

Reflection on the Gospel-Feast of the Holy Family Year A (Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23)

-Veronica Lawson RSM

Dreaming is an important part of life, both the dreaming we do at night and the “day dreaming” we engage in as we look to the future. In today’s gospel story, Joseph is a dreamer who listens to his dreams and hears the voice of God directing him to go where he may not have chosen to go. The visit of the wise ones or astrologers from the east has left him with some questions. Now the pieces begin to fall into place. In his dream, he becomes aware of the danger that is threatening the family. The new born child is at risk. Steps must be taken to protect the child and his mother.

The desert road to Egypt had long been the place of refuge for Joseph’s ancestors. It is still a place of refuge and asylum, away from the centre of international affairs. Although the gospel presents a patriarchal image of family with the husband as head of the household, there is no sense that family leadership resides in the exercise of power over others. It resides rather in constant vigilance and in care and protection of the most vulnerable. The reader of the gospel has already been told that Joseph is “just”: he has acted with integrity and will continue to do so.

The story-teller uses a literary device, that of “formula-citation”, to locate the story of this special family within Israel’s bigger faith story. Centuries before, Israel (Jacob’s family) had fled into Egypt in time of famine. Their descendants were later rescued from slavery in Egypt. This new-born child will also go down into Egypt for protection and be led out to safety through God’s providence. There is no neat correspondence of character to character or event to event, simply allusions to the power of God at work in the great saving events in the lives of God’s people. The reader is being prepared for the momentous destiny in store for the world through the agency of a child at risk.

The child’s mother receives little attention in the telling of this story. We may like to retell the story through the lens of her fears and hopes or through the lens of the fears and hopes of the millions of refugees and asylum seekers of our time. God is just as much at work in the lives of those who are threatened now as was the case in the life of the family we name as “holy”. God worked through the agency of Mary and Joseph and other wisdom figures to protect the child. God works in our times through those who imagine or dream of a different future for the homeless and bereft and act to achieve those dreams. As we move into a new year, we need to ensure we are among them. And let’s not forget the other-than-human families at risk on our planet.

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23 Now after they had left, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." When Herod died, an angel suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

ST ALIPIUS PARISH — BALLARAT EAST & BUNINYONG THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH — YEAR A, SUNDAY 29TH DEC, 2019

*Our parish is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity
of all children and vulnerable adults.*

St Alipius' Parish Church
82 Victoria Street, BALLARAT EAST 3350

SS Peter & Paul's Church
701 Fiskens St, BUNINYONG

Contact Details

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Clergy and Staff

Priests: Frs Justin Driscoll, Jorge De Chavez OSJ, Vincent Pham Van Long CSsR

Visiting Priests: Frs Dan Arundell and Barry Ryan

Parish Coordinator: Lucy O'Beirne

Child Safety Officer: Roxanne Leed

Finance Officer: Kerrie McTigue

Funeral Ministry: Kathy Curran & Carmel Flynn

Masses This Week

Wednesday, 1st January	9.30 am	New Year's Day Mass, St Alipius' Church
Thursday, 2nd January	11.00 am	Mercy Place (Corbett Street)
Friday, 3rd December	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Church

Next Weekend's Masses

St Alipius' Church , Ballarat East	Saturday	4th January	6.00 pm
	Sunday	5th January	9.00 am
SS Peter & Paul's Church , Buninyong	Sunday	5th January	10.30 am

Solemnity: The Epiphany of the Lord — Year A

Readings	First:	Isaiah	60:1-6
	Second:	Ephesians	3:2-3, 5-6
	Gospel:	Matthew	2:1-12

Baptisms: Mabel Manzi

Recent Deaths:

Anniversaries: Nancy Nugent

We pray for Kateri Byrne, Pat Hogan, Cathy Jones and Peter Martin and all who are unwell

Parish Office Closure over Christmas and January

During closure of the parish office, please call the **Cathedral office** on **5331 2933** for any urgent matters. As a shared bulletin will be available, you are welcome to also leave any requests with the Cathedral office staff. The St Alipius' parish office will reopen on Tuesday, 28th January.

Plenary Council 2020 — Nominations for Delegates

Bishop Paul is inviting us to nominate delegates from our diocese for the sessions of the Australian Plenary Council to be held in 2020 and 2021. Please collect a copy of Bishop Paul's letter in the church foyer or via www.ballarat.catholic.org.au . Nominations need to reach Bishop Paul by **Friday, 7th February, 2020**.

Ss Peter & Paul's Cuppa Roster for 2020

Anyone interested in joining the roster for organisation of morning tea after 10:30 Masses at Buninyong throughout 2020 please see John or Geraldine White after Mass. There will be Christmas morning tea after 9am Mass this Sunday. All welcome.

Prayer Book Found

A small prayer book with a blue cover called *Our Lady's Book* and containing several prayer cards was found in the St Alipius' Church about two weeks ago. It has been placed in the sacristy for the owner to collect.

Organs of the Ballarat Goldfields Festival

In their 25th year, the OBG will be hosting their first event of the season, *JS Bach – St Mark Passion* at St Alipius' Church on Friday 10th January at 8.00pm, ticket sales from 7.30pm at the door or book in advance. Programme brochures available in the church foyers.

Pastoral Care Education

The South West Victoria CPE Centre is offering the opportunity for education and formation in Pastoral Care, with the option to have a CPE unit recognised as 30 points should you wish to enrol in theological studies with the University of Divinity. The Centre is registered through the Association for Supervised and Clinical Pastoral Education Victoria (ASACPEV Inc.) and supported by an advisory group, Frs Gerry Prunty, John Fitzgerald and Paddy Mugavin. Bernadette Wurlod is the Clinical Pastoral Supervisor and CPE Centre Director. For further information ph. 0455 033 321 or email bernadette@bernadettewurlod.com.au.

Counting Teams

This Week: **Team 10:** E. Wilson ©, C. Stewart
Next Week: **Team 11:** K. Bevelander ©, M. Liston, G. Maguire

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Parish:	Envelopes:	\$ 774.00	<i>Thank you to those who contributed to the collections last weekend</i>
	Loose:	\$ 300.00	
	Direct Debits:	\$ <i>unknown at time of printing</i>	
		\$ 1074.00	

Presbytery: \$ 837.00

World Day of Peace message 1st January 2020

"Peace as a journey of hope:

Dialogue, reconciliation and ecological conversion."

This is the 53rd annual message dedicated to peace; St. Pope Paul VI issued the first World Day of Peace message in 1967. The 2020 message emphasizes that our work for peace is ongoing and of utmost importance. In fact, Pope Francis writes that "we should not resign ourselves to seeking anything less than [peace]." He acknowledges the *Hibakusha*, survivors of the 1945 atomic bombing of Japan, as witnesses to conscience and keepers of memory which are so necessary to humankind moving forward toward peace. Pope Francis also writes the journey to peace includes ecological conversion, which "must be understood in an integral way, as a transformation of how we relate to our sisters and brothers, to other living beings, to creation in all its rich variety and to the Creator who is the origin and source of all life." *"...How, then, do we undertake a journey of peace and mutual respect? How do we break the unhealthy mentality of threats and fear? How do we break the current dynamic of distrust? ... We need to pursue a genuine fraternity based on our common origin from God and exercised in dialogue and mutual trust. The desire for peace lies deep within the human heart, and we should not resign ourselves to seeking anything less than this. ... [M]emory is the horizon of hope. Many times, in the darkness of wars and conflicts, the remembrance of even a small gesture of solidarity received can lead to courageous and even heroic decisions. It can unleash new energies and kindle new hope in individuals and communities."*

Parish Pastoral Council Discernment gathering

Following the nomination of parishioners for membership of a Parish Pastoral Council for St Alipius' Parish, those nominated were invited to attend a discernment gathering on Monday evening December 16th. Some of the those nominated declined the invitation, some didn't respond. The gathering was attended by John Clonan, Jason & Terresa Fletcher, Brett Holloway, Sharon McCartin, Olivia McKeegan, Martin McGettigan, Kristen Murray, Paul & Lucy O'Beirne, Cathy Prunty, Clare Stewart, Margaret Tuddenham, Fr Justin and Rachel McLoughlin IBVM who facilitated this first gathering at which those nominated introduced themselves and their response to being nominated by parishioners.

The gathering explored Pope Francis' vision for a Synodal Church, a Church on the journey together which is expressed in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* and his vision for parishes based on the hope of missionary creativity.

Pope Francis identifies 7 aspects of Parish life: *an environment for hearing God's Word, growth in Christian life, dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship, and celebration.*

The gathering participated in discernment exercise to identify the fruits of the Spirit in St Alipius' Parish . Rather than adopt an existing model of Parish Council, the group will continue meet and be facilitated by Rachel McLoughlin over the first half of 2020 to discern the identity and mission of the Parish and the most appropriate leadership structure.