

Catholic Parish of Blackfriars

Issue 5
25th December 2018
Year C

Under the care of the Dominican Fathers



VERITAS



HOLY ROSARY CHURCH

Parish Priest
Fr Kieran Adams OP

Assistant Priests
Fr Rafael Cabezón OP
Fr Bernie Maxwell OP

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

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PO Box 900, Dickson
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Office Staff
Jacquie Cortese
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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

Christmas

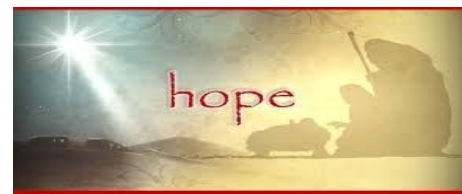


Peace Love Hope

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, 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.
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	First Reading: Isaiah 52:7-10 Second Reading: Hebrews 1:1-6 Gospel: John 1:1-18



CHRISTMAS GIFTS

To your Enemy - Forgiveness.
To an Opponent - Tolerance.
To a Customer - Service.
To a Friend - your Heart.
To ALL - Charity.
To a Child - a Good Example.
To Yourself - Respect

WELCOME



Every Christmas, the coming of the Christ Child brings other activities to a stop – and helps us re-evaluate what is precious in life especially the all-important relationships with our loved ones, our family and friends. It also signifies God's enduring presence to us – the God who loved us so much that he took on human form to be close to us and who continues to hold us 'in the palm of his hand'.

A good way to carry forward this deeper dimension of life is to be part of the parish family here at Holy Rosary Church when we celebrate Mass on Sundays, we recall God's great love and care for us.

Come and pray with us - you will be very welcome!

Wishing you and your family a happy and a Holy Christmas with God's richest blessings!

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.

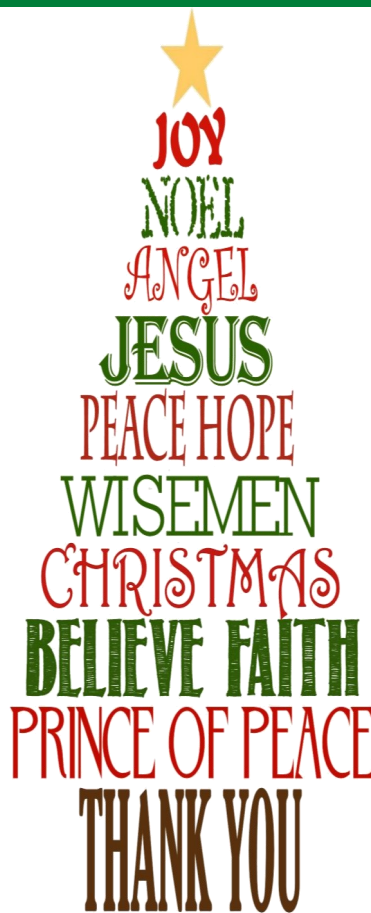
The Lord has made known his salvation;
has shown his justice to the nations.
He has remembered his truth and love
for the house of Israel.

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.

THANK YOU



We share with you the glory, the wonder,
the miracle of this Beautiful Holy Season.

Fr Kieran, Fr Rafael, 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
members of the Parish Pastoral
Council & Parish Finance Council.
'Thank You' to the Acolytes,
Readers, Eucharistic Ministers,
Musicians & Choir, School of
Religion Catechists, Counters
& Collectors, Social Function,
Pastoral Care, Flower Ladies,
Maintenance, St Vincent de Paul,
Altar Linen/Sacred Vessel Carers,
Prayer & Reflection Groups,
Sausage Sizzlers, and all the other
quiet achievers who contribute to
the life of our wonderful Parish!

THE ARCHBISHOP'S CHRISTMAS APPEAL FOR 2018

The Appeal will be conducted at all Christmas Masses throughout the Archdiocese and will again have the funds raised split.

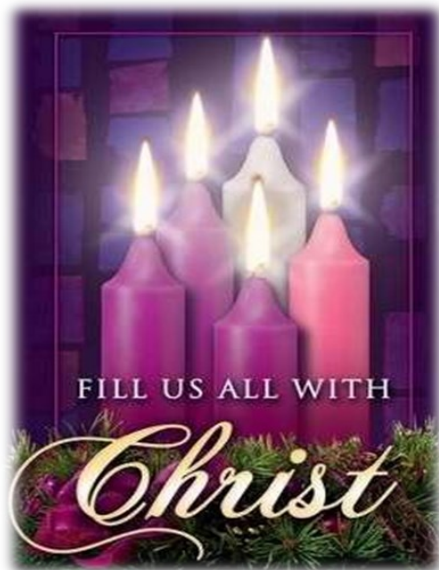
- Our support will continue for **the ecumenical Christmas Bowl appeal** and its work in **bringing hope and opportunity** to those in need in Vanuatu, Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Syria and Pakistan.
- Contributions will be made to support **Diocesan** projects locally, within Wilcannia Forbes Diocese and Broome Diocese.
- **Helping** helping the rural parish of St Joseph's, Battambang in Cambodia to provide improved and extended education opportunities to students beyond their infant years to primary, secondary and tertiary levels whilst also seeking to improve the self-sufficiency of the parish and their community is envisaged, projects focused on helping the poor within the La Salette Matha Province in India, and student assistance for those in need at Bethlehem University in the Holy Land.

The best way to keep Christ in Christmas
is to keep Mass in Christmas.

WHY SHEPHERDS?

Christmas

Fr Fergus Kerr OP preaches on the visit of the shepherds to the infant Jesus.



The first visitors to the infant Jesus that St Matthew mentions are 'wise men from the East', the Magi, led by their astrology, and consultation via King Herod with the chief priests and scribes. No doubt Matthew assumes they came from Persia or Babylon (Iran or Iraq), perhaps priests of the Zoroastrian religion (represented today by the Parsees in India) — perhaps signalling

an 'inter-faith' dimension, so to speak, which culminates in the Lord Jesus's last words — 'Go and make disciples of all nations' (Matt 28:19).

According to St Luke, however, the first to visit the infant Jesus were shepherds, minding their flocks near Bethlehem. They come as a result of pure revelation. They are surrounded by the glory of the Lord, terrified, told not to be afraid, and so on, the usual circumstances for an angelic message.

'The good news of great joy for all the people', they are told, is that 'there is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord'. They consulted among themselves, decided to go into the city, found Mary and Joseph and Jesus, and 'made known what had been told them about this child' — at which 'all were amazed', while Mary 'treasured it all and pondered it in her heart'.

Over the centuries, obviously, Matthew's Magi have largely eclipsed Luke's shepherds. Indeed, if relics were the measure of fame, there is no contest. The relics of the Magi may be visited in a wonderfully embellished shrine in Cologne cathedral, where they have been since 1162 as part of the loot brought back from Italy by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. After the Reformation, the shepherds pop up in Christmas hymns, such as 'While shepherds watched their flocks by night, all seated on the ground', by the Irish Protestant Nahum Tate (1652-1715).

But why shepherds?

One story goes as follows. Luke, it is claimed, is the Evangelist who makes the 'option for the poor' his central theme. Hitherto excluded people are now to be honoured, and outsiders to be brought into the community, such as tax collectors, women, and the poor — the first of whom, then, would be the shepherds. For, according to some Jewish writings, herdsmen were on the list of those ineligible to be witnesses in legal cases since they grazed their flocks on other people's lands and were thus (like tax collectors) archetypal sinners.

The more classes of people the Pharisees excluded, the more inclusive Jesus looks. Shepherds have to be brought in from the cold.

Fine — except that, throughout the Bible, shepherds have a very positive profile. We hear a great deal about *wicked* shepherds, it's true, especially in Ezekiel, feeding themselves rather than the flock, clothing themselves with wool and slaughtering the fat sheep, and so on. But such savage critiques only confirm the importance of the shepherd imagery that applies to leaders, whose task lies in protecting and guiding their people as a shepherd tends his flock.

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WHY SHEPHERDS?

The Lord himself is our shepherd (Psalm 23). Among biblical 'heroes', Moses, Jacob and of course David, were all literally shepherds, if not for very long, and then figuratively so, in their own histories and especially in subsequent iconography. The shepherd symbolism is everywhere.

Why should it not seem fitting, then, to St Luke, to highlight shepherds as the ones who were divinely chosen to identify the infant Jesus, born in the city of David, near where they tended their sheep?

After all, it was to Bethlehem that the prophet Samuel came in search of a king over Israel: Jesse's youngest son David had to be summoned, indeed, precisely from keeping the sheep (see 1 Samuel 17). Perhaps Luke expected us to assume that, when the angel revealed the good news to them, the shepherds were out in the fields in which David once tended his family's flock. No great leap of imagination is required to conclude that, for Luke, shepherds were the most appropriate class of people to visit the child first — the child descended from David, who inherited the throne of David, the shepherd king, and who would, in due time, identify himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10). In short, the revelation to the shepherds in the hills outside royal David's city seems to embed Jesus from the beginning within this pervasive biblical shepherd imagery and symbolism.

Perhaps we need not choose between these two interpretations. The option for the poor is not incompatible with the identification of the shepherd-king — on the contrary, 'The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep' (John 10:11).

Yet, it surely makes a difference: are the shepherds the first of the despised sinners whom Christ brings into communion with himself, or are they the heralds of the good news that the shepherd has come who will feed his flock, gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom and gently lead those that are with young (Isaiah 40: 13)?

The shepherds returned to their flocks 'glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen'. What they had heard and seen was surely, in the incomparable old metaphor, the birth of the shepherd who would care for his flock throughout their lives, through the valley of the shadow of death, and even beyond, in the 'house of the Lord for ever' (Psalm 23).

Fr Fergus Kerr OP <http://english.op.org/torch>

GOD SPEAKS TO US

As we look into the crib and gaze upon the baby Jesus, we can understand that God is teaching us a lesson about how we are to live. By nature, we can be rather selfish. We often don't like to serve others, we would rather serve ourselves. We don't like to be last, we would rather be first. We would prefer to be higher up, even at the cost of others.

But, in Christmas, God is offering another way. "Come down from your self-made throne and learn from me how to live a life of service," says God. We adore Jesus as God, and now he is our way. God wants more of us than to just visit the manger in awe and wonder. We are to imitate the Child we adore and surrender our lives to him. If we do, he will be with us as the greatest friend we could have, and the real peace and joy of this day will be in our hearts - not just today, but in every day that will follow.

While we rightly reflect on and give thanks for the goodness of those we celebrate these days with, the challenge is to do the same for those others - the ill or dying among our families and friends, the 'black sheep', the one who is struggling. God delights in us even more than we delight in the sounds, sights and tastes of this day. Lord, help us to remember that no failure can destroy the innate beauty and goodness you have installed in each of us. Amen

Fr Sean Cullen Saviour Advent Program Wollongong



ENTRANCE	The Lord said to me: You are my Son. It is I who have begotten you this day.
GOSPEL ACCLAMATION	Alleluia, alleluia! Good News and great joy to all the world: today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord. Alleluia!
READINGS	Isaiah 9:1-7 Titus 2:11-14 Gospel Luke 2:1-14



PSALM: 95:1-3, 11-13

**Today is born our Saviour,
Christ the Lord.**

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

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

Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad,
let the sea and all within it thunder praise,
let the land and all it bears rejoice,
all the trees of the wood shout for joy
at the presence of the Lord for he comes,
he comes to rule the earth.

With justice he will rule the world,
He will judge the peoples with his truth.

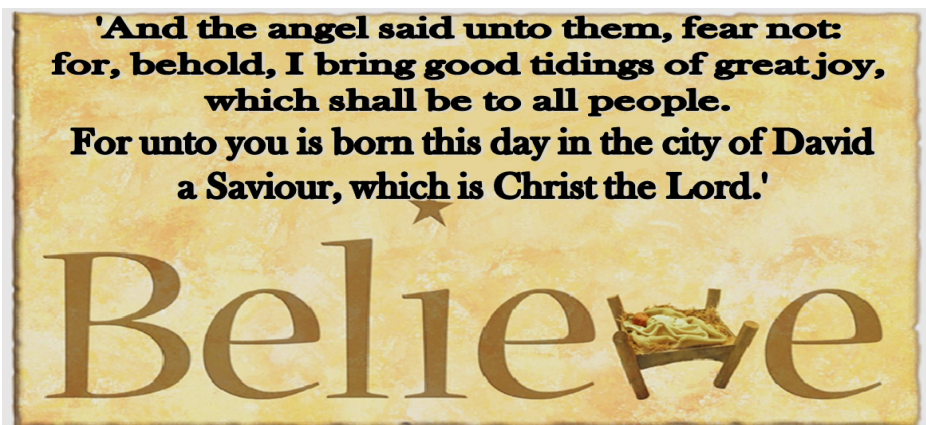
**Today is born our Saviour,
Christ the Lord.**

GROW FAITH

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’.
Wishing you and your family a happy and a holy Christmas!

PRAYERS

In our thoughts and in our prayers please remember those in our community, those who have died or have anniversaries at this time (Bill McManus), also those who are ill, in nursing homes, hospital or homebound.



POPE FRANCIS



Tonight “a great light” shines forth (Is 9:1); the light of Jesus’ birth shines all about us. How true and timely are the words of the prophet Isaiah which we have just heard: “You have brought abundant joy and great rejoicing” (9:2)! Our heart was already joyful in awaiting this moment; now that joy abounds and overflows, for the promise has been at last fulfilled. Joy and gladness are a sure sign that the message contained in the mystery of this night is truly from God. There is no room for doubt; let us leave that to the sceptics who, by looking to reason alone, never find the truth. There is no room for the indifference which reigns in the hearts of those unable to love for fear of losing something. All sadness has been banished, for the Child Jesus brings true comfort to every heart.

Today, the Son of God is born, and everything changes. The Saviour of the world comes to partake of our human nature; no longer are we alone and forsaken. The Virgin offers us her Son as the beginning of a new life.

The true light has come to illumine our lives so often beset by the darkness of sin. Today we once more discover who we are! Tonight we have been shown the way to reach the journey’s end. Now must we put away all fear and dread, for the light shows us the path to Bethlehem. We must not be laggards; we are not permitted to stand idle. We must set out to see our Saviour lying in a manger. This is the reason for our joy and gladness: this Child has been “born to us”; he was “given to us”, as Isaiah proclaims (cf. 9:5). The people who for two thousand years has traversed all the pathways of the world in order to allow every man and woman to share in this joy is now given the mission of making known “the Prince of peace” and becoming his effective servant in the midst of the nations. So when we hear tell of the birth of Christ, let us be silent and let the Child speak. Let us take his words to heart in rapt contemplation of his face. If we take him in our arms and let ourselves be embraced by him, he will bring us unending peace of heart. This Child teaches us what is truly essential in our lives. He was born into the poverty of this world; there was no room in the inn for him and his family. He found shelter and support in a stable and was laid in a manger for animals. And yet, from this nothingness, the light of God’s glory shines forth. From now on, the way of authentic liberation and perennial redemption is open to every man and woman who is simple of heart. This Child, whose face radiates the goodness, mercy and love of God the Father, trains us, his disciples, as Saint Paul says, “to reject godless ways” and the richness of the world, in order to live “temperately, justly and devoutly” (Tit 2:12). In a society so often intoxicated by consumerism and hedonism, wealth and extravagance, appearances and narcissism, this Child calls us to act soberly, in other words, in a way that is simple, balanced, consistent, capable of seeing and doing what is essential. In a world which all too often is merciless to the sinner and lenient to the sin, we need to cultivate a strong sense of justice, to discern and to do God’s will. Amid a culture of indifference which not infrequently turns ruthless, our style of life should instead be devout, filled with empathy, compassion and mercy, drawn daily from the wellspring of prayer.

Like the shepherds of Bethlehem, may we too, with eyes full of amazement and wonder, gaze upon the Child Jesus, the Son of God. And in his presence may our hearts burst forth in prayer: “Show us, Lord, your mercy, and grant us your salvation” (Ps 85:8).

<https://catholicerald.co.uk/news/2015/12/25/christmas-eve-mass-full-text/>