



Parish of Timboon

St Joseph's Timboon & St Andrew's Simpson
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WE ARE A CHILD SAFE PARISH.



Our Sick: Bailey Delaney, Pat Thornton, Patrick Giblin, Bernadette Moloney

Pray for Anniversaries occurring in January including :

Vera Hickey, Madge Boyle, Bill Haig, Patrick F Nicholson, Greg O'Flynn, Peg Duffy, Laurie Loft, Nancy Nugent, Jim Rylance Snr., Brian Fleming, Patricia Gaut, Ann Dodd, Bob Maslin, Catherine Dendle, Gertruda Heyden.



Dear Friends

This weekend we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. This feast proclaims the revelation of God to the whole world. God reveals and makes Himself accessible to the entirety of humanity. This feast also invites us to reflect on two truths about life.

The first one is: Life is a call. God invites us to a life of union with Him. Everyone is called — no one is excluded. God wants all to be saved and calls us from our old way of life to a new life with Him. But if we, like Herod, hold on to power and position, money and comfort, prestige and popularity, will turn a deaf ear to God and ignore His call.

Secondly: Our life is a journey towards God, who always makes it easy for us to find him. He gives us directions but leaves us free to use them. Unfortunately, there are other "stars" like wealth, authority, success, egoism and secularism — that could us astray. These can block our vision and keep us from seeing the true star leading us to God. Thus only Jesus, the true star, can take us home to God. If Jesus guiding us in our journey, we will always find our way back to God. So let us follow the true star Jesus in our life and ask him to take us home to God.

Neville

Plenary Council Update The journey to the Plenary Council 2020 continues. While it is in a context more different than we could have ever expected, the need to pray, discern and listen to the Holy Spirit and each other is more important than ever.

Discernment Papers:

The six discernment papers have been released and are available at <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/continuing-the-journey-of-discernment/ead>.

Happy New Year

To our Parishioners and Visitors

Best wishes for 2021 and may the year bring us joy and gladness and those particular worries and concerns of 2020 be put to rest.

May God bless you every day of the New Year



Mass this Sunday at St Andrew's Simpson at 9:00 a.m.

From the start of the New Year the planned schedule is:

- 1st Sunday — Service at St Andrew's**
- 2nd Sunday — Assembly at St Andrew's**
- 3rd Sunday — Service at St Joseph's**
- 4th Sunday — Assembly at St Joseph's**
- 5th Sunday — Service at St Joseph's**
- All beginning at 9:00 a.m.**

Year of St Joseph

Pope Francis on December 8, 2020 published an Apostolic Letter *Patris corde* (With a Father's Heart), commemorating the 150th anniversary of the declaration of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church.

To mark the occasion, the Holy Father has proclaimed a "Year of St Joseph", running from December 8, 2020 to December 8, 2021. A number of resources are being developed by the ACBC to encourage and support the celebration of the Year of St Joseph.

The resources are available from the ACBC website: <https://catholic.org.au/yearofstjoseph>

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19)

Bishop Paul Bird CSsR has issued information regarding gatherings in places of worship now that restrictions have eased in regional Victoria. All updates are on the diocesan website "news" section www.ballarat.catholic.org.au.

You can sign in at the church using the displayed QR code with a smart device. To use this code download the "Service Victoria" app from the apple app store or google play store. When you enter the church either use the QR Code or sign the attendance sheet.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Sunday 03 Jan 2021

The Epiphany of the Lord

First Reading

Is 60:1-6

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The glory of the Lord shines upon you.

Arise, shine out, Jerusalem, for your light has come,
the glory of the Lord is rising on you,
though night still covers the earth
and darkness the peoples.

Above you the Lord now rises
and above you his glory appears.

The nations come to your light
and kings to your dawning brightness.

Lift up your eyes and look round:
all are assembling and coming towards you,
your sons from far away
and your daughters being tenderly carried.

At this sight you will grow radiant,
your heart throbbing and full;
since the riches of the sea will flow to you;
the wealth of the nations come to you;

camels in throngs will cover you,
and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
everyone in Sheba will come,
bringing gold and incense
and singing the praise of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 71:1-2. 7-8. 10-13, R. see v.11

(R.) Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

1. O God, give your judgement to the king,
to a king's son your justice,
that he may judge your people in justice
and your poor in right judgement. (R.)
2. In his days justice shall flourish
and peace till the moon fails.
He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the Great River to earth's bounds. (R.)
3. The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts
shall pay him tribute.
The kings of Sheba and Seba
shall bring him gifts.
Before him all kings shall fall prostrate,
all nations shall serve him. (R.)
4. For he shall save the poor when they cry
and the needy who are helpless.
He will have pity on the weak
and save the lives of the poor. (R.)

Second Reading

Eph 3:2-3. 5-6

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

The revelation means that pagans now share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the same body.

You have probably heard how I have been entrusted by God with the grace he meant for you, and that it was by a revelation that I was given the knowledge of the mystery. This mystery that has now been revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets was unknown to any men in past generations; it means that pagans now share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the same body, and that the same promise has been made to them, in Christ Jesus, through the gospel.

Gospel Acclamation

Mt 2:2

Alleluia, alleluia!

We have seen his star in the East;
and have come to adore the Lord.

Alleluia!

Gospel

Mt 2:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

We have come from the East to worship the king.

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east. 'Where is the infant king of the Jews?' they asked. 'We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 'At Bethlehem in Judaea,' they told him, 'for this is what the prophet wrote:

And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah,
for out of you will come a leader
who will shepherd my people Israel.'

Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared, and sent them on to Bethlehem. 'Go and find out all about the child,' he said 'and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And there in front of them was the star they had seen rising; it went forward and halted over the place where the child was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

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HOMILY by Fr Michael Tate *Stars and Seekers after Truth*

There is a fascination with stars: their beauty shining and sparkling in the dark canopy of the night; amazement and wonder at their number and extent. And who amongst us hasn't stolen a furtive glance at the horoscopes, half humorously checking 'what the stars hold for me'.

The Magi, the wise men in today's gospel story, were not like the writers of our horoscope columns. They were astronomers – astrologers from ancient religions found to 'the East' of Bethlehem, perhaps modern day Iraq or Syria.

In particular, they would have thought that the birth of those destined to be great figures would be signalled by unusual constellations of events in the night sky. They really believed that stars greatly influenced and controlled the destiny of human beings.

But, *these* Magi were open to the insights of other religious traditions. And it was that combination of their own religion of astrology and their reading about Jewish expectations of a wonderful person who would inaugurate a new epoch of history, which led them to: To what? To whom?

To Jesus, in a nondescript dwelling, in a nondescript town, hovered over by an exhausted Mary and a protective Joseph.

This would be a most unexpected culmination of their journey.

Yet, because they were genuine seekers after truth, they were open enough to see in this baby what their own religious teaching had prepared them for, even as they were led beyond that religious system.

They were the first non-Jewish people to kneel before that infant. They did homage to this baby. Why? I think it was because they realised that the stars did not control *this* infant.

On the contrary: 'There is something in *this* baby which *caused* the night sky to respond. *This* baby is responsible for the movement of the stars!'

They were sufficiently filled with wonder that they preserved the child from the deadly schemes of Herod, not reporting where they had found him.

And, then they returned to their home country, 'by a different way'. They were on a different journey after encountering the Child.

What does this Gospel passage hold for us today?

Who can doubt that the Holy Spirit led these wise men from the East to the manger? In fact, the Holy Spirit is at work in every human being, prompting each and every one to become seekers after Truth.

People may be trapped in the limiting language of their astrology or Buddhism, or an ideology such as atheism or whatever. Of course, those systems of thought cannot save anyone.

But, individually and personally, Buddhists and atheists and astrologers can be set on a journey towards 'the Love which moves the sun and all the stars' (Dante).

As a person responds to the (often anonymous) prompting of the Holy Spirit and tries to lead a good humane life, then the Church teaches that the Holy Spirit can draw them into the saving life of God.

This is where we differ drastically from some fundamentalists. The Catholic Church believes that the billions in China and India, who have never heard the Gospel, can be saved.

But, such persons, even leading humane lives, do not savour the fullness of Truth as we do with the privilege of having the scriptures and the sacraments. Where it is possible, we are obliged to offer them the road map to the Truth.

That Truth which we have the privilege of understanding leads us to accept the claims made on us by the baby to whom the Astrologers paid homage:

We understand and accept

that *He* is the Body Language of God,

that *He* is 'God with us', Emmanuel,

that *He* is The Answer to all the seeking after truth and the yearning of the human heart.

O come, let us adore *Him*.

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