

Monty & Eltham

The Catholic Parishes of St Francis Xavier & Our Lady Help of Christians



We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the traditional custodians of this land and pay respect to the elders past, present and emerging of the Kulin Nation.

Thank you! In this 'Covid Safe' time at Christmas - we wish to 'THANK YOU' for your love, presence and attendance over these days. On behalf of the Parish Team, we wish to acknowledge all the wonderful musicians and technical staff, the ministers and the movers behind the scenes who have combined to make our outdoor and indoor Christmas Masses so special given these trying times. Thank you, for your patience and understanding too, if you were unable to attend due to restricted numbers!

Nothing was normal in 2020, and we continue to be heartfully disappointed by all these changes to our routine - prayers and warmest wishes to you, over these days!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your families!



Stay Safe, Michael

Prayers of the Faithful for 25 Dec 2020: The Nativity of the Lord

Celebrant: On this holy night we stand in the presence of the Christ born into our world to show us the way to live life to the full.

For healing of people who have been so devastated by Covid 19 and for the arrival of a vaccine as soon as possible.
Lord, hear us. Lord, hear our prayer.

For peace in families, particularly in families torn apart by arguments and differences. May the Christ of healing mend and give birth to the possibility of reconciliation. *Lord, hear us. Lord, hear our prayer.*

For peace within ourselves, especially when we are confused or tired or in grief. May the Christ stir new life in us and lead us in hope. *Lord, hear us. Lord, hear our prayer.*

For people who are homeless tonight, no room at the inn. We think of refugees, we think of people who have no-one, and we pray that they will find home one day. *Lord, hear us. Lord, hear our prayer.*

For people who are starting new careers in life, for people who are recently engaged, for newly weds, for parents of a newborn babe, that Christmas this year will be a time of celebration and anticipation.
Lord, hear us. Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who have died, especially those we will always love no matter how long since their death. May their blessing be with us at the Christmas table, and the Risen Christ welcome them home. We especially remember Peter Carbone, Mary Gioules and Sheila Mullane whose anniversaries occur at this time.
Lord, hear us. Lord, hear our prayer.

Celebrant: We make these prayers in the name of Jesus, our light, our peace and our hope forever and ever. **Amen.**

Gospel: Luke 2:1-14

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census - the first - took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn. In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to all people who enjoy his favour'

This parish has a commitment to ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable people in our community.

For more information visit pol.org.au/eltham or pol.org.au/montmorency.

We support the recommendations of the Royal Commission into institutional abuse and pray for all the survivors.



Reflection

Unlike the other feasts of the Christmas season - Nativity, Epiphany, and the Baptism of the Lord - that of the Holy Family doesn't celebrate a gospel event or date back to early times. It was established only in 1893 by Pope Leo XIII. In the face of perceived threats to family values, he inaugurated the feast to uphold traditional Catholic teaching. The Holy Family was offered as a model of faith and love and devotion.

More than a century later, the notion of "family" has become more and more complex and contested. Ironically, the unusual composition of the Holy Family - a single child growing up with his biological mother and a putative father - seems almost conventional in comparison with the many combinations that claim the title of "family" today. What may appeal most to us now about the feast of the Holy Family is its affirmation of the humanity of Jesus. **Break Open the Word 2021**

Prayers of the Faithful for 27 Dec 2020: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

Celebrant: Dear friends, through the Holy Family of Nazareth, let us bring our prayers before the Lord.

We pray for Pope Francis and for all Church leaders that they may continue to be witnesses of hope and defenders of truth in the world and that their words and actions will inspire others to listen more closely to the message of the Gospel. *Lord, hear us. Lord, hear our prayer.*

For national leaders, we pray that they can work towards resolving their differences peacefully and calming tensions that exist in an uncertain world. *Lord, hear us. Lord, hear our prayer.*

We pray that we can examine ways of promoting peace in our own lives and mending any broken relations that we may have with family or friends. *Lord, hear us. Lord, hear our prayer.*

We pray that we all can develop a greater awareness and respect for our natural environment and examine ways in which, through our decisions and consumption of resources we can better protect God's creation for ourselves and future generations. *Lord, hear us. Lord, hear our prayer.*

Jesus, Mary and Joseph were forced to flee their Bethlehem home and seek safety in Egypt. We pray for the millions of people in the world today who are displaced from their homes for whatever reason. We pray also for the government and non-government agencies who work to protect the rights and dignity of these people and wherever possible enable them to find safe place of refuge. *Lord, hear us. Lord, hear our prayer.*

We pray for those people who are suffering in mind, body or spirit. We pray that they will experience the healing touch of Christ. *Lord, hear us. Lord, hear our prayer.*

We pray for those who have died recently. We also remember Peter Carbone, Mary Gioules, Sheila Mullane and Nancy Swindon whose anniversaries occur at this time. May they rest in the peace and love of Christ. *Lord, hear us. Lord, hear our prayer.*

Celebrant: We make these prayers in the name of Jesus, our light, our peace and our hope forever and ever. **Amen.**



Gospel: Luke 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 - 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 eight-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.