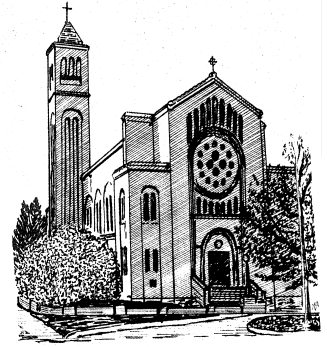


St Christopher's Cathedral Parish, Canberra

(including St Peter Chanel's Church, Yarralumla)



The Holy Family
Year B
31 December 2023

Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn
Archbishop: Most Rev Christopher Prowse DD STD
Administrator: Fr Trenton van Reesch
Assistant Priest: Fr Alexander Osborne



YEAR OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT
August 2023– 2024

PARISH OFFICE

55 Franklin Street, Forrest ACT 2603 (02) 6239 9846 (ph)
cathedral@cg.org.au www.cg.org.au/cathedral
Online Payments Link: www.bpoint.com.au/payments/sccc

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED FROM: FRIDAY 22 DEC - SUNDAY 7 JAN 2024

Sunday Mass

St Christopher's

Cnr Canberra Ave & Furneaux
Street, Forrest (Manuka) ACT

Sat. Vigil: 5.00pm

Sunday: 8.00am,
11.00am (livestreamed),
5.00pm

St Peter Chanel's

Cnr Weston & Loch Streets,
Yarralumla ACT

Sunday: 9.30am

Weekday Mass

St Christopher's

Monday to Friday: 7.30am &
12.15pm

Saturday & Public Holidays:
9.00am & 12.15pm

St Peter Chanel's

Tuesday: 5.30pm

Reconciliation

St Christopher's

Wednesday: 11.30am-12.00noon

Thursday: 6.00 - 6.30pm

Saturday: 11.00am - 12noon

St Peter Chanel's

Tuesday: 6.00 - 6.30pm

Adoration

St Christopher's

Monday to Friday: 5.00-6.00pm

Rosary at the Cathedral

Mon–Fri 8am, Sat 11:40am, Sun
4:45pm

Baptisms

St Christopher's:

2nd & 4th Sundays: 12.30pm

St Peter Chanel's:

3rd Sunday: 10:30am

Weddings

St Christopher's: Saturday

1.30pm & 3.00pm

St Peter Chanel's: By arrangement

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

The timing of this feast has always struck me – the first Sunday after Christmas. Through the Child's Birth which we have only just celebrated, a new family is born; a family now belonging to God. Christmas is not now 'over'. Indeed what flows from that gift of God's Incarnation, has only just begun.

We are reminded today of our true, lasting identity and who our true family is. But most of all we are reminded of how real this mystery of God becoming flesh is.

As a young boy I was drawn to Jesus through the nativity; intrigued by the humanity of the Christmas crib. Even today, I love contemplating all that is going on in an otherwise ordinary scene. Because the Nativity of course, is a depiction of something Divine, but at the same time, it depicts something remarkably human – something remarkably familial. It's a human situation, and a sad one at that!

My father used to make the Christmas nativity in our home. Each year, he would create a beautiful scene, with a stable, trees, a winding path and on occasion, a little creek. Yet every year, without fail, he would add this hideous vine, taken from the front yard. The vine would drape over the stable, as if to frame a previously gentle scene. And the vine, had thorns!

Each year I would remove the vine. Until one year, my dad stopped me. 'The thorns don't make it any less beautiful!' he said. 'Leave them!'

Perhaps, as I have become older, these words have revealed more of their truth to me. Because the fact is... no, the thorns don't make the scene any less beautiful, nor do they lessen the beauty of what we contemplate in these days. In fact, if anything, they increase it.

When God comes to us he comes in precisely this way. God is born into the midst of thorns, thorns which are more than physical. Thorns that neither shock nor deter Him. And the great truth of our faith is that it doesn't try and paint a magical utopia that doesn't exist; void of thorns and thistles. Our faith deals with facts. Into the midst of the pain, poverty, anxiety, exhaustion, and uncertainty. THAT is the manger, where God lays, and the thorns don't make it any less beautiful!

First century Palestine was no picnic and yet here the Holy Family gathers. These are the thorns in which Jesus becomes one of us! So often Christmas is so over sentimentalised, perfect and neat that, dare I say, it becomes equally irrelevant and sterile. And when it does, it becomes almost empty.

Now the real risk is that this same sentimentality can transfer to the Holy Family, remaining paper and plaster instead of flesh and blood. Of course this family was holy, but they were also human! The Holy Family, yes! But the Human Family at the same time. How often do we let this truth sink in?

Uncertainty, which is a word for these past years, was also a word for this family. Theirs is a story of a life which did not exactly go the way they'd planned. It is a story of a young woman who conceives and bears a son before she's seen to be in an acceptable marriage in the society and time. It is the story of a family who had to bear one of the most devilish burdens, the burden of gossip, and hearsay. All the while, carrying the hidden miracle in her womb. Theirs is the story of a young anxious father who confronts scandal and threats to the life of his newly formed family; planning for an uncertain, unknown future! The story of a family forced to flee and give birth in a stable. A remarkably human family, plunged into the thorns that greet you and I, here today!

Friends, this is our family – adopted through the mystery of Christmas. It is this truth, that in these days after Christmas we are in danger of forgetting.

May this season not pass us by, but be one of immense and genuine joy! Let us rejoice, because we now have a family, an identity, a future, with a God who walks with us in the midst of the thorns, in the midst of the mess.

Fr Trenton





Cathedral QR code

Entrance Antiphon: The shepherds went in haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in a manger.

Responsorial Psalm: The Lord remembers his covenant for ever

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! May the peace of Christ rule in your hearts and the fullness of his message live within you. Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon: Our God has appeared on the earth, and lived among us.

First Reading

Sirach 3:2-6. 12-14

The Lord honours the father in his children, and upholds the rights of a mother over her sons. Whoever respects his father is atoning for his sins, he who honours his mother is like someone amassing a fortune. Whoever respects his father will be happy with children of his own, he shall be heard on the day when he prays. Long life comes to him who honours his father, he who sets his mother at ease is showing obedience to the Lord. My son, support your father in his old age, do not grieve him during his life. Even if his mind should fail, show him sympathy, do not despise him in your health and strength; for kindness to a father shall not be forgotten but will serve as reparation for your sins.

Second Reading

Colossians 3:12-21

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful. Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God; and never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Wives, give way to your husbands, as you should in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and treat them with gentleness. Children, be obedient to your parents always, because that is what will please the Lord. Parents, never drive your children to resentment or you will make them feel frustrated.

Gospel

Luke 2:22-40

When the day came for them to be purified as laid down by the Law of Moses, the parents of Jesus took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord – observing what stands written in the Law of the Lord: Every first-born male must be consecrated to the Lord – and also to offer in sacrifice, in accordance with what is said in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he looked forward to Israel's comforting and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord. Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, he took him into his arms and blessed God; and he said: 'Now, Master, you can let your servant go in peace, just as you promised; because my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the nations to see, a light to enlighten the pagans and the glory of your people Israel'. As the child's father and mother stood there wondering at the things that were being said about him, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected – and a sword will pierce your own soul too – so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.' There was a prophetess also, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well on in years. Her days of girlhood over, she had been married for seven years before becoming a widow. She was now eighty-four years old and never left the Temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayer. She came by just at that moment and began to praise God; and she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem. When they had done everything the Law of the Lord required, they went back to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. Meanwhile the child grew to maturity, and he was filled with wisdom; and God's favour was with him.

LITURGICAL MINISTRIES ROSTER	
Lectors	
Mass	30/31 Dec
5:00pm (SCC)	Samantha Hazlett Les Buszynski
6:00pm (SPC)	Fiona Wheeler
8:00am (SCC)	Stewart Unwin Phil Pocock
9:30am (SPC)	Irene Maranan Wanda Kaucz
11:00am (SCC)	Mark Hyman Edwina Hyman
5:00pm	Kevin Woods

PARISH NEWS

A BLESSED AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

May we keep Christ at the centre of our lives this coming year. Wishing you a safe and joyful start to 2024!

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR – please note, the Parish Office will be closed from December 22 to January 7. Normal office hours will resume Monday 8 of January, 2023.

PLEASE NOTE—There will be NO 5:30pm evening Mass Tuesday **2 January** at SPC and Confessions on Saturday **6 January** will start at 11:30am at the Cathedral.

THANKYOU— to thank all the volunteers of our parish over the last year! What a year it has been! Know of the gratitude of our parish family for all that you do.