

THE SAVING WORD

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT / C

22 DECEMBER 2024

FIRST READING

Mic 5:1-4

A reading from the prophet Micah.

Out of you will be born the one who is to rule over Israel.

The Lord says this:

You, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
the least of the clans of Judah,
out of you will be born for me
the one who is to rule over Israel;
his origin goes back to the distant past,
to the days of old.

The Lord is therefore going to abandon
them
till the time when she who is to give birth
gives birth.

Then the remnant of his brothers will come
back
to the sons of Israel.

He will stand and feed his flock
with the power of the Lord,
with the majesty of the name of his God.
They will live secure, for from then on he
will extend his power to the ends of the
land.

He himself will be peace.

■ The word of the Lord.

RESP PSALM

Ps 79:2-3, 15-16, 18-19. R. v. 4

R. Lord, make us turn to you;
let us see your face and we shall be saved.

1. O shepherd of Israel, hear us, / shine forth
from your cherubim throne. / O Lord, rouse up
your might, / O Lord, come to our help. **R.**

2. God of hosts, turn again, we implore, / look
down from heaven and see. / Visit this vine
and protect it, / the vine your right hand has
planted. **R.**



3. May your hand be on the man you have
chosen, / the man you have given your
strength. / And we shall never forsake you
again: / give us life that we may call upon your
name. **R.**

SECOND READING

Heb 10:5-10

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

I am coming to do your will.

This is what Christ said, on coming into the
world:

You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation,
prepared a body for me.

You took no pleasure in holocausts or
sacrifices for sin;

then I said,

just as I was commanded in the scroll of the
book,

'God, here I am! I am coming to obey your
will.'

Notice that he says first: You did not want
what the Law lays down as the things to be
offered, that is: the sacrifices, the oblations, the
holocausts and the sacrifices for sin, and you

THE CATHOLIC PARISHES OF ST JOSEPH'S, ELSTERNWICK & HOLY CROSS, CAULFIELD SOUTH

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ST JOSEPH'S, ELSTERNWICK

71 Orrong Road, Elsternwick, VIC 3185

www.melbcatholic.org/elsternwick

Mass

Friday 10:00am, Saturday 6:30pm and Sunday 10:30am

Reconciliation

Friday after Mass, Saturday 6:00pm

Thanksgiving & Special Collections - 2 weeks

Church: \$609.15 Presbytery: \$643.15

Special Collection: -

Next Week's Roster

Lector - Saturday: S Bettoni

Lector - Sunday: P Donohue

Counters: No counting

HOLY CROSS, CAULFIELD SOUTH

707 Glen Huntly Road, Caulfield South 3162

www.melbcatholic.org/caulfieldsouth

Mass

Thursday 10:00am and Sunday 9:00am

Reconciliation

Thursday after Mass

Thanksgiving & Special Collections - 2 weeks

Church: \$386.25 Presbytery: \$371.25

Special Collection: -

Next Week's Roster

Lector: A Powell

ST ANTHONY'S, GLEN HUNTLY

74, Grange Road, Glen Huntly 3163

In Residence: Fr Pat Jackson SAC, Br Lindsay Rust SAC

Mass

Monday - Saturday 9:15am

Saturday 6:00pm

Sunday 9:00am, 11:00am, 5:00pm

Reconciliation

30-minutes before all Masses & Saturday 9:45-10:10am

Upcoming Week's Liturgical Calendar

Wed 25 Dec: The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

Thu 26 Dec: St Stephen, The First Martyr

Fri 27 Dec: St John, Apostle & Evangelist

Sat 28 Dec: The Holy Innocents, Martyr

Sun 29 Dec: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

Parish Office Closure

The Parish Office will be closed from 25 December 2024 and re-open on Thursday 9 January 2025.

For urgent matters, please leave a voice message or send us an email. We will get back to you as soon as we can.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (cf. Isa 45:8)

Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (Isa 7:14)

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

Those who are ill: Paulette Dobbin, Tony Messina, Steve Genge & family, Jenny, Fr Varghese Kattikattu

Recently Deceased: -

Death Anniversary: Malcom Cyril Thurgood

Special Celebration: Noel Thurgood

The Christmas Travelling Crib



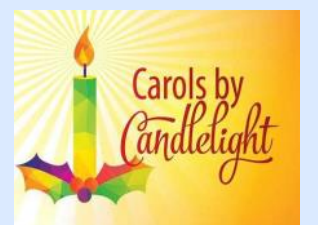
Thank you Fr Pat for organising the Travelling Cribs that are still going around with the families!

Let us pray in union with the households who have given the holy family a place to stay.

2024 Carols by Candlelight @ St Anthony's

A big THANK YOU to the organising team, participants and all who cooperated and made last Sunday evening a memorable one! It was a successful collaborative effort from the three Parishes. Well done!

Thank you!



Christmas 2024 & New Year 2025

St Joseph's, Elsternwick
Holy Cross, Caulfield South

Christmas Eve - Tuesday 24 December

St Joseph's	Carols 6:00pm, Vigil Mass 6:30pm
Holy Cross	Carols 8:30pm, Vigil Mass 9:00pm

Christmas Day - Wednesday 25 December

Holy Cross	Mass 9:00am
St Joseph's	Mass 10:30am

New Year's Day - Wednesday 1 January

Holy Cross	Mass 9:00am
St Joseph's	Mass 10:30am

Merry Christmas & Blessings in the New Year

Update: Proposed Amalgamation of St Joseph's, Elsternwick and Holy Cross, Caulfield South



1. Information Session

The 2nd Information Session was held at Holy Cross Hall immediately after the 9am Mass last Sunday, 15 December 2024.

Parishioners are invited to come together to discuss the proposed amalgamation, and ask any questions they may have regarding the process.

We had a total of 10 attendees which included parishioners, members of our Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) and Fr Leenus.

2. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

We have now updated the list of FAQs with some new queries received. You can find a copy on our notice boards or on the wall at the back of the church. Copies are also available at the church foyer for you to take home to read.

3. Next Steps

Fr Leenus had a meeting with the Proclaim Team from the Archdiocese on Wednesday, 18 December 2024 to discuss the next steps of our proposed amalgamation. He was given a checklist of documentation to prepare and will then write to the Archbishop to formally request the amalgamation of the parishes.

As we move through this process, we will continue to engage with all of you and provide important updates.

Please feel free to speak with Fr Leenus, the Parish Office or any of our PPC and PFC members if you have any questions. Additionally, you may send us an email or continue to use the 'Questions / Concerns' boxes.

Children's Liturgy

We officially started our Children's Liturgy Programme on the 1st Sunday of Advent at St Joseph's Church. The Gospel of the day is read and explained at a level that the children can understand.

Please feel free to accompany your child/ren to the session. If you would like to assist in the programme, kindly contact the Parish Office.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

RCIA sessions at St Joseph's Presbytery, 71 Orrong Rd, Elsternwick, will resume on 9th January 2025.

Please share with those may be interested in becoming Catholics.

Holy Communion to the Sick and Elderly

Please let the Parish Office know if you or anyone you know would like to receive Holy Communion at their homes or aged care facilities.

4th Sunday of Advent, Year C

The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus,

The last candle of the Advent wreath is already lit. In 2 days' time we will be celebrating the birth of Christ. Today's Gospel passage is a sure help in preparing us for the event. It's about the visit of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth. This visit took place a short time after the Annunciation. By then the status of Mary was already raised to "the Mother of God." But her status never came in the way of her being service-minded. She was too humble even to think of her new status.

So, what strikes us most about Mary's visit to Elizabeth is her loving concern for people in need. In order to help Elizabeth, Mary travelled a long way. She took much trouble in helping. Help was not requested of her, yet she volunteered; nor was Mary's help limited to Elizabeth. Having said "yes" to the plan of God, Mary had already extended her help to the whole of humanity. And her service to humanity is not limited by time or space. She is ever helpful. She is called, the mother of perpetual help. Anyone can avail of her help at anytime and from anywhere. Her visit to Elizabeth was only one among many examples.

Her visit to Elizabeth brought about spiritual benefits as well as temporal. When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, Elizabeth and the little John in her womb were filled with the Holy Spirit. The voice of Mary becomes instrumental for the Holy Spirit to sanctify Elizabeth and her son John. Now in turn it is the voice of Elizabeth that becomes instrumental for the Holy Spirit to glorify Mary and her Divine Son, Jesus. By letting Mary into our lives we will allow her to prepare us best to receive her Son and bring true meaning to our Christmas celebration.

Let Mary's service-mindedness be ours too! Fr Leenus.



What is a vegan's favourite Christmas song?
Soy to the World!



What is a Jubilee?

Jubilees are relatively rare occurrences, so for those of us who might not be familiar with what they are, a jubilee is a special year of grace and conversion, involving prayer, pilgrimage and sacramental repentance, held every 25 years or during other years as called for by the Pope.

The 2025 Jubilee will open with the 11am Mass celebrated by Archbishop Comensoli at St Patrick's Cathedral on Sunday 29 December 2024. At our parishes, we will light the Jubilee Candle at all Masses on the same weekend and together, say the Jubilee Prayer from Pope Francis.

This will culminate in the Australian Catholic Youth Festival, which will take place in Melbourne, with young pilgrims from across Australia visiting Melbourne for three days of faith, fun, food, friendship and formation in November & December 2025.

The Archdiocese is offering two pilgrimages to Rome next year to experience walking through Holy Doors. There are also local Pilgrim Places we can visit during the Jubilee Year. Please scan the QR-code for more info.



took no pleasure in them; and then he says: Here I am! I am coming to obey your will. He is abolishing the first sort to replace it with the second. And this will was for us to be made holy by the offering of his body made once and for all by Jesus Christ.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Lk 1:38

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the servant of the Lord: may his will for me be done. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Lk 1:39-44

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Why should it happen that I am honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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Breaking Open the Word

FRUITFULNESS AND BLESSEDNESS

With Christmas only days away, this final Advent Sunday Gospel turns its attention to the pregnant Mary, soon to give birth. She goes to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, also pregnant. While the Gospel's Greco-Roman audience is familiar with family structures and lines of patriarchal authority, our Gospel centres on these two women within the patriarchal setting of the house of Elizabeth's husband, Zechariah.

There is something subtly subversive here. Important is the relationship between these two women and the fruitful imagery that permeates the story. The pregnancies of the two mothers anticipate the births of the two central figures in the Gospel's opening chapters. We have already seen one of them, John the Baptist, in the Gospels of the previous Sundays. It is the other, Jesus, whose birth we are soon to celebrate in a few days' time.

Elizabeth attests to the blessedness of Mary and the child to whom she will give birth. It is an affirmation which even Elizabeth's child witnesses to while still in the womb. Elizabeth and the child she carries anticipate the holiness of the one whom Mary will, at the angel's earlier invitation, name 'Jesus'. For the mother to name the child, as Elizabeth will do later in naming 'John' before the speechless Zechariah, is culturally unusual. But there is nothing usual about these births. We are caught up in this story, about fruitfulness and blessedness. Perhaps these are God's much-needed words to us as we seek to be with these two female figures preparing for the birth amongst us of the one from God.

Fr Michael Trainor