



John the Baptist Catholic Parish

Mount Street, Bonnyrigg Heights

(incorporating Bonnyrigg Heights, Green Valley, Edensor Park, Abbotsbury, Cecil Hills and Elizabeth Hills)



Christmas Eve, Midnight, Christmas Day (Year A) 2016

The Greatest Gift Comes Wrapped

Christians gather at Christmas to celebrate. We celebrate the beauty of the Christmas story that brings us together and touches our hearts. We celebrate and reconnect with our families, and we celebrate and promote charitable giving, by especially helping the poorest of the poor.

One of the things I love about Christmas are Christmas presents. We give and receive presents. For generations the tradition has been that gifts are wrapped and that when the wrapping is removed, the person rejoices at the gift.

In St Luke's Gospel we hear: "You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." Jesus, the gift of God to humanity, is wrapped at Christmas and he is lying amongst the hay in the cave at Bethlehem.

But Jesus is not only wrapped at Christmas, he is also wrapped at Easter. At Easter, after his death on the cross, Jesus is wrapped and is laid in a cave that becomes a tomb. St Luke uses the very same word 'wrapped' at the birth and at the burial of Jesus, drawing a beautiful parallel between Christmas and Easter. Jesus, the greatest gift at Christmas, emerges from his wrapping on Easter Sunday, and all the world is filled with joy.

When the wrapping is removed from a present this Christmas, remember that Jesus was wrapped and that when the wrapping was taken off, Jesus's crucified body had been resurrected and glorified, and the salvation of the world was complete. Christmas presents are a great opportunity to not only share friendship, but are an invitation to recommit to our faith that Jesus, the gift of God, is born, died and has risen again and that we have reason to rejoice forever.



In most traditions, Christians tend to eat a lot of food at Christmas. Christmas Pudding, Cake, Panettone, nougat, Lollies, Chocolate, Ham, Turkey, and many others. An important part of the food we eat is the nourishment of Christ's body and blood. Catholics attend in very large numbers at our Christmas Masses, with a higher increase at Catholic churches than at any other Christian denomination. Food is important, and the food we eat at Christmas should remind us of the story of Jesus. Jesus was laid in a manger, but the manger he was laid in was not a cot or a baby's crib. Jesus was laid in the trough – the place for the food for the animals. From the moment of Jesus' birth, he was placed amongst the food and he became food, so that at the end of his life, at the Last Supper, he would give his body and blood to his followers by saying "Take and Eat, This is my Body". When we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, we receive Jesus from the manger at Bethlehem and we grow in a hope that we will all be united at the banquet of God in Heaven.

This Christmas, recommit to your faith, reaffirm your hope in eternal life and choose again to live a life of love by proclaiming the Kingdom of God in everything and creating a place where charity is not seen as an added extra, but as a part of who you are.

On behalf of our whole parish – our parishioners and staff, I wish you a blessed Christmas and a joyful New Year and all heaven's blessings of peace and love on you, your families and loved ones.

Fr James McCarthy

Wishing everyone a
Happy and Holy Christmas

Parish Administrator:
Rev Fr James McCarthy
Email: pp@johnthebaptist.org.au

Assistant: Rev Fr Phan Nguyen
Email: curate@johnthebaptist.org.au

Deacon : Rev Mervyn Francis
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Youth Ministry Co-ordinator:
Joe Sullivan
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Parish Pastoral Centre:
45 Mount Street, Bonnyrigg Heights
Presbytery: 9823 2572
Fax: 9822 9954
Email: info@johnthebaptist.org.au
website: www.johnthebaptist.org.au

Parish Secretary: Leanne Lang
Bookkeeper: Yvonne Smolinski
Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday

MASSES THIS WEEK

Monday - No Mass

St Stephen, the first martyr

Tuesday - 9:10am

St John, the apostle, evangelist

Wednesday - 7:00pm

The Holy Innocents, martyrs

Thursday - 9:10am

Friday - 9:10am

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Saturday - 9:10am

NEXT SUNDAY

SUNDAY 31 DECEMBER/1 JANUARY

(Mary, the Holy Mother of God)

Saturday Vigil Mass: 5:30pm

Sunday Masses: 8:00am, 10:00am & 5:30pm

Reconciliation:

Saturdays – 4:15 - 5:00pm

CHRISTMAS MASS DURING THE NIGHT

RAISE YOUR VOICES!

Entrance Antiphon: *The Lord said to me: You are my Son. It is I who have begotten you this day.*

Communion Antiphon: *The Word became flesh, and we have seen his glory.*

First reading

Isaiah 9:1-7

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah

The people that walked in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow
a light has shone.
You have made their gladness greater,
you have made their joy increase;
they rejoice in your presence
as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.

For the yoke that was weighing on him,
the barb across his shoulders,
the rod of his oppressor,
these you break as on the day of Midian.

For all the footgear of battle,
every cloak rolled in blood,
is burnt,
and consumed by fire.

For there is a child born for us,
a son given to us
and dominion is laid on his shoulders;
and this is the name they give him:
Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God,
Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.
Wide is his dominion
in a peace that has no end,
for the throne of David
and for his royal power,
which he establishes and makes secure
in justice and integrity.
From this time onwards and for ever,
the jealous love of the Lord of Hosts will do this.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 95:1-3,11-13

Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

O sing a new song to the Lord,
sing to the Lord all the earth.
O sing to the Lord, bless his name.

Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

Proclaim his help day by day,
tell among the nations his glory
and his wonders among all the peoples.

Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad,
let the sea and all within it thunder praise,
let the land and all it bears rejoice,
all the trees of the wood shout for joy
at the presence of the Lord for he comes,
he comes to rule the earth.

Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

With justice he will rule the world,
he will judge the peoples with his truth.

Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

Second reading

Titus :11-14

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Titus

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel Acclamation

Luke 2:10-11

Alleluia, alleluia!

I bring you news of great joy:
today a saviour has been born to us, Christ the Lord.
Alleluia!

Gospel

Luke 2:1-14

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

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 men who enjoy his favour.'

The Gospel of the Lord

PARENT COUNSELLING SERVICE

Christmas is a time of thanksgiving and celebration. Family life can however have unique ups and downs. Many families experience challenges over the Christmas period. CatholicCare runs a professional telephone counselling support for parents, carers and grandparents. The service is available for the cost of a local call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week including public holidays. If you would like to talk to a **Parent Line** counsellor please call **1300 1300 52**.

CHRISTMAS MASS DURING THE DAY

RAISE YOUR VOICES!

Entrance Antiphon: *A child is born for us, and a son is given to us; his sceptre of power rests upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Messenger of great counsel.*

First reading

Isaiah 52:7-10

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah

How beautiful on the mountains, are the feet of one who brings good news, who heralds peace, brings happiness, proclaims salvation, and tells Zion, 'Your God is king!'

Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices, they shout for joy together, for they see the Lord face to face, as he returns to Zion.

Break into shouts of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord is consoling his people, redeeming Jerusalem.

The Lord bares his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 97:1-6

All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Sing a new song to the Lord
for he has worked wonders.
His right hand and his holy arm
have brought salvation.

All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

The Lord has made known his salvation;
has shown his justice to the nations.
He has remembered his truth and love
for the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.
Shout to the Lord, all the earth,
ring out your joy.

All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp
with the sound of music.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
acclaim the King, the Lord.

All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Second reading

Hebrews 1:1-6

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son, the Son that he has appointed to inherit everything and through whom he made everything there is. He is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful command; and now that he has destroyed the defilement of sin, he has gone to take his place in heaven at the right hand of divine Majesty. So he is now as far above the angels as the title which he has inherited is higher than their own name.

God has never said to any angel: *You are my Son, today I have become your father*; or: *I will be a father to him and he a son to me*. Again, when he brings the First-born into the world, he says: *Let all the angels of God worship him*.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

A hallowed day has dawned upon us.

Come, you nations, worship the Lord,
for today a great light has shone down upon the earth.

Alleluia!

Gospel

John 1:18

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

In the beginning was the Word: and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him. All that came to be had life in him and that life was the light of men, a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower.

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light.

The Word was the true light that enlightens all men; and he was coming into the world. He was in the world that had its being through him, and the world did not know him. He came to his own domain and his own people did not accept him. But to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to all who believe in the name of him who was born not out of human stock or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself.

The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John appears as his witness. He proclaims: 'This is the one of whom I said: He who comes after me ranks before me because he existed before me.'

Indeed, from his fullness we have, all of us, received – yes, grace in return for grace, since, though the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The Gospel of the Lord

A PRAYER AT THE TABLE DURING CHRISTMAS TIME

A Christmas candle may be lighted as the leader says:



Glory to God in the highest.

All respond: And on earth peace to people of goodwill.

The leader prays:

**Lord Jesus, in the peace of this season our spirits rejoice:
With the beasts and angels, the shepherds and stars,
with Mary and Joseph we sing God's praise.**

**By your coming may the hungry be filled with good things,
and may our table and home be blessed.**

Glory to God in the highest.

All respond: And on earth peace to people of goodwill.

AFTER THE MEAL

The leader says: The Word became flesh, alleluia.

All respond: And dwelt among us, alleluia.

Your Prayers are requested for the following, for whom Mass will be offered:



Sick: Fr John LANGTRY, Archbishop Anthony FISHER, Sebastian AGUIAR, Maria KONTREC, Bishop George PHIMPISAN, Fr John CHIANG, Maila CORKILL, Fahed JREISAT, Emmanuel ARAPA, Bishop Geoffrey ROBINSON, Ciro PUNZO, Anna MILLZARSKI, Bogdan MILLZARSKI, Justin ZERAFI, Carmen SPITERI, Audrey SPITERI, Christine TRIGAS, Crystel SACOBOS, Guido BADINO, Sue SHERMAN, Emmanuel POLJAK, Valerie McCARTHY, Pamela LEVERS, Lily TANTIYA, Brindley & Virginia CAVALLARO, Sarah CANCER, Doug ANDERSON, Doris LIGHTOWER, Darren OWM, Joe SAMMUT, Giannino MORASSUT, Diana VUKOV, Florence JIANG, Isabel TANTIYA, Nguyet-Thi-PHAM, John CODNER, Robin ISHAC, Nancy VARTULLI, Tan LE, Bibeth BUENCAMINO, Rhea Mae ABRAHAMAS, Felicitas VALENCIA, Presley PETILLA

Recently Deceased: Norman CORDEIRO, Joseph BORG, Trinity Violet STILLMAK, Barbra MRSNIK, Barbra BUBICK

Death Anniversary: Mons. Dino FRAGIACOMO

Other: Julia & Arthur HIGGANS, Charles HIGGANS, Marie & Anthony VELLA, Rita and William CRUZE, Tan LE, Special Intention

2017 PARISH SACRAMENT INFORMATION

Baptisms are usually held during weekend Masses. It is necessary to book through the parish office and attend a Baptism Preparation session. The date for Baptism will be confirmed once you have attended a session.

Sacrament of First Penance/Reconciliation/Confession (for Yr 2 and older):

Will take place in Term 4 (28 November - 1 December, 2017).

First Holy Communion (for Yr 3 and older):

Will take place on 11, 17, 18, 23, 24 and 25 June, 2017.

Confirmation (for Yr 6 and older):

Will take place on Sunday 24 September, 2017.

Contact the Parish Office for more information.

THANK YOU from the St Vincent De Paul Conference

Thanks to everyone who so kindly donated food items and gifts for our hampers, and to all who helped so tirelessly in packing and delivering the Christmas hampers to the needy. Your thoughtfulness, generosity and time is very much appreciated.



2016 CATHOLIC MISSION APPEAL - CAMBODIA

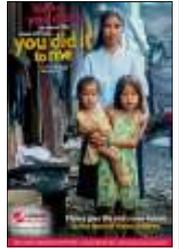
In the poorest and most disadvantaged communities of Cambodia, children are always the most vulnerable. Many children cannot go to school because they need to contribute financially to the family or to look after younger siblings. Our Advent Appeal this year is to give our support financially. Envelopes of various amounts (\$20, \$50, \$100) can be found on the Advent tree. Please take an envelope, complete the form and place in the collection baskets during Mass time. We will be helping the missionaries, like Sr Eulie Desacula to provide education to these precious children so they can have the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty and have a future with hope.

You may wish to contribute this way instead:

How you can help specifically:

- \$75 provides daily meals for 13 children for one week.
- \$400 allows 33 children from disadvantaged communities to receive an education for a year.
- \$528 pay the wages of one teacher for 2 months.
- \$1440 covers the cost of equipment and training for one local teacher for 1 year.

JUST AS YOU DID IT to one of the least of these YOU DID IT TO ME. Enquiries: Nina Laureti 0408 465 149.



IMPORTANT CHANGES TO TAX DEDUCTIONS FOR PARISH PLANNED GIVING

Due to a recent NSW State Government legislative change that takes effect from 1 January 2017, the Archdiocese of Sydney has informed all parishes that it will no longer be possible to provide tax deductibility on parish planned giving through the envelopes or through direct debit donations made after 31 December 2016. A tax deductible receipt will however be provided for any contributions made for the period 1 July to 31 December 2016.

The Parish will be writing to each parishioner who is currently contributing to the Parish Planned Giving to provide them with further information. Parishioners are able to still receive tax deductions for donations to the Charitable Works Fund. The Parish thanks you for your kindness and generosity in continuing to support the work of Christ in our Parish.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL NEWS

As required by our PPC Guidelines, a nomination process is to occur every 2 years and that members should serve for a maximum of 2 terms of 2 years.

After serving for 5 years on the PPC, Nina Laureti has decided to retire as chairperson. The Parish thanks her and all who have served the Parish on the Pastoral Council over the last 2 years.

This is an early invitation to all Parishioners to consider nominating to join our very active Parish Pastoral Council. A number of current members have elected to retire due to reaching the maximum term and due to other commitments. A Nomination and discernment process will occur in February 2017 to appoint new members. Please pray for many nominations to support the service of our priests and our parish.

An invitation to become involved in our Parish!

St John the Baptist Catholic Parish is a welcoming, supportive community of believers inspired to live and share the life of Jesus Christ. We are called to make Christ present in our parish, local community and in our world. Our mission is to know Christ and to make him known; to be a community committed to discovering Christ present in each person through our ministry to each other, our service to the wider community, the joyful celebration of the Eucharist and other sacraments, and our active concern for social justice.

By participating in one or more ministries within the parish, parishioners grow in their love and relationship with God. All Christians are called to share their God-given talents to promote the life of Christ and His Church.

Ministries are involved in all facets of the Parish life, ranging from Liturgical, Faith Development, Administration and Service together with Prayer Groups, Mission and Social Justice.

Please consider becoming active with your faith in a **particular ministry** in 2017. Please speak with one of our priests or lay leaders, or contact the Parish Office 9823 2572 for further information.

These are just some of our ministries:

Faith Development: Catechists, RCIA, Sacramental Preparation, Adult Faith Formation and ALPHA.

Prayer Groups and Social Justice: Bible Study, Christian Meditation, Charismatic Prayer, Bereavement Support, Piety Stall, St Vincent De Paul Society.

Youth Ministry: Jordan Group (Yr 5-6), Galilee Group (Yr 7-10), Antioch (16-25 yr old).

Service and Administration: Counters, Parish Finance Council, Parish Pastoral Council, New Church Building Committee, WHS and Maintenance Committee, Flowers, Parish Working Bees, Church Cleaning Group, Parish Suppers and Morning Teas, Parish Housie.

Liturgical Ministries: Altar Linen Group, Altar Servers, Acolytes, Banner Group, Children's Liturgy, Church Greeters and Collectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Flower Group, Powerpoint Preparation, Liturgy Group, Musicians and Singers, Readers.