



Member of the Knox Deanery

St. Joseph's & St. Bernadette's (Boronia) Parish

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THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD CHRISTMAS DAY

Dear Friends,

Usually at this time of the year we tend to look back, to reflect from the perspective of how we lived our lives during the past year. That reflection helps us to make decisions for our future. We see a lot of unrest in the world and we are still trying to come back to the things we had and enjoyed before Covid but we are still adjusting to new way of life. Sometimes in those thoughts we realise that we are missing something, something which makes us and our lives complete.

This Advent we went on the road to discipleship. A journey on which we are looking for Jesus in our lives, present, acting and empowering. We know from the testimony of many, that when we will have an encounter with him and come to know Jesus personally, we will find purpose, inspiration, power and joy in life.

We look for him, and invite him to our lives when we struggle, feel hopeless, and powerless. Sometimes it is an act of desperation. So let us not wait for that moment. Let us join Him this year, invite him now and walk with him. Let Him in, accept Him, trust Him so we can learn from Him what is best for us.

May this Christmas be our acceptance time. Let us not be those onlookers who wait to see what will happen. Let us be those who make it happen. Don't wait for Him, look for Him in your life, your family and friends. Be conscious of His presence around you. Look for His Gifts - He is empowering you with them.

May this new year, 2024 be for us all a year of JOY. Joy which comes from Jesus, not from the world. May this JOY touch you, your family and all you meet next year. Have a great and prosperous New Year.

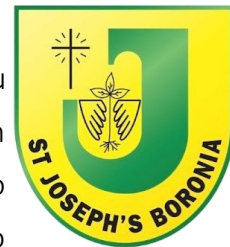
Mirek Knap CR

Parish Priest



Festive greetings from the St. Joseph's school community,

From all of the staff, students and parents of St. Joseph's Primary School, we wish you a merry Christmas and a Jesus filled Christmas break. We hope that you have an opportunity to spend Christmas with your family and your loved ones. Take time to thank God for his care of us during the year and the opportunities He has provided to do better and be better.



It has been wonderful to see the Parish community come together again so often during the year and witness their care, compassion and assistance for those in need. From the fantastic work the St. Vincent de Paul group has done, to the work done behind the scenes by the Parish Pastoral Council, Liturgy team, Fete committee and the Child Safeguarding team. Clearly demonstrating that we are truly supported and sustained by those who are committed to follow the example set by Jesus.

If you have the chance to get away, travel safely and enjoy the time by putting your feet up and relaxing after a challenging and ever changing year.

*May God hold you in the palm of His hand,
Mark Westwood,
Principal*

On behalf of the St. Joseph's school community.

O come, o come Emmanuel - Christmas is a time to celebrate the Gift of Christ.

As we listen to the Gospel on Christmas Day, we contemplate the meaning of the birth of Jesus for each one of us. This was an extraordinary event – God becoming human. The birth of Jesus Christ continues to bring people from all walks of life together each and every year. Perhaps you could ask your child or children to think about the things in the Christmas story that tell us something extraordinary is happening. In Children's Liturgy during Advent, we have considered what it means to prepare, to listen, to rejoice and to meet God. Each week the children felt that what was important was to pray every day and attend Mass, to care for each other, to help each other, to look after each other (and to listen to mum and dad!).

As a Parish, we take the time to reflect on the many blessings of this past year. We are very grateful to, and thank, the many volunteers who selflessly give of their time to support the Parish - those involved in community and hospitality, Liturgy and celebration, Faith and witness, service and outreach.

We continue to pray for and congratulate all who have participated in the Sacraments during the year as well as those who are preparing to receive the Sacraments in the coming year. Our prayers are with the many parishioners whose loved ones are no longer with them this Christmas. Thomas Campbell (1777 - 1844) wrote *'to live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die at all.'*

This Christmas, and each Christmas, we celebrate the gift of our Saviour - for He is the light that shines from the star. He is the shepherd, watching over us all. He is the peace that wise men still seek. A Saviour born, that we might live - He is the gift. (*He is the Gift - Shawna Edwards*)



May peace, love, joy and hope be your gift this Christmas and your blessing throughout the coming year. Best wishes

*Veronica Maguire,
Pastoral Worker.*

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School has engaged the wider community throughout 2023 as we promoted the importance of family involvement in their children's education. There was very positive feedback around community building events such as the Community Picnic, Family Day, Grandparents Day, and Christmas Carols.

After many years of planning, demolition and construction, we finally opened our brand new contemporary Senior Learning Community. With four modern classrooms and shared learning spaces, this has ensured that our facilities are regarded as some of the finest in the region.

St Bernadette's was recognised by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) with the school selected to host the MACS Board of Directors meeting in November. The Board complimented the school as they were able to observe, in person, St Bernadette's Primary School's unique learning community and sense of Catholic identity.

The school also continued its own St Vincent de Paul Society chapter of Mini Vinnies and searched for ways that they could put their faith in action and follow Jesus' mission to serve others. This culminated in our social justice topic 'Agents of Change'. The Mini Vinnies Twilight Market raised an outstanding \$2800 for the St Vincent de Paul society. This money as well as the many Christmas gifts and food items donated by families will be used by St Vincent de Paul to support disadvantaged families in the Basin and Boronia community over Christmas.

The school community watched the talents of the children shine throughout the whole school production 'Whose Turn To Choose'. This was held at Burrinja Theatre in Upwey and the evening was an incredible success that showcased everything that our staff and students are able to achieve.

St Bernadette's and St Joseph's Parish schools were able to work together to enable the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation to be celebrated by students and families from both schools and the wider parish community.

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School is very proud to be part of Boronia Parish and has welcomed the opportunity to continue the strong relationship that we have with the wider Parish and our sister school, St Joseph's, throughout the 2023 school year. We thank Fr Mirek and all members of the parish community for their support throughout 2023 and we wish everyone in Boronia Parish a very Merry Christmas.



Peter Steward
Principal
St Bernadette's Primary School

A Christmas Message from Archbishop Comensoli | Melbourne Catholic

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’.

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; respect for our shared humanity; care for our crying planet. Our world and its people seem to be groaning 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 hopefully 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!