

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 have all survived another 12 months. 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. Please be mindful of all people that you come in contact with during these festive days.

Nothing was normal in 2021, 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 2021: 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 to the full.

For the spirit of gratitude: that our minds and hearts may recognise and appreciate the gifts of family, friends and community during this festive season. *Lord, hear us.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For people who are homeless tonight, no room in the inn: we particularly think of refugees searching for a place to call home. May we continue to warmly welcome newcomers to our Australian shores.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who are recovering from natural disasters, who have lost homes or employment, or who have fled violence: may the peace that Christ brings renew their hope and strengthen their spirits.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who are ill: that God will relieve their pain, restore them to their loved ones and protect the human family from the covid-virus.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who have died: may their blessings be with us at the Christmas table, and the Risen Christ welcome them home. We especially remember *Kate Boyce, Peter Carbone, Mary Gioules, Sheila Mullane, Nancy Swindon* 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 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

With many away for summer holidays or relaxing at home in holiday spirit, it's fair to say that the Feast of the Holy Family isn't high on their agenda. To add to that, in years when there's no Sunday between Christmas Day and New Year's Day the observance is relegated to a weekday.

There are other reasons why the feast may not fire the Catholic imagination. It's a late arrival in the liturgical calendar, inserted not by a groundswell of popular devotion but by papal decree. Alarmed at seeing Catholic family life under siege, Pope Leo XII responded by inaugurating the feast in 1893. Since then the tide of change in all that concerns family life has only grown stronger. The tension between ideal and reality is evident in Pope Francis' lengthy exhortation, *On Love in the Family*, published after the 2014-15 Synod on the Family. In #32 he writes, "Faithful to Christ's teaching we look to the reality of the family today in all its complexity, with both its lights and shadows." A little earlier, in #30, he had noted that the Holy Family was not spared the human condition: "Every family should look to the icon of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Its daily life had its share of burdens and even nightmares." It may not be holiday reading, but there's much wisdom, love, inspiration and food for thought in Francis' pastoral rumination.

Break Open the Word 2022



Prayers of the Faithful for 26 Dec 2021: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

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

For all families: that family members support one another and help each other to grow in wisdom, age and grace, and walk closer with God each day. *Lord, hear us.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who have no family or are alienated from their family: that they find love and acceptance through joining a community such as our parish. May we warmly welcome newcomers. *Lord, hear us.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Jesus, Mary and Joseph were forced to flee Bethlehem and seek safety in Egypt. We pray for the millions of people worldwide who are displaced from their homes for whatever reason. We pray also for the people and agencies who work to protect the rights and dignity of displaced people. May they find comfort and peace during this joyful time of the year. *Lord, hear us.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who are grieving, particularly the parents who lost their children in the Devonport school tragedy: may they know God is with them and draw strength from the Holy Family who also experienced great loss and pain. *Lord, hear us.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who are ill: that God will bring an end to the pandemic, heal all who are sick or recovering from surgery, and give strength and protection to all healthcare workers. *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 2:41-52

Every year the parents of Jesus used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. When they were on their way home after the feast, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents knowing it. They assumed he was with the caravan, and it was only after a day's journey that they went to look for him among their relations and acquaintances. When they failed to find him they went back to Jerusalem looking for him everywhere.

Three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them, and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. They were over come when they saw him, and his mother said to him, 'My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you.' 'Why were you looking for me?' he replied. 'Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?' But they did not understand what he meant.

He then went down with them and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and men.