who are God's special ones.

We are challenged at Christmas to do what Jesus and the angels did: bring the good news of redemption to the outcast and the lowly. The "tidings of great joy (are) to be shared by the whole people," and no one is to be left out, not even the most hopeless or despicable person.

Our holy Mother (the Church) does not neglect the care of the poor or omit to provide for their necessities; but, rather, drawing them to her with a mother's embrace, and knowing that they bear the person of Christ Himself, who regards the smallest gift to the poor as a benefit conferred on Himself, holds them in great honour.

She does all she can to help them; she provides homes and hospitals where they may be received, nourished, and cared for all the world over, and watches over these.

Gerald Darring

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.



"The grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men" (Tit 2:11). The words of the Apostle Paul reveal the mystery of this holy night: the grace of God has appeared, his gift is free; in the Child given unto us the love of God is made visible. It is a night of glory, that glory proclaimed by the angels in Bethlehem and also by us today all over the world. It is a night of joy, because from this day forth, and for all times, the infinite and eternal God is God with us: he is not far off, we need not search for him in the heavens or in mystical notions; he is close, he is been made man and will never distance himself from our humanity, which he has made his own. It is a night of light: that light, prophesied by Isaiah (cf. 9:1), which would illumine those who walk in darkness, has appeared and enveloped the shepherds of Bethlehem (cf. Lk 2:9).

The shepherds simply discover that "unto us a child is born" (Is 9:5) and they understand that all this glory, all this joy, all this light converges to one single point, that sign which the angel indicated to them: "you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" (Lk 2:12). This is the enduring sign to find Jesus. Not just then, but also today. If we want to celebrate Christmas authentically, we need to contemplate this sign: the fragile simplicity of a small newborn, the meekness of where he lies, the tender affection of the swaddling clothes. God is there.

With this sign the Gospel reveals a paradox: it speaks of the emperor, the governor, the mighty of those times, but God does not make himself present there; he does not appear in the grand hall of a royal palace, but in the poverty of a stable; not in pomp and show, but in the simplicity of life; not in power, but in a smallness which surprises. In order to discover him, we need to go there, where he is: we need to bow down, humble ourselves, make ourselves small. The Child who is born challenges us: he calls us to leave behind fleeting illusions and go to the essence, to renounce our insatiable claims, to abandon our endless dissatisfaction and sadness for something we will never have. It will help us to leave these things behind in order to rediscover in the simplicity of the God-child, peace, joy and the meaning of life. Let us allow the Child in the manger to challenge us, but let us also allow ourselves to be challenged by the children of today's world, who are not lying in a cot caressed with the affection of a mother and father, but rather suffer the squalid "mangers that devour dignity:" hiding underground to escape bombardment, on the pavements of a large city, at the bottom of a boat overlaid with immigrants. Let us allow ourselves to be challenged by the children who are not allowed to be born, by those who cry because no one satiates their hunger, by those who have not toys in their hands, but rather weapons.

The mystery of Christmas, which is light and joy, questions and unsettles us, because it is at once both a mystery of hope and of sadness. It bears within itself the taste of sadness, inasmuch as love is not received, and life discarded. This happened to Joseph and Mary, who found the doors closed, and placed Jesus in a manger, "because there was no place for them in the inn" (v. 7). Jesus was born rejected by some and regarded by many others with indifference. Today also the same indifference can exist, when Christmas becomes a feast where the protagonists are ourselves, rather than Jesus; when the lights of commerce cast the light of God into the shadows; when we are concerned for gifts but cold towards those who are marginalized.

Yet Christmas has essentially a flavour of hope because, notwithstanding the darker aspects of our lives, God's light shines out. His gentle light does not make us fear; God who is in love with us, draws us to himself with his tenderness, born poor and fragile among us, as one of us. He is born in Bethlehem, which means "house of bread." In this way he seems to tell us that he is born as bread for us; he enters life to give us his life; he comes into our world to give us his love. He does not come to devour or to command but to nourish and to serve. Thus there is a direct thread joining the manger and the cross, where Jesus will become bread that is broken: it is the direct thread of love which is given and which saves us, which brings light to our lives, and peace to our hearts.

The shepherds grasped this in that night. They were among the marginalised of those times. But no one is marginalised in the sight of God and it was precisely they who were invited to the Nativity. Those who felt sure of themselves, self-sufficient, were at home with their possessions; the shepherds instead "went with haste" (cf. Lk 2:16). Let us allow ourselves also to be challenged and convened by Jesus. Let us go to him with trust, from that area in us we feel to be marginalized, from our own limitations. Let us touch the tenderness which saves. Let us draw close to God who draws close to us, let us pause to look upon the crib, and imagine the birth of Jesus: light, peace, utmost poverty and rejection. Let us enter into the real Nativity with the shepherds, taking to Jesus all that we are, our alienation, our unhealed wounds. Then, in Jesus we will enjoy the flavour of the true spirit of Christmas: the beauty of being loved by God. With Mary and Joseph we pause before the manger, before Jesus who is born as bread for my life. Contemplating his humble and infinite love, let us say to him: thank you, thank you because you have done all this for me.

Merry Christmas Merry Christmas Merry Christmas Merry Christmas Merry Christmas Merry Christmas

Christmas gift suggestions: To your enemy, forgiveness.
To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart.
To a customer, service. To all, charity. To every child, a good example. To yourself, respect.

The simple shepherds heard the voice of an angel and found their lamb; the wise men saw the light of a star and found their wisdom. "Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection".

Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return but rejoices in giving to those who can't.
Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.