



St Therese's & Our Lady of the Nativity Essendon & Essendon West Parishes



23 & 24 December: Fourth Sunday of Advent



First Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-5. 8-12. 14. 16 A reading from the second book of Samuel

The kingdom of David will be established for ever in the sight of the Lord.

Once David had settled into his house and the Lord had given him rest from all the enemies surrounding him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'Look, I am living in a house of cedar while the ark of God dwells in a tent'. Nathan said to the king, 'Go and do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you.'

But that very night the word of the Lord came to Nathan:

'Go and tell my servant David, "Thus the Lord speaks: Are you the man to build me a house to dwell in? I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel; I have been with you on all your expeditions; I have cut off all your enemies before you. I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall dwell in that place and never be disturbed again; nor shall the wicked continue to oppress them as they did, in the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel; I will give them rest from all their enemies. The Lord will make you great; the Lord will make you a House. And when your days are ended and you are laid to rest with your ancestors, I will preserve the offspring of your body after you and make his sovereignty secure. I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me and your throne be established for ever."'

Responsorial Psalm: For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! I am the servant of the Lord: may his will for me be done. Alleluia!

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38 A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

You will conceive and bear a son.

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

INTERCESSIONS

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

We pray for our Holy Father, the Pope, and for our bishops: that they may continue to encourage us in serving the Lord.

We pray for the recently ordained clergy: May they provide hope and good will to the local communities that they serve, as we all look forward to the warmth of God's love.

For young people: We pray they are able gain strength and resilience from the recent challenges of Covid, climate and war. May their future be bright.

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

We pray for all those affected by the floods in Queensland; for the emergency workers and volunteers and the residents who are left without access to power, drinking water, many with their homes inundated with flood waters.

We pray for those who are ill, especially Tess McKibbin and June McKibbin.

We pray for ourselves. Lord, please take our hand and lead us to your eternal life. And we pray for our own special needs.

We pray for those who have died recently especially Judith O'Connor and Kate Dostan.

And for those whom we remember at this time, especially: Henry Cooper, Mary Farrelly, Ronnie Devlin, Marie Gross, Vincent LaTerra, Sam Cassar, Andrew Bastian, Fabian & Eldredge Donovan, Luisa Faluo and Felice Falcone.

God of peace, hear our prayers and plant within our hearts the living presence of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen

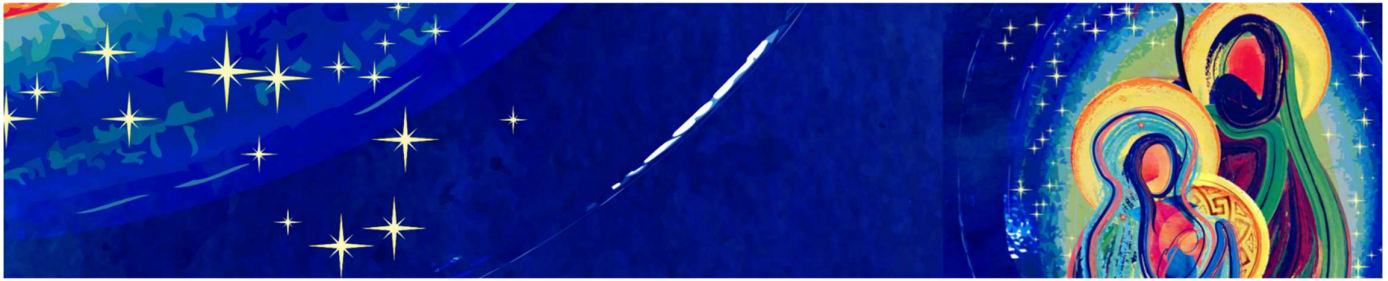


St Therese's & Our Lady of the Nativity

Essendon & Essendon West Parishes



24 & 25 December: Christmas (The Nativity of the Lord)



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 for ever, the jealous love of the Lord of hosts will do this.

'Responsorial Psalm: Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Good News and great joy to all the world: today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord. Alleluia!

Gospel: Luke 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.'

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.

INTERCESSIONS

Friends, gathered here to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the true Light, we pray with thanksgiving; for by scattering the darkness of sin, Jesus now makes our world radiant with his love.

For the leaders of the Church: that through humility and compassion they will show the love of the Christ-child for all peoples.

We pray for peace in the world. May the presence of God's Son in our world bring peace to the land of his birth and to every place where there is war, violence, and political unrest.

For the homeless and the lonely: that Christians everywhere will be the instruments of God's grace and love.

That those separated from loved ones this Christmas will find assurance in the love of God's family

That as our community celebrates the birth of our Saviour, we will bring about peace on earth and good will for all.

May the wonder of the shepherds at the sight of Jesus, inspire us to see the presence of Jesus in all other people, especially in the poor and vulnerable.

May Jesus take into the heavenly home all of our departed relatives and friends, along with our parishioners who have died since last Christmas.

Lord our God, your truth and your love stand forever for you have given your Son to us as our Lord and Saviour. May we live in faith through love and reach our heavenly home where he lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen

PEACE ✨ HOPE ✨ JOY ✨ LOVE



HAPPY ✨ CHRISTMAS

Greetings, friends at Our Lady of Nativity and St Therese's Parishes, This year we have faced the new challenges of combined parish life, after my appointment as parish priest of OLN in addition to St Therese's. We are learning as we go and I hope and believe we are growing together. As I come to the end of my first twelve months in this dual role, I look forward to the next year of service in both parish communities.

I wish to thank all who have contributed with their time and efforts in all sorts of ways. So much is required to keep a parish community lively, active, and of service to our local communities.

I must acknowledge Father Tony Feeney; with his assistance we have been able to continue weekend Masses at both churches.

I acknowledge all those who contribute to our parish administration, including our Parish Leadership Team. I thank those who contribute to liturgy co-ordination, to our lectors, Eucharistic ministers, collectors and to our musicians, instrumentalists and singers, who enhance our weekly celebrations. We have a hard-working and dedicated group of volunteers who take care of our gardens and maintenance. We have volunteers working in Sacramental preparation, pastoral support and outreach. These groups and more are all a part of parish life which could not go on without their involvement. Then there are our school communities, where we engage for sacramental celebrations and beyond.

Wishing you all a Happy and peaceful Christmas with families and friends, and a good break before we launch into a Happy New Year in 2024.

John Hannon Parish Priest jbhannon1978@gmail.com

ARCHBISHOP COMESOLI'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE Dear friends, we hear these words from the ancient prophet Isaiah (52:7): 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation ...' These are beautiful words—old words, first spoken in old days, yet so sorely needed in our day! Amid this time of conflict, suffering and exile, Isaiah speaks to us words of peace and the good news about the Prince of Peace. Our hearts ache for reconciliation of peoples; respect for our shared humanity; care for our crying planet. Our world and its people seem to be groaning and railing against pathways to true peace. Yet we experience the hope of God through simple words of joy, mercy and peace. The shepherds experienced this. So did the Magi. Mary and Joseph knew it intimately. God knew we needed his Son to come amongst us, to show us the way ahead. As we come to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord this year, might we be attentive to the broken people across the world who are held captive by the tragedy of war and old hatreds. Might we also remember those exiled in other ways—bereft of knowing God; lost and searching for identity and purpose. We too can be the messengers whose footfalls bring light into the world, announcing mercy, bringing joy, offering Good News. God has come among us, simply, humbly and hopefully in a little child, his Son, our Brother. May the peace that comes through this child, the Prince of Peace, be with you this Christmas. And with every footstep, may you take His message, and life, out into the world. Happy Christmas to you all!

PARISH OFFICE CHRISTMAS CLOSURE The parish office is now closed and will reopen on Monday 15 January for limited hours. Normal office hours will resume on Monday 29 January. During the office closure Fr John will be contactable for end of life anointing and funeral arrangements on our after-hours answering service. Ph 0490 956 610. There will be no response to messages other than those regarding funerals or end of life/anointing of the sick.

PACE FUNCTIONS CLOSURE PACE has closed for the holiday break and will be available from hire again from Saturday 4 February 2024. Function queries will not be responded to during the parish office closure.

LAST BULLETIN FOR 2023 The bulletin elves are having a break over Christmas and New Year. This is the last bulletin for the year and there will be none published in January. The next bulletin will be published on the weekend of 3 & 4 February 2024.



2024 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMME Our Sacrament dates for 2024 have now been set with the first being the Sacrament of First Reconciliation taking place in late March. Our RE Programme is held at St Therese's and is open to children from both parishes. The programme for First Reconciliation begins on Sunday 3 March and concludes with the Reconciliation Service on Wednesday 27 March. Enrolments for this first programme close on Friday 23 February. For more details visit our website here: <https://www.stthereses.org.au/sacraments/sacramental-programme/>

First Reconciliation Programme Dates		
Sunday 3 March	9:30am	Preparation session 1 – PACE Function Room
Sunday 10 March	n/a	Break in programme for Labour Day weekend
Sunday 17 March	9:30am	Preparation session 2 – PACE Function Room
Wednesday 20 March	6:45pm	Faith Night in St Therese's Church
Sunday 24 March	9:30am 10:30am	Preparation session 3 – PACE Function Room Present at Mass as a candidate for Sacrament*
Wednesday 27 March	7.00pm	Sacramental Service followed by individual

PARISH DATES

Saturday 23 December	Fourth Sunday of Advent Mass at OLN Fourth Sunday of Advent Mass at St Therese's	5:00pm 6:00pm
Sunday 24 December	Fourth Sunday of Advent Mass at St Therese's Fourth Sunday of Advent Mass at OLN Christmas Eve Vigil Mass at St Therese's Carols and Christmas Eve Vigil Mass at OLN Carols and Christmas Eve Vigil Mass at St Therese's Carols and Christmas Eve Vigil Mass at St Therese's Carols and Christmas Eve Vigil Mass at St Therese's	9:00am 10:00am 10:30am Begins 5:00pm Begins 5:30pm Begins 8:00pm Begins 10:30pm
Monday 25 December	Christmas Day Mass at St Therese's Christmas Day Mass at OLN	10:00am 10:00am
Tuesday 26 December	Boxing Day – Public Holiday	
Monday 1 January	Mass for New Years Day at OLN Mass for New Years Day at St Therese	9:00am 10:00am
Sunday 7 January	Fr Kevin Burke celebrating Mass at OLN	10:00am
Sunday 14 January	Fr Michael Elligate celebrating Mass at OLN	10:00am
Monday 15 January	Parish Office reopens (limited hours only)	
Sunday 21 January	Fr Michael Elligate celebrating Mass at OLN Parish Baptism Welcoming Mass at St Therese's	10:00am 10:30am
Tuesday 23 January	Mass at Raelene Boyle Village	11:00am
Sunday 28 January	Fr Kevin Burke celebrating Mass at OLN Parish Baptisms at St Therese's	10:00am 12:00pm
Monday 29 January	Parish office reopens for usual hours	9:00am
Thursday 1 February	Gospel reflections group meet in PACE meeting room	10:30am
Friday 2 February	All students onsite at St Therese's school Beginning of School Year Mass at St Therese's	10:00am
Monday 5 February	All students onsite at OLN school	
Wednesday 7 February	Beginning of School Year Mass at OLN Liturgy of the Word replaces morning Mass at St Therese's	9:00am 10:00am
Thursday 8 February	Tiny Ts Playgroup in PACE Function Room Gospel reflections group in PACE meeting room	9:30am 10:30am
Tuesday 13 February	Shrove Tuesday Pancakes in PACE function room	10:30am
Wednesday 14 February	Project Compassion Appeal begins Ash Wednesday: St Therese's School Mass Ash Wednesday: afternoon Mass at OLN Ash Wednesday: evening Mass St Therese's	10:00am 5:30pm 7:00pm

PARISH CONTACTS

PARISH PRIEST Fr John Hannon

After Hours: 0490 956 610 **Email:** jbhannon1978@gmail.com

Office: (currently closed) **Ph:** 9401 6330

ST THERESE'S CHURCH

48a Lincoln Rd, Essendon

Office email: essendon@cam.org.au **Website:** www.stthereses.org.au

Weekday Masses: Tuesday to Friday 10:00am

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

Reconciliation: Saturday 5:45pm

School: email info@stessendon.catholic.edu.au phone 9374 6100

OUR LADY OF THE NATIVITY CHURCH

31 Fawkner St, Aberfeldie

Office email: essendonwest@cam.org.au **Website:** <http://pol.org.au/essendonwest/Home.aspx>

Weekend Masses: Saturday 5:00pm, Sunday 10:00am

School: email principal@olnaberfeldie.catholic.edu.au phone 9337 4204

You can **subscribe** to the weekly Parish newsletter and the monthly Gospel Reflections:
<https://www.melbcatholic.org/s/subscription?id=0012w00000LOj4wAAD&req=subscribe>

*Our Parishes are 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 churches stand and recognize their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and to Elders past, present and emerging.*