



Bridgeside Bulletin



The weekly Bulletin of the Catholic Parish of Forster Tuncurry

"Unity in Christ"

Holy Name of Jesus Church, 31 Lake Street, Forster 2428 NSW

Ph: 6554 6401 E: forster-tuncurry.parish@mn.catholic.org.au W: www.forstertuncurrycatholic.org.au

We acknowledge the Worimi people - the traditional custodians of this place

SUNDAY 26 DECEMBER 2021, THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH YEAR C

Dear Brothers and Sisters.

Merry Christmas. With the celebration and festivities which have finally commenced, I hope and pray that each of us and those who are near and dear to us, as well as all people of good will, take some time out to remember the real meaning of Christmas. The birth of Jesus is the lynch pin of history. With his Birth, Life, Death and Resurrection we are redeemed. That God himself became one of us to live and die for us, is a truly remarkable thing. I hope that the celebration of this event, is a time of real joy for you all.

You will notice in the Church the beautiful flowers that adorn the Sanctuary for Christmas. Thank you to Rosita's Florists for facilitating the beautification of the Church for this wonderful solemnity. If anybody would like to make a contribution to help offset the cost the flowers please do so by placing this in an envelope and putting it on the collection plates, alternately please see me after Mass.

Please note that the office will be closed from Christmas Eve and will reopen on the fifth of January. Please remember you can leave things in the letterbox at the back door. I will be around and checking messages each day during this time.

For those who are travelling at this time, please do so safely!

Please see inside a beautiful poem written by former Poet Laureate Sir John Betjeman. This poem sums up the true meaning of Christmas very well.

May God bless you all this Christmas season.

With Love.

Fr. Peter.

PROCLAMATION OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

The Twenty-fifth Day of December, when ages beyond number had run their course from the creation of the world, when God in the beginning created heaven and earth, and formed man in his own likeness; when century upon century had passed since the Almighty set his bow in the clouds after the Great Flood, as a sign of covenant and peace; in the twenty-first century since Abraham, our father in faith, came out of Ur of the Chaldees; in the thirteenth century since the People of Israel were led by Moses in the Exodus from Egypt; around the thousandth year since David was anointed King; in the sixty-fifth week of the prophecy of Daniel; in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; in the year seven hundred and fifty-two since the foundation of the City of Rome; in the forty-second year of the reign of Caesar Octavian Augustus, the whole world being at peace, Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father, desiring to consecrate the world by his most loving presence, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and when nine months had passed since his conception, was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judah, and was made man: The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.



Parish Timetable

WEEKDAY MASS
27 DEC—1 JAN
 MON 9.30am
 TUE: 4.30pm
 WED: 9.30am
 THU: 4.30pm
 FRI: 9.30am
 SAT: 9.30am

Mon 27 DEC	9am Counters— Team 7 Community Kitchen Closed
Tue 28 DEC	12pm Community Kitchen 3.30pm Holy Hour, followed by Benediction
Wed 29 DEC	12pm Community Kitchen
Thu 30 DEC	12pm Community Kitchen
Sat 25 Dec	11.30am Community Christmas lunch in hall

Parish Notices

- **Parish Office closed 23 Dec—5 Jan**
- A Mass will be held on Mon 27th Dec at 9.30am
- **Holy Hour** will no longer be held on Thursday afternoons.
- **The Novena group** will resume on the 12th Jan 2022
- **Meditation** will resume in Feb

From the Parish Office...

From the bottom of my heart I would like to thank each and every one of you for the kind wishes for a Merry Christmas and for all the gifts I have received. It has been very overwhelming; thank you. I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a safe and prosperous 2022.

With love. Fr. Peter.

Thank you for the lovely gifts and cards to me and my family this Christmas. We sat around the dining table after dinner this week and I read the cards to my family as we shared the chocolates. It brought the kids a lot of joy so I thank you all very much! I wish everyone a safe and Merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year. I'll see you in 2022 ☺

Best wishes, Danielle.

Thank you to all those who have given donations and gifts to the St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal. Your generosity is overwhelming. Because of you, SVDP will be able to spread the joy of Christmas to families who need it most at this time.



Safeguarding Training

The Office of Safeguarding will be offering Safeguarding Training locally in the parish hall for volunteers. If you are a current volunteer or thinking of volunteering in the future then this training session is beneficial to you. Safeguarding Training is mandatory for those volunteering in child related ministries or working with vulnerable people in the community.

Date: Friday 11th February

Time: 12pm—3.30pm

Location: Parish hall, 31 Lake Street, Forster

Registrations: 02 4979 1390 oosgtraining@mn.catholic.org.au

Are you interested in becoming a Catechist?

Our parish has volunteer opportunities for anyone interested in teaching Special Religious Education in our local government schools. We currently have 3 local schools who participate in SRE. Scripture classes are held on Fridays during the school term. Each class is half an hour in length. Training is provided for new volunteers. For more information contact the Parish Office on 6554 6 4 0 1 or forster-tuncurry.parish@mn.catholic.org.au



THE LATEST NEWS FROM OUR SAFEGUARDING PROMOTERS

The Promoters of Safeguarding continue to endorse a culture of safeguarding within the Parish. To this end, your attention is drawn to the following **tips or tactics to make day to day living more manageable**. This is especially relevant when living with an illness or someone elderly. So...

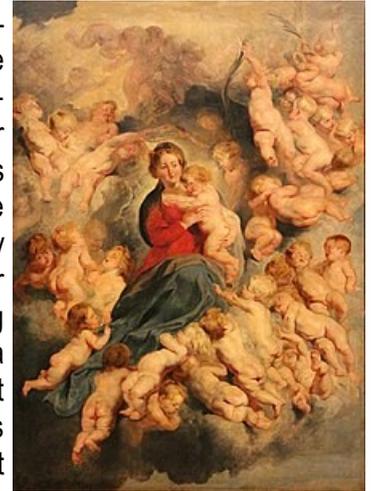
- ▶ Leave your most used items out or store them at waist level rather than put them away.
 - ▶ Prioritise the most important activities – be prepared to let some things go or ask for help to share the load.
 - ▶ Pace yourself by taking regular breaks which will help you balance your energy levels and complete the whole task.
 - ▶ Use tricks such as using a bathrobe to dry rather than towel-drying—let dishes air dry on the kitchen counter.
 - ▶ Seek and accept help from others to ease your load and allow you to stay independent for longer.
 - ▶ Take advantage of community services such as adult care day programs, meal programs, homecare support, respite care for yourself and a loved one.
 - ▶ Use services from your pharmacy such as the preparation and home delivery of blister packs which package your daily prescription medication.
 - ▶ Use a walking frame or walking stick to minimise chances of slips and falls.
 - ▶ Ask your doctor about aged care services to which you may be entitled – these include laundry, garden maintenance, home modifications, podiatry, physio, meals, wound care, medication management, bathing, grooming, opportunities to enable community participation.
 - ▶ You may also be entitled to a parking sticker permitting access to spots reserved for those with limited mobility.
 - ▶ Groceries can be home delivered or learn how to use 'click and collect' grocery services.
 - ▶ Be mindful that vegetables, fruits, nuts, seafood, whole grains are the best nutritional aid to recovery and prevention of heart disease, strokes and Type 2 diabetes.
- The following tips are helpful to everyone:**
- ▶ Take care of your own health
 - ▶ Stay connected to friends
 - ▶ Exercise as often as you can
 - ▶ Laugh and keep your sense of humour
 - ▶ Keep track of your money
 - ▶ Value your sleep
 - ▶ Finally, show understanding towards others - say comforting things helps you and the recipient.

Saints and Feasts



27/12/21 ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST was a son of Zebedee and brother of James. John and James (the Greater) were apostles of Jesus, who referred to them as the 'sons of thunder'. He was a witness to many events including the Transfiguration, the raising of Jairus' daughter and the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. As he stood at the foot of the cross, John was told by Jesus to accept Mary as his adopted mother. John was the first to reach the tomb when told of the resurrection and the first to recognise the Risen Lord when he appeared to them at Lake Tiberias. Towards the end of his life, John wrote the fourth Gospel as a witness to the Divinity of Christ. He also wrote three epistles contained in the New Testament, and is traditionally, though perhaps not correctly, identified as the author of the Book of Revelation.

28/12/21 THE HOLY INNOCENTS, martyrs. It is easy for us to overlook the martyrdom, the murder, of these innocent infant boys. We can be certain that, in that little town of Bethlehem, the number of babies slaughtered would be relatively low. However, that low number by no means diminishes the treachery of Herod's decree or the murders committed by his Roman soldiers. This martyrdom of the Holy Innocents is indeed the forgotten Christmas story. Also easily lost is why these baby boys are called martyrs. Their blood was shed-poured out-on account of Jesus. That is why the liturgical colour for this day is red. They had not done or said anything to anger anyone, but Herod, out of his paranoia over this infant King and his fury over being tricked by the Wise Men and their going home by a different route after receiving a divine vision to do so, demanded that blood be shed at the expense of these infant boys. It is a most gruesome account in our text, and for that reason many of us choose to make this the forgotten Christmas story. However, theirs is a story that must be told.



29/12/21 THE HOLY FAMILY. The Gospels speak little of the life of the Holy Family in the years before Jesus' public ministry. All that is known are the sojourn in Egypt, the return to Nazareth, and the incident that occurred when the twelve-year-old boy accompanied his parents to Jerusalem. The parents were apparently observant Jews, making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem every year with other Jewish families (Luke. 2:41). The Feast of the Holy Family is a liturgical celebration in the Catholic Church in honour of Jesus of Nazareth, his mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and his foster father, Saint Joseph, as a family. The primary purpose of this feast is to present the Holy Family as a model for Christian families. It is a holy day of obligation only if it falls on a Sunday.

31/12/21 ST SYLVESTER was ordained by Pope St. Marcellinus during the peace that preceded the persecutions of Diocletian. He passed through those days of terror, witnessed the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian, and saw the triumph of Constantine in the year 312. Two years later he succeeded St. Melchiades as Bishop of Rome. He then sent four legates to represent him at the great Council of the Western Church, held at Aries. He confirmed its decision and imparted them to the Church. The Council of Nice was assembled during his reign, in the year 325, but not being able to assist at it in person, on account of his great age, he sent his legates, who headed the list of subscribers to its decrees, preceding the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch. He was Pope for 24 years and eleven months. He died in the year 335.



PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Recently deceased:

Anniversaries: Wayne Anderson

We remember and pray for those who are ill at home and in hospital at this time, may they know the healing presence of Christ:

Connie Cachia, Joe Barnett, Monica Hunt, Max Dunn, Delphin Adonis Jr

People will remain on the prayers for the sick for 4 weeks. You can resubmit names as needed.



UNIVERSAL PRAYER

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph Year C

Father: Christ came into the world to draw us to the Father. Let us come before the God of hosts in prayer.

1. Reader: That the Church may foster the unity of families and support them in times of need. As one we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

2. Reader: That all nations respect the rights of families to live and work together. As one we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

3. Reader: That the members of the human family will show respect and goodwill to one another. As one we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

4. Reader: That those gathered here today may be instruments of peace. As one we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

5. Reader: That children everywhere will be loved and nurtured. As one we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

6. Reader: That those who are preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony will be supported by their family and friends. As one we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

7. Reader: That a new Bishop will soon be appointed to lead the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. As one we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

8. Reader: That Fr. Greg Barker will be sustained by our prayers as he fulfils the role of Diocesan Administrator. As one we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

9. Reader: That those who have gone before us, especially Wayne Anderson whose anniversary occurs at this time and members of our families, will live forever. As one we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Father: Lord God, you have taught us that whatever we ask we shall receive. Help us to keep your commandments and live the kind of life you want. We ask this in Jesus' name.

All: Amen.

Sunday 26 Dec 2021
The Holy Family of Jesus,
Mary and Joseph Year C

Entrance Antiphon

Lk 2:16

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

First Reading

Sir 3:2-6. 12-14

A reading from the Book of Ecclesiasticus

The Lord honours the father in his children, and upholds the rights of a mother over her sons. Whoever respects his father is atoning for his sins, he who honours his mother is like someone amassing a fortune.

Whoever respects his father will be happy with children of his own, he shall be heard on the day when he prays. Long life comes to him who honours his father, he who sets his mother at ease is showing obedience to the Lord. My son, support your father in his old age, do not grieve him during his life. Even if his mind should fail, show him sympathy, do not despise him in your health and strength; for kindness to a father shall not be forgotten but will serve as reparation for your sins.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 127:1-5. R. see v.1

(R.) Happy are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

1. O blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways! By the labour of your hands you shall eat. You will be happy and prosper. (R.)

2. Your wife like a fruitful vine in the heart of your house; your children like shoots of the olive, around your table. (R.)

3. Indeed thus shall be blessed the man who fears the Lord. May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life. (R.)

Second Reading

1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24

A reading from the first letter of St John

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God's children; and that is what we are. Because the world refused to acknowledge him, therefore it does not acknowledge us. My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed, all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is. My dear people, if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience, we need not be afraid in God's presence, and whatever we ask him, we shall receive, because we keep his commandments and live the kind of life that he wants. His commandments are these: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and that we love one another as he told us to. Whoever keeps his commandments lives in God and God lives in him. We know that he lives in us by the Spirit that he has given us.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel Acclamation

Col 3:15. 16

Alleluia, alleluia!

May the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, and the fullness of his message live within you.

Alleluia!

Gospel

Lk 2:41-52

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

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 rela-

tions 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 overcome 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.

The Gospel of the Lord

Communion Antiphon

Bar 3:38

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

Readings for Next Week 1/2 Jan

First Reading

Is 60:1-6 Jerusalem is exalted.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 71:1-2. 7-8. 10-13, R. see v.11
(R.) Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

Second Reading

Eph 3:2-3. 5-6 Paul declares the Gentiles co-heirs to the Kingdom.

Gospel Acclamation

Mt 2:2 Alleluia, alleluia!

We have seen his star in the East; and have come to adore the Lord.
Alleluia!

Gospel

Mt 2:1-12 The Wise Men journey to the infant Jesus.

THE ORDER OF MASS

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen. either:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And with your spirit.** or:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **And with your spirit.** or:

The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**

PENITENTIAL ACT

Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. either:

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, (striking the breast) through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.** or:

Have mercy on us, O Lord.

For we have sinned against you.

Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

And grant us your salvation.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.** or:

You were sent to heal the contrite of heart:

P: Lord, have mercy or: **P:** Kyrie, eleison.

R: Lord, have mercy or: **R:** Kyrie, eleison.

You came to call sinners:

P: Christ have mercy or: **P:** Christe, eleison.

R: Christ have mercy or: **R:** Christe, eleison.

You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us:

P: Lord, have mercy or: **P:** Kyrie, eleison.

R: Lord, have mercy or: **R:** Kyrie, eleison.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

The Kyrie follows, unless it has occurred in the Penitential Act. either:

P: Lord, have mercy. **R:** Lord, have mercy.

P: Christ, have mercy. **R:** Christ, have mercy.

P: Lord, have mercy. **R:** Lord, have mercy.

or:

P: Kyrie, eleison.

R: Kyrie, eleison.

P: Christe, eleison.

R: Christe, eleison.

P: Kyrie, eleison.

R: Kyrie, eleison.

Gloria (when said)

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Let us pray. At the end of the Collect, the people acclaim: **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

At the end of the reading:

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

At the Gospel:

The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to N.

Glorify to you, O Lord.

At the end of the Gospel:

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

THE NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (all bow) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come

again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, (all bow) born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Pray, brethren ... the almighty Father.

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of His name, for our good and the good of all His holy Church.

At the end of the prayer, the people acclaim:
Amen.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right and just.**

After the Preface

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

The mystery of faith. either:

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again. or:

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again. or:

**Save us, Saviour of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.**

Through him, and with him, ... for ever and ever.
Amen.

THE COMMUNION RITE

At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

Our Father, who art in heaven...

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil...

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles...

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And with your spirit.

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. (X2)

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The Body of Christ. **Amen.**

The Blood of Christ. **Amen.**

Let us pray. At the end of the prayer, the people acclaim:
Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**

May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the † Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

either:

Go forth, the Mass is ended. or:

Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord. or:

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your Life. or:

Go in peace.

Thanks be to God.

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SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

by Brendan Byrne SJ

In respect to the family the New Testament shows a decided ambiguity. Documents that stem from the developed Christian tradition, such as the Pastoral Letters and the excerpt from the Letter to the Colossians included as the Second Reading for today, commend family life in a highly traditional way. The Synoptic tradition, however, with its roots in the teaching and practice of Jesus himself, insists that family ties can be a hindrance to following the call of the Kingdom. Did not Jesus say that no one could be his disciple without 'hating' one's father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters' (Luke 14:26)? Of course, such statements need not be taken at face value: Semitic idiom uses 'love' and 'hate' simply to express a preference for one thing over another. Still the ambiguity remains.

But the task of finding some relevance to current family life is at least easier this year when the Year C readings for the feast of the Holy Family have as **Gospel** reading Luke's account of the loss and finding of Jesus in the Temple when he was twelve years of age (2:41-52). This offers what might seem to be a more realistic view of family life. Though part of Luke's Infancy Story, it presents Jesus no longer as a passive infant but as a young adolescent beginning to grasp, at this age, his adult identity.

Luke tells the story in a way that brings out very strongly the element of misunderstanding between the boy and his parents. Jesus' response to his mother's complaint ('My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been looking for you.') reflects adolescent impatience: 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know I must be about my Father's business?' (or 'in my Father's house' but 'business' seems more appropriate). On Mary's lips, 'father' refers to her husband, Joseph. But Jesus is speaking of his Father in heaven. Into their tranquil family life bursts a sharp reminder of his true status as unique Son of God and of the destiny (the Father's 'business') to which they are going to have to surrender him. This surrender, beginning here and now and culminating at the cross, is the 'sword' that will pierce Mary's heart, as the aged Simeon has prophesied at the Presentation (2:35).

It would be trite simply to say that here we see that the Holy Family was not immune to the trials of children going adolescence – though, of course, some comfort can be drawn from that. The Gospel is bringing out the uniqueness of Jesus as well as his identification with the ordinary human condition. 'His Father's business', which will ultimately involve a very painful destiny indeed, is his mission to draw the entire human race back into a 'family' relationship with God that it had lost through sin.

No image of God or of the relationship God wishes to have with us is ever adequate. But we do have to picture God in human terms and the 'family' image is the one that Jesus left us. He taught his disciples to pray, 'Our Father, ...' (Matt 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4) and, as Paul says, his Spirit comes into our hearts crying 'Abba, Father' (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6), impelling us, that is, to address God with the familial intimacy characteristic of Jesus – something that impressed the early believers so much that they preserved the address in the original Aramaic.

Jesus said of those who hear the word of God and keep it that they are 'my father and mother and sister and brother ...' (Luke 8:21). Here, in the truth that Jesus draws us into his own divine family life, lies the foundation for the dignity of all family life. But growing into Christian adulthood is perhaps no easier than growing into human adulthood and no less immune to the trials all growth entails. Each of us is called to discover and 'be about' our Father's business in our own unique way.

The **Second Reading** (Colossians 3:12-21), as noted above, reflects a more traditional sense of family life. Anchored in the culture of his time, Paul urges wives to 'give way' to their husbands and husbands to 'love' their wives and treat them with gentleness. Today, with a greater sense of the equality of the spousal relationship, we might see the injunctions equally applicable to both partners in the marriage. But Paul's advice to parents in regard to children scarcely needs updating.

POPE FRANCIS
ANGELUS
Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 19 December 2021

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

The Gospel of the Liturgy of today, fourth Sunday of Advent, tells of Mary's visit to Elizabeth (cf. Lk 1: 39-45). After receiving the annunciation of the angel, the Virgin does not stay at home, thinking over what has happened and considering the problems and pitfalls, which were certainly not lacking: because, poor girl, she did not know what to do with this news, with the culture of that age... She did not understand... On the contrary, she first thinks of someone in need; instead of being absorbed in her own problems, she thinks about someone in need, she thinks about Elizabeth, her relative, who was of advanced years and with child, something strange and miraculous. Mary sets out on with generosity, without letting herself be put off by the discomforts of the journey, responding to an inner impulse that called her to be close and to help. A long road, kilometre after kilometre, and there was no bus to go there: she went on foot. She went out to help. How? By sharing her joy. Mary gives Elizabeth the joy of Jesus, the joy she carried in her heart and in her womb. She goes to her and proclaims her feelings, and this proclamation of feelings then became a prayer, the Magnificat, which we all know. And the text says that Our Lady "arose and went with haste" (v. 39).

She arose and went. In the last stretch of the journey of Advent, let us be guided by these two verbs. To arise and to go in haste: these are the two movements that Mary made and that she invites us also to make as Christmas approaches. First of all, arise. After the angel's announcement, a difficult period loomed ahead for the Virgin: her unexpected pregnancy exposed her to misunderstandings and even severe punishment, even stoning, in the culture of that time. Imagine how many concerns and worries she had! Nevertheless, she did not become discouraged, she was not disheartened: she arose. She did not look down at her problems, but up to God. And she did not think about whom to ask for help, but to whom to bring help. She always thinks about others: that is Mary, always thinking of the needs of others. She will do the same later, at the wedding in Cana, when she realizes that there is no more wine. It is a problem for other people, but she thinks about this and looks for a solution. Mary always thinks about others. She also thinks of us.

Let us learn from Our Lady this way of reacting: to get up, especially when difficulties threaten to crush us. To arise, so as not to get bogged down in problems, sinking into self-pity or falling into a sadness that paralyzes us. But why get up? Because God is great and is ready to lift us up if we reach out to Him. So let us cast away the negative thoughts, the fears that block every impulse and that prevent us from moving forward. And then let's do as Mary did: let's look around and look for someone to whom we can be of help! Is there an elderly person I know to whom I can give a little help, company? Everyone, think about it.

Or to offer a service to someone, a kindness, a phone call? But who can I help? I get up and I help. By helping others, we help ourselves to rise up from difficulties.

The second movement is to go in haste. This does not mean to proceed with agitation, in a hurried manner, no, it does not mean this. Instead, it means conducting our days with a joyful step, looking ahead with confidence, without dragging our feet, as slaves to complaints – these complaints ruin so many lives, because one starts complaining and complaining, and life drains away. Complaining leads you always to look for someone to blame. On her way to Elizabeth's house, Mary proceeds with the quick step of one whose heart and life are full of God, full of his joy. So, let us ask ourselves, for our benefit: how is my "step"? Am I proactive or do I linger in melancholy, in sadness? Do I move forward with hope or do I stop and feel sorry for myself? If we proceed with the tired step of grumbling and talking, we will not bring God to anyone, we will only bring bitterness and dark things. Instead, it does great good to cultivate a healthy sense of humour, as did, for example, Saint Thomas More or Saint Philip Neri. We can also ask for this grace, this grace of a healthy sense of humour: it does so much good. Let us not forget that the first act of charity we can do for our neighbour is to offer him a serene and smiling face. It is to bring them the joy of Jesus, as Mary did with Elizabeth.

May the Mother of God take us by the hand, and may she help us to arise and to go in haste towards Christmas!

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters

I express my closeness to the people of the Philippines affected by a strong typhoon, which has destroyed many homes. May the Santo Niño bring consolation and hope to the families most in need; and may he inspire practical help in all of us! The first genuine help is prayer.

I greet all of you, pilgrims from Italy and from different countries. In particular, I greet the Peruvian community of Rome and its folkloric group gathered here for the celebration in honour of the "Niño Jesús Andino" of Chopcca, the place of origin of the Nativity display set up in this Square. Thank you! I greet the Musical Band of Soriano al Cimino. I would like to listen to them later... [the band intones "Happy Birthday"] They play well, these ones! I greet the faithful of Terni, the scouts of Marigliano and the young people of Cingoli, Macerata.

And I wish you all a good Sunday and a good journey in this last stretch of Advent that prepares us for the birth of Jesus. May it be for all of us a time of expectation and collaboration: hope, hoping and praying, in the company of the Virgin Mary, woman of expectation. And please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch, and arrivederci. And now the band, may it play something beautiful!

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Christmas, by John Betjeman

The bells of waiting Advent ring,
The Tortoise stove is lit again
And lamp-oil light across the night
Has caught the streaks of winter rain
In many a stained-glass window sheen
From Crimson Lake to Hookers Green.

The holly in the windy hedge
And round the Manor House the yew
Will soon be stripped to deck the ledge,
The altar, font and arch and pew,
So that the villagers can say
'The church looks nice' on Christmas Day.

Provincial Public Houses blaze,
Corporation tramcars clang,
On lighted tenements I gaze,
Where paper decorations hang,
And bunting in the red Town Hall
Says 'Merry Christmas to you all'.

And London shops on Christmas Eve
Are strung with silver bells and flowers
As hurrying clerks the City leave
To pigeon-haunted classic towers,
And marbled clouds go scudding by
The many-steepled London sky.

And girls in slacks remember Dad,
And oafish louts remember Mum,
And sleepless children's hearts are glad.
And Christmas-morning bells say 'Come!
Even to shining ones who dwell
Safe in the Dorchester Hotel.

And is it true,
This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,
A Baby in an ox's stall ?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Become a Child on earth for me ?

And is it true ? For if it is,
No loving fingers tying strings
Around those tissue'd fripperies,
The sweet and silly Christmas things,
Bath salts and inexpensive scent
And hideous tie so kindly meant,

No love that in a family dwells,
No carolling in frosty air,
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells
Can with this single Truth compare -
That God was man in Palestine
And lives today in Bread and Wine.

Why We Do The Things We Do

bite-size explanations of Catholic practices

Advent: The Church calendar begins with the Advent season, the four weeks leading up to Christmas. This period is a time of preparation, not just for Christmas gifts and luncheons and holidays, but for the great celebration of God's revelation through the birth of Jesus Christ. How privileged we are to live in this age of salvation! For centuries before Jesus' birth, the Jewish people waited for the coming of the promised Messiah as foretold by the Scriptures. We find ourselves in a similar position as we look forward to the second coming of Christ at the end of time. In this sense, Jews and Christians share in a messianic yearning. Although we do not know the hour or the day, each Advent we renew our faith in this great promise.

A Christmas question: Since we do not know the exact historical date of Jesus' birth, why do Christians celebrate Christmas on 25th December? In the ancient world, a pagan festival held on 25th December worshipped the sun as the divine controller of all life. The Roman Emperor Aurelian established this festival in 274, naming it *Natalis Solis Invicti* ('the Birth of the Unconquered Sun'). By choosing this day as the birth of Christ, Christians intended to counteract the pagan belief as they celebrated Christ as the true light of the world, the Saviour who dispels the darkness of sin with the light of God's love.

The Jesse Tree: No, it's not just another Christmas tree you see in churches at this time of year. In Christian tradition the Jesse Tree represents the family tree of Jesus. Beginning with Abraham, the names that you see decorating the tree are the characters listed in the genealogy of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew (1:1-16). The name Jesse comes from the father of King David who is listed in verse 6. The tree reminds us that Jesus our Saviour is revealed not as an isolated super-hero, but as the Messiah intimately connected with the people of God. He is God-with-us.

The Holy Family: On the feast of the Holy Family we pause to reflect on our own families. For some of us this raises happy thoughts. For others, painful. For most of us it is a mixture of both. Undoubtedly, blood bonds are the most lifeaffecting relationships we have, even if by their absence! It is precisely because of their significance that families can teach us so much about the Gospel and about the Church. In the ups and downs of relating to one another, family members cannot help but be confronted by the challenge to love, to forgive and to put others before one's own agenda. Families often underrate their holiness. In fact they are among the greatest of witnesses to the depth of love that Christians are called to share.



CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS 2021 FROM FR GREG BARKER

As I write I am mindful of the sad loss of our Bishop, Bishop William Wright, who succumbed to illness recently. It has been tragic not only to his family but to our Church. Bishop Bill was this Diocese' shepherd for ten years and guided our Catholic community through difficulties most of us may not have been fully aware of. He did that with a strength of character and dignity that was something of a light for not only this Catholic Church but for many others in the broader community. He will be sadly missed and fondly remembered.

His message this year might well have been born out of the challenge of his illness and the quiet acceptance of God's plan as it unfolded, even if the end or purpose was hidden from his eyes. 'It is hard to die even for a good man' (Romans 5:7) we are reminded in the words of St Paul. Bill died with great grace and dignity and a strength that faith gives.

It feels like we have been anticipating Christmas this year for a very long time. I want to say that it seems the Christmas decorations started appearing soon after Easter, a slight exaggeration perhaps. Maybe it was a sense that this year is, was or did 'suck'. And whilst I was very optimistic last year that 2020 was going to give us 'clear' vision and a bright future with many opportunities, COVID came and changed our world forever.

I was not so optimistic this year. The early anticipation of Christmas maybe was a reflection that I was not alone. Even with a year full of challenges Christmas trees going up in October and the tinsel and glitter already about, may have been a little premature even for a community feeling the effects of a 'gloomish' year.

I was recently reminded that COVID came on the back of flood, fire and

drought – 2019 was not such a great year. This year our communities were once again called to dig deep and accept some 'big' challenges. Resilience sometimes is hard to find especially in the face of multiple hurdles. We did it and here we are celebrating Christmas once again.

I cannot forget the images that came out of Afghanistan this year as the Taliban once again took Kabul. Tragic is a word the springs immediately to mind. I feel for the people left behind but am grateful for the wider world community who responded with such generosity. The response from many nations rescuing thousands, taking them to waiting open arms who welcomed, comforted and made a place for those seeking safety.

In recent days the interviews with young female Afghani soccer players, teachers, medical staff and others who would have been denied the freedom to be all of those things has been heart-warming. I hear in them a sadness too that these necessary skills will be denied the Nation of Afghanistan, their homeland.

These good news stories fill us with hope amidst the sadness as the more vulnerable women, girls and children find sanctuary right across the globe. There is something about the human condition mostly that simply wants to help and save. We are intrinsically good, created that way by a God who loves us and who sent his own Son to save us. That's the heart of Christmas isn't it.

Jesus was a refugee. Soon after his birth he and his family were forced to flee oppression and violence and make a home in a neighbouring country. We have great example of what 'making a home' looks like for those that seek sanctuary.

The infant who is born to us reminds a world with its broken parts that intrinsically there is good in all of us and that

somehow, some where we are worth saving. Eventually that Son, the good 'man' of Paul's letter to the Romans, will give his life for us. That's the hope of Christmas.

For now, we gather in our Churches and our homes to celebrate the birth with great joy. The tree, the tinsel and the glitter, the presents, the effort of Christmas all builds in anticipation of that moment that salvation enters our world.

This year has been a year of lockdown and isolating, yet I feel more connected to those people and events than ever before. I am amazed at the numbers of people who have gone out of their way to make more regular contact with a neighbour, parish member, work colleague, friend and member of their own family than ever before. I have been reminded of what really is important in my life. That's the joy of Christmas.

How did being in lockdown make us more connected? Have more conversations? Be more aware of those who live alone or are more vulnerable to loneliness and aloneness? It is a modern-day miracle! I never thought I would be so grateful to technology, which had been the bane of my life till two years ago. Whilst I cannot say I am grateful to COVID it has reminded me to of what my priorities should be. This year has seen many challenges no doubt but also some amazing graces and blessings. As you sit around your tree this year with your family and friends remember to give thanks for the blessings they bring to your heart and home. At the heart of everything is Jesus, the Saviour born to us and who in his unconditional love reminds us to be what we have been created to be, intrinsically good! Have a wonderful, safe, and joy filled Christmas. May 2022 be COVID free!





BAPTISMS

Celebrated most Sundays.
Bookings via the Parish website

MARRIAGE

Celebrated by arrangement with at least 3 months notice. Bookings via the parish website

SACRAMENTAL PROCESS

Enrolment via the Parish Website

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

(RCIA) Parish Office 02 6554 6401

CATHOLIC CARE

Phone: 02 6539 5900 for services provided in Forster



PARISH TEAM

Fr Peter Street - Parish Priest
Peter.street@mn.catholic.org.au
Emergency Contact: 0458 327 219
(Please only calls to this phone no texts)

Danielle Kingdom
Admin Assistant
danielle.kingdom@mn.catholic.org.au

Office Hours:
Mon-Fri 9.00am- 3.30pm
Phone: 02 6554 6401

Website:
www.forstertuncurrycatholic.org.au

Follow us on facebook:
@catholicparishofforstertuncurry

Feedback, complaints or concerns can be communicated directly to the Parish Office, through our website (Contact Us) or if the concern is relating to the safety of a child, contact the Office of Safeguarding: 02 4979 1390 childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au

COMMUNITY KITCHEN

Serving meals to the community from the Parish Hall **Mon Tue, Wed & Thurs 12pm-1pm**

PARISH GROUPS

Christian Meditation

Forster Tues 9.30am
Greg 0427 918 568
Hallidays Point Wed 10am
John 0417 249 466

Gardening Group

3rd Monday of the month, 8am
Church grounds.
David Olliffe 0424 369 485

Family and Friends Group

Meets monthly, contact Carol and Terry Pearson on 0408768729.

Singing Practice

Ken Heffernan 02 6554 6401
(see parish timetable)

Holy Hour

Tues 3.30pm in the Church

Finance Council

3rd Wednesday of the month, 5pm
Meeting Room

Pastoral Council

1st Thursday of the month, 6.00pm
Meeting Room

Novena to our Lady of Perpetual Help and Rosary

Wed 11.00am in the Church
Shiony 0411 493 086
Novena Benediction on the 1st Wednesday of the month.

Secular Franciscan Fraternity

4th Sunday of the month 9.30am
Barbara Dolahenty 0408 248 018

The above groups are all subject to Covid-19 restrictions, please enquire before attending.



SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Sat 5.00pm, Sun. 8.00am & 10.00am

RECONCILIATION

9.00am Saturday and during Holy Hour

YOUTH MASS

3rd Sunday of the month, will resume once restrictions have eased.

AGED CARE MASSES (Subject to change)

GLAICA: **1st Tues 10.30am**
Estia Forster: **3rd Tues 10.00am**



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Holy Name Catholic School K-6

41 Lake Street, Forster

Ph: 02 6554 6504

E:admin@forster.catholic.edu.au

W: www.forster.catholic.edu.au

Principal: Brooke Stephens

St Clare's High School 7-12

Davis Street, Taree

P: 02 6552 3300

E:Admin@tareesc.catholic.edu.au

W: www.tareesc.catholic.edu.au

Principal: Peter Nicholls

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