



OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL PARISH

in the care of the Carmelites since 1937

www.mtcarmelcoorparoo.org.au

Nativity of the Lord - 25 December 2015

The Holy Family - 27 December 2015

CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

Today we celebrate the great story of Christ's birth in a stable, in this case a fancy name for a cow shed, where he was laid in a manger – another fancy name for a feed trough. His young and weary, luckily only temporarily dispossessed parents were in awe, as were the shepherds in nearby fields who came to visit and eventually the three kings who followed a star to this humble birthplace. It is a story so familiar to us all and one that we have anticipated and waited for these last few weeks of Advent. It is a story told and retold in so many ways – on Christmas cards, in Christmas carols, in children's picture books and in the scripture we listen to today. The UK fantasy writer Ursula Le Guin once observed that there have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories. Our stories are integral to who we are. We each have our own story, we are each part of many communal stories, with family, friendship networks, work, school, parish or other, and today we celebrate the greatest story, the truth of God with us.

Cardinal Walter Kasper in his book *Mercy - the Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life* comments that *the Christmas story has lost none of its fascination in two thousand years. In its more popular form, this story elicits believing or disbelieving wonder down to this very day. Francis of Assisi was the first to suggest setting up a crèche in order to make visible through it God's love, which is made manifest to us in an incredible way. To this very day, many people, even those who are alienated from the life of the church, visit the divine child in the crib, who is experienced as love's ray of light in a dark and cold world.*

As we gather over Christmas dinner, surrounding ourselves with those who share our stories, we will be mindful of the truth (and responsibility) of the message in a Christmas card I received in recent weeks.

The message spoke volumes to me about the heart of our story and the metaphoric star we follow:

Christ is being born: quietly, unnoticed – inviting us to proclaim his presence.

Happy Christmas everyone. Jane Connolly, Parishioner

PRIOR OF CARMELITE
COMMUNITY

Matthew McPhee
O.Carm

PARISH PRIEST
Paul Sireh O.Carm

ASSOCIATE PASTOR
Jerome Watt O.Carm

PARISH SECRETARY
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OFFICE HOURS:
8.30am - 4.00pm
Mondays – Fridays

MOUNT CARMEL SCHOOL

PARISH MASS TIMES

Weekends: Saturday Vigil: 6pm

Sunday: 8.30am & 5.30pm

Weekdays: Monday to Saturday 9am

** The first Wednesday of each month, a Mass of Anointing is held at 10am. This replaces the 9am Mass.*

RECONCILIATION:

Saturdays 9.30am – 10am

ROSARY:

Mondays –after 9am Mass

Our Church is always open during daylight hours, to allow you the opportunity to come in and spend some time with Our Lord.

This Week at Mt Carmel **Christmas Mass Times**

Christmas Eve—6pm Children's Mass

Christmas Eve—9pm Mass

Christmas Day - 7am and 9am

Christmas Carols will be sung half an hour before the start of each Mass.

Please note there is no evening Mass on Christmas Day

New Year's Day Mass will be at 9am

Happy New Year to You and your family. With every blessing for a bright and peaceful 2016

Next Sunday's Readings:

Year C: The Epiphany of the Lord

Is 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3,5-6;

Gospel: Mt:2:1-12

A Christmas Message from our Parish Priest

So another Christmas! It seems to come faster each year, usually before we have finished our preparations! But whether we're ready or not, it's time to relax and enjoy our celebration of Jesus' birth.

Christmas is a many diamond, beaming radiant light into all the nooks and crannies of our lives. Sometime we pick up the full beam, sometimes only the fringe. But to all of us it can make a real difference.

For some, Christmas is merely a secular festive, the "festive season", as a local politician expressed it. Some people talk of Xmas, Christmas without Christ, a season of Santa Clause and presents, a time for renewing old friendships and strengthening family ties. We sometimes hear "Christmas is really for children", and if Jesus comes into the story at all he remains a baby, the child in a manger.

It's easy to mock this "bottom line" of Christmas. But even here some of the light from Jesus' birth gently touches many in today's world. Didn't the angels promise "peace to all people of good will" that first Christmas? Even if Christmas goes no deeper, let's pray that God's love will touch all families and all people, that they may joyfully receive his gifts of unselfish love and self-giving.

But when we let the full beam of Christ's birth light up our lives, Christmas will mean so much.

continued.....

First of all, it will reveal for us a new face of God. In Jesus's birth, our God enters our human story, he "learns from experience" what it means to be human. And the meeting place between God and his creation is a totally dependent new-born baby, in Bethlehem, in an animal's feeding trough, and among displaced refugees and shepherds. Our God comes to meet us in absolute powerlessness, in poverty and among the most unimportant of people. What does that say to us about own priorities, and who is regarded as important?

Secondly, the light of Christmas shines on the face of this newborn child. We see there much more than a cuddly infant. As his parents will quickly learn, he is destined to grow into a sign of contradiction to challenge the powerful and complacent, leading him inexorably to Calvary. Maybe already in the eyes of this baby in the crib we can glimpse the pain of the Cross and the triumph of Easter .

For those prepared to let the full radiance of this mystery shine into their hearts, Christmas will be a transforming experience. While continuing to be a festival for families and children, for giving gifts, for rekindling friendships and deepening the bonds of love, it can do so much more.

It can lead us closer to the God of love, as we join the shepherds and Mary and Joseph in kneeling in awe and wonder and adoration. As the light of God's love penetrates more deeply into our hearts it will lead us to Eucharist, to taste and drink deeply from the fountain of love that week by week gives us the strength to keep the Christmas vision alive the whole year long.

The light of Christmas will also shine upon those who carry heavy burdens. For some families Christmas will make us keenly aware of the death of a loved one during the year. It may also be the first family gathering after a marriage has broken down, or a rift has occurred within our family circle, or we have become unemployed and face an uncertain future. May Jesus' birth bring healing, hope and even joy in the midst of sorrow and regret for what could have been.

Blessings and joy to all our parishioners and visitors from all the members of our Parish Team, Donna Moloney our parish secretary and Jenette Free our finance officer and Fathers, Matthew, Jerome and I. We have once again been overwhelmed by so many messages and cards and gifts. Thank you for your thoughtfulness and generosity.

Due to the renovation of the priory that had begun on the 7th December, Fr Jerome is now residing with Augustinians at Villanova College and I am staying at the 'White House' with Peter and Mary now as Peter Paul and Mary" Our Prior Fr Matthew stays put comfortably in his wing and keeps the place warm.

We will keep all of you in our Christmas Masses as we celebrate together this profound mystery of God' love, A happy and holy Christmas to all.

Fr Paul Sireh O.Carm



We remember those in God's care...

Recently Deceased:

Amy Robertson, Harold Stain, Edith Brennan, Joan O'Leary, Raymond O'Connell, Sean Atkinson, Ester Carlevaro, Anna Moroavia, and all who have died recently.

May they Rest in God's Peace.

Anniversaries and Memorials:

We pray for our sick....

David Weston, Brian Cochrane, Kathleen Horne, Brian McErlian, Brian Sykes, Joan Logan, Maryanne Faulkner, John O'Loughlin

To have someone included in the Newsletter, please phone or email the Parish.

Names for the sick will be removed after two months, unless notified for them to continue.

World Youth Day

Some Brisbane East Deanery funding available to suitable applicants.

We would love to have you join us for the Brisbane Pilgrimage to World Youth Day 2016 in Krakow!

Young people aged 18-35 are invited to join us on a 21 day 'Footsteps of John Paul II' pilgrimage through Poland, including a 'Days in the Diocese' experience. .

Head to the [Brisbane WYD Website](#) for more info!

Year of Mercy



"We all make mistakes and on occasion someone gets offended in the marriage, in the family, and sometimes – I say – plates are smashed,

*harsh words are spoken but **please** listen to my advice: don't ever let the sun set without reconciling.*

Peace is made each day in the family: "Please forgive me", and then you start over." – Pope Francis

Carmelite



Communication From our wider Carmelite family

We wish you and your family a very happy Christmas.

Wherever you are celebrating may it be filled with the presence of the One who is the human face of God's love, mercy and compassion. We rejoice that God IS with us!

As always, you will be remembered at our Christmas Midnight Mass at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Middle Park, VIC.

We also remember those for whom Christmas is a painful time, a reminder of loved ones lost into God's care, absent family and friends. May we be God's merciful and loving presence for them.

Mount Carmel Parish acknowledges the Turrbal people as the traditional owners of the land on which we live.