

Reflection

OPEN OUR HEARTS TO GOD'S PRESENCE

Today the liturgical readings invite us to reflect on the presence of God in our midst. His presence is enlivening and reassuring. It is not the presence of the spy or of the judge that fills people with uneasiness and fear. Rather, God's presence among us is the source of our salvation. It is an undeserved gift that transforms our lives, filling them with hope and peace. But if we want to enjoy all these benefits, we must respond adequately to God's presence in us.

We do that by opening our hearts to Him with gratitude and eagerness, following the example of Mary Most Holy who declares her total availability to do whatever God wants.

Let this be our disposition today as we celebrate the Holy Eucharist.



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Admin Assistant: Marianne Kelly

Parish Office Hours

Tuesday - Friday : 9am - 1pm

St Mary's Parish Centre

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PARISH MASS TIMES

Weekend Mass Times: 23rd & 24th & 25th December

Saturday: 6:00pm Vigil Mass

Sunday : 9:30am Mass 4th Sunday of Advent

6.00pm Christmas Family Mass

(St Joseph's College, Oak Centre)

10.00pm Christmas Vigil Mass (Church)

Monday: 9.30am Christmas Day Mass (Church)

Weekday Masses: 25th to 29th December

Monday: 9.30am Christmas Day Mass

Weekend Mass Times: 30th & 31st December

Saturday: 6:00pm Mass

Sunday : 9:30am Mass

Reconciliation: Approach Fr. Novie Before Mass

Baptism: Every Second Sunday of the Month

Weddings: By Appointment with the Parish Priest

Ladies' Group: Every Tuesday 2pm (Parish Centre)

Men's Group: Every Saturday 9am (Parish Centre)

Playgroup: Every Friday 9am (Parish Centre)

During school terms

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Yorta Yorta Nation. This land is sacred, this land is gift, this land is thousands of years old. We acknowledge the immense beauty of this land and the dreams of the Yorta-Yorta

People. We pay our respects to elders past and present and acknowledge the lessons the Yorta-Yorta people teach us about care, respect and justice for mother earth. We remember their story as we journey together in a spirit of hope, justice and peace.

If you wish to assist in "further supporting the Parish" we offer different ways of giving... direct debit, credit card or planned giving envelopes. Please ring the office for more details.

PARISH BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS are as follows:

St Mary's Echuca

BSB Number: 083-543

Account Number: 45-782-9206

Child Safety: Through our policies and practices, we protect the right of children to feel safe and to be safe. We promote the well-being and inclusion of all children. For more information, contact the parish office and look for the Child Safety Officer Mel Slattery.

PARISH NEWS



Advent and Christmas Celebrations

23rd December 2023

6 pm Vigil Mass

24th December 2023

9:30 am Sunday Mass

24th December 2023

6:00 pm Christmas Family Mass
(St. Joseph's College, Oak Centre)
10:00 pm Christmas Vigil Mass
(Church)

25th December 2023

9:30am Christmas Day Mass

One of our parishioners has a medical appointment in Melbourne on the 19th January. They're looking for someone to drive them down and back. If you're able to assist could you please contact Julie Moyle on 0409 826336. Thank you.

Caritas Australia Christmas Appeal:

At our Christmas Masses you are invited to share your love to help communities vulnerable to natural disasters around the world to be ready, respond and recover.

When a disaster strikes, the most vulnerable and marginalised are often hit the hardest. Natural disasters and emergencies can devastate communities, and responding rapidly to a crisis is often a matter of life and death. **This lifesaving work can only happen with your support.**

Caritas is also on the ground in Gaza responding to the urgent need of humanitarian aid. Your support is needed now to help provide immediate basic needs like food, shelter and medical supplies.

Donate at caritas.org.au/christmas



Dear Parishioners,

Temporary Parish Office Arrangements for January 2024

I'll be away on my annual holiday, returning to the Philippines from December 26th to January 26th. With no permanent Parish Secretary available, we've collaborated with the Senior Leadership Team to create a temporary plan for smooth operations.

In January, the Parish Office will be open exclusively on Thursdays from 9 am to 1 pm, managed by Marianne Kelly, our administrative assistant. On days when Marianne is unavailable, Julie Moyle will be the point of contact for urgent matters like Anointing of the Sick (reaching out to Fr. Des or Fr. Damien), parish emergencies, pastoral concerns, and essential needs. Julie will coordinate with various ministry groups. Building issues will go to the Maintenance Team (Rob Morris, Bob Cooper, and Bunny Oliver), and financial matters will go to Margaret Hart. Mary Atkins and our team will continue managing funerals and liturgical matters.

We regret any inconvenience caused and appreciate your patience. We're maximising the support of our staff and volunteers during this time. Thank you for your understanding and continued support. We hope to resume normal parish office operations soon.

Fr. Novie



May the warm embrace of our Christian community extend a joyful welcome to

**Nash and William Keogh
children of
Jack and Shantelle**

**as they receive the sacrament of
Baptism this weekend.**

PARISH CALENDAR (December—January)

22nd December - Office closed.

26th December - Fr Novie away for 4 weeks

28th December - Office open from 9.00am to 1.00pm

January.

The office will only be open on a Thursday from 9.00am to 1.00pm.

24th January—Ladies' Night 5:30pm

26th January—Australia Day (Public Holiday)

29th January—Combined Staff Mass (St. Mary's and St. Joe's)



A heartfelt thank you to St Mary's Community for making my celebration of 60 years of Brigidine life such a happy and memorable occasion.

I am blessed to live in Echuca and I am very grateful to belong to such a vibrant Parish.

May everyone be filled with the peace and hope of Christ's presence in our hearts this Christmas time.

Cecilia Merrigan

May your heart be lifted in praise this Christmas for the wonderful gift of Jesus and the joy He brings to our lives. Have a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.



ROSTERS: This Week - 23rd & 24th December

Commentators/Lectors:

6.00pm: Tania Dixon
Carla Chisholm, Terry McKitterick

9.30am: Rachel McAsey
Lauren Gould, John Vagg

Ministers of the Eucharist

6.00pm: Ruth Phillips
9.30am: Adrian Costello, Bernie Oliver

St Anne's Church Cleaners: 21st

Kay Westblade, Eileen Pineo, Bev Stapleton

Setting up the Church: 23rd Christine Sebire

Setting up the Church: 24th Rachel McAsey

Baptism Preparation: Sarah Byrne

Counters: 27/28th Pat Whyte, Adrian Costello

Hospital Visiting: Noela Boyer

Gardening: Jim & Prue Galea, Rose Quinn

People for the 6.00pm, 10.00pm (24th) and 9.30am (Christmas Day) Masses will be notified.

ROSTERS: Next Week - 30th & 31st December

Commentators/Lectors:

6.00pm: Mary Atkins
Christine Sebire, Kajini Karunanayke

9.30am: Cecilia Merrigan
Jenny Morris, Michelle Shingles

Ministers of the Eucharist

6.00pm: Carmel MacKenzie
9.30am: Rob Morris, Margaret Hart

St Anne's Church Cleaners: 28th

Pat Sanderson, Bev Kenna

Setting up the Church: 30th Carol Purdon

Setting up the Church: 31st Noela Boyer

Baptism Preparation: Sarah Byrne

Counters: 2nd Eileen Pineo, Lois Williams

Hospital Visiting: Karla Chisholm

Gardening: Jim & Prue Galea, Rose Quinn

YOUR PRAYERS PLEASE

Sick: Julio and Nati Acebron, Eileen Anderson, David Baker, Bruno Barbera, Monica Beckwith, Dan Carey, Howard Clark Jnr, Pat Davey, John & Chloris Dignan, Anne Dodd, Caroline Farley, Bernadette McClelland, Fred Molluso, John Monigatti, Margaret Oman, Murray Perrett, Beatrice Phillips, Peter Phillips, Meredith (Maddick) Ryan, Patricia Voegel, Jodie Walton, Jayden Williams.

Anniversaries: George Jasper, Howard Clark Snr., Bishop Joe Grech, Carmel Cannard, Barry McIntyre, Edward Jasper, Teresa Pavone.

Deaths: John Oliveri

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

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."

The word of the Lord.**Thanks be to God.****Responsorial Psalm** Ps 88:2-5, 27, 29**R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord;
through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth.
Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever,
that your truth is firmly established as the heavens. **R.**

'I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn to David my servant:
I will establish your dynasty for ever
and set up your throne through all ages.' **R.**

He will say to me: 'You are my father,
my God, the rock who saves me.'
I will keep my love for him always;
for him my covenant shall endure. **R.**

Next week: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
30th & 31st December Year B**1st Reading:****Genesis 15:1-6, 21:1-3****Responsorial Psalm:****104:1-6, 8-9****2nd Reading:****Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19****Gospel:****Luke 2:22-40****Second Reading** Romans 16:25-27**A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans**

Glory to him who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery kept secret for endless ages, but now so clear that it must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things to be. He alone is wisdom; give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

The word of the Lord.**Thanks be to God.****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

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.

The Gospel of the Lord.**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**