

KU-RING-GAI CHASE CATHOLIC PARISH

Diocese of Broken Bay

CHRISTMAS DAY 25 DECEMBER 2023 ~ THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Responsorial Psalms:

Vigil Mass & Youth Mass ~ For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Midnight Mass ~ Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

Day Masses ~ All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Ah, dearest Jesus, Holy Child, make thee a bed, soft, undefiled, within my heart, that it may be, a quiet chamber kept for Thee. My heart for very joy doth leap, my lips no more can silence keep. I, too, must sing, with joyful tongue, that sweetest ancient cradle song. Glory to God in highest heaven, who unto man His Son hath given, while angels sing with pious mirth, a glad new year to all the earth!

Amen.

Martin Luther

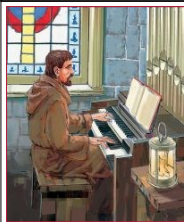


Beloved Parishioners,

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined" (Isa 9:2). It was a prophecy and is fulfilled in the Christmas event. Jesus is the true light of the world, and we are the children of light, and our vocation is to be a light to the nations, a light to those who are in darkness. The society in which we live is under the influence of the power of light and darkness. Our world has become to a certain extent a frightening and disappointing place. Random acts of violence are all too common in schools, entertainment venues and even in houses of worship. Life is still sadly disregarded, especially in the unborn, the poor, disabled and elderly. Immigrants and refugees seeking a better life are forced to the margins of society by discrimination, and hatred. And we have failed to create safe environments for those entrusted to our care. Consequently, the power of darkness attempts to dim the splendour of the divine light.

Understanding the critical nature of the times, we should respond to God's call. It is the proper time in which we, Christians should prove ourselves to be the sons and daughters of the light and of the day. We are thus challenged to actively engage in good works and so enlighten the world. The value of witness is therefore irreplaceable in our Christian life. A light is often a guide, and it shows the way. Jesus is the way and light of the world. As children of the Light, let our lights shine before the world, brighten the lives of those around us and bring others to Jesus, the true light of the world. Jesus, our Savior, is among us and continues to walk our world and to fill hearts with hope and peace.

We wish you all a very Happy and Holy Christmas. Fr Biju & Fr Joy OSN



'The Story of Silent Night' ~ by Dick Smolinski

Father Joseph Mohr sat at the old organ. His fingers stretched over the keys, forming the notes of a chord. He took a deep breath and pressed down. Nothing. He lifted his fingers and tried again. Silence echoed through the church. Father Joseph shook his head. It was no use. The pipes were rusted, the bellows mildewed. The organ had been wheezing and growing quieter for months, and Father Joseph had been hoping it would hold together until the organ builder arrived to repair it in the spring. But now, on December 23, 1818, the organ had finally given out. St. Nicholas Church would have no music for Christmas. Father Joseph sighed. Maybe a brisk walk would make him feel better. He pulled on his overcoat and stepped out into the night. His white breath puffed out before him.

Moonlight sparkled off the snow-custed trees and houses in the village of Oberndorf. Father Joseph crunched through the snowy streets to the edge of the little Austrian town and climbed the path leading up the mountain. From high above Oberndorf, Father Joseph watched the Salzach River ripple past St. Nicholas Church. In the spring, when melting snow flowed down the mountains and the river swelled in its banks, water lapped at the foundation of the church. It was moisture from the flooding river that had caused the organ to mildew and rust. Father Joseph looked out over the Austrian Alps. Stars shone above in the still and silent night. Silent night? Father Joseph stopped. Of course! "Silent Night!" He had written a poem a few years before, when he had first become a priest, and he had given it that very title. "Silent Night." Father Joseph scrambled down the mountain. Suddenly he knew how to bring music to the church. The next morning, Father Joseph set out on another walk. This time he carried his poem. And this time he knew exactly where he was going -- to see his friend Franz Gruber, the organist for St. Nicholas, who lived in the next village. Franz Gruber was surprised to see the priest so far from home on Christmas Eve, and even more surprised when Father Joseph handed him the poem. That night Father Joseph and Franz Gruber stood at the altar of St. Nicholas Church. Father Joseph held his guitar. He could see members of the congregation giving each other puzzled looks. They had never heard a guitar played in church before, and certainly not during midnight mass on Christmas Eve, the holiest night of the year. Father Joseph picked out a few notes on the guitar, and he and Franz Gruber began to sing. Their two voices rang out, joined by the church choir on the chorus. Franz Gruber's melody matched the simplicity and honesty of Father Joseph's words. When the last notes faded into the night, the congregation remained still for a moment, then began to clap their hands. Applause filled the church. The villagers of Oberndorf loved the song! Father Joseph's plan to bring music to St. Nicholas Church had worked. A few months later, the organ builder arrived in Oberndorf and found the words and music to "Silent Night" lying on the organ. The song enchanted him, and when he left, he took a copy of it with him. The organ builder gave the song to two families of traveling singers who lived near his home. The traveling singers performed "Silent Night" in concerts all over Europe, and soon the song spread throughout the world. Today, cathedral choirs and carollers from New York to New Zealand sing the simple song that was first played in a mountain church in Austria on Christmas Eve nearly 200 years ago.

WEEKEND COLLECTIONS ~ Please consider carefully how the funds you place on the plate are administered ...

1st Collection: **LEAVES** the parish and goes to a common fund **outside the Parish** to support priests.

2nd Collection: **STAYS** in the parish to pay for all our costs, including insurance, maintenance, telecommunications, wages, pastoral programmes, church and office expenses, the Priests' cars & petrol etc, etc and is

ESSENTIAL for our **PARISH** to **FUNCTION FINANCIALLY**



O come let us adore Him ... as one faith family ~ You, the parishioners of KCCP, are again this year our extended family. Fr Joy and myself pray that the Infant Christ, will shower you with His blessings during this Season of Christmas. We also wish each of you great joy, safe travels and good health in 2024.

Hello to all visitors to our parish ~ We warmly welcome all visitors and extended family members to our churches. It is wonderful to have you among us as we celebrate Christmas and experience the Joy of Our Saviour's Birth. **May God bless you all & keep you safe & healthy during your visit with us.**

ROSTERS & READINGS FOR WEEKEND – 30th / 31st December 2023 - (Feast) The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph — Year B
 Genesis 15:1-6, 21:1-3; Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Luke 2:22-40

	St Bernard's Church		St Patrick's Church			
	5.00pm	9.00am	6.00pm	8.00am	10.00am	6.00pm
Acolyte / Snr Server	Matthew Waite	Barbara McMullen	Mani Subramany	Francis Lizardo	Malcolm Cross	Keith Fone
Altar Servers	Archie Tod Harry Tod	Miranda Tablizo Bronte Tonkin	Volunteer needed Volunteer needed	Volunteer needed Volunteer needed	Rishona Gonsalves Joshua Telford	Volunteer needed Volunteer needed
Reader (1)	Francesca Parrino	Isaac Tonkin	Miguel Do Rego	Michael Halliday	Christina Vila	Fiona Fone
Reader (2)	Anne Maree Hutchins	Peta Tonkin	Hayley Rodrigues	Jim Fitzgerald	Cora Cuasay	Les Fogden
Sacristy/Cleaning/Flowers	GC (Ch.Cleaning); Cecilia Waite (f); Brenda Brooks (s)		Pat Smith, Marion Pahalawatta, Ellen Downey (f),			
Maintenance	Team A & B - <i>additional help always appreciated</i>		December: Malcolm Cross, David Chui - <i>additional help always appreciated</i>			

A Walk through the Christmas Season 2023-2024

The Church's liturgical season of Christmas is one of its shortest, but also one of its most unique. It always begins on the solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord — December 25 — and ends on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Within the octave are various feast days that have rich histories and traditions.



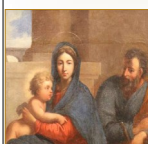
December 26: Feast of St. Stephen ~ It is exciting to note that the first feast day after Christmas is the feast of a martyr. Recalling the purpose for which Christ came and of his divine mission, Christians are reminded, of the Lord's exhortation that anyone who wishes to follow him must take up his cross. St. Stephen, the first martyr of the Christian faith, is held up as a living witness of what it means to proclaim that Christ is Savior without counting the cost.



December 27: Feast of St. John ~ December 27 is the feast of the apostle and evangelist St. John. Regarded as the disciple closest to Jesus, St. John — believed to be the author of a Gospel, the Book of Revelation and three New Testament letters — is the one who teaches us that "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8).



December 28: Feast of the Holy Innocents ~ The Holy Innocents celebrated on December 28 were martyrs killed as the result of Herod's murderous rage, resulting in his desire to eliminate any threats to his power, by killing anyone who fit the profile of the newborn king, he learned about from the Magi (Mt 2:13-18). Taking no chances for the babe's survival, he ordered the murder of all boys in or around Bethlehem under the age of 2. Christ, of course, survives thanks to the heavenly intervention manifested by the angelic admonition to St. Joseph to flee with Mary and Jesus in the middle of the night to Egypt. The Gospel proclaimed on this day, referenced above, evokes two major issues about which the Church is concerned today: immigration and abortion.



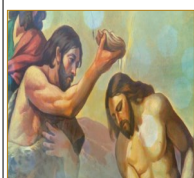
December 31: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph ~ Many of the few details we know of Jesus' early life relates to his familial relationships. As a young man, we know he grew in the ways of faith as the obedient son of Mary and Joseph. The Church holds up annually the Holy Family of Nazareth as a model for all families, as a model for all human relationships. As Blessed Pope Paul VI said during a visit to the Holy Family's town in 1964, "Nazareth is the school in which we begin to understand the life of Jesus. It is the school of the Gospel."



January 1: Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God ~ The octave of Christmas ends with the celebration of the Solemnity of Mary. It also marks the Church's commemoration of the World Day of Peace, first observed over 50 years ago in 1968. It seems appropriate and fitting to be celebrated on a Marian feast day, for peace is only possible through total self-sacrifice and surrender — through total love and obedience to the will of God, of which Mary is an icon for the Church.



January 7: The Epiphany of the Lord ~ Traditionally celebrated on January 6, the Twelfth Day of Christmas, is the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. In commemoration of Christ's manifestation to the Magi — who represent how Christ came to save all mankind, not just the Jews — this feast celebrates how Christ's identity is revealed, as is summed up in the gifts the Three Kings presented him. The gold and frankincense they gave Christ represent his status as king of the universe, the deity worthy of our true worship. And the myrrh tells of the bitter reality that the babe in the manger was born to die.



8 January: The Baptism of the Lord ~ The Christmas season ends with the feast of the Lord's baptism. This feast commemorates the day on which God, the Father anointed His Son, Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power. He sets out from the waters of the Jordan, identified as God's own son by the Father's voice that resounded from heaven (Mk 1,7-11), and inaugurates his saving work as the long-awaited Messiah who will free us of our sins.



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A Christmas Prayer for Children

Gentle Jesus born today,
 in a manger filled with hay.
 We your Christmas children be,
 help us now your love to see.
 Gentle Jesus, come today,
 be our shepherd, Lord we pray.
 Gentle Jesus, come this hour,
 fill us with your love and power.
 You fell asleep in Mary's arm,
 God kept you safe from all alarm.
 Gentle Jesus come today,
 be our shepherd now we pray.

Amen



CHRISTMAS CLOSURES

**The Parish Office will be CLOSED
 from 22 December 2023 and
 reopen on Tuesday 23 January 2024**

For **urgent assistance only** please call **0468 341 841**.
 E: parishkccp@bbccatholic.org.au
 W: bbccatholic.org.au/kccp

PASTORAL CENTRE: 1-19 Woodcourt Road,
 Berowra Hts / P.O. Box 335, Berowra Hts 2082
Hours: 9am – 3.30pm. P: 9456 2450;
 E: parishkccp@bbccatholic.org.au;
 W: www.bbccatholic.org.au/kccp
 Parish Administrator: Fr Biju Jose, OSH;
 Assistant Priest: Fr Joy Thomas, OSH



I wish you all a joyful Christmas Season and a Happy Feast. Fr Biju OSH