

Our Lady of Mt Carmel Parish

Varroville, Raby, St Andrews and Bow Bowing



To know, love and serve Jesus
by sharing our gifts through our baptismal mission.

We acknowledge and respect the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we stand, the elders, past and present and all the Dharawal people. May we too be good stewards of this land.

Christmas prayers and celebrations.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus we are reminded of the dangers faced by the fledgling family and the determination Mary and Joseph showed to avoid detection. As we ourselves face a continuing difficult environment may the new year 2022, bring renewed hope to us all.

Wishing you and your family will be kept safe under the protective wings of God throughout the festive season and into the new year .

Reconnect Bishop Brian Mascord's complete pastoral message for Christmas 2021 is on the Diocese of Wollongong Website www.dow.org.au.

"May Christmas be an opportunity for all of us to rediscover the family as a cradle of life and faith, a place of acceptance and love, dialogue, forgiveness, fraternal solidarity and shared joy, a source of peace for all humanity."

Yours in Christ
Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD



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Sunday Mass times	Weekday Mass times
Saturday Vigil: 6pm	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday Mass at 9am
Sunday: 9.30 am & 5pm	Thursday - Mass at 7.30pm

REFLECTION by Dianne Bergant CSA

As we stand at the threshold of Christmas, we reflect on the theme of covenant. Out of inexplicable love, God established a covenant with us, one that is best characterised with marriage imagery. The love reflected in such imagery is the basis of everything that has transpired in history and that will unfold in the future. Because of this love, God promised to send a saviour, and throughout the history of a particular people, God moved to bring that promise to fulfilment. The promises of God are realised in actual human



history.

The Incarnation is grounded in belief that Jesus is not only the Son of God, but also a real human being. Therefore, it is important to be able to situate him in history, to know his family, his ancestry. Often when the gospel

writers proclaim some of the wondrous aspects of Jesus, they also underscore his human origins. Though he might be misunderstood, he was still in many ways a man like other men, a vulnerable child like other children. The Incarnation assures us that God does not love us despite our humanity. Rather, it is precisely through it that we know God's love.

Finally, today we realise that the promises of God blossom in the soil of vulnerability. Though covenants were made with a people or a family, they are brought to completion in a child whose birth was shrouded in misunderstanding. He will be our saviour, he will be 'God with us', but he will still always be a mystery of God's own vulnerability.



Feast of the Holy Family COMMENTARY by Dianne Bergant CSA



The Book of Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus) belongs to ancient Israel's wisdom tradition, which is a collection of insights that provide a glimpse into a way of living that has brought happiness in the past. This tradition seeks to encourage behaviour that will bring corresponding happiness in the present or the future. The reading for today, instruction about family life, describes the kind of living that will result in family harmony. It focuses on the respect and obedience that children (both male and female) owe their parents (both mother and father). The final verses indicate that the children are adults, not young children. True to the character of wisdom instruction, Sirach lists the blessings that follow righteous living. The wisdom psalm is descriptive instruction, rather than praise or thanksgiving addressed to God. It opens with a formal statement that designates a person or group as blessed (or happy). They are those who fear the Lord, who walk in God's ways; the blessings that flow from this attitude of mind and heart are both material good fortune and a large and extended family. The blessing shifts from the good fortune of the individual to the blessing enjoyed by the nation. The final statement is less a prayer than an exclamation: 'Peace upon Israel!' Peace, *shalom*, fullness of life, includes personal contentment, harmony with others and the rest of creation, adequate material resources. Such peace is the result of right relationship with God.

Paul issues the Christians a very demanding program of righteous behaviour. The virtues are all relational and directed toward others. The motivation for the self-sacrifice is the forgiveness that the people already received from God. The final directives reflect the household codes that were prevalent in the Greco-Roman world of the time (cf. Eph 5:22-29). While the author insists that wives must be subject to their husbands, he instructs husbands to act toward wives with love and thoughtfulness. Children are told to obey their parents, but fathers are advised to be moderate in the training of their children lest their discipline become oppressive. It's clear that in Christ, the relationships between man and woman and child have been radically altered.

The key element of the gospel is the Christological self-declaration of the young Jesus. The setting is one of the pilgrimages to Jerusalem required of every adult Israelite man. Jesus, though identified as a child (*país*), is the age when he is about to assume the religious responsibilities of an adult. Those in the temple who heard him were astounded. The Greek word (*exitemi*) is frequently used to describe human reaction to the manifestation of divine power associated with the age of fulfilment (cf. Luke 4:22). Approaching adulthood, Jesus begins to assume a public role. The implications of these events and of Jesus' words are not lost on Mary. She keeps them in her heart.

Bulletin Notices



Alpha Come and See Pancake Night Tuesday March 1, 7:00pm at the Parish Hall

Alpha is a chance to explore life and the Christian faith, to ask questions, and to share your point of view. Come along, with a friend, for a night of pancakes, a film and discussion. Registrations via the Parish Office
Ph: 9603 7373 or

Email: donna.ransom@dow.org.au

Fire Safety: We have updated our fire safety and evacuation notices throughout the church. Please make yourself aware of our emergency procedures, particularly our emergency evacuation plan.

COVID Update: With the continuing uncertainty around the new Covid variant, it is strongly recommended that parishioners wear masks inside the church. The congregation will still be able to join in the singing and whilst it is recognised that this is an inconvenience we must all still take all necessary steps to protect each other.

For the sick & homebound: Phyllis Cooper, Dorothy Jones, Sr Heather Burke, Marie & Barry Atkins, Carol Gonzales, Christabelle Adina, Gloria Gonzales Prudente, Allan & Kelvin Marquinez, Amelia Jimenez, John Ingster, Elizabeth Moore, Nelia Balingit, John Morgos, Greg Watson, Joe Spinnato, Susan Mella, Ron Allen, Sean Finnerty, Rose Levoune, Gabriel Gonzales, Francisco Carmona, Doreen Gibbons, Clayton Diack, Emily Rose Pavicin, Pat & Denise Furner, Tracey Bokor, Lily Pereira, Doris Wahhab, John Kajdrys, Erlinda Hermes, Aurelia Vertucio, Ofilia Mawson, Mary & Frances Raithi, Jeanna San Diego, Hugo Garzotto, Eileen Butcher, Josephina Duefries, Austin Taylor, Marisa Aguirre, Joan Wilson.



May they experience the saving power of the risen Lord amidst their pain & affliction.

For our recently dearly departed: Silvano Stocco, Geoff Jones, Angela Tomarchio, Jovicen Delanon, Harry Loche, Angelito Bateria, Zaphaniah John Klarnett, David Donovan, Domingo Furcciniti, Rozalia Astalosh,

Those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Ivan Astalosh, Therese Thompson, Angelo Tomarchio, Les Wicks, Thi Nguyen, Therese Douglass.
Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, may perpetual light shine upon them.