

Entrance Antiphon

Luke 2:16

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

A reading from the book of Genesis

Genesis 15:1-6. 21:1-3

Your own son shall be your heir.

The word of the Lord was spoken to Abram in a vision, 'Have no fear, Abram, I am your shield; your reward will be very great'. 'My Lord', Abram replied, 'what do you intend to give me? I go childless...' Then Abram said, 'See, you have given me no descendants; some man of my household will be my heir.' And then this word of the Lord was spoken to him, 'He shall not be your heir; your heir shall be one of your own flesh and blood.' Then taking him outside he said, 'Look up to heaven and count the stars if you can. Such will be your descendants,' he told him. Abram put his faith in the Lord, who counted this as making him justified. The Lord dealt kindly with Sarah as he had said, and did what he had promised her. So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the time God had promised. Abraham named the son born to him Isaac, the son to whom Sarah had given birth.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 104:1-6. 8-9. R.vv.7.8

The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

Hebrews 11:8. 11-12. 17-19

It was by faith that Abraham obeyed the call to set out for a country that was the inheritance given to him and his descendants, and that he set out without knowing where he was going. It was equally by faith that Sarah, in spite of being past the age, was made able to conceive, because she believed that he who had made the promise would be faithful to it. Because of this, there came from one man, and one who was already as good as dead himself, more descendants than could be counted, as many as the stars of heaven or the grains of sand on the seashore. It was by faith that Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He offered to sacrifice his only son even though the promises had been made to him and he had been told: It is through Isaac that your name will be carried on. He was confident that God had the power even to raise the dead; and so, figuratively speaking, he was given back Isaac from the dead.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation

Hebrews 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!**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to

Luke

Luke 2:22-40

The child grew to maturity, and he was filled with wisdom.

When the day came for them to be purified as laid down by the Law of Moses, the parents of Jesus took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord – observing what stands written in the Law of the Lord: Every first-born male must be consecrated to the Lord – and also to offer in sacrifice, in accordance with what is said in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he looked forward to Israel's comforting and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord. Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, he took him into his arms and blessed God; and he said: 'Now, Master, you can let your servant go in peace, just as you promised; because my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the nations to see, a light to enlighten the pagans and the glory of your people Israel.' As the child's father and mother stood there wondering at the things that were being said about him, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected – and a sword will pierce your own soul too – so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.' There was a prophetess also, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well on in years. Her days of girlhood over, she had been married for seven years before becoming a widow. She was now eighty-four years old and never left the Temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayer. She came by just at that moment and began to praise God; and she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem.

When they had done everything the Law of the Lord required, they went back to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. Meanwhile the child grew to maturity, and he was filled with wisdom; and God's favour was with him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Communion Antiphon

Baruch 3:38

Our God has appeared on the earth, and lived among us.



St. Thomas More Parish, Belgrave

The Catholic Church in the Dandenong Ranges

P.O. Box 100, Belgrave, Victoria 3160

Phone: 97542141

Office Hours: 9.30am—2pm Tuesday to Friday

Internet: pol.org.au/belgrave

The Parish of St Thomas More and the Archdiocese of Melbourne are committed to the care, wellbeing and protection of children, young people and vulnerable people in our community. May our message be that child protection and the dignity of every person is the responsibility of every adult. You can find out more about the Church's work in this area at: www.catholic.org.au/responseandprevention

Our Parish Vision Statement:

We are called to be a welcoming, compassionate community, empowered for our faith journey for active service.....

CHURCH CENTRES		St. Joseph's Church Emerald Cnr. Emerald- Monbulk & Cornish Roads	Sacred Heart Church Gembrook Main Road	St. Thomas More Church Belgrave 17 Terry Avenue, Belgrave	St. Paul's Church Monbulk 59 Moores Road
MASS TIMES	WEEKEND	Vigil Mass 6.00pm	9.00am	9.00am	11.00am
	WEEKDAY			9.00am	

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH YEAR B - 31st December, 2023

REFLECTION by Dianne Bergant CSA

In an era when so much talk is devoted to the discussion of family values, the readings for this feast offer significant challenge. Those who believe in Christ, while still adhering to certain cultural codes of conduct, are asked to consider new and ever more balanced ways of relating. In view of their lives as Christians, parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters must all be embraced as equal members of the household of God.

While it is important that children of all ages honour their parents, the caring relationship of adult children for aging parents is vital in a time of mobility, nursing homes, and the lack of extended families. From God's perspective, loving care of aged members is non-negotiable. It is a family virtue that is to be kept sacred.

Wisdom comes with time and experience. Such wisdom is a source of blessing, for it provides insight and a perspective that allows the community to know the mystery and the presence of God. When the wisdom of the elderly is respected, the young are enriched by the stories of the past. Wisdom figures can point the community to places where God is working and where the divine can be found. It is their respect for tradition that allows the elderly to speak the prophetic words that can change the course of the future and inspire noble deeds of courage in the face of great pain. In reverencing the elderly and their wisdom, the community of believers receive Christ.



<https://www.liturgyhelp.com/calendar/date/2023Dec31/0/RefDiBer>

WE ARE A CHILD SAFETY PARISH AND WE BELIEVE IN CHILD SAFETY.

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Belgrave: Evie and Irene Reed
Gembrook:
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REMEMBRANCE IN OUR PRAYERS:

Recent deaths:

Many people across the world who have died due to natural calamities and ongoing Wars. May their souls rest in peace.

Anniversaries:

Prayers for the Sick: We pray for all who are ill, but especially the following people: Flynn Kroeger, Verity Loke, Helen Bye, Peter Lawrence, Stephen Billington, Anne Radocaj, Simon Kuyper John Barber, Dimuthu, Glen Butler, Juhyeon Kim, Peter Hicks, Margaret Campion, Cameron DiCasio, Jack Weir, Ewa Wallis, Jane Schellenbach, Deanne Atkinson, Daniel, Mason, Hero, Helen Smith, Irene, Debbie Owens, Don Kempster, Pat McCarrick, Justin, Tom Fergus, Josie Walsh, B. O'Connor, Maureen Lyons, Ingyin Collins, David Bourke, Eileen Banyard, Brendan, Martin Fergus, Margaret, Maureen, Patricia Gilchrist, Stephen Mc., Cheryl McInnes, Kate Arnott, Julian Neesham, Fa Perisipi, John Reid, Dieter Farmer, Margaret Sheanon, Dianne Zidek, Mark Pickthall, Terry Schubert, Neil Weatherill, Margaret Herbert, Rob Zwagerman, Joshua McQuade, Lanie Brereton, Sandra Dowling, Francesca, Neil Holland, Maureen Hughes, Marilyn Ward, Isabelle Henry, Phillis Willoughby.

- **Sick List: If you are aware that any names on the sick list need to be removed, please contact the Parish Office on 97542141.**

Reading Roster - 31st December

David Paton & Robert Quirk

Church Cleaning roster

Janette Wicks & Una Steele

The new year mass times - 31st December

St. Thomas More church, Belgrave - 9am

Sacred Heart church, Gembrook - 9am

St. Paul's church, Monbulk - 11am

Next Week's readings

1st Reading Isaiah 60:1-6

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 71:1-2. 7-8. 10-13, R. see v.11

2nd reading Ephesians 3:2-3. 5-6

Gospel Matthew 2:1-12

NEW YEAR PRAYER:

Thank You Lord for giving me
The brand new year ahead.
Help me live the way I should
As each new day I tread.
Give me gentle wisdom
That I might help a friend,
Give me strength and courage
So a shoulder I might lend.
The year ahead is empty,
Help me fill it with good things
Each new day filled with joy
And happiness it brings.
Amen.

Thank You!

Dear Parishioners

I would specially like to thank our parishioners who contributed to the life and the functioning of the parish in 2023 through their generous service.

And also to our Volunteers...

Mass Managers, Liturgy group members, Parish council members, Parish Finance Committee members, Bookkeeper, Parish property manager, Social Justice group, Alter servers, Lectors, Money collectors and counters, Sacramental Coordinator, Musicians, Choir members, visitation group, Special communion ministers, Working bee organizing committee members, Vincent de Paul Committee members, Garden maintain volunteers, Child Safety Committee members, Alter decorators, Cleaners, and other Volunteers...

May the blessings of the Holy Night be with you today and always. Merry Christmas and a peaceful, prosperous New Year.

Fr. Anthony Cruz MC

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

(1ST JANUARY)



The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God is a liturgical celebration observed on January 1st. It is a holy day of obligation for Catholics, meaning that Mass attendance is required (though the Mass obligation is sometimes waived by the bishop for various reasons; when in doubt, check with your parish.) The use of the word “Solemnity” here is a designation used for certain days within the liturgical (church-based) calendar of the Church. Solemnities are the highest rank of liturgical celebration, higher than feast days or memorials. By celebrating a solemnity dedicated to Mary’s motherhood, the Church highlights the significance of her part in the life of Jesus, and emphasizes that He is both human and divine. Jesus’ nature as both and equally human and divine is something we may take for granted today. But back in the early days of the church, this dogma of our faith was hotly debated. In 431 A.D. during the Council of Ephesus, the title of “Mary Mother of God,” in Greek “Theotokus,” was defended and defined against the heresy of Nestorius. Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, refuted the title of “Theotokus” claiming that Christ had two loosely united natures, and therefore, Mary was only the mother of the human part of Him. Catholic theologians rejected this claim, and defined that Christ indeed has two natures, a divine nature and a human nature definitely united in one divine person, and since Christ’s two natures form one single person, Mary is the mother of the whole Person of Christ. Therefore, Mary can be properly called “Mother of God,” not in the sense that she came before God or is the source of God, but in the sense that the Person that she bore in her womb is indeed true God and true man. The Solemnity of Mary Mother of God falls exactly one week after Christmas, the end of the octave of Christmas. It is fitting to honor Mary as Mother of Jesus, following the birth of Christ. When Catholics celebrate the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God we are not only honoring Mary, who was chosen among all women throughout history to bear God incarnate, but we are also honoring our Lord, who is fully God and fully human. Calling Mary “mother of God” is the highest honor we can give Mary. Just as Christmas honors Jesus as the “Prince of Peace,” the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God honors Mary as the “Queen of Peace.” Pope Paul VI, in his apostolic exhortation *Marialis Cultus* (1974), called the Solemnity of Mary “a fitting occasion for renewing adoration of the newborn Prince of Peace, for listening once more to the glad tidings of the angels (cf. Lk 2:14), and for imploring from God, through the Queen of Peace, the supreme gift of peace.”

<https://divinemercyparish.org/solemnity-of-mary-mother-of->

In his Christmas message for 2023, Archbishop Peter A Comensoli reflects on the beautiful words of the prophet Isaiah, who speaks of ‘the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation’.

Transcript:

Dear friends, we hear these words from the ancient prophet Isaiah (52:7):

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation ...
These are beautiful words—old words, first spoken
in old days, yet so sorely needed in our day!

Amid this time of conflict, suffering and exile, Isaiah
speaks to us words of peace and the good news
about the Prince of Peace.

Our hearts ache for reconciliation of peoples; re-
spect for our shared humanity; care for our crying
planet. Our world and its people seem to be groan-
ing and railing against pathways to true peace.

Yet we experience the hope of God through simple
words of joy, mercy and peace.

The shepherds experienced this. So did the Magi.
Mary and Joseph knew it intimately.

God knew we needed his Son to come amongst us,
to show us the way ahead.

As we come to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord this
year, might we be attentive to the broken people
across the world who are held captive by the tragedy
of war and old hatreds.

Might we also remember those exiled in other
ways—bereft of knowing God; lost and searching for
identity and purpose.

We too can be the messengers whose footfalls bring
light into the world, announcing mercy, bringing
joy, offering Good News.

God has come among us, simply, humbly and hope-
fully in a little child, his Son, our Brother.

May the peace that comes through this child, the
Prince of Peace, be with you this Christmas.

And with every footstep, may you take His message,
and life, out into the world.

Happy Christmas to you all!

