

St Thomas More's Parish

*St Thomas More's Catholic Parish, a welcoming people of faith,
lives out God's Mission, embracing love, justice and peace.*

*We acknowledge the Giabal and Jarowair people, the Traditional Owners
who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years.
We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship
of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country
and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.*

71 A Ramsay Street Toowoomba Qld 4350 Ph: 4635 9555 Fax: 4635 5742

Parish Leader: a/h phone: 0407 804 461. Email: parishleader@stthomasmores.org.au

Parish Email: parishoffice@stthomasmores.org.au Parish Council Email: parishcouncil@stthomasmores.org.au

Parish Website: www.stthomasmores.org.au Parish Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/stmparishtwmba/>

Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year C: 22 - 23 December 2018

Readings: Micah 5:1-4; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-44

The fourth Sunday of Advent draws us closer to the celebration of the Christmas mysteries. The gospel offers the story of the young pregnant woman, Miriam of Nazareth, travelling in haste from her home town of Nazareth to the hill country of Judaea, some 130 kilometres to the south, to be with an older woman who is also pregnant, her cousin Elizabeth. Mary enters "the house of Zechariah" who remains silent and in the background throughout. While Zechariah is the householder according to Jewish law, his earlier reluctance to believe renders him silent and powerless to offer hospitality. Elizabeth's contrasting openness to recognise and affirm the living presence of God in their midst makes her the true householder and foreshadows the reversal that is to characterise the new order, an order that is yet to be fully realised. The two women embrace and, in their loving embrace, the Spirit-filled life gestating within Mary encounters and physically affects the life that is coming to birth in Elizabeth.

Elizabeth's words resound throughout the ages in the prayer we know as the Hail Mary: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb...." These are the words of one woman prophet to another. Elizabeth recognises that Mary is blessed by God because she believed that God's promise to her would be fulfilled. As God's prophet, Elizabeth gives expression to the faith that is to be embraced by all who accept that Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Miriam of Nazareth, is the Holy One of God (Luke 1:35). The lives of both women have been transformed through the power of God's Spirit. The birth of their children will bring to birth unprecedented events in human history.

Elizabeth's proclamation of the blessing of God on Mary is found daily on the lips of countless faith-filled Christians across the globe. It echoes the blessing prayer of Moses to the Israelites (Deuteronomy 28: 2-4): "May you be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. Blessed is the fruit of your womb, the produce of your soil and the offspring of your livestock...." This ancient blessing recognizes the interconnection of all God's creation. We might make it our own blessing prayer. In our times, God's blessing on the whole Earth community can only become a reality when we stop playing politics in the interests of short-term gains or personal greed, when we read the signs of the times and work together to address the underlying causes of global warming and its effects. Advent is not a time of passive waiting. It is a time to ponder the various ways that God sustains life in its diverse forms. It is a time to become householders, like Elizabeth, who clear the paths and open our doors for the God of life to enter in.

(Reflection by Sister of Mercy, Sr Veronica Lawson RSM, Theologian and Biblical Scholar)

Parish Leader: Michael Bermingham
Priest Director:..... Michael O'Brien
Pastoral Council:..... Terry Carter
Finance Committee:..... Tim Davis
Secretary: Donna Pugh
Secretary: Jenny Bartkus
School Principal: Michael Cash
APRE: Lee ann Weekes
School Board.....Matt Andreas
Parish Safeguards Contacts:
Maree Keating – 0435 173 882
Sarah Holcombe – 0408 193 636

Parish Diary: 24 - 30 December 2018

Monday: 9.00am.....Mass
6.00pm.....Christmas Mass
8.00pm.....Christmas Mass
Tuesday: 8.30am.....Christmas Mass
Wednesday to 7.00am..... Mass at St Pat's
Saturday
Friday 9.00am.....Mass

Feast of the Holy Family – Year C

Mass: 6.00pm Saturday
8.30am Sunday
Readings: 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28
1 John 3:1-2, 21-24
Luke 2:41-52



December/January 2018/2019

27/28 December – Office closed

29 January – Parish Pastoral Council Agenda Meeting

HAPPENINGS IN OUR PARISH

Christmas Mass Roster:

The Roster for Mass Coordinators, Welcomers, Altar Servers. Readers and Communion Ministers for Christmas Masses is now available in the Church foyer. Please indicate on the roster your availability for these positions.

Manger Collection:

The Manger is in the centre aisle of the church for those who wish to make a monetary gift as part of their Christmas sharing. The beneficiary of this year's collection is Rosies: Friends on the Street.

2019 Rosters:

The new Church roster is displayed in the Church foyer and there are also copies available for pick up. If you have not been included and would like to participate, please contact the Parish Office.

Christmas Mass Times:

Christmas Eve – 6.00pm and 8.00pm

Christmas Day – 8.30am

Flower Roster for Church:

Due to one of the members being unable to continue to do flower arranging in the Church for the weekend Masses, the group are looking for a new team member. If you are able to fill this spot, please contact the Parish Office on 4635 9555, or Carmel Macdermott on 4613 6366.

Plenary Council Matters:

Forms are still available in the Church foyer. Forms can be returned to the Parish Leader at weekend Masses or to the Parish Office or put in the wall slot outside the Parish Office if the office is unattended. In the foyer, also, there are small cards that have details such as postal address, email address and website for those who would like to respond directly to the Plenary Council Coordinating Group

Updating your will?

Have you ever considered a Bequest to St Thomas More's Parish? The work of St Thomas More's Parish relies on the personal and financial generosity of many people. Each of us will revisit and update our wills from time to time as life circumstances change. Next time you are reviewing your will and talking with your solicitor, you might consider leaving a bequest to the Parish. A Form of Wording, for Bequests to the Parish, is available from the Parish Office.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

You are reminded that the Blessed Sacrament Chapel is open every Wednesday and Thursday between the hours of 10 am and 3 pm for adoration, personal prayer and reflection.

New to the Parish:

If you are new to the parish, please put your details in the book provided in the foyer and you will be provided with information regarding the groups and activities you may wish to be part of. If you want to be part of our Thanksgiving Program, please contact the Parish Office 46359555.

Transport Available:

Anyone who has no transport to attend weekend Mass can be assisted. Telephone the Parish Office (4635 955) to make your needs known and a Care and Concern member will follow up to arrange suitable transport.

Tai Chi for Health:

On 24 January 2019, Tai Chi for Health Classes for Seniors will commence in the Hall. Classes are being held on Thursdays from 1.00 to 2.00pm. A flyer with further information is on display on the noticeboard in the Church or contact Juanita on 0472 526 745.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Confessions at St Patricks Cathedral:

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available between 9.00am and 10.00am at St Patrick's Cathedral on Saturday mornings.

Are You Planning a Trip to Sydney in January?

Why not stay at Mary MacKillop Place, in the heart of North Sydney! 30 minutes from the Airport, close to Ferries, Trains, Sydney Harbour foreshore, Opera House and more! for Accommodation Enquiries please call 02 89124800 or see flyer on the Church notice board.

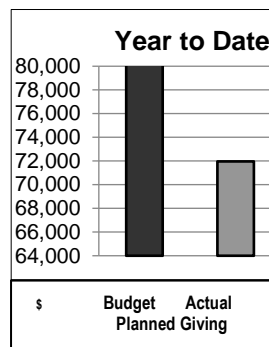
Sacramental Gifts:

Gifts for children receiving the Sacraments are often hard to find. South Street Newsagency now has a new range of beautiful gifts available. It is a range of gifts for Baptism, Confirmation and Communion and other religious gifts for all occasions. It includes statues, crosses and candles.

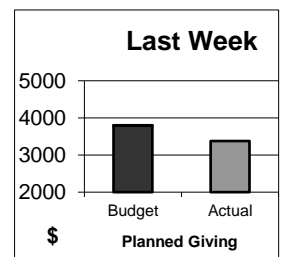
PLEASE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS:

Those who are ill: Bryan Flemming, Terry Tyers, Ned Sparksman, Michael Kelly, Mark Butlin, Pauline Dixon, Allan Wills, Damian Wyvill, Sara Mehari, Scott Murphy, Michelle Halpin, Christine Prescott, Toni Fitzgibbon, Camille Taylor, Patrick McNamee, Janice Lockhart, Dodie McGrane, Christene Andrews, Rita Sullivan, Maria Hunter-Robinson, Val Sharpe, Paul Turner, Ros Morton, Megan Ford, Ted Wormwell, Mary Buttin, Fr Brian Sparksman, James Babineau, Mort Edmiston, Bernie O'Keefe, Arleen Hansen, Mary James.

Anniversaries: Tom Mitchell



PLANNED GIVING



'Be not afraid.' Richard Leonard on the greeting we all need to hear this Christmas
(published in The Tablet on 12 December 2018)

At the risk of wrecking your Christmas, we have to clear up a few things. I know all our carols and cards say that Jesus was born in December; in a snow-covered stable; was wrapped in swaddling clothes; lay in the manger with the animals around him; that a star stood vigil; and was later visited by three Kings whose names were Balthazar, Caspar and Melchior.

But the Gospels don't say any of this. It could have snowed on the first Christmas, but the Scriptures don't say that it did. No animals are mentioned. The star in the North did not stand still in the night sky because stars just don't behave like that. And Jesus probably wasn't even born in December. Pope Julius I declared that Christmas was to be celebrated on 25 December in 350 AD, after the Christians had given the pagan Roman calendar the thorough make-over it richly deserved. Rather neatly, the pagan feast of the "birthday of the unconquered Sun" became the "birthday of the all-conquering Son" – the birthday of Jesus our Lord.

The worst Christmas I ever celebrated was in Manger Square in Bethlehem. By the time I had finally negotiated the traffic jams, the security checks, and the guards on patrol and joined the thousands who had been packed into the church, the adventure had lost some of its appeal.

In all the accounts of Christmas we have in the New Testament we hear the angel begin her announcement of Jesus' birth with the words: "Be not afraid." Given the world events over recent months, this greeting is just what we need to hear this Christmas: Be not afraid.

Fear cripples us into passivity. It ruins our memories of past or present events and undermines dignified, trusting and respectful relationships. There is an important difference between being vigilant and being frightened, but since the 9/11 terrorist attacks this difference has become blurred. We have seen people become anxious, change their lifestyle and travel plans and worry for their future and for that of their children. But we don't need to look to international terror to explain the nature of our fear. Broadly speaking, we fear four things: God, nature, other people, or something in ourselves. It is usually a combination of these things; for some of us, tragically, it is all of them. But to whatever degree fear has come to rule our lives, we need to hear again God's greeting at Christmas: "Be not afraid."

St Paul tells us that love drives out all fear. That's what – and who – we celebrate at Christmas: perfect love took human form in Jesus Christ the Lord. Throughout this joyful season we celebrate the one whose life, death and resurrection showed us the way out of our fears; revealed the truth that sets us free; and gave us the life that we can live to the full in this world, and the next.

Christmas is the feast day when God calls us to be as active as we can in bringing Christ's Kingdom to bear in our world. Christmas is the time when our memories are joined to God's, who has remembered us in our fear. Christmas is the season when all Christian relationships are defined by the dignity, trust and respect they bestow on us and on those we relate to.

As a result of the Babe of Bethlehem, God has shown us that fear is not our calling and that the saving love of Jesus impels us to take risks in how we live out our faith, hope and love. On any day, then, in the coming year, when we face down our fears and live our Christian life to the full we will discover that Christmas is a moveable feast.

My favourite Advent poem is from John Bell, of the Iona Community in Scotland:

Light looked down and saw the darkness.
"I will go there," said light.
Peace looked down and saw war.
"I will go there," said peace.

Love looked down and saw hatred.
"I will go there," said love.

So he,
the Lord of Light,
the Prince of Peace,
the King of Love,
came down and crept in beside us.

No fanfare. No palace. No earthly prince. Christmas celebrates that God crept in beside us. And as a result there is no part of our lives he will not enter with mercy and love. So this Christmas let's invite in again the Lord of Light, the Prince of Peace, the King of Love and live as boldly as we can.

(Richard Leonard SJ is the author of What are waiting for? Finding Meaning in Advent and Christmas.)

Gathering: Advent Song

D Browne

***Gather in hope, people of God
Sing the Advent Song!
Song of faith, song of trust,
A song to welcome the Christ!***

C: Let the warmth of our love,
Like the long summer days,
Prepare the way of the Lord!

All: Prepare the way of the Lord!

C: Let our will for justice,
As strong as the sun,
Prepare the way of the Lord!

All: Prepare the way of the Lord!

© 1985, Deirdre Browne (Text) & Jane Wood. All rights reserved. Used with permission under ONE LICENCE #A-62451e

Introductory Rite: Sing out Earth and Skies M Haugen

Sing out, earth and skies! Sing of the God who loves you!

Raise your joyful cries! Dance to the life around you!

© 1985, GIA Publications. All rights reserved. Used with permission under ONE LICENCE #A-62451e

Psalm: Lord Make us turn to you C Smith

**Response: Lord make us turn to you, let us see your face
and we shall be saved.**

O Shepherd of Israel, hear us,
Shine forth from your cherubim throne
O Lord, rouse up your might,
O Lord make haste to help us.

God of hosts, turn again, we implore you,
Look down from heaven and see.
Visit this vine and protect it,
The vine which your right hand has planted.

May your hand be the one you have chosen,
The one to whom you give your strength.

We shall never forsake you again:

Give us life that we may call upon your name.

© 1972 Willow Connections. All rights reserved. Used with permission under ONE LICENCE #A-62451e

Advent Litany

Cantor:	All:
Light of nations,	Alleluia
Light in darkness.	Maranatha
Risen Saviour,	Alleluia
Lord of glory,	Maranatha
You we long for,	Alleluia
You we thirst for.	Maranatha
Here among us,	Alleluia
Living in us.	Maranatha.

B Farrell

©1987 Bernadette Farrell OCP Publications. All rights reserved. Used with permission under ONE LICENCE #A-62451e

The Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ,
his only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the
right hand of God the Father almighty
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen

Prayers of the Faithful:

We come to do your will.

Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas. We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day. We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us. We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom. We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence. We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light. To you we say, 'Come Lord Jesus!' Amen. (Henri J.M. Nouwen)

(Excerpts from the English translation of the Roman Missal © International Commission on English in the Liturgy [ICEL]. All rights reserved)

Acclamation:

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

© 2010, Colin D Smith & Paul Mason, Willow Publishing: All rights reserved Used with permission under ONE LICENCE #A-62451e

Communion: Come, O Come Emmanuel T Helmore/Neale

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!***

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
Who orders all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
and teach us in her ways to go.

O come, O come, great Lord of might,
Who to your tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times once gave the law,
In cloud and majesty and awe.

O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem,
From ev'ry foe deliver them
That trust your mighty pow'r to save;
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

O come, O Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.

O come, O Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by your drawing nigh,
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadow put to flight.

O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of humankind;
O bid our sad divisions cease,
And be for us our King of Peace.

Copyright: GIA Publications. All Rights Reserved. Used with permission under ONE LICENCE #A-62451E

Thanksgiving: Hail Mary: Gentle Woman C Landry

Hail Mary, full of grace, The Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women,
and blest is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners
Now and at the hour of death. Amen.

**Gentle woman, quiet light, morning star,
So strong and bright gentle Mother,
Peaceful dove, teach us wisdom, teach us love.**

You were chosen by the Father, you were chosen for the Son
You were chosen from all women and for woman shining one.

Blessed are you among women, blest in turn all women too.
Blessed they with peaceful spirits blessed they with gentle hearts.

© 1975 Carey Landry & New Dawn Music. All rights reserved. Used with permission under ONE LICENCE #A-62451e

Recessional: Joyful in Hope: M Herry

Joyful in hope, your people pray.
Joyful in hope, we're on our way.
Though the road may not be clear,
We believe, Lord, you are near,
In the smile and open heart of a friend.

Joyful in hope, your people pray.
Joyful in hope, we're on our way.
There's sunshine after rain, There's laughter after pain,
And I am with you always, so rise again.

Mary, so open to the Lord,
When you answered 'Yes,' Our hope was restored.
Though you couldn't understand,
In trust you took his hand.
So, joyful in hope, we live again.

© Michael Herry. Willow Publications. All rights reserved. Used with permission under ONE LICENCE #A-62451e