



THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH YEAR C SUNDAY 26 DECEMBER 2021

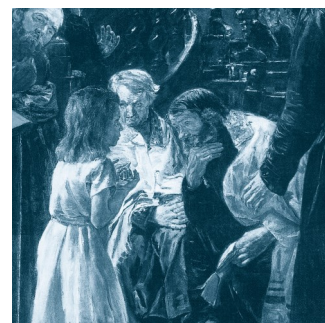
Today we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family. Devotion to the Holy Family has a reasonably long history in Catholicism.

When the feast falls on the Sunday after Christmas as it has this year, it extends the celebration of the Nativity, putting new emphasis on the humanity of Jesus and on the gift of divine life offered to all of us. Today's feast reminds us that Jesus was a part of a family and part of the whole human family.

*One of the key lessons of this feast may be understanding Jesus for who he is
It will always be a process of seeking and finding, of questioning and being questioned.*

Today is a day to expand our understanding of our spiritual lives, and renew the promises we made at Confirmation, and embrace our adult responsibilities.

It is a tall order, but with the help of God we will succeed. The courage to listen and respond to God's word is sorely needed in our world today.



We Acknowledge the traditional owners of this land the Awabakal Peoples. And pay our respects to the elders past and present, and any that may be with us today.

PARISH LEADERSHIP TEAM:

| Foundation | Leader | In Office |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Identity and Community | | |
| 2. Worship and Prayer. | Uta France | Mon |
| 3. Formation and Education | | |
| 4. Mission and Outreach. | | |
| 5. Leadership and Structure. | John France & Juliet Hutchins | Sat & Sun Tues |

If you have any concerns or questions you can also talk to any member of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) who are: Mal and Pam Melvey, Kerry Lendon, and Rod Hay.

PRIEST SUPERVISOR: Fr Geoff Mulhearn

SACRAMENTAL PRIEST: Fr John Purnell

Parish Secretary: Mrs Rosanna Suckling Mon— Fri 9am-2pm

OFFICE: 60 Yambo Street, Morisset, PO Box 87, Ph: 02 4973.6859

Office Hours: 9.00 am to 2.00pm—Monday to Friday

(Due to COVID we ask that you make an appointment to come to the office)

Morisset Parish email: morparish@mn.catholic.org.au

Parish Leadership Team Email: morparishplt@mn.catholic.org.au

Morisset Parish Web site: www.vianneymorisset.org

Morisset Parish Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/stjvparish>

Morisset Parish Instagram : https://www.instagram.com/stjvparish_morisset/

Morisset Parish Bulletin Items: morparish@mn.catholic.org.au

Morisset Parish Presbytery: Ph: 02 4973 1537

(Please submit all Bulletin Notice requests to the parish office by 2pm Wednesdays)

Email the Parish Office to Subscribe for an Electronic Bulletin .

UPCOMING WORSHIP TIMES :

| | | |
|---------|---------------|----------|
| Sunday | 26th December | 9.30am |
| | Liturgy— | Morisset |
| Tuesday | 28th December | 9.30am |
| | Mass— | Morisset |
| Sunday | 2nd January | 9.30am |
| | Mass— | Morisset |
| Tuesday | 4th January | 9.30am |
| | Mass— | Morisset |

As we are still required to Physical Distance you need to Register your place via the Book for Services button on the Parish Website, or the Eventbrite App or Website:

<http://vianneymorisset.eventbrite.com> to guarantee yourself a seat.

CHECK-IN

Everyone is required to electronically check-in via the Service App using a QR Code when they come to the Church or any Service held by the Parish, or have someone do it for them.

MASKS REQUIRED

Everyone over the age of 12 is required to wear a Mask that covers the nose and mouth indoors or while waiting to come inside.

REFLECTION FOR FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY YEAR C 26/12/2021

With many people away for Summer holidays or relaxing at home, it's fair to say that the Feast of the Holy Family may not be high on their agenda. In those years when there's no Sunday between Christmas Day & New Year's Day, the feast is celebrated on a weekday. It was only added to the Liturgical Calendar by Papal Decree in 1893. However, since then, the tide of change in all that concerns family life has only grown stronger. The tension between ideal & reality was emphasised in Pope Francis' lengthy discourse "On love in the family" that was published after the 2014-2015 Synod on the Family.

In Section 30 of that document he noted that -

The Holy Family, Mary, Joseph & Jesus, was not spared the human condition & in fact, their daily life had it's own share of burdens & nightmares, just like ours.

In Section 32 he writes, "Faithful to Christ's teaching, we look to the reality of the family today- in all it's complexity & it's lights & shadows.

He describes St Joseph as "a model of quiet prayer & closeness to Jesus".

We live in an era when we are constantly hearing about the demise of the family unit & it's values. It seems that the family unit is under constant attack--divorce rates are at an all-time high & a huge number of children are raised in single-parent, divided or blended families. In ALL these situations, we are learning to appreciate the diversity of family experience - BUT despite these variations, there is NO disputing the VALUE of the family unit--- it is at the heart of our society, our development & our Church.

If we stop & think about it, the Holy Family that we are honouring today wasn't exactly what we might describe as a "typical family", but nevertheless, it IS presented here as a model - NOT that it was ideal, but because, no matter what disagreements & stresses occurred - (and there were plenty) - it was characterised by a willingness to trust in God & in each other.

In today's Gospel we get a snapshot of their family life when Jesus was 12yrs old. Along with every other Jewish family- YES - they lived their life in strict Jewish tradition- a fact that some may find difficult to accept -they were attending the Passover celebrations in Jerusalem - you all know the familiar scenario that occurred after they set out for home- travelling along with the crowds of people.

We are drawn sympathetically into the predicament that Jesus & Mary faced & we can imagine their panic & distress as they began their search for their young son. We ,too, are familiar with this situation in OUR world today when a loved one, especially a child is missing & " all efforts " are put in place to find that child..

On finding Jesus, preaching in the Temple, they , as well as us, are surprised by Jesus' dismissal of his parents' concerns & his declaration of what he had been doing. Nevertheless, he returned to Nazareth to continue living happily with them.- probably working as a Carpenter with his father!

Let's think about Mary's reaction- we are told that, despite her fear & panic, she stored all these things in her heart. Mary is a model of the reflective life- she responds to these events by allowing them to speak to her & to her heart- rather than simply REACTING, as so many of us do. This ability to REFLECT ON events, rather than REACT TO them, can lead to a more considered response & so less chance of making

the same mistake again- a good practice we might try to adopt.

The reality is that Jesus not only shared a family relationship with Mary & Joseph BUT also with God, his Father- WE are called to do the same.

-How might you improve relationships within your family?

-Today, especially, let us pray for ALL parents that they will follow the example of Mary & Joseph .

Heather White

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

The Parish Office will be closed from 2pm on Friday 24th December 2021 and will re-open at 9am on Monday 10th January 2022. You are still able to call the Parish Office where your call will be redirected to a member of the Parish Leadership Team. We ask that you limit your calls to emergencies and booking in for services only.

CHRISTMAS MASS LIVE STREAM

The following Mass times at Sacred Heart Cathedral will be live streamed on the Diocese's YouTube channel:

5:00PM, Friday 24 December (Christmas Eve Vigil)

00:00AM, Saturday 25 December (Midnight Mass)

9:30AM, Saturday 25 December (Christmas Day Mass)

You can access our YouTube channel here:

www.youtube.com/channel/UCNSG1_ktOJRbiNCBw5fABGA

CARITAS AUSTRALIA CHRISTMAS APPEAL

For years Maria, a young mother living in northern Tanzania, struggled to earn an income and provide enough food to feed her family.

Unable to read, write or count, her opportunities to make a living were limited. Her farm often produced poor harvests due to water scarcity, and Maria was forced to travel long distances to collect water.

Thanks to the generosity of people like you, Maria was able to join the A+ program and participate in training about sustainable farming, literacy and numeracy, gender awareness, hygiene and sanitation.

With her new skills, Maria is now able to produce enough food to feed her family, earn a sustainable income, and has even become a leader in her community.

When you support a mother like Maria, it has the power to uplift her entire family. This Christmas, give a family like Maria's the gift of a brighter future.

Visit www.caritas.org.au/donate/christmas-appeal or call 1800 024 413 toll free to support vulnerable families doing it tough this year.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS: A TIME FOR REFLECTION AND GRATITUDE

It feels like just the other day we were taking down the Christmas decorations in my home. But here we are again, on the cusp of the "most beautiful time of the year".

GERARD OGLE PUBLISHED DECEMBER 21, 2021

To read the full story go to: <https://www.mnnews.today/aurora/december-2021/christmas-celebrations-a-time-for-reflection-and-gratitude/>

Keep up to date with all the Diocese Events and News at:
<https://mnnews.today/>

LITURGY MATTERS: THE CRADLE AND THE CROSS

It is only a few more sleeps to Christmas day, the first day of the Christmas season. Yes, Christmas is a season, so you need to pace yourselves!

LOUISE GANNON RSJ PUBLISHED DECEMBER 21, 2021

As another extraordinary year draws to a close and we enter these last days of Advent I have been thinking that the last two years have been something of a master class in pacing ourselves and a prolonged Advent experience of waiting with purpose and hope.

I approach Christmas with a much deeper experience and appreciation of the truth that the cradle and the cross are all part of the one mystery of God's love and are woven together in the very human joys and struggles of our lives.

What do you think of the image accompanying this reflection? I thank my friend and colleague Bernadette Gibson for putting it before me. I haven't been able to get it out of my mind and heart since.

Today I read a reflection that included the following:

Those who witnessed and were involved in or around the incarnation were all adults. Only Christ was small. Christmas, therefore, requires the adult world not to gaze on children re-enacting the Nativity, but rather to re-discover the stories of Christ's birth as speaking from and to adult experience.

Irrespective of how I am, or what joys and sorrows I bring to our liturgical celebration of Christmas, every year the word that echoes through me is 'Today'. The liturgy is full of references to 'today' or 'this day' and other similar phrases. I hear its clearest and most beautiful proclamation in the Responsorial Psalm for midnight Mass:

Today is born a saviour, Christ the Lord.

The Christmas liturgy spells it out for us with repeated and deafening clarity. We remember the birth of Christ not as some long past, beautiful story but as an event that continues today in and through us. The invitation is not to watch but to participate. Today a saviour is born, love is born, in us. The incarnation continues in and through us. It takes the whole Christmas Season and indeed the whole liturgical year for me to join myself in this mystery and endeavour to live it every day.

Our joys and sorrows, our achievements and struggles matter. They are the stuff where love is born and where we learn the dying, rising pattern of the cross. They are sacred. They deserve our attention. Some deserve celebration. Some, anointing and tender care as we wait patiently for healing and the hint of new life.

As we wait these last few days to celebrate Christmas, I wish to say 'Thank you' to all who have given birth to love through liturgical ministry. Thank you to all those who gather for liturgy. Thank you to liturgical ministers who prepare, preside, proclaim, preach, make music, process, serve, welcome ... Thank you to those who ask questions and participate in formation, who dare to engage in the ongoing process of conversion summed up in the image of 'unlearning – learning – re-learning' that Richard Lennan put before us.

I am conscious too that many approach Christmas with heavy and broken hearts: because someone has died and is missing from your table; because of sickness; because COVID has brought unemployment and lost hopes and dreams; because relationships are broken or dead; because of feelings of diminishment and insecurity; because of any number of losses and challenges.

Probably, all of us come to this Christmas with a very human

mix of feelings from weariness to hope. We come also in faith knowing God is with us in all our joys and struggles, in our thanksgiving and our longings ...

May the love of God be born in you, in the sacred messy stuff of your life, that you may bring the love of God to birth for others, each and every day.

Today is born a saviour, Christ the Lord.

And it is you who is giving birth!

You might like to listen to A Weary Couple by Tony Alonso.

Acknowledgements

Quote: Wild Goose Worship. Cloth for the Cradle. The Wild Goose Worship Group. Glasgow, Scotland, 1997.

A PLACE TO CALL HOME REPORT

Jesuit Refugee Services Australia and the Western Sydney University have released a report on homelessness and accommodation levels with asylum seeker populations in Western Sydney.

The research was conducted between October 2020 and April 2021 by Dr Elizabeth Conroy of the Translational Health Research Institute, Western Sydney University and Anjali Roberts and Nishadh Rego from the Jesuit Refugee Service – Australia.

The report was launched on 10 December where experts shared their thoughts on the report.

Mariam, an Iranian refugee on a temporary visa said she had been held in detention with her three year-old son. She said she had felt helpless as she could not defend herself or her son. She described her living conditions when she was released into the community without working rights as rough, "but we survived."

People who are claiming asylum in Australia may have access to Status Resolution Support Service, however this is the equivalent of just \$35 a day (in 2018). Those with work rights do not have access to this, even if they are unemployed. Also, people whose claims have been rejected at the merit stage but have not yet had a chance to appeal are also ineligible for the SRSS payment. Many become destitute.

From 2018, the number of people on SRSS went from 13,000 to 3,000 as the budget was cut by 85%. In NSW people are also ineligible for housing or rental assistance unless experiencing domestic violence.

Dr. Eve Lester, Australia Research Council DECRA Fellow at ANU college of Law and a Board Member of JRS Australia said, "This is policy. It's a product of policy. It's planned destitution, it's planned hardship. It's entirely predictable that people will experience hardship...and it's entirely preventable."

Housing security was low across the 14 participants where continual uncertainty and financial stress caused accommodation stress. The report states, "Home was consistently framed in terms of having the financial capacity to afford it, particularly by participants at the primary stage of the Refugee Status Determination process.

"As a result of not being allowed to work, or being unable to work, participants were forced to depend on family, friends, and charities. Participants described this as 'approval of begging' and described the humiliation of continually asking for food and rent from others. One participant explained:

"The church is giving us Coles cards and I sell a \$50 card to a friend for \$40 so I can put it on top of the rent."

To read the full story go to: <https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/2021/12/15/a-place-to-call-home-report-released/>

HOW NEW WHS LAWS AFFECT US

Under the New WHS Laws regarding managing the risk of COVID-19 we are required to maintain physical distancing of 1.5m between seated persons who do not live together, on each row. This means that everyone needs to sit in the marked spots as directed by our ushers, we are also unable to kneel due to this requirement.

We also must have safe hygiene practices, cleaning and disinfecting high traffic areas and shared surfaces. This means that we need people to sanitise their hands upon entry, directly before communion and when asked to by a COVID Safety Team Member, Parish Leadership or Staff. There is also to be no communion from the Chalice or on the tongue. We also need to clean after each service.

SUPPORTING OUR PARISH

We thank everyone who has continued their support for our Parish during these very different times. As cash is deemed a transmission hazard by NSW Health they recommend that donations and payments be made electronically.

There is an online parish payments button on the Parish Website Home page or alternatively you can deposit directly into the Parish Account our details are:
Account Name: CDF 96014 Morisset Parish BSB:062815
Account Number: 00328161 Ref: 5004 2nd Collection or 5004 PG and Giver Number.

SUPPORTING THE DIOCESE CLERGY

If you would like to make contributions to support the Diocese Clergy / 1st Collection the Bank Account Details are:
Account Name: CDF 96020 Morisset Presbytery BSB: 062815
Account Number 00328161 Ref: 5016 1st Collection

UPCOMING FEAST DAYS MEMORIALS AND SOLEMNITIES

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH— 26TH DEC
SAINT JOHN— 27TH DECEMBER
THE HOLY INNOCENTS— 28TH DECEMBER
THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD— 2ND JANUARY
THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD—9TH JANUARY
SAINT ANTHONY—17TH JANUARY
SAINT AGNES— 21ST JANUARY
SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES— 24TH JANUARY
CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL— 25TH JANUARY
SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS— 28TH JANUARY

Please pray for those who are sick, in hospital or recovering at home:

Ian Douglas, Maureen Phillips, Dan Joyce, Bruce Gillett, William Eggins, Robert Jay.

Please pray for those who have been called to eternal life may they always be in our prayers.



PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE BULLETIN

If you would like the parish to pray for a family member who is sick, recently deceased or you would like remembered please call or email the parish office or complete a prayer card for each person and place in the mail box near the parish office door. Cards are available at the back of the church and at the Parish Office.

All prayer requests require permission from a family member or the person. Due to Australian privacy laws.

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there and unite
myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.



Live stream Mass every Sunday at 9.30am at <https://www.mn.catholic.org.au/places/live-stream/>

| <u>WEEKEND ROSTERS</u> | | | |
|--------------------------------|------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | | <u>THIS WEEK</u> | <u>NEXT WEEK</u> |
| <u>Presiders</u> | 9.30 | Liturgy | Mass |
| <u>PROCLAIMER:</u> | 9.30 | L McRae | J Shamley |
| <u>PSALMIST:</u> | 9.30 | P Melvey | J Vipan |
| <u>UNIVERSAL PRAYER</u> | 9.30 | P Melvey | J Vipan |
| <u>SERVERS</u> | 9.30 | XXXX | V Paulo |
| <u>AV:</u> | 9.30 | U France | U France |
| <u>SOUND/ VIDEO:</u> | 9.30 | U France | G & L Hutchinson |
| <u>SIGN-IN</u> | 9.30 | J Hutchins M Foo | H White T Alexander |
| <u>USHERS</u> | 9.30 | P Herbert P Melvey | R Hay J France |
| <u>CLEANING</u> | 9.30 | COVID TEAM | COVID TEAM |





Christmas Blessings 2021 | Fr Greg Barker

As I write I am mindful of the sad loss of our Bishop, Bishop William Wright, who succumbed to illness recently. It has been tragic not only to his family but to our Church.

FR GREG BARKER PUBLISHED DECEMBER 21, 2021

Bishop Bill was this Diocese' shepherd for ten years and guided our Catholic community through difficulties most of us may not have been fully aware of. He did that with a strength of character and dignity that was something of a light for not only this Catholic Church but for many others in the broader community. He will be sadly missed and fondly remembered.

His message this year might well have been born out of the challenge of his illness and the quiet acceptance of God's plan as it unfolded, even if the end or purpose was hidden from his eyes. 'It is hard to die even for a good man' (Romans 5:7) we are reminded in the words of St Paul. Bill died with great grace and dignity and a strength that faith gives.

It feels like we have been anticipating Christmas this year for a very long time. I want to say that it seems the Christmas decorations started appearing soon after Easter, a slight exaggeration perhaps. Maybe it was a sense that this year is, was or did 'suck'. And whilst I was very optimistic last year that 2020 was going to give us 'clear' vision and a bright future with many opportunities, COVID came and changed our world forever.

I was not so optimistic this year. The early anticipation of Christmas maybe was a reflection that I was not alone. Even with a year full of challenges Christmas trees going up in October and the tinsel and glitter already about, may have been a little premature even for a community feeling the effects of a 'gloomish' year.

I was recently reminded that COVID came on the back of flood, fire and drought – 2019 was not such a great year. This year our communities were once again called to dig deep and accept some 'big' challenges. Resilience sometimes is hard to find especially in the face of multiple hurdles. We did it and here we are celebrating Christmas once again.

I cannot forget the images that came out of Afghanistan this year as the Taliban once again took Kabul. Tragic is a word the springs immediately to mind. I feel for the people left behind but am grateful for the wider world community who responded with such generosity. The response from many nations rescuing thousands, taking them to waiting open arms who welcomed, comforted and made a place for those seeking safety.

In recent days the interviews with young female Afghani soccer players, teachers, medical staff and others who would have been denied the freedom to be all of those things has been heart-warming. I hear in them a sadness too that these necessary skills will be denied the Nation of Afghanistan, their homeland.

These good news stories fill us with hope amidst the sadness as the more vulnerable women, girls and children find sanctuary right across the globe. There is something about the human condition mostly that simply wants to help and save. We are intrinsically good, created that way by a God who loves us and who sent his own Son to save us. That's the heart of Christmas isn't it.

Jesus was a refugee. Soon after his birth he and his family were forced to flee oppression and violence and make a home in a neighbouring country. We have great example of what 'making a home' looks like for those that seek sanctuary.

The infant who is born to us reminds a world with its broken parts that intrinsically there is good in all of us and that somehow, some where we are worth saving. Eventually that Son, the good 'man' of Paul's letter to the Romans, will give his life for us. That's the hope of Christmas.

For now, we gather in our Churches and our homes to celebrate the birth with great joy. The tree, the tinsel and the glitter, the presents, the effort of Christmas all builds in anticipation of that moment that salvation enters our world.

This year has been a year of lockdown and isolating, yet I feel more connected to those people and events than ever before. I am amazed at the numbers of people who have gone out of their way to make more regular contact with a neighbour, parish member, work colleague, friend and member of their own family than ever before. I have been reminded of what really is important in my life. That's the joy of Christmas.

How did being in lockdown make us more connected? Have more conversations? Be more aware of those who live alone or are more vulnerable to loneliness and aloneness? It is a modern-day miracle! I never thought I would be so grateful to technology, which had been the bane of my life till two years ago. Whilst I cannot say I am grateful to COVID it has reminded me to of what my priorities should be.

This year has seen many challenges no doubt but also some amazing graces and blessings. As you sit around your tree this year with your family and friends remember to give thanks for the blessings they bring to your heart and home. At the heart of everything is Jesus, the Saviour born to us and who in his unconditional love reminds us to be what we have been created to be, intrinsically good!

Have a wonderful, safe, and joy filled Christmas. May 2022 be COVID free!

View Fr Greg Baker's Christmas Message at: <https://youtu.be/uHqnweTID6Y>



Brendon Mannyx: Breaking walls this Christmas

In November, our Diocese began sharing stories of Mission and Outreach under the name, *Church without Walls*.

BRENDON MANNYX PUBLISHED DECEMBER 21, 2021

In these weeks of Advent preparation, it has struck me that the Christmas story is the ultimate 'Church without Walls' story that we tell. We encounter a family for whom there is no room within the established community. They are a family looking for a place to rest. They are a family who find their place outside the city centre in a barn with the animals. And it is into this space that Jesus, *God-with-us*, is born.

For Mary and Joseph, life did not go as they planned. That first Christmas, if anything, was a disruption of their hopes and dreams. No one plans to give birth among the smell of animals. No one plans for their baby's first bed to be a trough for animal food. No one plans to celebrate the birth of their first child cut off from family and friends in an unfamiliar place.

As I write this, COVID cases within our diocese are increasing dramatically. These cases are people we know. They are our family members. Our colleagues. Our friends. Families that were getting ready to celebrate are now preparing for days or weeks of quarantine and isolation. Communities that were already struggling are wondering when relief will come. This was not the Christmas we were planning this year.

And yet, what is the story we've come to know? That first Christmas was a sign of God's transformative power coming into the world. Into the mess, into the chaos and the disruption, the Prince of Peace is born. This young mother and father use everything at their disposal to make the world comfortable for their newborn child. Soon others will gather around them drawn to the simplicity and love they encounter in this couple and the new baby boy. Shepherds, magi and townsfolk are drawn out of their 'walls' to come and be with this family at this privileged moment in their story.

Mary and Joseph were able to open their hearts in welcome to those they found gathered around them that first Christmas. Mary and Joseph didn't let the disruption to their plans close them off from the Great Plan that God had for them. Mary and Joseph didn't let fear of the unknown stop them from loving and being loved.

What might we learn this year in looking back at that first Christmas?

Might we discover that we are exactly where God needs us to be this Christmas? Whatever our plans were, might we discover something new in the disruptions and unmet expectations? Might God be calling us to love and be loved right where we are?

I look at my own family and the year that has been. Like many families, the challenges of lock-downs and home-schooling proved extremely challenging. Just as we were getting ready to reengage with the world around us, we find ourselves wondering just what the right thing is to do at a time like this. But then I think of that first Christmas and I imagine a simple Christmas with those nearest me. I picture myself slowing down and really taking time to listen to those God has put around me. This year, when many won't be able to join our celebrations at our churches, I picture our home becoming church in the little part of the world where we find ourselves.

This Christmas, our Church will be wherever we are. Our celebrations won't be limited to gatherings within four walls but will break out into a world that needs to share in the love of God that we carry within our life stories. Every family gathering to share a meal; every act of generosity and kindness; every care package delivered to a household in need; every carol joyfully sung; every neighbour greeted with a smile; every stranger made welcome – this is our Church without walls.

Mary and Joseph were able to transform the dwelling of cows and sheep into a welcoming home. This space became a 'place of belonging' for those who happened to be there. Perhaps we'll create that 'place of belonging' just by slowing down enough to open our hearts to one another – that longer phone conversation with a family member or old friend – that moment of reconnecting with neighbours not seen throughout the year – that intentional gesture of charity towards those in need – that moment of realising that what I actually need this year is to simply be with Jesus in a new and unexpected way.

In this way, God is doing more than just breaking down the walls of our church.

God is breaking the walls of our hearts.



PRAYER SERVICE

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) Day

Saturday 25 Dec 2021

The Introductory Rites

Gathering

The Lectionary/Roman Missal or a Bible may be placed on a table together with a candle and a cross.

Sign of the Cross

Leader:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All:

Amen.

Greeting

Leader:

Blessed be Jesus Christ
the Word made flesh
who is proclaimed among the nations.

All:

Blessed be God forever.

Introductory Remarks

Leader (in these or similar words):

Friends in Christ,
although we cannot celebrate the Eucharist this day,
we gather in God's name
for when two or more come together
God is always with us.
We worship in union with the whole Church
rejoicing at the birth of the Saviour.

Opening Rite

GLORIA

Leader:

With peoples everywhere,
let us glorify our God (in joyful song).

A brief period of silence follows.

All:

**Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.**

**We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

Opening Prayer

Leader:

Let us pray.

All pause for silent prayer.

**Eternal God,
today we have seen your glory
for Jesus Christ is born.
Emmanuel, God with us,
may your light shine on us
for your coming brings hope to the world.
We make this prayer through the Holy Spirit
in Jesus' name.**

All:

Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Is 52:7-10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

All the ends of the earth shall see the saving power of our God.

How beautiful on the mountains,
are the feet of one who brings good news,
who heralds peace, brings happiness,
proclaims salvation,
and tells Zion,
'Your God is king!'

Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices,
they shout for joy together,
for they see the Lord face to face,
as he returns to Zion.

Break into shouts of joy together,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the Lord is consoling his people,
redeeming Jerusalem.

The Lord bares his holy arm
in the sight of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

To indicate the end of the reading, the reader acclaims:

The word of the Lord.

All reply:

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 97:1-6. R. v.3

(R.) All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

1. Sing a new song to the Lord
for he has worked wonders.
His right hand and his holy arm
have brought salvation. **(R.)**
2. The Lord has made known his salvation;
has shown his justice to the nations.
He has remembered his truth and love
for the house of Israel. **(R.)**
3. All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.
Shout to the Lord all the earth,
ring out your joy. **(R.)**

4. Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp,
with the sound of music.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
acclaim the King, the Lord. **(R.)**

Second Reading

Heb 1:1-6

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

In our own time, God speaks to us through his Son.

At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son, the Son that he has appointed to inherit everything and through whom he made everything there is. He is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful command; and now that he has destroyed the defilement of sin, he has gone to take his place in heaven at the right hand of divine Majesty. So he is now as far above the angels as the title which he has inherited is higher than their own name.

God has never said to any angel: You are my Son, today I have become your father, or: I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Again, when he brings the First-born into the world, he says: Let all the angels of God worship him.

To indicate the end of the reading, the reader acclaims:

The word of the Lord.

All reply:

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

Reader:

From the holy Gospel according to John.

All:

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jn 1:1-5. 9-14

The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory.

In the beginning was the Word:

the Word was with God

and the Word was God.

He was with God in the beginning.

Through him all things came to be,

not one thing had its being but through him.

All that came to be had life in him

and that life was the light of men,

a light that shines in the dark,

a light that darkness could not overpower.

The Word was the true light

that enlightens all men;

and he was coming into the world.

He was in the world

that had its being through him,
and the world did not know him.
He came to his own domain
and his own people did not accept him.
But to all who did accept him
he gave power to become children of God,
to all who believe in the name of him
who was born not out of human stock
or urge of the flesh
or will of man
but of God himself.
The Word was made flesh,
he lived among us.
And we saw his glory,
the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father,
full of grace and truth.

Reader:

The Gospel of the Lord.

All:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

All are seated.

Reflection on the Word

A short period of reflection may be observed.

Profession of Faith

Leader:

In union with the whole Church
let us profess our faith.

All:

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

At the words that follow, up to and including the Virgin Mary, all bow.

**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

Leader: Dear friends, today a holy light has shone upon the earth. Let us bring our prayers before God the Father of all humanity.

Reader: That through the birth of God's Son, the Holy Church of God will ever acclaim God's presence among all people.

(pause)

In your glory:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That the holy child of Bethlehem will draw us out of darkness, and into the light of God.

(pause)

In your glory:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

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

(pause)

In your glory:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

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

(pause)

In your glory:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That through the Virgin's Son, all the sick will be given renewed life, especially those in our community and families.

(pause)

In your glory:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That all those who have died may ever share in the eternal light of Christ, especially those in our community and families.

(pause)

In your glory:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord God, all the ends of the earth have seen your saving power. Hear our prayers this Christmas day as we joyfully proclaim the glory of your infant Son on earth. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

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The Lord's Prayer

Leader:

At the Saviour's command
and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to say:

All:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

The Concluding Rite

Blessing

Leader:

May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now and for ever.

All make the sign of the cross during the blessing.

All:

Amen.

Dismissal

Leader:

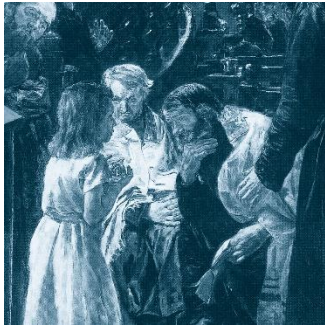
Let us go in peace.

All:

Thanks be to God.

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SUNDAY PRAYER SERVICE

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Year C

Sunday 26 Dec 2021

The Introductory Rites

Gathering

The Lectionary/Roman Missal or a Bible may be placed on a table together with a candle and a cross.

Sign of the Cross

Leader:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All:

Amen.

Greeting

Leader:

Blessed be Jesus Christ
the Word made flesh
who is proclaimed among the nations.

All:

Blessed be God forever.

Introductory Remarks

Leader (in these or similar words):

Friends in Christ,
although we cannot celebrate the Eucharist this day,
we gather in God's name
for when two or more come together
God is always with us.

We worship in union with the whole Church
rejoicing at the birth of the Saviour.

Opening Rite

GLORIA

Leader:

With peoples everywhere,
let us glorify our God (in joyful song).

A brief period of silence follows.

All:

**Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.**

**We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

Opening Prayer

Leader:

Let us pray.

All pause for silent prayer.

**God, our Father,
in your wisdom and kindness
you watched over your Son, Jesus,
and the Holy Family.
Fill us with gentleness and patience
so that we may follow their example of love and faith.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever.**

All:

Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

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.

To indicate the end of the reading, the reader acclaims:

The word of the Lord.

All reply:

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 83:2-3. 5-6. 9-10. R. v.5

(R.) How happy they who dwell in your house, O Lord.

1. How lovely is your dwelling place,
Lord, God of hosts.
My soul is longing and yearning,
is yearning for the courts of the Lord.
My heart and my soul ring out their joy
to God, the living God. **(R.)**
2. They are happy, who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.
They are happy, whose strength is in you;
they walk with ever growing strength. **(R.)**
3. O Lord, God of hosts, hear my prayer,
gave ear, O God of Jacob.
Turn your eyes, O God, our shield,
look on the face of your anointed. **(R.)**

Second Reading

1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24

A reading from the first letter of St John

He calls you his own children, and that is what you are.

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us,
by letting us be called God's children;
and that is what we are.

Because the world refused to acknowledge him,
therefore it does not acknowledge us.

My dear people, we are already the children of God
but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed,
all we know is, that when it is revealed
we shall be like him

because we shall see him as he really is.

My dear people,
if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience,
we need not be afraid in God's presence,
and whatever we ask him,
we shall receive,
because we keep his commandments
and live the kind of life that he wants.

His commandments are these:
that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ
and that we love one another
as he told us to.

Whoever keeps his commandments
lives in God and God lives in him.

We know that he lives in us
by the Spirit that he has given us.

To indicate the end of the reading, the reader acclaims:

The word of the Lord.

All reply:

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

Reader:

From the holy Gospel according to Luke.

All:

Glory to you, O Lord.

Lk 2:41-52

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.

Reader:

The Gospel of the Lord.

All:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

All are seated.

Reflection on the Word

A short period of reflection may be observed.

Q. What might Mary and Joseph have felt when Jesus was missing and when they found him again?

Q. Why do you think this is the only incident from Jesus' childhood reported in the four gospels?

Q. Why does Jesus appear to place little importance on his family in this and other gospel incidents?

Q. Why is it that families can be both the most frustrating and fulfilling parts of our life?

Q. How could you improve relationships within your family?

Profession of Faith

Leader:

In union with the whole Church
let us profess our faith.

All:

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

At the words that follow, up to and including the Virgin Mary, all bow.

**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

Leader: Dear friends, through the Holy Family of Nazareth, let us bring our prayers before the Lord.

Reader: That our Holy Father Pope Francis. may be filled with grace and holiness as he exercises his pastoral care over the Christian family.

(pause)

In your kindness:

All:Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That leaders and governors will recognise the sanctity of the family unit and serve them with peace, justice and harmony.

(pause)

In your kindness:

All:Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That those from broken families will find a welcoming and loving home with God's people.

(pause)

In your kindness:

All:Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That as a family of the Church, our community will bestow grace and peace to all of God's children.

(pause)

In your kindness:

All:Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That all the sick will be filled with the consolation of God's abundant love, especially those in our community and families.

(pause)

In your kindness:

All:Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That all those who have died will be gathered into eternal life in God's heavenly home, especially those in our community and families.

(pause)

In your kindness:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: 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.

All: Amen.

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The Lord's Prayer

Leader:

At the Saviour's command
and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to say:

All:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

The Concluding Rite

Blessing

Leader:

May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now and for ever.

All make the sign of the cross during the blessing.

All:

Amen.

Dismissal

Leader:

Let us go in peace.

All:

Thanks be to God.

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