



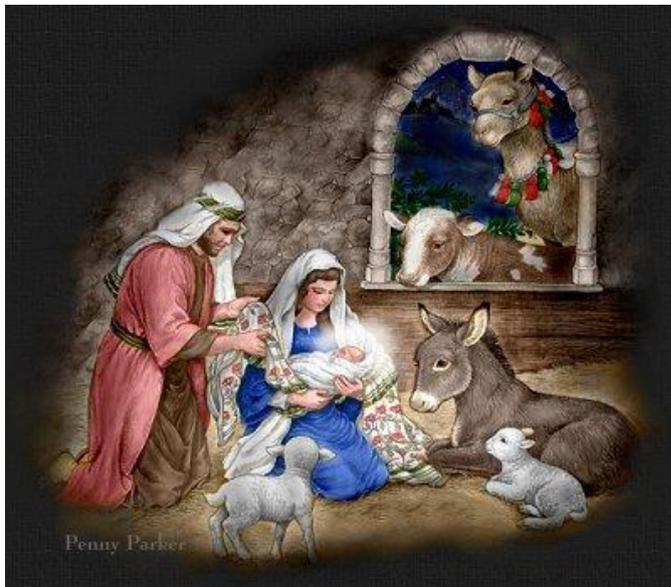
**CATHOLIC PARISH OF HEALESVILLE, INCORPORATING HEALESVILLE (ST BRIGID'S),
YARRA GLEN (ST ALOYSIUS) & MARYSVILLE (OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS)**

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WELCOME TO CHRISTMAS AT ST BRIGID'S



Our celebration of the birth of our Lord is more than a remembrance of the happenings in Bethlehem on a starry night. It is a reminder that God loves us so much that he sent his only Son among us to save us, to forgive our sins and to show us the way to our heavenly home.

"Heavenly Father, whose light, love and happiness have been shown to us in this Christmas season, give us the grace to walk in your presence. Amen"

**The Parish Community of St Brigid's welcomes you to join in
our celebration of the Birth of Jesus.**

We are one family.



THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD VIGIL

First Reading: Isaiah 62:1-5

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 88:4-5. 16-17. 27. 29

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

'I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your dynasty for ever and set up your throne through all ages.' Happy the people who acclaim such a king, who walk, O Lord, in the light of your face, who find their joy every day in your name, who make your justice the source of their bliss.

'He will say to me: "You are my father, my God, the rock who saves me."

I will keep my love for him always; for him my covenant shall endure.'

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Second Reading: Acts 13:16-17. 22-25

Celtic Alleluia

Refrain:

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia,

Verse:

You are the Christ everlasting,
Born for us all of a Virgin.

You have conquered death.

Opened heaven to all believers.

Refrain

Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25

General Intercessions

CHRISTMAS DAY

First Reading: Isaiah 52:7-10

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 97:1-6

R. 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.

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 salvation of our God.

Shout to the Lord all the earth,
ring out your joy.

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.

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

Second Reading: Hebrews 1:1-6

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!

A holy day has dawned upon us.

Come you nations and adore the Lord.

Today a great light has come upon the earth.

Alleluia!

Gospel: John 1:1-18

General Intercessions

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Recently Deceased: Wynn Wilson

Sick: Babies Emmett, Noah Glen Christie, Tedi and Santi; Roman, Blake Smith, Trish Leahy, John Snell, Abby Sharp, Peter Munro, Megan, Bernie Jansen, Andrew Sharp, John, Glenn, Lyn Francis, Dorothy Barber, Fiona, Annie Preuss, Michelle Ryan, Damian, John, Alison, Heather, Julie Bates, Garry Dettman, Bradley Jordan, Jeanette Henkel, Richard Galbraith, Debbie Huby, Geoff Lucas, Sandra Donkin, Glen, Fred Bullas, Fred Coullas, Evie Gleeson, Indy Dawes, Rade Krstic, Megan Williams, Michael Wood, Michael, Margo & Stephen Youngberry, Marie Hammond, John Mulholland, Rhiannon Days, Val Savitt, Ron Garland, Jaz Nueber, James Cooney, Robert, Mary & Gerard Bariola, Tilly Van der Zee, Lydia, Joyce Slattery, Annie, Bob Ireland, Val & Michael Christie, Ted & Peter Bowling, Natasha, Mia, James, Mitchell Wilson, Anne Bateman, Veronica Ireland, Lauren, Brooke, Anthony, Laura Baosde Pinto, Michelle, Judy, Annette Fromholtz, John Wray, Lynn Doensen, Elsa Gianforte, Fiona M

2021 has been another rollercoaster ride. As the year comes to its end, I suspect many will be glad to get off, perhaps feeling a little dizzy and unsettled! The opportunity to freely celebrate with family, friends and our parish communities this Christmas is much needed. Fear, isolation and division have been the hallmarks of this year, it seems – the very things that Our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to dispel. There is a lot of healing that is needed, perhaps forgiveness too. Coming together in a spirit of Christian love and fellowship to rejoice in the birth of Our Saviour is balm for the weary soul.

The cultural war that is currently raging throughout the world will never be resolved through violence, force or by any merely human, scientific or technological means. Jesus Christ alone can heal the human race of the divisions that we see opening up around us, and (if we're honest with ourselves) that we find in our own hearts. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in his forensic examination of the most brutal political regime in human history sought to grapple with the mystery of the evil. His search led him to recognise the truth that "the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either – but right through every human heart." Every human being is a 'house divided' that needs to be reconciled – to God, to his neighbour and to himself.

St Paul writes in 2 Corinthians: *"All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God"* (2 Cor 5:18-20). This is the meaning of the joy that we celebrate each Christmas – it is the realisation of God's plan to reconcile us to himself in Christ. Christ is our reconciliation. He, and He alone, has the power to heal us and our broken world. St Paul's words also recognise the part that we must play as "ambassadors for Christ" by making His work of reconciliation known to the world. We must, with great urgency, re-evangelise a world that has forgotten its need of Christ.

Jesus' birth in human history 2000 years ago, marks the dawn of our eternal redemption. Jesus came into the world for this purpose – to reconcile us to the Father. The mystery of Jesus' birth in the most abject

and inhospitable of circumstances adds to the wondrous lustre of the gift God gave us, like a precious jewel discovered gleaming in the craggy rockface. God's grace is so often to be found in the most unexpected of places and events. Even our own troubled times must be seen as a time of grace where Christ appears suddenly and unexpectedly in our midst, imparting to us the gift our Salvation – in prayer, in the consolation of friendships, in the sacrament of Confession, in the Eucharist, and so on. Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace, not just for a time, but forever. He wants us to experience his peace even in the face of these present trials: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. I do not give peace to you as the world gives it. Do not let your hearts be troubled; do not be afraid." (Jn 14:27)

The end of the year is also a good time to thank all the many extraordinary people who work (often unseen) to build up our parish and keep it going. A huge thank you to our parish secretary Sharon Jacob; pastoral worker Debra Edwards; Rod Hysted who helps in so many ways, sacristans, mowing team, Finance Council members, care group and : many other volunteer readers, money-collectors/counters, church welcomers, parish safe-guard team, and so on.

Yours In Christ
Fr Francis Denton



From Debbie's Desk

Let there be light! A saviour is born to us, welcome Jesus!

Our Christmas celebrations and traditions revolve around light – tiny candles, strings of fairy lights, trees decorated with coloured lights that shimmer and blink. The full effect of their pretty beauty is felt when it is darkest. I know that, but today I am making a conscious effort to notice. In this Christmas season of peace and joy set free, our often-inattentive hearts are pierced through with a celebration of relationships, and a reflection of our love for those who matter most to us. Thank you God! Christmas is that focussed time of the year that draws us to appreciate each other, friendship smoothing over hurts, love for our family and friends ironing out wrinkles and wrankles, patience and reflection reminding us that we are lucky to have each other. We are encouraged to remember that love obliterates hatred if we allow it to do its work in us.

Light always overcomes darkness, and love overcomes anger and resentment, if we let it loose to do its stuff.

I woke early this morning, the sky was just picking up the light of the new dawn, and I decided to take the opportunity offered to me to have a cuppa while I watched a passing thunderstorm from my deck chair. I listened to the roosters and the birds, one by one joining a chorus of joy that greeted the new day. The lightning was spectacular, but so brief that I had to be alert and prepared to catch it. The sky lightened imperceptibly at first. The dark earth seemed to drink the light, and then suddenly, there was a moment. It was as if the land had become saturated with light, and began to actively participate in the show. Colours jumped out of the land, reflecting the sunlight back to the sky, and to me. Light flooded the landscape, and then bounced in all directions, setting colours free, and the earth's detail and its texture were revealed. I felt that moment, unexpectedly, surprisingly, possibly for the first time in my sixty odd years of watching the sun rise. As old as I am, I can't say that I have ever noticed this before!

Jesus is the light of the world. I understand a little more fully now. The tiny baby lying in his mother's arms is the hope of humanity. His first bed was not in his family's ancestral home, he was born without a place to call his own, and he died without a home. The light he brings is for each of us throughout history, not just for those related to him. Jesus' birth is that first moment in time when light is reflected back from the earth to heaven. Colours are set free! For the first time, humanity sees the light of God through our own eyes, our human eyes. Wow! Until the birth of Jesus, humanity knew God in the unpredictable lightning flashes that pierced our dark souls from time to time throughout the Old Testament. We could see God's power and might through the experiences of our ancestors, yet we could not hold on to those flashes, which were gone before we could grab them, as it were. Yet the babe of Bethlehem is God whom we can see, divine, of heaven, yet human as we are human, of the earth. Just like us. He remains with each of us today. We can hold him. We can kiss him. We understand God in a whole new way, because Jesus is divine, and he is human, just like me. Suddenly, the light of heaven is shining through humanity, not just around it! This needs a bit of thought!

For today, have a wonderful, wonderful Christmas! No matter what your circumstances, enjoy the peace and the joy of Christmas time. Give yourself to others in your celebrations. But when the lights dim, and the noise settles, find some time to sit quietly, holding the Christ child close to your heart. See his tiny features, kiss his cheek, place your finger in his tiny hand. Thank him for releasing the colours of God to our dark thirsty world. Ask him to help you to know him more personally, and ask him to open your eyes a little wider to the infinite brightness of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And ask Jesus, the light of the world, to help you to reflect his light to others each and every day. Merry Christmas!

THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES ARE IN DECEMBER

Josephine Fassler (06.12.95), Lucy Mahedy (09.12.96), Mark Broomhead (11.12.13), Ilona Huebel (12.12.74), Doris Dennehy (12.12.95), Danny O'Meara (12.12.10), Nora Podesta (14.12.06), Paul Dunlop (14.12.06), Neil Lindorff (19.12.08), Noel Dudgeon (20.12.09), Pietro Bariola (27.12.88), Bishop Joe Grech (28.12.10), Dolly (Florence) Reeves, Dennis Eldred, Dawn Flannaghan, Paul Hansen, Hans Rietbergen, John Burger, Maria Kermac (6.12.18), Silvano Kermac, Tony Grieve (4.12.19)



Healesville Parish Office

Will close at 12noon Thursday 23rd December 2021 and reopen Thursday 27th January 2022. For any queries please call 0448 658 418

New Years Day Mass

8.30am - Healesville

10.30am - Lilydale.

6pm Vigil - Lilydale



We wish all our parishioners and visitors a Holy, Safe and Happy Christmas and New Year.