

St Therese's Parish Essendon

Christmas 2021



First Reading (Isaiah 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 forever, the jealous love of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Gospel Luke 2:1-20 A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

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.'

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.



WELCOME TO THIS CHRISTMAS MASS AT ST THERESE'S. At Christmas we feel that God is very close to us and very loving towards us. At the same time we feel a closeness to one another. All this happens because God's Son became one of us. He has brought God near us, and brought us near one another.

THANK YOU to our friend Fr Tony Cox who will be saying our 10:30am Mass here on Sunday 26 December for the Mass of the Feast of the Holy Family.

A CHILD – A LIGHT – A HOPE

The one thing that Christmas trees and Christmas cribs have in common is a star or an Angel on top whose light shines down upon all that is beneath. Whether Christmas star or Angel, its light illumines what otherwise would remain in shadow. It reveals delights and gifts, warmth and hope; but most especially it reveals a child who would be the light of the world.

Whether it was by the light from heaven glorifying the shepherds, or the light in the heavens guiding the Magi, both the lowly and the mighty were led to 'the Light', under which all people could find illumination. In the manger, among the animals, the baby Jesus would open the eyes of shepherd and magi alike, for they hoped for the gift of this light, who would shine for all.

Christmas is the living memory of the greatest gift we have ever been given: that of the Christ-child, Emmanuel, who is "God-with-us". He is the great gift of hope at Christmas: the gift of a God who is with us, who loves us and binds us together in all that is worth living for - and who remains with us, through thick and thin.

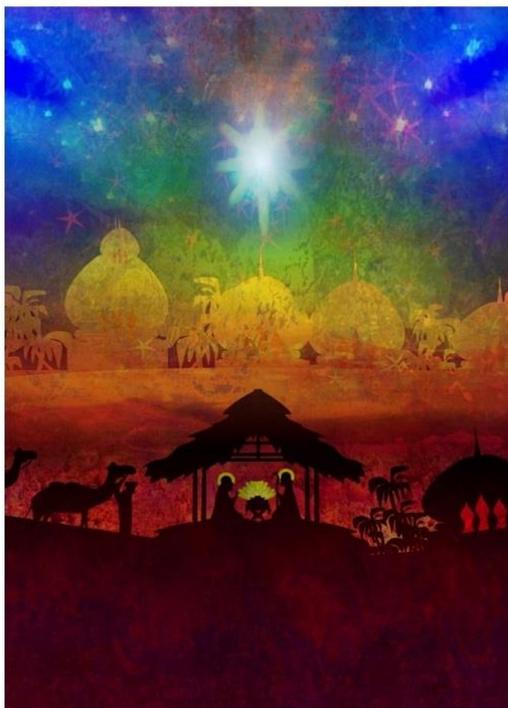
The old and wizened men of Jesus' nativity – Zechariah, husband of Elizabeth, and Simeon, the prophet in the temple – both learned to see by His light. For Zechariah, Jesus was God's dawning light for those caught up in the shadows of death, and a guide for our feet on the way to peace. For Simeon, Jesus was the revealing light of salvation to all the nations and the hope of glory for God's people.

May Jesus, child of God, son of Mary, and light to the nations, illumine the darkened regions of the world, and the shadowy places of the human heart. May we look to His light and find hope for our families, and for ourselves. May the light of Christmas – the light of Jesus – spread out its rays to bring reconciliation between enemies, to light up bridges over troubled waters; to reveal new ways towards renewed friendships.

A child; a light; a hope. May these be yours this Christmas.

Archbishop Peter A Comensoli

HAPPY CHRISTMAS



Dear friends at St Therese's and beyond,

Christmas has arrived and I send greetings and express gratitude to all of you who make our parish the lively and involved community it is.

Masses are now open to all and you are all most welcome in joining us here for our Christmas celebrations here at St Therese's. We have again added an extra Mass on Christmas Eve so that we can spread the crowds, so there are many options to suit you and your families..

It has been another frustrating year, in so many ways, for all, but with the benefits of vaccination, we have been able to move forward. I appreciate that it has been not any easy time for any of us, with a major frustration being the lengthy period when we were unable to gather as a faith community of friends. At least we have had the opportunity for live-streaming, so that family members and friends have had the opportunity to participate by tuning in, and being virtually present in spirit.

I acknowledge the support and commitment of those in our parish school community; the school leadership team, teachers, staff, parents, students and friends, who have persevered in challenging circumstances and times, with balancing home, work and on-line education with the difficulties of lockdown and associated uncertainty.

Once again, I thank Kathy Gilmour, Jac Radcliffe, Irene Fritsche and Leanne Torr, in the parish office, and Bryan Guiney, John Harvey, Peter Tyrell, and Teresa Pong for their support in keeping the external surrounds looking bright and welcoming.

PEACE ✦ HOPE ✦ JOY ✦ LOVE

Thank you also to Paul Zammit for preparing the data images for our weekend masses and Annmaree Sharkey for her continual support coordinating the music. Thanks also to our Leadership team who have continued with zoom meetings during lockdown under the guidance of co-ordinator Kevin McCartney.

It's good to see our team of Lectors, Eucharistic ministers and collectors back and thanks also goes to our small group of Covid Marshals (no longer required) as without them we would not have been able to open for Masses.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas. May the spirit of peace and good will remain with us all, for a happy and healthy New Year in 2022.


John Hannon Parish Priest

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First Reading (1 Sm 1:20-22. 24-28) A reading from the first book of Samuel

For the whole of his life, Samuel shall be lent to the Lord.

Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son, and called him Samuel 'since' she said 'I asked the Lord for him.' When a year had gone by, the husband Elkanah went up again with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the Lord and to fulfil his vow. Hannah, however, did not go up, having said to her husband, 'Not before the child is weaned. Then I will bring him and present him before the Lord and he shall stay there for ever.'

When she had weaned him, she took him up with her together with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the temple of the Lord at Shiloh; and the child was with them. They slaughtered the bull, and the child's mother came to Eli. She said, 'If you please, my lord. As you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the Lord. This is the child I prayed for, and the Lord granted me what I asked him. Now I make him over to the Lord for the whole of his life. He is made over to the Lord.'

There she left him, for the Lord..

Gospel Lk 2:41-52 A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

His parents found him in the temple, sitting among the learned men, listening to them.

Every year the parents of Jesus used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. When they were on their way home after the feast, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents knowing it. They assumed he was with the caravan, and it was only after a day's journey that they went to look for him among their relations and acquaintances. When they failed to find him they went back to Jerusalem looking for him everywhere.

Three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them, and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. They were overcome when they saw him, and his mother said to him, 'My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you.' 'Why were you looking for me?' he replied. 'Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?' But they did not understand what he meant.

He then went down with them and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and men.

INTERCESSIONS

In this season of joy let us turn to God who hears our every prayer.

For the Pope and the Bishops of the Church: may they be inspired by the guardianship of St Joseph in their care of God's holy people. Lord, hear us.

For our families: we pray that the Holy Spirit uplift us all by the love and humility of the holy family of Nazareth. Lord, hear us.

For those exiled from their homes: may the knowledge of the Holy Family's flight to Egypt deepen their hope in the Lord and the care of our parishes. Lord, hear us.

For those who are lonely over the festive season. May all of us here today be filled with the Holy Spirit to offer a hand of companionship to those in need. Lord, hear us.

We pray for those who are ill, especially Bryan Guiney and Cas Lukauskas. Lord, hear us.

We pray for our own special needs. Lord, hear us

We pray for those who have died recently especially Anthony Miceli, Frank Camiller, Kathleen Moloney, Patrice Gbikpi

And for those whom we remember at this time, especially Marie Ryan, Marie Gross, Peter Donnellan, Ronnie Devlin and Mary Farrelly. Lord, hear us

Loving Father, you have created the human family as an image of your love for us. Hear our prayers and give us the grace to love one another as we follow in the ways of your Son. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen



It is out of love that we are called to be children of God. As children of God, we are also joined to God's own Son, who has commanded us to love one another as God has loved all. If we are faithful to that commandment, Christ remains in us. We are bound to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The human family plays a significant role in the fashioning of the broader family of God. The larger family that God initiates is specified in unique historical families, as strange and as complex as those family relationships may be, with their joys and sorrows, their barrenness and their fruitfulness. There is no way of separating this human family and the broader people of God. The plan of God does not unfold in a vacuum, but in the everyday family situations that include separation and misunderstanding as well as joy and celebration. © Dianne Bergant CSA

GUIDELINES FOR ATTENDING MASS The following guidelines are in accordance with Victorian pandemic orders under the new *Public Health and Wellbeing Act*, which came into effect from 11.59pm Wednesday, 15 December 2021, and will be in place until 12 January 2022.

- All attendees over the age of 8 must wear a mask.
- There are no limits on participants at Places of Worship for Weddings, Funerals, and general Worship – including the opening for private prayer.
- There will not be any vaccination requirements nor any requirement for organisers to check vaccination status at Places of Worship for Weddings, Funerals, and general Worship.
- Workers at Places of Worship (staff and volunteers) must still be fully vaccinated.
- Victorians should still Check in using the Service Victoria QR code

At this stage our church will remain closed between Masses, as is our usual practise during school holidays. We expect to reopen for private prayer and worship in February 2022.

PARISH DATES		
Sunday 26 December	Boxing Day Mass with Fr Tony Cox	10:30am
Tuesday 28 December	No Mass	
Monday 10 January 2022	Parish office re-opens for limited hours (working from home)	
Sunday 23 January 2022	Parish Baptisms	12:00pm
Monday 24 January 2022	Parish office resumes regular hours	9:00am
Wednesday 26 January 2022	Australia Day Public Holiday	
Monday 31 January 2022	Prep school students begin for short sessions	
Wednesday 2 February 2022	School term begins for all St Therese's school students	

PARISH CONTACTS

Parish Priest: John Hannon john.hannon@cam.org.au
Baptism – Pastoral Outreach: Leanne Torr leanne.torr@cam.org.au
Business Manager: Kathy Gilmour kathy.gilmour@cam.org.au
Function Manager: Jac Radcliffe jac.radcliffe@cam.org.au
Bookkeeper: Irene Fritsche irene.fritsche@cam.org.au
Parish Leadership Team: essendon.plt@cam.org.au
Child Safety Officer: Olivia Metcalf essendon.safeguarding@cam.org.au
Office opening hours - Monday to Friday 9:00am – 3:00pm
Office Telephone: 9401 6330 – after hours Fr John: 0490 956 610
Office email: essendon@cam.org.au Website: www.stthereses.org.au
School email: info@stessendon.catholic.edu.au
St Vincent de Paul helpline: 1800 305 330 WEEKDAYS 10:00am–3:00pm

Mass Online:

Follow this [link here](#)

Weekday Masses:

Tuesday to Friday 10:00am

Weekend Masses

Saturday 6:00pm, Sunday 9:00am, Sunday 10:30am

St Therese's Parish is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and vulnerable adults.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country of the land on which our church stands and recognize their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and to Elders past, present and emerging.



THE BULLETIN ELVES ARE GOING ON HOLIDAY This is our last bulletin until the parish office reopens in January. We wish you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful and restful holiday.

We'll see you in 2022!