

# St Therese's Parish Essendon

18 & 19 December 2021  
Fourth Sunday of Advent Year C



**First Reading** Mi 5:1-4 - A reading from the prophet Micah

*Out of you will be born the one who is to rule over Israel.*

The Lord says this: You, Bethlehem Ephrathah, the least of the clans of Judah, out of you will be born for me the one who is to rule over Israel; his origin goes back to the distant past, to the days of old.

The Lord is therefore going to abandon them till the time when she who is to give birth gives birth.

Then the remnant of his brothers will come back to the sons of Israel. He will stand and feed his flock with the power of the Lord, with the majesty of the name of his God.

They will live secure, for from then on he will extend his power to the ends of the land.

He himself will be peace.

**Gospel** Lk 1:39-45 A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

*Why should it happen that I am honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?*

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'



There is always excitement at this time of the year. It is as if everything is filled with promise. Animosity is set aside; estrangement dissolves into reconciliation; the whole world seems gentler; and we are filled with the spirit of generosity. In the days just before Christmas, the possibility of newness is almost palpable. The spirit of the season has caught hold of us even before the actual day has arrived. Today we stand on the threshold of fulfilment. The future that God has prepared for us is open before us, even though we have not yet stepped out into it.

The incarnation takes place in human history, thus affirming the fundamental goodness of human life and concerns, and sanctifying them even further. The child comes from simple people, from a place that is relatively insignificant, thus underscoring God's preference for what is ordinary. The body that was offered for our salvation, the body that consecrated us through having been offered up, was the body that grew in the womb of Mary. The extraordinary salvific deed of God was accomplished through his coming into the world as one of us. The obedience that Christ played out through his body fulfilled for us the promises made by God.

We stand on the threshold of fulfilment, the fulfilment of an event that has already taken place. We ritually reenact it so that we never take it for granted, so that we never forget that it is in and through human history that the marvellous deeds of God are accomplished.

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**JESUS IS CHRISTMAS: A CAROLS SPECIAL** Join in celebrating the joy of Christmas with our Archdiocesan Carols Special, Jesus is Christmas, to be broadcast Monday 20 December at 7.30pm on Community TV Channel C31 (Channel 44 on digital TV) and streamed live on the [Archdiocesan YouTube channel](#). Presented in partnership with Mercy Health and VMCH, the one-hour carols special will feature Christmas favourites such as O Come, O Come, Emmanuel by the celebrated opera tenor Michael Petrucelli and O Holy Night by Wiradjuri soprano Shauntai Batzke and the Mia Sorella Trio. Other carols include the English medieval Christmas classic, Sing we to this merry company, and a special treat from our Filipino Chaplaincy Choir singing traditional Christmas hymns such as Noche Buena ('Christmas Eve') and Kumukutikutitap ('sparkling lights'). As the year comes to a close, we hope you can join us for an evening of songs old and new, and be reminded of the true Hope that Christmas brings—Jesus—who is our Hope and Light now and always!

## INTERCESSIONS

*Confident that God is with us, let us bring our needs before the God of all.*

For the Church, the people of God: that we will grow in holiness and love. Lord, hear us

For those who carry the burden of sickness, grief or depression: that they may know the healing of God through the care of others. Lord, hear us

For those who have lost faith in their dreams, in God and in other people: that they may have their hope restored. Lord, hear us

We pray for Emma, Luna, Summer, Sebastian, Leo, Ziya and Emmanuelle who are presented this weekend for the sacrament of Baptism. May they lead a life of faith and love for all. Lord, hear us

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

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

We pray for those who have died recently: Frank Camiller, Kathleen Moloney, Patrice Gbikpi, Patricia Meli

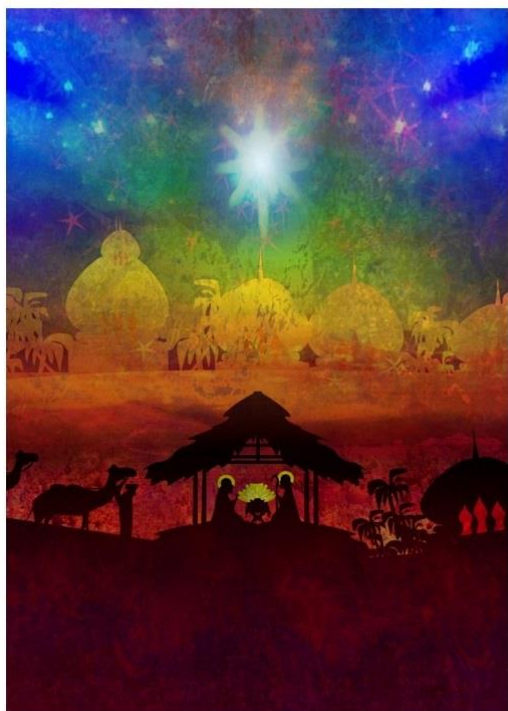
And for those whom we remember at this time, especially: William John Cox, Geoff O'Brien, Jason Kralik, Fr Louis Catterall, Frank Casamento, Angela Cardamone. Lord, hear us

*Lord God, we wait for the arrival of the Son of David. Hear our prayers, and grant us the confidence to embrace Christ's coming as God-with-us. We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

Amen

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## HAPPY CHRISTMAS



PEACE ✦ HOPE ✦ JOY ✦ LOVE

*Dear friends at St Therese's and beyond,*

*Advent draws to a close and as Christmas fast approaches, I send greetings and express gratitude to all of you who make our parish the lively and involved community it is. This week we welcome the further easing of restrictions whilst remaining aware that covid remains a risk to our community still.*

*Masses are now open to all and you are all most welcome to join us 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. I will also record a Christmas Mass for the parish website, as we have been doing regularly for weekend Masses since late March 2020 when the first lockdown began.*

*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.*

*Thank you also to Paul Zammit for preparing the data images for our weekend masses and Annmarie 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

[jbhannon@netspace.net.au](mailto:jbhannon@netspace.net.au)

**MASSES NOW OPEN TO ALL AT ST THERESE'S** 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.

- 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.
- Face coverings no longer need to be worn at weddings, funerals, or worship.
- Wearing a mask if you can't physically distance, are indoors in public areas, have any symptoms, or if you are with people who may be vulnerable to COVID-19 is strongly recommended.
- Victorians should still Check in using the Service Victoria QR code

Christmas Masses this year will not require booking and there will be no limit on the number of attendees. All attendees are asked to Check in using the QR code on display in our church. It is strongly recommended that Mass attendees wear face masks when attending crowded Masses.

For our Christmas Masses, all entry doors will be open and will remain open during services to increase ventilation.

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.

Please note that other activities outside of worship, particularly those activities that involve hospitality, will require full vaccination for participation and will entail QR code check-ins and COVID Marshals. This applies to use of our PACE function space.

When visiting PACE, people under 18 years of age will no longer be required to show proof of their vaccination status.



**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR CHRISTMAS MASSES** There are sign up sheets on our entry tables. If you can help with collecting, Eucharistic Ministry or with data projection please write your name down!

**ONGOING volunteer opportunities are listed below.**

**LECTORS NEEDED** We have had a few of our faithful lectors retire from the roster recently and are now seeking help to support those who read at our weekly Masses. Experience is ideal but not necessary, we can provide mentoring.

**DATA PROJECTIONISTS NEEDED** an important role in helping our attendees follow Mass and join in responses. Training provided.

If you are willing and able to assist in any of these roles please contact the parish office.

**VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS** All volunteers are required to have a current Working with Children Check which we can help with if necessary. Working With Children checks can be applied for online at:

<https://service.vic.gov.au/find-services/work-and-volunteering/working-with-children-check> All volunteers must be fully vaccinated.



**PARISH SUPPORT PROGRAMME ENVELOPES** For parishioners who use envelopes for their PSP contributions, your new envelopes are on the tables near the main doors for you to collect. Envelopes are sorted in STREET NAME ORDER.

If you would like to continue your payments but are not currently attending Mass in person, you can deposit your PSP donations in the drop box beside the parish office or directly to the parish accounts. Note there are separate accounts for church and for clergy.

**Contributions to the church account:**

Name: St Therese's Church, BSB: 083 347, Account number: 67640 1701

**Contributions towards supporting the clergy:**

Account Name: St Therese's Church, BSB: 083 347, A/C number: 67616 4988

Deposits should be referenced with your **FIRST INITIAL and SURNAME**

**CHRISTMAS OFFERING ENVELOPES** for the support of our parish clergy, visiting/supply priests, retired/sick and priests in poorer or newer parishes are available at the entry tables. Thank you for your ongoing support

**PARISH CHRISTMAS CARDS** are now available to collect from our entry tables. The cards include a message from Fr John and the time and date of all our Christmas services. Please feel to take cards for friends, family or neighbours if they'd like to keep up to date with our Christmas Mass times. Just a note that the cards were printed when vaccination requirements for Mass attendance were in place. Attendees no longer need to be full-vaccinated.

**ON SALE NOW – ST VINCENT DE PAUL:** Columban Calendars at the back of the Church after each weekend Mass. **Calendars** \$9.00 each.

**FOR SALE ON ENTRY TABLES:** The Far East \$1.50

| <b>PARISH DATES</b>    |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Monday 20 December     | Requiem Mass for Frank Camiller   | 11:00am   |
| Tuesday 21 December    | Communal Reconciliation Mass  | 7:00pm  |
| Thursday 23 December   | Parish office closes for Christmas break  | 3:00pm  |
| Friday 24 December     | <b>Christmas Eve</b><br>Mass<br>Carols followed by Mass<br>Carols followed by Mass<br>Carols followed by Mass | 10:00am<br>5:30pm then 6:00pm<br>8:00pm then 8:30pm<br>10:30pm then 11:00pm |
| Saturday 25 December   | <b>Christmas Day</b> Mass   | 10:00am   |
| Sunday 26 December     | <b>Boxing Day</b> Mass  | 10:30am   |
| Monday 10 January 2022 | Parish office re-opens for limited hours  |   |
| Sunday 23 January      | Parish Baptisms   | 12:00pm   |
| Monday 24 January 2022 | Parish office resumes regular hours   | 9:00am  |
| Wednesday 26 January   | Australia Day Public Holiday  |   |

### **PARISH CONTACTS**

**Parish Priest:** John Hannon [john.hannon@cam.org.au](mailto:john.hannon@cam.org.au)

**Baptism – Pastoral Outreach:** Leanne Torr [leanne.torr@cam.org.au](mailto:leanne.torr@cam.org.au)

**Business Manager:** Kathy Gilmour [kathy.gilmour@cam.org.au](mailto:kathy.gilmour@cam.org.au)

**Function Manager:** Jac Radcliffe [jac.radcliffe@cam.org.au](mailto:jac.radcliffe@cam.org.au)

**Bookkeeper:** Irene Fritsche [irene.fritsche@cam.org.au](mailto:irene.fritsche@cam.org.au)

**Parish Leadership Team:** [essendon.plt@cam.org.au](mailto:essendon.plt@cam.org.au)

**Child Safety Officer:** Olivia Metcalf [essendon.safeguarding@cam.org.au](mailto: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](mailto:essendon@cam.org.au) Website: [www.stthereses.org.au](http://www.stthereses.org.au)

**School email:** [info@stessendon.catholic.edu.au](mailto: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.*