



# Ss Michael & John's Parish

Horsham - Dimboola - Murtoa - Natimuk - Rupanyup

Happy and blessed Christmas and Happy New Year to you all



## Christmas Day - 25th December 2015



May the blessings of God's peace, joy, hope, love and goodwill, be upon you and your loved ones this Christmas and for the New Year

Welcome home to family members and visitors with us this Christmas and holidays.

### PARISH CONTACTS

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**Mass on New Year's Day, Friday January 1st, 10am, SMJ Church**

### Christmas Mass Collections

**1st Collection (basket):** the Parish and Presbytery.

**2nd collection (green bag):** the Bishop's Annual Christmas Appeal  
*Last year across the diocese \$46,000 was given to support missions to our north, in New Guinea, the Pacific and Fiji.*

**Christmas Dues Envelopes in the Foyers to support our retired priests and needy Parishes.** Please place this envelope on the collection, or leave at the Presbytery.

*Thank you for your support to these Collections and Christmas Dues.*

The Christmas Message of Pope Francis in 2014 is still relevant for today:

"Jesus, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, is born for us, born in Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary, fulfilling the ancient prophecies. Humble people, full of hope in the goodness of God, are those who welcome Jesus and recognise Him. The Spirit enlightened the shepherds who hastened to see Him, Simeon and Anna in the Temple recognised in Jesus the Messiah: 'My eyes have seen your salvation... the salvation prepared by God in the sight of all peoples.' Jesus is the salvation of all peoples. May Christ our Saviour look upon those people who suffer across the world from persecution, war, conflict, refugees, bestowing his peace and hope upon them, protecting them. May world leaders work together to overcome tensions, conquer hatred and violence, and set our world on a new path of reconciliation and peace. May the Holy Spirit enlighten our minds and hearts that we may recognise in Jesus the salvation given by God to each one of us, that our lives will be transformed into love and hope to see our God of salvation....."

*Mary is the cause of our joy. For in Mary comes the Messiah our Saviour, Jesus. Christmas lights have been great, but we are to be Christ's light to our world.*

### WEEK-DAY MASSES:

Tuesday 29th Dec 5.30pm

Wednesday 30th Dec **10.30am Funeral Mass for Warren Strauss**

Thursday 31st Dec **9.15am 10.30.** Funeral Prayers at Dimboola

Friday 1st January 2016 **10am** New Year's Day, Motherhood of Mary, Peace

Saturday 2nd Jan 10am Sts Basil and Gregory



### PRAYERS

#### Recently Deceased:

Warren Strauss, Nicola Raneri (Switzerland - brother of Ida Lattanzio and Maria Cericola), Bernie Kelly, Antonio Kardogeros (Dimboola)

**Anniversaries:** Dymp Sleeman, Eric Wood

**Sick:** Kobe Davidson, Brian Rice, Corey Panozzo, Ruby Spasic, Bill Kennedy, Renee Kerr, Peter Laskey, Susan Finnigan, Stephen Sherman, Helen Brennan, Eileen Finnigan, Madeleine Cameron, John Coleman, Carmela Baviello, Lyn Cooper, Jill and Christine Higgenbottoms,

**Masses this weekend Dec 26/27**  
Horsham : 6.30pm, Sunday 10.30  
Dimboola 8.30am. Murtoa 10.30.

**Masses for January 2/3, 2016:**  
Horsham: 6.30pm. Sunday 10.30  
Dimboola LLA 8.30.  
Murtoa Mass 8.30am

**Confessions** Saturday 10.25

**Saturday Morning Devotions:**  
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 9 to 9.20. Rosary 9.20. Prayer of the Church. 10am Mass

**Making Connections:** This week take note of all the questions you would like to ask about your new life of faith.

**Marriage Tip:** Christmas can be a difficult time for those who lost loved ones recently or who are without a family. Is there someone your family could reach out to and encourage?

**Daily Prayer.** Give to parents the wisdom and wonder to see the mystery of your will unfold in the lives of their children. To daughters and sons give, with the increase of years, an equal measure of growth in your grace. Together may we treasure in our hearts the love you have lavished upon us in letting us be called your children. Bless our families and our world with your peace.

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God, my creator, breathe on me, renew me, refresh me, extend my abilities, comfort me in adjusting to changes in health, mobility and activity. Body of Jesus Christ flow through every fibre of my being. Keep me well, and hope filled, always. Holy Spirit use me in my situation, for the good of others. Amen



## Bishop Paul Bird's Christmas Message 2015

In a church in the south of Italy, people were gathered for Christmas Mass and the priest was giving a sermon. He recalled a message of joy from the gospel. "I bring you news of great joy! This is what the angel said to the shepherds and this is what I say to you, my dear people. I bring you news of great joy!" The priest then compared the joy of Christmas to the joy of exiles who have been told they can return to their homeland. "What news could be more joyful for a nation of poor exiles than for them to be told that a saviour had come and had set them free to return to their own country? This is what I announce to you today. A saviour is born. Jesus Christ is born. He is born to set us free to return to our true homeland, which is heaven. We were exiled from heaven because of sin but Christ has come to tell us that our exile is over. We can go home!" The priest giving the sermon was St Alphonsus Liguori. He preached this Christmas message over two hundred years ago but his words can still resonate with us today. He spoke of the sad plight of exiles driven from their homes. This is a sadness that is all too common in our own time. In our own day, millions of people have been driven from their homes by wars in many parts of the world. Sometimes they languish in makeshift camps for years – with a few scraps of plastic sheeting to shelter them from the burning sun or the scorching wind or the biting cold. How they must long for the chance to go home and rebuild their lives in peace and security. Imagine their joy if one day someone arrived in their camp and announced that the war was over and that they could now go back to their homes and live in peace. The joy of Christmas is like the joy of returning exiles. The message of Christmas is that a saviour has come – a saviour who will lead us home. The Scriptures tell us that our true homeland is in heaven. In the letter to the Hebrews we read these words: "They recognised that they were only strangers and nomads on earth ... they were longing for a better homeland, their heavenly homeland ... there is no eternal city for us in this life but we look for one in the life to come." (Hebrews 11:13-16; 13:14) In the gospel of John, Jesus speaks of going ahead to prepare a place for us. "I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am you may be too. (John 14:2-3) Christmas is not only a time to look back to the birth of our Saviour. It is a time to look forward to the gifts our Saviour will bring in the future. Those in sorrow will find joy. Those who have suffered violence will find peace. Those who have lived as exiles will reach their true homeland. St Alphonsus summed up his Christmas message by encouraging his listeners to be of good cheer. May his words encourage us as well. "Be of good cheer, because the birthday of the Lord is the birthday of peace and joy." A blessed Christmas to you all!

*Bishop Paul Bird*

*Thank You*

Thank you to our children and their families and Alison for our Children's Christmas Story at 7pm Mass.



**Happy  
New Year!**

**Intentions to be placed on St Mary MacKillop's Tomb in Sydney.** Fr Peter will be Chaplain at St Mary's Chapel from January 6th to 22. If you wish to have intentions prayed for at Mary's Tomb, please leave them in writing at the Office or with Fr Peter by Sunday Jan 3rd.

## CHRISTMAS MASS READINGS

### 1st Reading Isaiah 9:1-7

The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone. You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase; they rejoice in your presence as men rejoice at harvest time, as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils. For the yoke that was weighing on him, the bar across his shoulders, the rod of his oppressor, these you break as on the day of Midian. For all the footgear of battle, every cloak rolled in blood, is burnt and consumed by fire. For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him: Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace. Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end, for the throne of David and for his royal power, which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity. From this time onwards and for ever, the jealous love of the Lord of hosts will do this.

### Responsorial Psalm Ps 95:1-

R. Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

O sing a new song to the Lord, sing to the Lord all the earth. O sing to the Lord, bless his name.

Proclaim his help day by day, tell among the nations his glory and his wonders among all the peoples.

Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad, let the sea and all within it thunder praise, let the land and all it bears rejoice, all the trees of the wood shout for joy, at the presence of the Lord for he comes, he comes to rule the earth.

With justice he will rule the world, he will judge the peoples with his truth.

R. Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

### 2nd Reading Titus 2:11-14

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to

God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

### Acclamation Luke 2:10-11

Alleluia, alleluia! Good News and great joy to all the world: today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord. Alleluia!

### Gospel Luke 2:1-

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census - the first - took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn. In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing: 'God to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favour'.

