

## The Nativity of the Lord 9.00pm

**First Reading** *Is 9:1-7* A reading from the prophet Isaiah *A son is given to us.*

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 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 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 R. Thanks be to God*

## Second Reading *Ti 2:11-14*

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Titus *God's grace has been revealed to all people.* 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 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 R. Thanks be to God*

## Gospel *Lk 2:1-14*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke *Today a saviour has been born for you.* Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn. In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling

clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'

*The Gospel of the Lord*

**R. Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

## The Nativity of the Lord 9.00am

**First Reading** *Is 62:11-12*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah *Your Saviour is born.*

This the Lord proclaims to the ends of the earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Look, your saviour comes, the prize of his victory with him, his trophies before him'. They shall be called 'The Holy People', 'The Lord's Redeemed'. And you shall be called 'The-sought-after', 'City-not-forsaken.'

*The Word of the Lord R. Thanks be to God*

## Second Reading *Ti 3:4-7*

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Titus *His own compassion saved us.*

When the kindness and love of God our saviour for mankind were revealed, it was not because he was concerned with any righteous actions we might have done ourselves; it was for no reason except his own compassion that he saved us, by means of the cleansing water of rebirth and by renewing us with the Holy Spirit which he has so generously poured over us through Jesus Christ our saviour. He did this so that we should be justified by his grace, to become heirs looking forward to inheriting eternal life.

*The Word of the Lord R. Thanks be to God*

## Gospel *Lk 2:15-20*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

*The shepherds found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.*

Now when the angels had gone from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.' So they hurried away 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.

*The Gospel of the Lord*

**R. Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

## The Nativity of the Lord 5.00pm

**First Reading** *Is 52:7-10*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah *All the ends of the earth shall see the saving power of our God.*

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 R. Thanks be to God*

## Second Reading *Heb 1:1-6*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

*In our own time, God speaks to us through his Son.*

At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son, the Son that 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 command; 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, today 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 R. Thanks be to God*

## Gospel *Jn 1:1-18*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

*The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory.*

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 himself.

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 his 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*

**R. Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

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**2020**

**Christmas  
YEAR B**



## CHRISTMAS THE VACCINE OF HOPE

*Christmas is all about hope. I have experienced some wonderful examples of hopeful living over this eventful year.*

Here are some "snapshots".

**There were the bushfires on the South Coast.** The trauma is ongoing for those affected. I witnessed hope in hearing of the generosity of heart shown by the frightened gathered at the Moruya Showgrounds. There was the raw courage shown by the two women who saved our Cobargo Church and belltower. I witnessed Fr Luke Verrell and others offering hope to the people at the Bega Emergency Centre.

The three families I visited who had lost their homes along the Eurobodalla Rd impressed me deeply by their Christian faith and hopeful determination to build again. Sadly, this rebuilding still remains a dream.

There was hope and excitement from some who pointed out to me small green shoots starting to come from charred trees. South Coast families expressed much hope and thanks from the incredible generosity of Canberra people who sent immediate financial help to those most in need.

Social welfare agencies continue to provide hope for the homeless, hungry and mentally ill.

There is also the hope that the long and devastating drought is finally breaking. The rains have come. The canola fields near Harden are healthy and brilliant in gold. The vision exudes hope. Travellers are stopping to take photos and breathe in the clean air. It is a total change from smoky and hail damaged Canberra in January. Even the farmers themselves seem rather upbeat and hopeful for the immediate future. The despair surrounding suicides and mental health issues remain a threat to hope.

## The Covid-19 global catastrophe has really worn us out.

We are tired. Schoolteachers have exhausted themselves by offering so much hope to their students and parents. They have kept our schools open as much as possible during the threatening weeks.

Whole families studying and working from homes has not been easy. People are turning to prayer and silence in greater numbers.

The sick, aged and vulnerable appreciate the extra on-line services to help our reflections in these times.

The youth, as always, have shown us an example of on-line networking.

Compassionate people talk of the hope that a phone call or visit gives the house bound. Grandparents delight to see their children and grandchildren on FaceTime, Viber or whatever is electronically available. In so many ways, the underlining pandemic of loneliness and isolation is conquered by all these "little miracles" of practical hope and closeness, as Pope Francis would phrase it.

In 2021, we await in hope a vaccine. Will it ever come? We hope it does. In the meantime, we continue to offer others the "new normal" of a kindly smile and generous word and help. It is all part now of the vaccine of hope we offer. This is especially shared at Christmas.

Over the centuries, Christians have knelt in awe before the Holy Family at the Bethlehem stable. They have done so in greater fervour in times of war, pestilence and catastrophe. They have done so not simply to draw personal hope for life after death.

They have prayed too for the communitarian hope in the here and now arising from the humility of the Bethlehem stable.

This is our hope. This is our Christmas prayer. Emmanuel – God is with us! Do not be afraid!

A prayerful and Happy Christmas and New Year to all!

**Archbishop Christopher Prowse  
Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and  
Goulburn**





# Welcome Home For Christmas

We live in seasons. These include summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring. Each season comes with a difference, adding flavour to life and living. Similarly, the Church's Liturgical Year is celebrated in Seasons. It begins with the preparatory season of Advent leading to the celebration of Christmas and later continue with the penance season of Lent followed by Easter.

Within these liturgical seasons especially Christmas and Easter, we gather in numbers each year to encounter and celebrate God's hospitality to humanity in the Liturgy of the Mass.

Since the last Christmas, we have as individuals, parish and people experienced displacement and disconnections. We were displaced by the bushfires, and the flash floods. With the global pandemic, we are experiencing an ongoing disconnection from our loved ones, from each other and from our valued routines due to the ever-changing COVID restrictions.

In hindsight, 2020 will also be remembered globally and in our parish, as the year that went without a large gathering to celebrate God's hospitality to humanity expressed in the Christ Event at Easter. And with the gradual re-opening of venues, we have not return to full capacity just yet, with many of our community members unable to participate as before.

In view of these shared experiences in 2020 as a parish, we have adopted the Advent theme: *Welcome Home for Christmas*, in order to invite all who have been unable to participate in the community fellowship throughout the year back to the Parish for Christmas.

We, therefore, welcome children together with their families, all the individuals in our community and visitors to our parish.

Welcome home to the Parish of St Bernard's and Merry Christmas.

**Fr. Martins**

## CHRISTMAS PRAYER

*Loving God, we give thanks for your abundant love as we celebrate the birth of the Christ-Child - your love made present in our humanity. This Christmas we pray especially for those who are suffering all over our world, that they may experience the love and hope of the birth of Jesus*

*Jesus did not come into the world to take away pain and suffering but to fill it with his presence and love.*  
(Clausel).

## The Archbishop's Christmas Appeal for 2020

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, Africa, Asia and Oceania.

Contributions will be made to support Diocesan projects locally, within Wilcannia Forbes Diocese and globally, within the Dioceses of Otukpo, Nigeria, Thamarassery, India and Gizo Diocese PNG. Within Gizo Diocese assistance will support construction of a multipurpose hall at a school for migrant children from Kiribati and Malaita in Nusabaruku.

Other international endeavours will include support towards projects focused on helping the poor within the La Salette Matha Province and by the Society of the Oblates of the Sacred Heart (OSH) in India; and further student assistance for those in need at Bethlehem University in the Holy Land.

An article with detail on this year's Archbishop's Christmas Appeal is also in the December edition of the Catholic Voice along with a Coupon for people wishing to send in their donation .

**PARISH CHRISTMAS  
LUNCH**  
**ALL ARE WELCOME.**  
**PLEASE BRING A PLATE  
TO SHARE.**



## THE CHRIST CANDLE



**Christmas is here!  
The Christ-Child is born!  
Emmanuel - God with us!**

The **Christ Candle** is lit as a symbol of our prayer and active response, a Christmas symbol of hope, that is envisioned as bringing a little light into the darkness of the world in which we live, especially during these challenging times.

### The Christmas Symbols

*The Crib is a place where cows, sheep and animals come to eat. It is appropriate that Jesus - who is food for the life of the world - should be lying in a wooden manger. The wood of the crib will become the wood of the cross, that place where Jesus gives himself completely as food for the life of the world.*

*The Christmas Lights represent the light and warmth of God, especially in the northern hemisphere winter but here in Australia they light up our nights just as the Christ-Child lights up our lives.*

*(adapted from Fr Ron Rolheiser OMI)*

### THE JESSE TREE IS FINISHED

The ornaments of the Jesse tree tell the story of God in the Old Testament, connecting the Advent season with the faithfulness of God across history

### Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve  
6pm Family Mass  
8.30pm Christmas Carols  
9pm Christmas Eve Mass

Christmas Day  
9 am Christmas Day Mass  
5pm Christmas Day Mass



## LITURGY OF THE WORD

**The Nativity of the Lord - 6.00pm**

**First Reading Is 62:1-5**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah  
*The Lord takes delight in you.*  
About Zion I will not be silent, about Jerusalem 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*

**R. Thanks be to God**

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

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles  
*Paul spoke of Christ, the son of David.*  
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, 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*

**R. Thanks be to God**

**Gospel Mt 1:18-25**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew  
*Mary will give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus.*  
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 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.

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