



Holy Spirit  
Parish  
Gariwerd

# THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS) NIGHT

St Patrick's Stawell, Immaculate Conception Ararat, St Francis of Assisi Landsborough and St Bernard's Lake Bolac form Holy Spirit Parish, Gariwerd.

We acknowledge recognise and respect the elders and families of the Barengi Gadjin and Eastern Maar people, the traditional owners of the land on which our parish gathers. We commit ourselves to walking in unity with our First Nations people.

## First Reading

Isaiah 9:1-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

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 95:1-3. 11-13 R. Lk 2:11

(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. (R.)

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

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. (R.)

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

## Second Reading

Titus 2:11-14

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Titus

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.

## Gospel 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 2:1-14

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke  
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:

**'Glory to God in the highest heaven  
and peace to people who enjoy God's favour.'**

# Information – Holy Spirit Parish, Gariwerd

**Parish Priest** Fr. Andrew Hayes [andrew.hayes@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:andrew.hayes@ballarat.catholic.org.au)  
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## Mass Times

**Ararat** Sunday 8.30am  
**Stawell** Sunday 10.30am  
**Lake Bolac** 1<sup>st</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays 6.30pm Vigil Sat  
**Landsborough** 2<sup>nd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays 12.30pm  
**Glenthompson** (Hamilton Parish) 2<sup>nd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays 8.30am

## Readings for next Sunday

31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2023  
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph Year B  
Sirach 3:2-6.12-14/Colossians 3:12-21/Luke 2:22,39-40

## Changes to Mass Times this Week

Tues 26<sup>th</sup> Stawell Cancelled / Wed 27<sup>th</sup> ARV - Cancelled  
Other days as normal.

## Weekday Masses (usual schedule)

**Tuesday:** 10am Stawell (Check bulletin for occasional changes)  
**Wednesday:** Aged Care  
**Thursday:** 2.30pm Hopkins  
**Friday:** 11am Ararat (Check bulletin for occasional changes)

## Aged Care Roster

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday 11.15am Eventide  
2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday 11am Lowe St  
3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday 10.30am Garden View  
4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday 10am ARVillage

**Christmas Eve** Sunday 24 December

<b>8.30am</b>	<b>Ararat</b> (simple Mass)	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Stawell</b> (simple Mass)
<b>12.30pm</b>	<b>Landsborough</b> (Christmas Mass)	<b>6pm</b>	<b>Stawell</b> (Christmas Mass with Carols at 5.30pm)
<b>7.30pm</b>	<b>Ararat</b> (Christmas Mass)	<b>9.15pm</b>	<b>Lake Bolac</b> (Christmas Mass)

## Anniversaries

Christina O'Brien, Roslyn Lillis, Jean Rolfe, Leo Stewart 1985, Ellen Byrne, Anne Gregan 1954, Mary Clarkson 1976, Alex Haslett, William Casanova, Fr. Stephen O'Rourke, Lily Jones 1991, Stephen Pyke 1991, Stephan Sugden, Oliver Schwab, Norman Joseph Rowe, Maude Doecke 1961, Michael Young 1965, Patrick Phelan 1965, Rita Lardner, Jean McGuan 1992, Bill Foo 1984, Rose Hogan, Fr Michael Glennen, Jack Brennan, Vera Cox, Kevin Richards, Carl Spies, Heather Rose Allan 1981, Mary Rutter 1986, Timothy Shanahan 1991, Maurice Diggle, Sr. Rose Day RSM, Peter Newall 1973.

**Lake Bolac Roster** Sun Dec 24<sup>th</sup> 9.15pm  
Sun Dec 30<sup>th</sup> Reader Mick Brennan/ Prayers of Faithful Tricia Higgins

**Ararat Roster** Sun Dec 24<sup>th</sup> 8.30am and 7.30pm  
Sun Dec 31<sup>ST</sup> Facilitator Pat L /Reader Teresa /Euch Min Mary C

**Stawell Roster** Sun Dec 24<sup>th</sup> 10.30am S/Minister K Ashton/Reader M R Thomas/ Offer M McGaffin  
Sun Dec 24<sup>th</sup> 6pm S/Minister M Maestros /Reader K Dallinger/ Offertory G Pascall  
Sun Dec 31<sup>ST</sup> S/Minister M Rowe /Reader D O'Donnell/Offertory Heenan Family

**Catholic Mission thanks the parish of Gariwerd** for your support of this year's World Mission Day Appeal. Your generosity has empowered Church workers across 1047 mission dioceses, allowing them to spread the message of hope and love within their local communities. Your contribution of \$50.00 has been most gratefully received. Through your partnership with Catholic Mission, Sr. Carolina in Timor-Leste can continue providing life-saving treatment and essential resources for health, education and well-being. Your gift not only transforms individual lives but also fuels mission programs globally, reaching out to those in dire need. Many thanks!

**Sunday Dinner.** A young couple invited their priest for Sunday dinner. While they were in the kitchen preparing the meal, the priest asked their son what they were having. "Goat", the little boy replied, "Goat?" replied the priest, Are you sure about that?" "Yes, said the little boy. "I heard Dad say to mum, We might as well have the old goat for dinner today as any other day."

## **Christmas Message - Fr Andrew**

It's all kinds of an affair the birth of a baby! I have two new great nieces in recent months. Welcome to the world Maeva and Keeley. As another year comes to a close it's a good time to wonder both what might have been and what will be. Christmas Eve's first reading is a reading of hope and better times. "The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light..." My hope for every parishioner is that 2023 has been decent and that 2024 will be better. Christmas isn't so much about that I suppose. Wishing for a better 2024 is for New Year's Eve. Christmas at its core is God breaking into the world to renew us, to raise us up and to call us to be people who give glory to God. So let's do that. I do wish to take this opportunity to thank every parishioner who has worked to make the place go around, the lawn mowers, vacuumers, flower people, cooks, fixers, collectors, readers, givers of money, committee members, liturgy people, funeral organisers, Op Shop people ... I am very thankful for the parish staff. Good job! Today is the 21<sup>st</sup> of December. I hope the gravy is good on Christmas Day. Have a blessed Christmas everyone.

## **Christmas Message 2023 - from Bishop Paul Bird CSsR**

In these days leading up to Christmas, I am pleased to have the chance to say hullo and offer you my best wishes as we prepare for the feast. I wish you peace and joy as we celebrate the birth of Christ. Yet, even as I say this, I realise that, for a lot of people around the world, peace and joy seem far away. In many places, there is little peace or joy. Rather, there is war and sorrow. There is conflict in the Holy Land. There are ongoing battles in Ukraine. These are two of the many wars that are bringing destruction and sorrow around the world. Soon we will be celebrating Christmas. We will read of the angel appearing to the shepherds announcing the birth of the Saviour. We will hear that a whole host of angels then joined in singing, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace." (Luke 2:8-14) The birth of Christ was a cause of great rejoicing. His birth prompted praise of God in heaven. His birth also promised peace to people on earth. Jesus came offering the gift of peace. Unfortunately, people did not always accept this gift. This brought sadness to the heart of Christ. In the gospel of Luke we read of Jesus weeping because people were not accepting the gift of peace that he offered. In chapter 2 of his gospel, St Luke writes of the joy at Christ's birth. But then, in chapter 19, he writes of Christ's sorrow as he looked over the city of Jerusalem. "As Jesus drew near Jerusalem and came in sight of the city he shed tears over it and said, 'If you in your turn had only understood on this day the message of peace! But, alas, it is hidden from your eyes!'" We might find a particular sadness in those verses at the moment as we think of the situation in Jerusalem and the Holy Land at the present time. In Jerusalem there is great tension. In the Holy Land there is much suffering. As Jesus wept over Jerusalem long ago, we might well weep over the Holy Land today. Yet, it is important not to lose hope. It is important to continue to pray and work for peace. For this, we have the example of Jesus himself. Jesus was deeply saddened when people did not accept his gift of peace. Yet, he continued to offer the gift. After he rose from the dead, his first words to his disciples were, "Peace be with you." As we move towards Christmas, I pray the same for you. Peace be with you. Even as we hear of wars around the world, I pray that you might be blessed with peace. I pray that our world might be blessed with peace. We reflect in sorrow on the suffering in the Holy Land and Ukraine and many other places. Yet, we can continue to pray that conflicts might be ended and sorrow might turn to joy. May this Christmas bring peace and joy to you and your family. May this Christmas bring some peace and joy to our world. Merry Christmas, one and all. God bless us, everyone. Bishop Paul Bird CSsR

## **57th World Day of Peace – January 1, 2024**

Pope Francis' message for the 57<sup>th</sup> World Day of Peace, "Artificial Intelligence and Peace" is available from <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/20231208-messaggio-57giornatamondiale-pace2024.html>

**An elderly man in Sydney** calls his son in Perth and says, "I hate to ruin your day son, but I have to tell you that your mother and I are getting a divorce; 45 years of marriage. .. and I can only take so much of this misery!" "Dad, what are you talking about?" the son yells. "We can't stand the sight of each other any longer," the old bloke explains. "We're sick of each other, and I'm sick of talking about this, so you call your sister in Adelaide and tell her!" Frantic, the son calls his sister, who shouts. "Absolute rubbish! They're not getting divorced. I'll take care of this." She calls her elderly father immediately, and screams at him, "You are not getting divorced. Don't do a single thing until I get there. I'm calling my brother back, and we'll both be in Sydney by the end of the week. Until then, don't do a thing, you hear me?" she yells and hangs up abruptly. The old man puts the phone down, smiles, and turns to his wife. "Okay," he says. "It's all settled. They're both coming for Christmas and paying their own air-fare."

## Lectionary Art and Reflection by Jenny Close/Reflection by Artist

John's gospel focuses on the cosmic and awesome aspects of the Incarnation: Jesus is the Word made flesh and also 'the light that shines in the dark' and which 'the darkness could not overpower'. In this poetic imaging, Jesus is the quintessential example of God's self-expression in the stuff of creation.

### REFLECTION by Dianne Bergant CSA

Today the Christmas celebration gains a new depth of theological meaning. At midnight, the birth in history was proclaimed. At dawn, the initiative of God's gift was declared and the community's joyful gratitude was announced. In this third celebration, the identity of Christ and the new way of life that he brings is announced. If our eyes are open and alert, we can see that God has won a victory for us, one that is tangible and realised in our midst. It is an overwhelming victory, one that permanently conquers the enemy. This victory has a profound impact on every place, every time and every people. The birth of the infant, the king in David's line, promises salvation to all who long for it. This salvation is a new vision of wisdom, one that has been realised in Christ, God's agent of grace in the world. It is a new world, one of inclusivity and of righteous honour. It is a new age, one that is ushered in by the child who is leading a victory procession.

Ultimately, only eyes of faith allow us to see the fullness of God's revelation. The glory of the infant king is the very presence of God made flesh. Jesus is the eternal incarnate Word who has pitched his tent among us. Ours is not a distant God; the incarnate wisdom of God is among us, and we are called to a change of heart that will allow us to see this wonder.

### REFLECTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE – by Lisa-Marie Calderone-Stewart

For people surrounded by department store decorations, commercials, Christmas carols, special foods, and the like, believing that today's Christmas celebration actually evolved from the humble story of a young woman giving birth in the straw is a stretch. It might help to focus on the characters involved. What do you think went through Joseph's mind as he witnessed Mary giving birth to a baby? What do you think went through Mary's mind as she struggled with the birth experience? The Christmas story is full of symbols. Jesus, who becomes our bread and wine – our nourishment – is laid in a manger, the feeding trough for the animals. Jesus, who is the champion of poor people, is born into a homeless family. Poor shepherds were the first to welcome the Messiah that the Jewish people had been awaiting for generations. The symbol of angels singing, praising God, and flying madly all over the sky was a good clue that something out of the ordinary was happening. Modern Christmas stories use different symbols to make the same points: Rudolph, the 'poorest' reindeer, becomes the champion; and Frosty, a snowman, transforms children's lives.

### Historical Context – The Nativity scene

St Francis of Assisi is credited with setting up the first nativity scene and thus establishing a tradition that is carried on today in homes, churches and public spaces in Christian communities everywhere. In 1223, in the town of Greccio he created a life size tableau of the nativity scene to heighten the awareness of the celebration of the birth of Christ. It included statues of the holy family and a live ox and donkey. The inclusion of the livestock has no scriptural support and it is to Francis that we owe the array of sheep, oxen and donkeys that have become standard inclusions in our nativity scenes.

