

**Reflection on the Gospel-Feast of the Holy Family Year B
(Luke 2:22-40)**

-Veronica Lawson RSM

The time between Christmas and New Year is often family time, a good time to think about what family means. We try to connect with and enjoy the company of those with whom we have family ties, especially those who are alone or struggling in some way. Many parents value the extra time they are able to spend with their children over this period.

The first two readings for today narrate and reflect on the family story of Sarah and Abraham, of God's promise to give them a child, and of the fulfilment of that promise in the most unlikely of circumstances. The wonder of God's ways and the need to trust in God are at the heart of their story. At the same time, there is humour reflected in Abraham's choice of name for their son: "Isaac" means "he laughed". Does Abraham detect God's humour in providing a son for an elderly couple? Does he laugh for sheer joy at the birth of the child who will hold the traditions of the past and the hopes of the future? Whatever about this, the family story of Sarah, Abraham and Isaac foreshadows the even more extraordinary family story to be found in today's gospel.

Luke depicts Mary and Joseph as observant Jews bringing their child to the Jerusalem Temple in accordance with the ritual requirements of the Law, even if the Law actually applied only to the woman who had given birth and not to the man. Two prophetic figures, Anna and Simeon, recognise God's saving and redemptive purpose at work in the presence of this child who is presented in the Temple. Luke insists that Mary and Joseph have fulfilled the demands of the Law before they return to their home in Nazareth.

Growing up in Nazareth in the care of Mary and Joseph, the child Jesus grows to maturity, is filled with wisdom and God's favour is with him. Luke's summary statement introduces us to the wonderful world of a grace-filled family home. It invites us to ponder the wisdom that both Mary and Joseph had to share with their child. They taught him to pray and told him the stories of his people. They filled him with wonder at the goodness of God and of God's creation. They mediated the grace and favour of God and watched him grow and gain the strength he needed for life. They allowed him the freedom he needed to develop his own personality and to find his own Spirit-filled way on the earth. Finally, they had to let him go so that he might follow a path that was beyond their imagining when they brought him to the Temple in fulfilment of the Law. In other words, they did what so many parents would want to do for their children.

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH, YR B



ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST

Including St Peter & Paul's, Buninyong

Parish Address: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East. 3350

Telephone: 5332 6611

Fax: 5332 3303

Email: ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

**MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING
MONDAY, 1ST JANUARY 2018**

MONDAY:	No Mass
TUESDAY:	No Mass
WEDNESDAY:	No Mass
THURSDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church
FRIDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

ST. ALIPIUS	SAT	6.00 PM
	SUN	9.00 AM
BUNINYONG	SUN	10.30 AM

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

READINGS	First: Isaiah 60:1-6
	Second: Ephesians 3:2-3.5-6
	Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

ANNIVERSARIES: Mary Elizabeth McCann, Margaret and Maurie Troy.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Nathan Cambell, Denise Learmonth, Cath Wheelahan, Terry McGarry, Kevin Walsh, Peter Clohesy, Frank Nolan (Buninyong), Mary Barnett, Fiona Dickinson, Carmel Doherty, Pauline Murphy, Maria Wilson, Noreen Mullane.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: Team 7: K. Cummins ©, J. O'Meara, B. Hood, G. Duck.

Next Week: Team 8: B. McKeegan ©, M. Ridsdale, K. McKeegan.



COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$ 1,130.50
	Loose:	\$ 300.00
	Direct Debits:	\$ 480.00
		\$ 1,910.50
PRESBYTERY:		\$ 840.00

WELCOME BISHOP PETER

Bishop Peter will be celebrating the Sunday morning Masses this weekend as Fr. Peter is celebrating a family wedding on Sunday.

Thank you also to Bishop Peter for celebrating Mass at Buninyong on Christmas Eve.

THANKS & APPRECIATION

Thank you to the many parishioners who served at the Christmas Masses in many different ways. Your contribution enabled our Masses to be welcoming, prayerful celebrations for our Christmas time. Many thanks.

Fr. Peter would like to express his thanks for the kind wishes and gifts from parishioners over the Christmas time. Thank you.

BERRY STREET — SINCERE APPRECIATION

Berry Street wishes to thank you for the generous donation of 20 Christmas gifts. Without the support of organisations such as the St Alipius Parish, we would not be able to provide the few little extra's for young people who seek our help and support. Over the years, we have been grateful for the assistance you have given our clients, and we look forward to your continued support of Berry Street.

COMMUNION IN THE PARISH

Will all who take Holy Communion to those in private homes please contact Jim on 5332 6611 with details.

A big *thank you* to all who have indicated their willingness to assist with this very important ministry to our nursing homes. You have not been forgotten and will be contacted soon.

BALLARAT DIOCESE LAY PASTORAL MINISTRY PROGRAM

The Lay Pastoral Ministry Program offers low-cost opportunities for online study and formation for lay workers in the diocese, both employees and volunteers. A wide range of subject areas are offered: Scripture, Sacraments, Social Justice, Leadership Skills, Youth Ministry, and many more. Study one subject or many — it's a flexible program!

Registration for the January 2018 study cycle is open now (closes 5 January).

A study cycle means you do one subject over 5 weeks. There are 6 study cycles each year, you can start at any one. See details on the diocesan website www.ballarat.catholic.org.au (link is on home page), or contact Amanda on 5337 7125 or email amanda.smith@ballarat.catholic.org.au.

STUDY TOUR OF THE BIBLICAL LANDS 2018

Come and join us for our information session for *Study Tour of the Biblical Lands 2018* on Saturday, 20 January 2018 from 2.00—4.00 pm. In 2018 we are travelling to Jordan, Israel and Palestinian Territories, Turkey and Greece plus there is the opportunity to add on 3 days in Rome! If you are interested in attending this information session please advise me on 9412 3314 or via email jenny.delahunt@ctc.edu.au by Wednesday, 17 January 2018.

PROCLAIM CONFERENCE 2018—SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The Diocesan Foundation has offered sponsorship for six people from the diocese to attend the PROCLAIM 2018 CONFERENCE in Brisbane from July 12-14 (www.proclaimconference.com.au). Further information is available on the diocesan website www.ballarat.catholic.org.au.

MEDITATION

Reflect on these words. Let the words give way to silence. Just rest for a few moments in God's presence.

“The prayer of the heart introduces us to deep interior silence so that we learn to experience its power. For that reason the prayer of the heart has to be always very simple, confined to the simplest acts and often making use of no words and no thoughts at all.” **Thomas Merton.**