

# 4th Sunday of Advent - Year A 21st - 22nd December 2019

**First Reading:** Isaiah 7:10-14

*The virgin will conceive.*

The Lord spoke to Ahaz and said, 'Ask the Lord your God for a sign for yourself coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights above.' 'No,' Ahaz answered 'I will not put the Lord to the test.' Then Isaiah said: 'Listen now, House of David: are you not satisfied with trying the patience of men without trying the patience of my God, too? The Lord himself, therefore, will give you a sign. It is this: the maiden is with child and will soon give birth to a son whom she will call Emmanuel, a name which means "God-is-with-us".'

The Word of the Lord

**Responsorial Psalm:** Ps 23:1-6. R. see v. 7. 10

**R/** Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

**Second Reading:** Romans 1:1-7

*Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, is the Son of God.*

From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus who has been called to be an apostle, and specially chosen to preach the Good News that God promised long ago through his prophets in the scriptures. This news is about the son of God who, according to the human nature he took, was a descendant of David: it is about Jesus Christ our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in him, was proclaimed Son of God in all his power through his resurrection from the dead. Through him we received grace and our apostolic mission to preach the obedience of faith to all pagan nations in honour of his name. You are one of these nations, and by his call belong to Jesus Christ. To you all, then, who are God's beloved in Rome, called to be saints, may God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send grace and peace.

The Word of the Lord

**Gospel Acclamation:** Mt 1:23

**Alleluia, alleluia!** The virgin will give birth to a son; his name will be Emmanuel: God is with us. **Alleluia!**

**Gospel:** Matthew 1:18-24

*Jesus was born of Mary, the betrothed of Joseph, a son of David.*

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfill the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'. When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

The Gospel of the Lord

**We are called to the obedience of faith. This usually requires choices to be made without a complete understanding of their significance in the unfolding plan of God. We must rely on daily encounters with God that come through the scriptures, the sacraments, and prayer.**

**By listening and discerning - often in silence and stillness - we are given the privilege of participating in the life of God to which we are called.**



# Sacred Heart Parish Preston

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**Parish Contacts:** Phone: (03) 9480 3398 Or (03) 9484 2124

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## 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - YEAR A 21st - 22nd December 2019

### Emmanuel – God With Us

The hope of the Israelite people has always been that God would be with them in a special way. In times of struggle, they longed for the day when they would see their prayer for God's intervention answered.

Over the past weeks, the Advent Liturgies of the Word have presented the prophet Isaiah's vision of a new world keeping alive - in times of oppression and exile - the faithful promise that God would be with them, and through them establish a kingdom of peace and justice that would eventually reach out to the ends of the earth.

Today's Gospel reading concerning 'how Jesus Christ came to be born' expresses the faith of the community, faith for which Matthew wrote. This community of Jewish Christians was anxious to persuade those with whom they shared the traditions of Israel, that Jesus was the long awaited one, the fulfilment of the vision of the prophets. Joseph's dream of an angel announcing a child to be born to Mary, his betrothed, identifies the one to come as Emmanuel, meaning "God with us". Matthew invites his people to recognise God's promise, "I will be your God and you will be my people".

God's presence with them is closer than they could imagine. It is in human life; through its struggles, sufferings, hopes, joys and events that God is to be sought, found and celebrated.

Today we hear of God being present in the one called Jesus who was born to a woman called Mary, which means 'beloved of God', raised and nurtured by two humble but deeply trusting human beings and would, through his short mission, identify with and proclaim God's love for the poor, exiled and outcast, drawing all into the embrace of God.

Whatever account of the birth of Jesus we read, Matthew's or Luke's, the fundamental message is about 'God being with us' now.

As we attend to this truth, we might become more attentive to the 'us' and how we are with each other. This is the most precious gift about which Christmas reminds us - 'being with' is sharing with each other and being supported in a family, celebrating with our faith community, welcoming a new comer, attending to a person in need, supporting a refugee, shedding an embittered ego, mending a broken relationship. "If only one broken relationship could be mended, our Christmas - our 'God with us' would be real for one other person." (Sr Clare Condon SGS)



**Office Hours:**

Tues to Fri: 10.00am - 12.30pm

**Parish Priest:**

Fr Jan Szweda, SVD

**Priest in Residence:**

Fr Ennio Mantovani SVD

**Parish Office:** Cristina Agius

**School Principal:** Mark Tierney

**School Phone:** 9487 1001

**Sacrament Co-ordinator:**

Judeline Wadhvani

**Child Safety Officer:**

Kay Dufty: 0431 376 212

**Child Safety Committee:**

Teresa Dang, Kay Dufty, Robert Dullard (Chair), Mary Harb, Sharron Kotz, Pauline O'Day, Fr Jan Szweda

**Parish Council Members:**

Catherine Zanatta (chairperson), Kay Dufty (secretary), Tony Eley, Gerard Grant, Ophelia Swai, Anisasio (Pauline) Veamatahau, Mark Tierney, Ben Fortuna, Solomon Konchakara, Natalie Baran

**St. Vincent de Paul Society:**

Pauline O'Day (President)  
Ph: 9484 2445

**Parish Mass Schedule**

**Weekend Masses:**

**Saturday:** 6:00pm

**Sunday:** 9:00am (Italian),  
10:30 am, 6:00 pm

**Weekday Masses:**

**Monday to Friday:** 9.10am

**Healing Mass:** 1st Thursday of the month at 1.30pm

**Devotional Practices:**

**Adoration of the Blessed**

**Sacrament:** Wednesday after 9.10am Mass

**Holy Rosary:** Thursday (Eng) & Friday (Italian) after 9.10am Mass

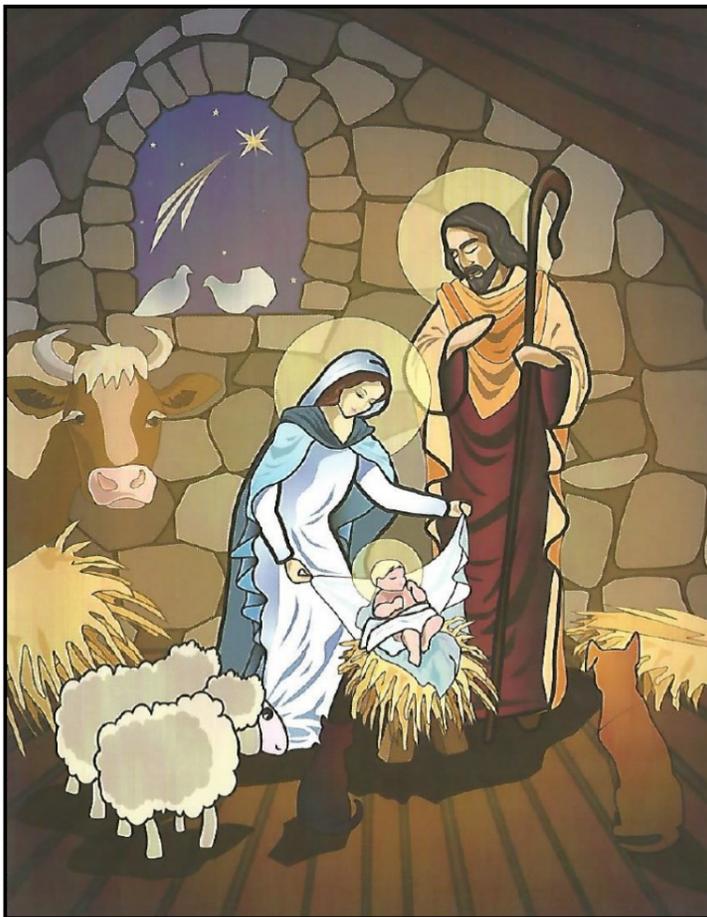
**Legion of Mary:** Thursday 7.30pm, in the Presbytery

**Reconciliation:**

Weekdays: 30 minutes before Mass or by appointment

**Baptisms & Weddings:**

By appointment only



**Christmas Greetings**

May the Joy and Peace of the Infant Jesus be in your heart, and may He bless you and your loved ones with a happy and holy Christmas.




**Welcome!**  
This weekend through Baptism we welcome **Francis Stevens** into our Parish family

**Dates to Remember**

- Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December:** Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
- Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> January:** Masses 9.10am & 7.30pm  
New Year, Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
- Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> January:** Epiphany of the Lord

**Last Week's Collection: 15/12/19**

1st Collection for our Church: \$1363.60  
2nd Collection for support of clergy: \$935.80  
*Thank you for your kind generosity!*



**Sacred Heart Parish Prayer**

Loving God, we honour the heart of Jesus, your beloved Son. We remember how he opened his heart in love to all people. Open our own heart to receive the gifts that continue to flow so richly from the heart of Christ, who lives with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

**Christmas - Celebrating Giving**

Many thanks to all who contributed so generously in different ways to our giving tree. Purchasing Hamper items, gift cards, Money donations, Packing hampers and delivering them. On Thursday around thirty Hampers were delivered on your behalf to the joy of many. As more than one parishioner commented after carrying a heavy bag up the front steps of the church: "Giving. That's what Christmas is about isn't it?"



God gave us His son so now it's our turn.

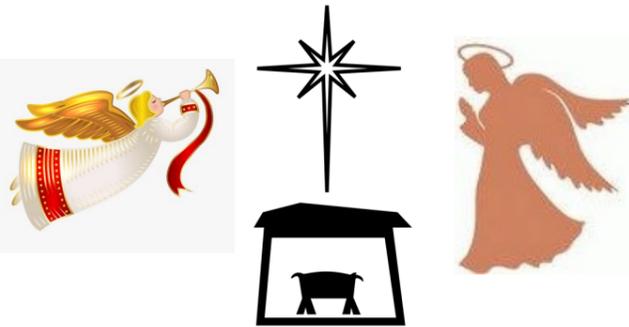
**2019 CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES**

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December:**  
**Christmas Eve**

Family Mass - 7.00pm  
Carols Singing: 9.30pm  
Night Mass: 10.00pm

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December:**  
**Christmas Day**

9.00am (Italian)  
10.30am & 6.00pm (English)



**Christmas Collection**

There will be only one collection on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The entire offering will be for the continued renovation of our church building and the presbytery.

**Christmas Reflection**

Christmas is a time when Christians rejoice in the gift of the Christ Child who comes among us as the vulnerable one.

In this moment he was completely dependent on Mary and Joseph for love and nourishment. His presence brings joy to the world and to the lives of the forgotten ones. Christmas is about finding God in the unexpected places of our world – in the faces of the refugee children, in the homeless women and men whom we so often walk past without noticing, in the families with a member in prison, in victims and survivors of abuse, just as Mary and Joseph found in the hearts of the shepherds.

The celebration of Christmas is a time for gathering with family and friends, a time for gifting one another and at the same time opening our hearts and minds to those struggling and hidden in our world.

Monica Cavanagh rsj

**Australian Nativity Scene at St. Elizabeth Parish**

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December to Friday 10<sup>th</sup> January  
St Elizabeth's Parish, 107 Baker Rd, Dandenong North

Wilson Fernandez has been creating the Australian Nativity Scene (ANS) for sixteen years. This intricate display is now regarded as one of Australia's best nativity scenes.

This event is free and open to everyone. Children are to be accompanied by a guardian. Melway Ref: 81A8.

<https://www.facebook.com/AustralianNativityScene/>  
Viewing time: After Mass and any other time by appointment only.

Details: Wilson on 0428 927 110 or 9795 6217

**Sacrament of Reconciliation**

You are invited to the opportunities for Confession before Christmas at the following times:

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December:** 8.30am – 9 am  
or by appointment

**Roster for weekend of 28<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

	Readers	Ministers
<b>Sat 6.00pm</b>	Terry Murphy Marlene Vergou	Charlotte Bainy Mary Harb
<b>Sun 9.00am (Italian)</b>	Ilardi L..	Capobianco A. Roda G.
<b>Sun 10.30am</b>	Jessy Thambiraj Ivana Lo Bello	Giovanna D'Intino Tony Eley
<b>Sun 6.00pm</b>	Marijana Jurjevic Damian Casamento	Robert Dullard Margaret Bannon

**WE PRAY FOR:**

The elderly and the sick

*Charmaine Nuqui*



We Commemorate

*Pasquale Belcaro, Santino Casalis (1st Anni.),  
Serafina Di Giorgio,  
Duilio Malavisi (6<sup>th</sup> month), Ines Malavisi,  
Frank Mendolicchio (12<sup>th</sup> Anni.), Vincenzo Roda,  
Carmela, Carmenu & Robert Vella*

O Lord, may perpetual light shine upon them.  
May they rest in peace. Amen.

**Vocation News**

4<sup>th</sup> Advent Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December: "God is With Us"  
"God is With Us" St Joseph listened to the call of God, his vocation was to trust. Today let us pray that many young people from our parishes and families will hear the call of God and trust enough to say 'yes' to priesthood and consecrated life.

**Why Do We Celebrate Christmas on 25<sup>th</sup> December?**

A Columban priest, Fr Noel Connolly says: "There is nothing in the Gospels to say that Jesus was born on 25th December so why do we choose to celebrate Christmas on that day? The best explanation I have heard is that Christians adopted a "pre-Christian" feast celebrating the northern winter solstice (shortest day).

For us living in the southern hemisphere that is not very convincing, but I lived in Ireland for almost sixteen years and I well remember the long dark, wet and windy nights. Even the days were short and miserable and there was little you could do outside. People could get quite depressed. Christmas is the celebration of light shining in the darkness. It comes just after the winter solstice. In the middle of a seemingly endless winter, the days begin to get longer and everyone celebrates the realisation that the winter darkness will not last forever".

**Catholic Theological College**

**2020 Study Options Now Available!**

Two courses are offered next year: 1/The Parish and Pastoral Ministry in a New Environment, and 2/ Church History. If interested, please contact the Academic Records Office for all study options and further information. Phone: 9412 3309 or Email: [AssistantDean@ctc.edu.au](mailto:AssistantDean@ctc.edu.au)  
278 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne  
Email: [ctc@ctc.edu.au](mailto:ctc@ctc.edu.au)

**Cleaning Roster:  
Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> December 2019  
Volunteers**

*Thank you for your help!*

