



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

Address: 15 High Street, Healesville, Victoria, 3777  
Postal Address: PO Box 73, Healesville, Victoria, 3777  
Website: <http://www.stbrigidshealesville.cam.org.au>

Administrator: Fr. Francis Denton  
Secretary: Mrs Sharon Jacob 0448 658 418

Pastoral Worker: Mrs. Debbie Edwards 0448 664 731  
Email: [Healesville@cam.org.au](mailto:Healesville@cam.org.au) Ph: 5962 4026

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**THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH (Year C)**

**First Reading: 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28**

A reading from the first book of Samuel

Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son, and called him Samuel 'since' she said 'I asked the Lord for him.'

When a year had gone by, the husband Elkanah went up again with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the Lord and to fulfil his vow. Hannah, however, did not go up, having said to her husband, 'Not before the child is weaned. Then I will bring him and present him before the Lord and he shall stay there for ever.'

When she had weaned him, she took him up with her together with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the temple of the Lord at Shiloh; and the child was with them. They slaughtered the bull and the child's mother came to Eli. She said, 'If you please, my lord. As you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the Lord. This is the child I prayed for, and the Lord granted me what I asked him. Now I make him over to the Lord for the whole of his life. He is made over to the Lord.'

There she left him, for the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**Responsorial Psalm: Ps 83:2-3, 5-6, 9-10**

**R. How happy they who dwell in your house, O Lord.**

How lovely is your dwelling place,  
Lord, God of hosts.

My soul is longing and yearning,  
is yearning for the courts of the Lord.  
My heart and my soul ring out their joy  
to God, the living God.

**R. How happy they who dwell in your house, O Lord.**

They are happy, who dwell in your house,

for ever singing your praise.

They are happy, whose strength is in you;  
they walk with ever growing strength.

**R. How happy they who dwell in your house, O Lord.**

O Lord, God of hosts, hear my prayer,  
give ear, O God of Jacob.

Turn your eyes, O God, our shield,  
look on the face of your anointed.

**R. How happy they who dwell in your house, O Lord.**

**Second Reading: 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24**

A reading from the first letter of St. John

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us,  
by letting us be called God's children;  
and that is what we are.

Because the world refused to acknowledge him,  
therefore it does not acknowledge us.

My dear people, we are already the children of God  
but what we are to be in the future has not yet been  
revealed,

all we know is, that when it is revealed  
we shall be like him

because we shall see him as he really is.

My dear people,

if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience,  
we need not be afraid in God's presence,  
and whatever we ask him,

we shall receive,

because we keep his commandments  
and live the kind of life that he wants.

His commandments are these:

that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ  
and that we love one another

as he told us to.

Whoever keeps his commandments  
lives in God and God lives in him.

We know that he lives in us  
by the Spirit that he has given us.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**Gospel Acclamation: cf Acts 16:14**

Alleluia, alleluia!

Open our heart, O Lord,  
to listen to the words of your Son.

Alleluia!

**Gospel:** Luke 2:41-52

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

His parents found him in the temple, sitting among the learned men listening to them.

Every year the parents of Jesus used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. When they were on their way home after the feast, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents knowing it. They assumed he was with the caravan, and it was only after a day's journey that they went to look for him among their relations and acquaintances. When they failed to find him they went back to Jerusalem looking for him everywhere.

Three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them, and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. They were overcome when they saw him, and his mother said to him, 'My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you.' 'Why were you looking for me?' he replied. 'Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?' But they did not understand what he meant.

He then went down with them and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and men.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

#### FROM DEBBIE'S DESK



Here we are, immersed in our celebration of the birth of Jesus, over 2000 years ago.

Jesus' birth is not just a one day event, the effects of his arrival in our world continue on into every day of our year, and on into history itself. Thank God! The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light! Our world can never be the same.

Jesus was born at a time when there were no computers, no traffic lights, no technologically loaded hospitals or schools. Civilisation has 'advanced' in physical capability, yet it crosses my mind to wonder if our world is in better shape today than what Jesus found it in? There are still tears. There is still war, oppression, injustice and power struggles wherever you look. There are natural disasters and diseases. There is still birth, and there is still death.

Jesus was born into the real world, he is not a story book character, he was born as we are all born, and he died as we will all die. He was born to a real family. Mary, Joseph and Jesus are the Holy Family we celebrate today, the day following his birthday. Despite the stunning, divine events that surrounded his poor birth, angel choirs proclaiming the salvation of mankind to stunned shepherds in a dark field, and visiting Wise Men turning up bearing gifts fit for a great king, we know that Jesus' mother and earthly step-father really do understand our human journey from the inside out, because they, too, had to live in a world that was by no means perfect or easy. No matter what 'advances' our world may think it is making as it lurches through history, the Holy Family continues to be our anchor, relevant in every century. Mary, Joseph and Jesus are always available to mentor us, to walk with us on our own precarious paths through the years. They have already 'been there, done that, got the ticket stamped'! There is nothing this world can throw at us that Jesus, Mary and Joseph have not experienced before us. They really, genuinely understand.

The tiny babe of Bethlehem is Jesus, Christ the King, the light of the world. We follow his light, be it a tiny star in the distance or the blinding light of a 'Transfiguration moment'. The sadness and the excitement of our world are real challenges, incomprehensible for the most part, often distracting, and confusing at times. But the messiness of our world can never obliterate the light. We follow the light to our meeting with Jesus face to face in our death, secure in the knowledge that we are never alone, sadness is temporary, and that we walk as people of the light in the company of many, many good people who do care, and who try to be there for us when we need them. As we turn our faces to a new year, filled with potential, we do so with anticipation of our opportunity for fresh encounters with our God through our experiences in each new day. Some will be filled with joy, some will no doubt challenge us in ways we would prefer not to have to deal with. If we continue to search for the newborn King in each hour of 2022, his light will swamp every moment of dark fear, his comforting presence will lead us and give us strength. And his promise of life with him for eternity will inspire us to trust, no matter what.

