



SEASONS

Newsletter of the Catholic Parish of St. Thomas More, Mount Eliza

The Nativity of the Lord & January-Year B

December 24th 2023

The Parish Office will be closed from 27/12 until 17 January. During this time you are welcome to speak with Fr Patrick- select option "4" when you ring. Urgent calls for the sacraments can be arrangements by selecting option "5"

**311 Canadian Bay Rd
Mount Eliza Vic. 3930
Phone: 9787 7777**

Email: MountEliza@cam.org.au
Website: <http://pol.org.au/mounteliza>

Parish Priest:

Rev. Fr. Patrick Bradford

Secretary: Ann Hancock

Office Days/Hours:

Wednesday 9.30am to 4pm

Friday 9.30am to 4pm

Pastoral Leadership Team

Fr Patrick Bradford

Ruth Hilton Joe Sayah

Emma Chapple Sandra Taylor

Kathy Raccanello

See your happy team on the Notice Board!

Church Services from 27th Dec

Wednesday 27th* Mass 10.00am

Thursday 28th No Mass

Friday Adoration 9.00am

Friday Mass 10.00am

During January

Monday 1st Jan Mary, Mother of God Mass 10.00am

Wednesday * Mass 10.00am

Thursday * Mass 10.00am

Friday Adoration 9.00am

Friday Mass 10.00am

*Rosary before this Mass.

Reconciliation

Friday 9.30am -10.00am

Saturday 4.30pm - 5.00pm

Sunday Masses

Saturday Vigil 5.00pm

Sunday 8.00am

Sunday 10.00am



Dear Friends

As we welcome Jesus into our midst this Christmas, we give thanks for God's incredible gift of love. This Christmas families will be busily exchanging gifts, presents with each others. Presents, gifts are one way to show love and affection for someone. A carefully selected gift says to the other person—I know who you are, I know what you like, (I know what you don't like!); I care about you to the point that I am I willing sacrifice for you.

The gift that God gives us at Christmas is no ordinary present. It is a person, a child, more precious to the father than anything or anyone else in the world. And yet this gift is given to us precisely because he loves us, his children, so much. Unlike so many of the gifts that we receive which wear out, break down, become obsolete, the gift of Jesus is always new and always precious. There is nothing more valuable that God could have done than give us his son, who totally God and totally human at the same time. This union reassures us that God cares about you and me; that God wants us to be happy, that God has not abandoned us but that he is with us always.

I pray that this Christmas you are able to experience something of the beauty, the goodness and the joy of God who comes close to each one of us. This is the real reason behind the Christmas story. This is the reason why we come together as families around the table to celebrate.

This is why we come to the Mass and remember what God has done for

**We
pray
for.....**

Those who have passed away recently... Peter Hengel

Those whose anniversaries fall in January..



George Morrow, John Koppenol, George Grech, Valda Pierce, Narelle Bracken, Tomasine Hennessy, Maurice Carr, Michael Pennefather, Sidney Smith, Karel Merkus, Tony Pinnuck, Brendan Dickson, Agnes McDonald, Aubrey Pearson, Inga Kufer, Rosemary Ivey, Keith Jackson, Michael Gleeson, James Breen, Ralph Skinner, Elizabeth Morse, Margaret Connolly, Mary Jane McGinty, Maisie Horrigan, Doreen Lloyd, Johannes Bruitzman, Doris Clark, John McCartney

The sick... Adrian Gobel, Caroline Herbert, April Morrissey, Bev Johnstone, Kate Matheson, John Xavier Clifton, Michael Leonard, Liz Spurdle, John Spurdle, Evonne Paddison, Maree Bracken, Bill Luscombe, Brigitte Rohner, Eileen O'Beirne, Ava Macias, Michael MacKenzie, Betty Corke, Maria Kelly, Elizabeth Ware, Althea Greeff, Michael Blick, Maureen Anstey, Rosalie McKiernan, Sue Emerton, Jimmy and Gary Lakeman, Anneliese Rose, Charlie Ebsworth, Noel Anstey, Mary Doherty, Annette O'Brien, Elaine (Dee) Smith, Sr Elizabeth Browne-Russell, Philip Yee, John Miller, Jim Bourke, Gui Hone, Mina Jones, Des Leyden and all of the sick at the George Vowell Centre and the parishioners of St Thomas More Parish, Tequinomata, East Timor, St Therese Parish, Bathurst Island and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish, Alice Springs.

Women's Fellowship Group

Let's get together ladies!

Every first Friday of the month :7pm to 9pm (after dinner) for women 18 - 100 years +

A chance to connect, chat, laugh and share.

Next get together : **Friday 5th January.**

Where?: at my home - Please email me for details if you're interested in attending (raccanellokathy@gmail.com).

If you can, please bring something to share with everyone.

Hope you can come!

Managing our 'Sick List'

Following feedback from parishioners, we are intending to make some changes to the administration and publication of our weekly "sick list" in the Parish bulletin.

Caring for the sick is one of the seven works of mercy, and an important outreach of St Thomas More Parish. The current practice is that anyone can contact the Parish Office and nominate a loved one to be included on this list. However, as we do not collect any contact details, there is often no way for us to keep this lists accurate and up to date. Unfortunately, there have been occasions where we have been praying for someone on the sick list who has since passed away; other times we are praying for someone on the sick list who has since fully recovered!

It is important that we offer care for the sick and housebound in our community through our prayer, personal contact and the ministry of the Sacraments. Going forward, if there is someone you would like to be named on this list in the Parish bulletin you will be asked if they would like a visit from Fr Patrick to administer the Sacraments. You will also be asked to give at least an email address or phone number so that each month the Parish Office can review the lists and ensure that the sick are not only being prayed for at Mass, but also receiving any ongoing spiritual and pastoral care they may need.

From 2024, the sick list will be actively monitored and it will be amended (ie names removed) if we can't ascertain the status of someone listed. We welcome the names of sick or housebound parishioners to be emailed or phoned in to the Parish Office.

If you prefer, we can of course keep names off the published sick list but continue to pray and keep in contact.

– Fr Patrick

Safeguarding Committee

For information:

Julie Carter 0420 923 859



Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. In the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, we consider the safety and wellbeing of all persons to be our highest priority.

We also acknowledge that children, young people and adults at risk may require additional safeguards to promote their participation, wellbeing and safety.

We respect the human dignity of each person and strive to create an inclusive and welcoming Church that enables its people to grow and develop in their faith freely and in a caring and supportive environment.

Children are to be supervised by a parent/guardian at all times.

us. I pray that this Christmas Season—(which goes for eight days!) will a joyful experience and that amongst the celebrations there will be a chance to pause and feel God’s closeness to you.

As we come to the end of the calendar year, I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all in our Parish family who contribute to the building up of God’s kingdom in Mount Eliza. This of course includes our parish staff and volunteers working in the office—Ann Hancock, Faye Melhem and Lynn Chen. I would like to thank the volunteers who serve in different ministries—the tireless service of our sacristan and those who help with altar linens and flowers. There are who quietly weed and water the plants in our various gardens, who drop in on parishioners and provide a word of consolation and encouragement, those who visit those in need of food and support. Thanks to those who give of their time to help with the many events that we have had this year, as well as all who have helped with our working bees and general property maintenance. I am particularly grateful for the skilled musicians and singers who regularly lead us at Mass and for the tremendous work that goes on behind the scenes preparing for the great feasts. To those who serve on the various committees—ad hoc; Safeguarding, PPLT/ SLT; Finance, Vinnies—your gifts and talents are greatly appreciated. I pray that the Lord continues to bless each one of you as we give thanks for the year that has passed and look forward to the year ahead.

Fr Patrick

St Vincent de Paul— Annual Christmas collection

A collection will be taken at all Christmas Masses to support the ongoing care of those in need. Your generous support is greatly appreciated.

Want to become a Catholic?

At S.T.M, we are about to start classes for those who would like to learn about our beautiful Catholic faith. If you, or someone you know, would be interested in this invitation, please contact Ann at the parish office on 9787-7777.

End of Year Review

As we reflect on the year that has passed, and the many good things that have happened, it seems to me that 2023 has been a year of consolidation and renewal for St Thomas More Parish. In these pages, I wanted to share with you all some of the highlights of the year that has passed, and some thoughts as to where we might go into 2024.

Sacraments and Worship

At the heart of every Catholic Parish is the Eucharist, the Sacraments of initiation, healing and mission, and the powerful experience of personal prayer. It is encouraging that our Sunday Mass count continues to increase as parishioners return to Mass following the lockdowns and other recent challenges. We are working to build on this momentum and ensure that new families are intentionally welcomed and initiated into our Parish— this insight has been driven by learnings from the Parish Census. Throughout the year there have been significant Masses celebrated with the school community, notably the Mothers and Fathers day Masses on Friday, First Holy Communion with the Parish community on Sundays, St Thomas More’s Feast Day. Dur-

ing lent we prayed the stations of the Cross and celebrated the beautiful Easter liturgies with reverence and joy. Beginning this December, the Parish hosted an extended time of adoration on the first Fridays and Saturdays of the month, which will resume in February 2024. This year the PPLT suggested the school community could join the regular parish Friday Mass at 10am – which has been well received. These Masses will continue next year on alternating Fridays during term time. In 2023 we had 27 infant baptisms. Families meet with me and are prepared for the Sacrament the month before the ceremony. This year we also welcome two adult converts into the Church, which was a great joy. There were seven funerals celebrated at St Thomas More.

Works and Maintenance

In February our electrician completed the upgrade of the lighting around the Church and Parish Community Centre. These fixtures light up the driveway outside the Church across to the carparks near the school. The Church is automatically lit each night by sensor lights, which greatly improves security and safety onsite. We have also completed a security upgrade including cameras and digital locks which make it easier to secure the Church and Parish buildings. In September the parish installed Café blinds and three x 2.5kw heaters to provide shelter and warmth to those who gather for refreshments after Mass, especially during the winter months. Total cost of these works: \$11,700. The remaining shipping container which belonged to the Friends of East Timor was generously donated by the Harper family to St Thomas More School. The container now sits on the oval providing easier access to sporting and other play equipment.

Events

In February we had the first of two Parish Working Bees. These are fun events where people share their time and talent clearing up and restoring our Parish site. In February we also began the first Parish Census and Thanksgiving renewal that we've had since 2015. The programme was run by the Philanthropy Office at the Archdiocese, as we were a pilot parish we received this valuable programme free of charge! The census provided us with up to date records for around 140 families, who were then invited to consider their financial support for the Parish. The campaign resulted in a 55% increase in pledged income- thankyou so much for this generous support.

In June we we welcomed Archbishop Peter for the PP Installation Mass, followed by a light supper. It was wonderful to have this personal support for our Parish from Archbishop Peter and for him to spend time meeting and chatting with parishioners. In July we had a fundraising event at 1001 nights restaurant hosted by Mr John Cavanan. This dinner and the several donations received raised around \$5,000 to support Matthew and Charles Sayah who travelled with around 600 pilgrims from Melbourne to the World Youth Day Festival with Pope Francis. They returned in August with a powerful personal testimony of how those days had strengthened their faith and experience of the Universal Church.

In September St Thomas More Parish hosted John Pridmore for a three day Parish Mission. John has had a profound conversion experience which has helped him to reach millions of people. John spoke about God's love, God's mercy and God's healing. He also spoke with around 600 school youth at our local schools and community.

We continue to see much good fruit from his visit since then. In November the Catholic leadership coach Ron Huntley spent time working with PPLT and Parish Leaders to help collaborate more closely in leadership around a clearer vision to make our parish a welcoming centre for evangelisation and worship – this work continues. In December we finished the year with a BBQ on the Parish grounds following the 10am Mass. It was suggested this becomes a regular event which allows our people to build community and a place to welcome new parishioners into the fold, and give thanks to God for the year's blessings.

Groups

The Parish hosted a number of regular events throughout the year. This year in collaboration with St Thomas More School the Parish Undercroft hosted weekly playgroup each Tuesday for families in the area. This is jointly advertised in Parish and School bulletins. Our Vinnies Conference headed by Marilyn Moloney does magnificent work visiting the isolated and needy in the area, and providing much needed support in what has been a very challenging year of high inflation, rising rents and cost pressures facing so many families. Vinnies are always looking for more volunteers to help with this work.

This year we have solidified the welcoming and hospitality rosters which support the 10am Mass. It is hoped this will be expanded to other Masses in 2024. The Altar Society led by Caroline Goble has welcomed three new members this year, who together look after the flowers and altar requisites in the Church, and over Christmas and Easter beautify the Church for these special feasts- thankyou for this work. The Parish advertised a number of social events throughout the year run by active parishioners which included meals together, special Masses, presentations and tours. These events are a great chance to meet new people and form new friendships. Throughout 2023 the women's group met regularly on the first Fridays of the month for prayer and discussion. This group has grown in faith (and numbers) since it began last year. New members are always welcome – details will be published from February onwards in our bulletin.

On the first Sunday of the Month the Filipino community meet at the Church for a Mass, followed by refreshments – anyone is welcome to join. In the youth space we have been trialling different ways of engagement with our young people. This year we offered young people aged 12+ to experience “Youth Alpha” – an introduction to the big questions of life through videos, food and discussion. Following this course, some of the children continued on to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation. My thanks to our catechist, Faye Melhem for her tireless work in this area.

Fr Patrick

This year I was grateful for the opportunity to receive some leadership coaching which was offered through the Archdiocese. Over six weeks I met online with a group of clergy and leadership coach Ron Huntley looking at different models of leadership and collaboration in the Parish. This has fed through the Parish Council which we are working to focus our energies on the more “strategic” and less “operational” matters. We have found there is a powerful gravity which pulls us back to the urgent everyday needs of the Parish, which are important, but which can leave little time to plan and

strategise for the future, as it is important we not only do things but do things that make an impact. This will be a priority next year. This year I attended the Melbourne and ACCC Clergy Conferences where the topics of liturgy, worship, priesthood and spiritual care were very helpful for my ministry, along with the support and friendship of many great priests. In September I made my annual retreat at Galong with Fr Joseph Carola SJ, who teaches theology at the Gregorian University in Rome. During the retreat we looked at the Cure of Ars – Fr John Vianney, and learnt how to balance the demands of prayer, ministry and leadership with his example and learnings. There was ample time to pray with the scriptures and spend silent time with the other priests. It was a great booster for me.

2024

In mid February we will welcome Bishop Tony Ireland who is in the process of visiting the Parishes in the Southern Region on behalf of Archbishop Peter. A comprehensive report will be sent ahead of his visit, which will form the basis of his discussions with myself and key groups in the Parish. Parishioners will also have the opportunity to talk with him, Bishop Ireland will celebrate the weekend Masses on the 17th and 18th of February. Details will be published in Seasons. Following his visit a report will be sent to the Archbishop and the Parish for our consideration. Next year, apart from all the important work that is already happening, there will be some new initiatives that I can share with you. The local clergy, myself included are making steps to be more available to support the faith of Padua College students, particularly building on the momentum of those who attended World Youth Day. We also plan to offer more support to Padua teachers in teaching the Catholic faith following the recommendations from the Education Review recently published by Professor John Haldane.

Next year the PPLT are focussed on these areas: 1. Drawing our people more deeply into relationship with God and each other through our worship, our welcome and “intentional discipleship”. As part of this we plan to launch the Alpha programme which is a tool to deepen faith and community. 2. We plan to run a “volunteering drive” where parishioners will hear about the different ministries running in the Parish and be encouraged to pick an area where they can share their time and talent. 3. Youth and young adults: Are there other ways to bring about spiritual fruit in their lives? Could we do more to help them experience the beauty, truth and goodness of the Mass and the other Sacraments beyond the initial sacramental celebration? 4. Baptism. This year, 27 infants and younger children were baptised at St Thomas More. Could we put more resources into supporting parents and families to grow in their faith and understand what this commitment means for them? Are there ways to translate their desire for baptism into a deeper personal faith and experience of the Mass? Our committees will also continue to find ways to resource our Parish mission in sustainable ways against the backdrop of rising costs and the need to grow our parish so that it is vital, viable and vibrant.

As we conclude 2023 I would like to sincerely thank our parishioners for their ongoing generosity, commitment and for your support and encouragement of me. Together we look forward to the blessings and challenges that The Lord has in store for us in 2024. Fr Patrick

The Holy family of Jesus ,Mary and Joseph
31st December 2024

Entrance Antiphon:

The shepherds went in haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in a manger.

First Reading: **Genesis 15:1-6,21:1-3**
Your own son shall be your heir.

Responsorial Psalm: **Psalm 104**
The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

Second Reading: **Hebrews 11:8, 11-12,17-19**
The faith of Abraham, Sarah and Isaac.

Gospel Acclamation: **Heb 1:1-2**
Alleluia alleluia! In the past, God spoke to our fathers through the prophets; now he speaks to us through his Son. Alleluia!

Gospel: **Luke 2:22-40**
The child grew to maturity, and he was filled with wisdom.

Communion Antiphon: **Heb 13:8**
Our God has appeared on the earth, and lived among us.

The Epiphany of the Lord
7th January 2024

Entrance Antiphon (Vigil):

Arise Jerusalem, and look to the East and see your children gathered from the rising to the setting of the sun.

Entrance Antiphon (Sunday):
Behold, the Lord, the Mighty One, has come; and kingship is in his grasp, and power and dominion.

First Reading: **Isaiah 60:1-6**
Above you, the glory of the Lord appears

Responsorial Psalm: **Psalm 71**
Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

Second Reading: **Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6**
It has now been revealed that pagans share the same inheritance.

Gospel Acclamation: **Matthew 2:2**
Alleluia alleluia! We have seen his star in the East; and have come to adore the Lord. Alleluia!

Gospel: The visit of the Magi **Matthew 2:1-12**

Communion Antiphon (Vigil): The brightness of God illumined the holy city Jerusalem, and the nations will walk by its light.

Communion Antiphon (Sunday): We have seen his star in the East, and have come with gifts to adore the Lord.

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
1st January 2024

Entrance Antiphon:

Hail, Holy Mother, who gave birth to the King, who rules heaven and earth for ever.

First Reading: **Numbers 6:22-27**
They will call down my name on the sons of Israel, and I will bless them.

Responsorial Psalm: **Psalm 66**
May God bless us in his mercy.

Second Reading: **Galatians 4:4-7**
God sent his son, born of a woman.

Gospel Acclamation: **Heb 1:1-2**
Alleluia alleluia! In the past, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; now he speaks to us through his Son. Alleluia!

Gospel: **Luke 2:16-21**
The Shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found the baby lying in the manger.

Communion Antiphon: **Heb 13:8**
Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
14th January 2023

Entrance Antiphon:

All the earth shall bow down before you, O God, and shall sing to you, shall sing to your name, O Most High!

First Reading: **1 Samuel 3:3-10,19**
'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening'

Responsorial Psalm: **Psalm 39**
Here am I, Lord: I come to do your will.

Second Reading: **1 Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20**
Do not sin against your own body.

Gospel Acclamation: **John 1:41,17**
Alleluia alleluia!
We have found the Messiah: Jesus Christ, who brings us truth and grace. Alleluia

Gospel: **John 1:35-42**
'We have found the Messiah'

Communion Antiphon:
You have prepared a table before me, and how precious is the chalice that quenches my thirst.

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
21st January 2024

Entrance Antiphon:

O sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.

First Reading: **Jonah 3:1-5,10**
The people of Nineveh renounce their evil behaviour.

Responsorial Psalm: **Psalm 24**
Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Second Reading: **1 Corinthians 7:29-31**
The world as we know it is passing away.

Gospel Acclamation: **Mark 1:15**
Alleluia alleluia! The kingdom of God is near: believe the Good News! Alleluia!

Gospel: **Mark 1:14-20**
I will make you into fishers of men.

Communion Antiphon: Look toward the Lord and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed.

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time
28th January 2024

Entrance Antiphon:

Save us, O Lord our God! And gather us from the nations, to give thanks to your holy name, and make it our glory to praise you.

First Reading: **Deuteronomy 18:15-20**
I will raise up a prophet and put my words into his mouth.

Responsorial Psalm: **Psalm 94**
If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Second Reading: **1 Corinthians 7:32-35**
Give your undivided attention to the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation: **Matthew 4:16**
Alleluia alleluia! A people in darkness have seen a great light: a radiant dawn shines on those lost in death. Alleluia!

Gospel: **Mark 1:21-28**
Unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority.

Communion Antiphon:
Let your face shine on your servant. Save me in your merciful love. O Lord, let me never be put to shame, for I call on you.

Mass Parts for December/January**Penitential Act**

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and
in what I have failed to do,

And, striking their breast, they say:

through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God. Amen

Gloria

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.

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.