

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



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**FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT (YEAR B) 6<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2020**

**THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**First Reading:** Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

'Console my people, console them' says your God. 'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for, that she has received from the hand of the Lord double punishment for all her crimes.' A voice cries, 'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low, let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley; then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion. Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem. Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God.' Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him. The prize of his victory is with him, his trophies all go before him. He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Responsorial Psalm:** Ps 84:9-14

**R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.**

I will hear what the Lord God has to say,  
a voice that speaks of peace,  
peace for his people.  
His help is near for those who fear him  
and his glory will dwell in our land. **R.**

**R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.**

Mercy and faithfulness have met;  
justice and peace have embraced.  
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth

and justice look down from heaven. **R.**

**R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.**

The Lord will make us prosper  
and our earth shall yield its fruit.  
Justice shall march before him  
and peace shall follow his steps. **R.**

**R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.**

**Second Reading:** 2 Peter 3:8-14

A reading from the second letter of St Peter

There is one thing, my friends, that you must never forget: that with the Lord, 'a day' can mean a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises, as anybody else might be called slow; but he is being patient with you all, wanting nobody to be lost and everybody to be brought to change his ways. The Day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire and fall apart, the earth and all that it contains will be burnt up. Since everything is coming to an end like this, you should be living holy and saintly lives while you wait and long for the Day of God to come, when the sky will dissolve in flames and the elements melt in the heat. What we are waiting for is what he promised: the new heavens and new earth, the place where righteousness will be at home. So then, my friends, while you are waiting, do your best to live lives without spot or stain so that he will find you at peace.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation:** Luke 3:4, 6

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths:  
all people shall see the salvation of God.  
Alleluia!

**Gospel:** Mark 1:1-8

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way. A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight, and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## FROM FR FRANCIS

### **Feast of the Immaculate Conception – Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December**

**Mass at 9:15am – St Patrick’s, Lilydale**

**Mass at 6:00pm – St Patrick’s, Lilydale**

“Hail Full of grace, the Lord is with thee!” These are quite possibly the most commonly recited words of scripture of all time, thanks in no small part to the rosary. We say these words so often that it is easy for us to lose an appreciation of their significance.

Here the Archangel Gabriel addresses Mary by a strange new name: in Greek, *Ke-char-i-to-me-ne*. For the grammarians out there, *Kecharitomene* is the perfect passive participle of the word *charitoo* meaning ‘to fill with grace’: the tense conveys the sense of something that has already happened but continues to have effects in the present. And so a more unwieldy translation of *kecharitomene* would be “one who has already been filled with grace.” The point of the unusual choice of tense in Gabriel’s address to Mary is that the Archangel is implying that Mary has *already* been fully endowed with the grace of God, even before she has conceived of Jesus in her womb. And so St Augustine would say, “Mary had conceived of Christ in her heart, before she conceived of him in her womb.”

Mary had already been singled out by God with a calling unparalleled in the history of the human race. From all eternity God had planned Mary to be the Mother of His Incarnate Word. It is not surprising then that God in creating Mary, would make her the most perfect work in all his creation, a vessel of Divine favour into which he would entrust his most sacred treasure. Mary is the feminine form of the true ‘*imago Dei*’ – the image of God. Her own likeness is reflected in the face of Jesus Christ, as surely as Mary herself reflects the likeness of her creator more perfectly than any other human being. The image of God so sadly blemished and disfigured in the rest of the human race on account of original sin and personal sin, is by God’s grace, perfectly reflected in the Immaculate Mother of God.

Pope Pius IX in line with the fathers of the Church speaks of the ‘fittingness’ of the immaculate conception of Mary in the womb of St Anne.

*"And indeed, it was wholly fitting that so wonderful a mother should be ever resplendent with the glory of most sublime holiness and so completely free from all taint of original sin that she would triumph utterly over the ancient serpent. To her did the Father will to give his only-begotten Son -- the Son whom, equal to the Father and begotten by him, the Father loves from his heart -- and to give this Son in such a way that he would be the one and the same common Son of God the Father and of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was she whom the Son himself chose to make his Mother and it was from her that the Holy Spirit willed and brought it about that he should be conceived and born from whom he himself proceeds." (Pope Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, 1854).*

The sceptics of the Dogma of the Immaculate conception might question why the Dogma was declared so late. And it is something to be wondered at: 1854 – is rather late. Yet God in his providence permits things to unfold in His time according to his own purpose. For one thing, the dogma was reaffirmed with a sign from heaven, from no less an authority than the Mother of God herself.

When in 1858 St Bernadette received the vision of the beautiful heavenly Lady at Lourdes, and asked who she was, Our Lady declared “I am the Immaculate Conception.” Just as the Archangel Gabriel had called Mary with the title *Kecharitomene* - “Full of Grace” not as an adjective describing her, but as a proper name, so too Mary declares herself to *be* the Immaculate Conception, as an ontological reality. Through this declaration, Mary ratified the Papal dogma of Pope Pius IX.

Nor should we overlook the context of today’s feast within the season of Advent, as we await the coming of the Christ-child. From the moment of the annunciation Mary spent nine months awaiting the birth of Christ. Mary was the first human to experience the grace-filled season of Advent just as she was the first to experience the feast of Christmas. As we turn our attention to Mary in the coming week for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception she in turn guides us to approach her son with a pure, undivided heart.

*O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

### [MASS FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION](#)

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> Dec at St Patrick’s, Lilydale: 9.15 am and 6.00 pm.**

For bookings call Debbie on 0448 664 731

### [WEEKLY MASSES ARE STILL AVAILABLE ON OUR ST BRIGID’S YOU TUBE CHANNEL](#)

A reminder that Fr Francis’ Sunday Masses are recorded each weekend and are available on St Brigid’s You Tube Channel each Sunday morning. The link is accessible through St Brigid’s Healesville’s website, by searching St Brigid’s Healesville on You Tube, or using the link: <https://bit.ly/StBsHville> **A big, big thank you to Rod, who gives up much time and energy in making this happen for us each week.**

This week’s Mass comes from St Brigid’s in Healesville

### [KEEPING US CONNECTED](#)

Check out the Living Faith page on St Brigid’s website. This page is kept up to date with the latest news and provides us with resources to assist our prayer life and enhance our reflection time with the Lord.

## WEEKLY MASS TIMES

**St Brigid's Healesville: Sunday 8.30 am and Thursday 9.15 am**

**St Aloysius Yarra Glen: No Masses until further notice**

(St Aloysius church is currently undergoing maintenance and is not open for Masses or Rosary gatherings until further notice. Essential works are commencing very shortly.)

**Our Lady of the Snows, Marysville: Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December at 10.30am**



## TRYBOOKING FOR MASS BOOKINGS

On paper, churches can currently have up to 150 people attend Mass, subject to the 4 square meter rule. On the ground, numbers are determined by the size of the church. Under current restrictions we can have **40** people attend each Mass at St Brigid's. Social distancing rules apply and masks must be worn.

Bookings are essential to ensure our compliance with regulations, which may change again with the Premier's next announcement. We are moving to TryBooking as numbers increase.

**From this coming Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> December, bookings for Masses will be on line. If you don't have access to a computer, or need assistance with TryBooking, please call Debbie on 0448 664 731. The link for bookings is: <https://www.trybooking.com/BNJZP>**

At this stage we are still unsure of the numbers allowed for Christmas Masses. Bookings for Christmas will open up shortly.

## CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES AT ST BRIGID'S

**Christmas Eve Children's Nativity Play: 6.30 pm** followed by **Christmas Eve Family Mass: 7.00 pm.** On the lawns between the hall and the church. Byo picnic rug and sunscreen.

**Christmas Morning Mass: 8.30 am** in the church

Midnight Mass will be celebrated at St Patrick's Church in Lilydale, commencing at 12 am.



## CHILDREN'S NATIVITY PLAY

If your child would like to have a role in our Nativity Play this year, please contact Debbie. The play is always a highlight of our Christmas celebrations.

## THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Available on request. The Sacrament is also available at St Patrick's Lilydale on Saturday mornings at 10 am.

## THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION, 2020

The following children will be receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December. Please keep them and their families in your prayers. Our congratulations to:

**Oliver, Blake, Tadhg, Mia, Gideon, Harrison, Samuel, Ringo and Tyler**

*May you receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit with joy.  
and come to an awareness of God's active presence in your lives  
this week, and in the years to come.*

## CARE GROUP CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

Our Care Group is continuing to find ways of reaching out to those who are struggling. In this unusual year, we are asking for donations of festive food, toiletries, gifts, whatever can be added to hampers that will be distributed just before Christmas. Please think about buying an extra item as you shop. Care Group representatives will be available to receive goods next Thursday and Friday between 9 am and 11 am. For further information, please call Maree on 0417 087 199. .

## COLUMBAN CALENDARS.

Columban Calendars for 2021 are now available in the church. Cost: \$10.00. Please place your money in an envelope clearly marked with 'Columban Calendar' in the basket near the church door when you come to Mass, or contact Debbie.

## SOME THOUGHTS FROM DEBBIE

The traditional Advent wreath has been a welcome addition to churches and to many of the homes of families over the past centuries. It is wonderful to know that we are continuing the stories that our ancestors in faith began, as we take up the traditions that others have honoured through the years. As the way families have lived has changed dramatically in response to new technology and new ways of thinking, some things remain as core celebrations that nourish family life. Last week I encouraged us to think about making an Advent wreath for your family to enjoy as you gather for a meal. This week I thought I might share a little of another Advent tradition, perhaps more modern in origin, but adapted from ancient scripture. It is called a Jesse Tree.

You will remember that the New Testament in the Bible begins with the birth of Jesus and tells us of God made man, Jesus Christ, who reveals his Father to us through the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the ultimate revelation of who God is, he is a human person, just like us, we can relate to him completely, and he is God himself, God the Son, who reveals his Father to us through his Sonship. The Old Testament is a collection of the writings of God's people throughout the centuries leading up to his birth, the beginning of the New Testament. God sent his Son so that we may truly know who he is.

The invisible God of the Old Testament was revealed through the encounters of the 'Chosen People' with his power, his might, his generosity, his anger, and his persistent attempts to create and honour a Covenant, an agreement with the people, who knew of him, but who regularly seemed to forget his goodness to them. Again and again they broke the Covenant he offered them, which was ultimately very simple: 'I am your God, you are my people'. God spoke to his people through the Patriarchs, the 'Fathers', the prophets, and the many good people whom God used to reveal himself to our world.

A Jesse Tree honours the folk of the Old Testament who form the family tree of Jesus, and of us, as new generations of faithful who carry his Good News forward into the future. The tree of life is a common symbol today, and we all appreciate the Christmas tree. They pick up the symbolism of a family tree, and the joy of the birth of Jesus passed down to us through the centuries, and carried forward in time through us. Like a magnificent old tree, rooted in the past and sending forth new growth year by year, we are part of living history. What an inheritance! A Jesse Tree is an undecorated Christmas Tree which is slowly adorned with symbols that relate to significant people from the Old Testament, capturing in some way how they brought the knowledge and love of God to his people. We think of Noah when we see an ark and a rainbow. Moses may be represented by a burning bush. Isaac can be symbolised by a ram. Any Children's Bible contains many interesting stories from the Old Testament, which we slowly come to learn as we grow up. The Old Testament is filled with countless ordinary people, and some truly extraordinary people, who have done great things for God. We still remember the 'stand-outs' today through the Scriptures, and their adventures make wonderful reading. Families building a Jesse Tree through Advent investigate these wonderful stories, choosing a symbol to represent the outstanding feature of that person's adventures in God's service. The symbols slowly build to decorate the tree during the course of Advent. On Christmas Eve, the symbols are replaced by Christmas decorations and a star, symbolising the completion of our Salvation History, the coming of our Saviour, Jesus the Christ, the one who was promised throughout the ages.

Traditions keep us rooted in the past, providing stability and an anchor point for the new growth that excitedly bursts forward in each new generation. We thank God for our place in his history, and ask him to help us to play our role in his service with generosity and dedication.

### COLLECTION TOTALS WEEK ENDING 29<sup>TH</sup> NOV 2020

**Healesville:** Thanksgiving: \$754.30  
Presbytery: \$136.00

**Yarra Glen:** Thanksgiving: \$35.00  
Presbytery: \$17.50

### PARISH PRAYER LIST

#### WE PRAY FOR ALL WHO HAVE DIED

#### WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE 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, Dorothy Fraser, Glen, Fred Bullas, Fred Coullas, Evie Gleeson, Indy Dawes, Rade Krstic, Megan Williams, Michael Wood, Bill Howie, Jennie, 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, Lawrie Field, Annie, Bob Ireland, Val & Michael Christie, Ted & Peter Bowling, Natasha, Mia, James, Richard Adams, Mitchell & Wynn Wilson, Carina Warton, Anne Bateman, Veronica Ireland, Lauren, Brooke, Anthony, Michelle, Judy.

#### WE PRAY FOR 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), Fr Bernie Hammond

