

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph Year B

Entrance Antiphon: Lk 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 Gen 15:1-6. 21:1-3

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

(R.) The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

Give thanks to the Lord, tell his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.

O sing to him, sing his praise;
tell all his wonderful works! **(R.)**

Be proud of his holy name,
let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice.

Consider the Lord and his strength;
constantly seek his face. **(R.)**

Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, the judgements he spoke.

O children of Abraham, his servant,
O sons of the Jacob he chose. **(R.)**

He remembers his covenant for ever,
his promise for a thousand generations,

the covenant he made with Abraham,
the oath he swore to Isaac. **(R.)**

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

Heb 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:

Heb 1:1-2

In the past God spoke to our fathers through the prophets; now he speaks to us through his Son.

Alleluia, alleluia!

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Lk 2:22-40

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



Parish of Belgrave

The Catholic Church

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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 Emerald Cnr. Emerald-Monbulk & Cornish Roads	Sacred Heart Gembrook Main Road	St. Thomas More Belgrave Reynolds Lane	St. Paul's Monbulk 59 Moores Road
MASS TIMES	WEEKEND	6.00pm Vigil Mass	9.00am	9.00am	11.00am
	WEEKDAY			9.00am	

Homily for the feast of the holy Family

When was the last time someone promised you something that was never fulfilled? ... Or how many times have you made promises that you never kept? It seems to me that the readings during these days speak to us about promises ... but promises that have been fulfilled! Promises that are fulfilled by a faithful God, a God who is Emmanuel: God-is-with-us! As we gather to celebrate this Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, we are invited to thanksgiving but we are also invited to healing and compassion; we are invited to look at the past with gentleness, to look into the future with hope and to see the many blessings that life is offering us, even in the midst of personal difficulties. We are invited to look at the poor family of Nazareth and see the poor families of our day. On this Feast we are called to look at the *anawim*, the poor and the oppressed among us, the refugees and the lonely, for they must be family to us too!

In the first reading from Genesis God tells Abram “fear not Abram, I am your shield”... and Abram put his faith in the Lord. Sarah and Abraham had a child. A promise was made and fulfilled...and the fulfillment of this promise changed the history of salvation. In our Gospel today, another couple receives a promise and that promised is also fulfilled. Mary and Joseph bring their child to the Temple for they were obedient and followed the law of Moses: “Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord.” They didn’t have the resources to offer a lamb, so they offered “the sacrifice of a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons, in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord.”

The promise made to the righteous and devout Simeon and the prophetess Anna were also fulfilled! Simeon will not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord... He received more than what was promised! Not only did he see the consolation of Israel, not only did he see the Christ, but he took him into his arms and blessed God!! Now he can die in peace, for his eyes saw God’s salvation! A promise was made to Mary: a sword shall pierce her heart... and the promised was later fulfilled. Simeon and Anna received promises that were fulfilled. They were filled with the spirit and were able to see things others couldn’t! The saw salvation, peace, redemption, Christ the Savior! Others didn’t recognize it; others only saw a couple with a child fulfilling a requirement of the law. Mary and Joseph were probably filled with questions ... but with God in their hearts and the hope of a promise. They went back home and “the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.” Promises fulfilled!

In our own families promises are made. Sometimes they are fulfilled, sometimes they are not. Our families might not be perfect... probably we have been hurt as we grew up, but we are still called to hope. In the second reading, St. Paul invites the Colossians and invites us to put on “heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another.” These are qualities we all need as followers of Christ, as people who live in a world that has become “smaller” each day. On this last Sunday of the year and on this great feast of the Holy Family, we hear the call to “put on love... and let the peace of Christ control [our] hearts, the peace into which [we] were also called in one body. And be thankful.” May we always learn from the God who is our shield and who is always faithful to the promises God has made.

Source: <https://www.augustinian.org/homilies/2017/12/28/feast-of-the-holy-family-year-b>

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REMEMBRANCE IN OUR PRAYERS:

Recent deaths: Alida Maria Cabret, Many people across the world who have died due to corona virus and natural calamities.

Anniversaries: Dorothy Surmen, Jean Moule, Maria Wotkiw, Ian Schofield, Anne Oude Vrielink, Anthony Vale.

Prayer for the deceased:

Lord open wide the doors of your Mercy to all those who have passed away in the parish of St. Thomas More, Belgrave. In your compassion grant eternal bliss to all of them.

Prayers for the Sick: We pray for all who are ill, but especially the following people: Deanne Atkinson, Damien Van der Linden, Lil Warner, Fiona, Margaret Gilhooly, Daniel, Mason, Hero, Helen Smith, Irene and Kevin Ryan, Debbie Owens, Don Kempster.

Note : Please be advised about the new changes due to easing of restrictions re covid19.

We are now allowed to have up to 150 people in the church.

We can't have more than the permitted numbers. So we follow, "First come first served"

Please sign in before you enter the Church with your ***name and your contact number.***

Places of Worship and Religious Gatherings for Christmas Masses

- Record Keeping is still required for all attendees beyond a 15-minute visit – and must include: First Name + Contact Number + date and time at which the person attended the place of worship. Records must be kept for 28 days;
- People carry a face covering at all times as we may not be able to maintain 1.5m social distance. Children (under 12, those who have lawful reason for excepted from wearing masks).



FUNDRAISING NEWS:

We are in the process of collecting old stamps and old coins

Can you please keep all used postage stamps (Australian and overseas) and overseas money, also old stamp albums.

These are for sale at the next parish fete. Send to the parish office or call Tony Whyte (St Paul's Monbulk) for collection.

Thankyou



BAPTISM

Let us welcome **Jude Butler, Reuben Butler and Vivian Butler** into our faith community as they are going to be baptized this weekend at St. Thomas More Church, Belgrave. May they be richly blessed throughout their life, constantly being aware of the unconditional love and mercy of God.

BAPTISM:

To arrange a Baptism in the Parish, please phone the parish office during the office hours on 97542141.

Invitation for Readers for 2021

***O Lord, open my lips,
That my mouth may declare Your praise.***

Psalm 51:15

Who got a passion to serve the God by joining the readers team. We invite the people who would like read the Holy bible in the Sunday mass. Please contact Helen Smith via helenysmith@gmail.com.



St Vincent de Paul Society

St Vincent de Paul Society volunteers are committed to providing people with access to the resources and support they need to overcome personal hardship. Our service is run entirely by volunteers and funded through the generosity of donations from our local community.

If you require assistance, please phone our Welfare Assistance Line on: Free Call 1800 305 330 Monday to Friday, 10:00am - 3:00pm, except for public holidays.

Important Dates

27th December	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph St. John, Apostle, Evangelist
28th December	Holy Innocents, martyrs

Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist

Saint Jerome, while living in Palestine in the late 300s, relates a touching anecdote still being told at that time about John the Evangelist. When John was old and feeble, Jerome recounts, and no longer able to walk or preach, he would be carried among the faithful in church and would repeat only one thing over and over again: “My little children, love one another.” Saint Polycarp, through Saint Irenaeus, tells us that Saint John’s long life ended peacefully in Ephesus about 100 A.D. John was the only Apostle not to die a martyr.



John’s old age in Ephesus was a long way from where his life began on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Young John was sitting in his boat mending his nets alongside his brother James when an enigmatic but straight-talking teacher who lived in nearby Capernaum (Mt 4:13) walked by. Jesus saw the brothers on the water and challenged them to follow Him and become fishers of men (Mt 4:21–22). John and his brother said “Yes.” Their immediate and generous response put them at the red hot center of a movement which would change the world. From that decisive moment onward, John was at Christ’s side in the quiet times and in the momentous times. Peter, James, and John were the select Three inside of the Twelve. John saw Christ transfigured on Mount Tabor and wondered at what it meant. He leaned against Jesus at the Last Supper and stood under His drooping body at the foot of the cross. John was the first to reach the empty tomb on the first Easter Sunday, though he deferred to age and authority and let Peter enter the tomb first. John sees the resurrected Jesus in the upper room and then back where it all began, at the Sea of Galilee. John perseveres despite persecution, even the religiously inspired murder of his brother. John likely accompanied the Virgin Mary to Ephesus, where both shared their memories and tender faith with the Christian community there over many years.

John’s Gospel is stylistically distinct from those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. He likely wrote it in his old age. Perhaps many calm years mellowed the Gospel’s tone, allowing John to draw out God’s pure love more than His fight.

John’s Gospel, his letters, and his Book of Revelation soar. They offer a high theology of Christ, a supernatural, often mystical vision of Christ’s role in salvation. John is the Apostle who best conveys God’s love. It is a commonplace to say that God is love. It is also commonplace to say that any further description of God complicates His simplicity and leads to arguments, division, and violence.

Yet the Christian attestation that “God is love” is like a flag snapping in the wind at the summit of a mountain of thought—complicated and nuanced theological and philosophical thought. The simplest thing we can say about God is tied to the most complex thing we can say about God. It took centuries of hard climbing to plant that flag of love at the summit. To say God is love implies a wealth of supportive truths.

The harshness and apparent injustice of life does not naturally lead to the conclusion that God is love, and no one said that God was love before Christians said it. For many, God was, and is, a master, a warrior, a hero, an oak, a waterfall, or a sunrise. God was a growling earthquake, a mighty storm, a tidal wave that drowned the new colony. God took vengeance for sins and flooded the earth when the people disobeyed. He was like a hunter on the prowl, his bow arched with arrow ready to fly. Reading the history of man and experiencing daily life, it is in no way clear that God is love. We have to be told this. We have to see this. We have to experience this. And the Church tells us and shows us this constantly. That many people the world over instinctively think that God is love is a triumph of the Church and of Saint John the Evangelist. To say this and to think this is to break one’s lance against the brick wall of daily life. But it is also to say the truth, a received truth. God loves Himself in the Holy Trinity first, and then that love radiates outward to all of us. Without knowing that, we cannot know the rest.

Saint John the Evangelist, you wrote of God’s love for you, Christ’s Beloved Disciple. Through your intercession in heaven, inspire all writers and evangelists to convey God’s goodness and love, so that the entire world knows that there is one person, a divine person, who cares.

Source: <https://mycatholic.life/saints/saints-of-the-liturgical-year/27-december-saint-john-the-apostle-and-evangelist-feast/>

