



St Anthony's Parish

67-75 EXFORD ROAD, MELTON SOUTH, 3338.
P.O BOX 2152 MELTON SOUTH 3338
TEL: 9747 9692



St Bernard's Parish

61 LERDERBERG STREET, BACCHUS MARSH 3340
TEL: 5367 2069
OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, KOROBET
309 MYRNIONG-KOROBET ROAD 3341

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT-YEAR A

18th December 2022

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Fabian Smith
ASSISTANT PRIESTS: Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint and Fr Samuel Kapani

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Lesley Morffew

Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson

Parish Office Hours: Mon 9.00am-12noon

Tue-9.00-4.00pm Wed 9.00-5.30pm

Thu/Fri 9.00-4.00pm

Email: parishsecretary83@gmail.com

Website: www.stanthonyofpadua.com.au

St Anthony's School **Principal:** Damien Schuster

Wilson Road, Melton South 3338

Phone: 8099 7800

Email: principal@sameltonsth.catholic.edu.au

Website: www.sameltonsth.catholic.edu.au

St Lawrence of Brindisi School **Principal:** Bill Hill

31 Waterway Boulevard, Weir Views, 3338

Phone: 8099 6699

Email: principal@slweirviews.catholic.edu.au

Website: www.slweirviews.catholic.edu.au

ST BERNARD'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Dolores Turcsan

Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson

Sacramental Coordinator/ Bookkeeper:

Naim Chdid

Parish Office Hours:

Tue 9.00am-11.30am Wed & Thu 9.00am-1.00pm

Email: bacchusmarsh@cam.org.au

Website: www.stbernardsbacchusmarsh.com.au

Facebook link:

<https://www.facebook.com/stbernardsbacchusmarsh>

St Bernard's School

Principal: Sr Mary Sarah Galbraith

19a Gisborne Rd, Bacchus Marsh VIC 3340

Phone: (03) 5366 5800

Email: principal@sbbacchusmarsh.catholic.edu.au

Website: www.sbbacchusmarsh.catholic.edu.au

Catholic Regional College - Melton (Years 7-12)

Principal: Marlene Jorgensen **Phone:** 8099 6000

109-141 Bulmans Rd, West Melton, 3337 **Website:** www.crcmelton.com.au

If you need a Priest in the case of a genuine emergency please call 0403 435 471

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

Naim Chid	0437 004 790
Lillian Christian - Vice Chair	0400 441 257
Stephen Fernandes	0439 743 533
Amy Honrade	0457 042 695
Natalie Howard - Chair	0492 947 201
Rose Ma'ae	0460 672 571

EX-OFFICIO: Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint,
Fr Samuel Kapani, Damien Schuster and Bill Hill
Council Secretary: Judy Johnson

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

Shane Cook -School Advisory Board	0419 999 052
Peter Farren	0418 594 501
Peter Kennedy - Secretary	0407 778 119
Moir Ross	0400 675 056
Aaron Russell - Chair	0401 927 502

EX-OFFICIO:

Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint and Fr Samuel Kapani
Sr Mary Sarah Galbraith

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Coordinator/Officer: Godwin Barton (0425 734 449) **Officers:** St Anthony's - Lorraine Tellis 0437 658 423 & Geetha Vincent 0478 112 996
St Bernard's - Margaret Love (0437 247 779) Evana Miesen & Ron Geurts

Items for the newsletter must be submitted by Tuesday 6.00pm. Please email judyparishnews@gmail.com or call 0414 007 009

Judy Johnson's office hours: Mon-Wed 9am-1pm

MASS AND DEVOTIONS

ST ANTHONY'S MELTON SOUTH 19/12/2022-1/01/2023

MASS TIMES:

Monday 19/12	6.30pm
Tuesday 20/12	9.30am & 6.30pm
Tuesday 20/12	Sacrament of Reconciliation 6.00pm-7.30pm
Wednesday 21/12	9.30am
Thursday 22/12	9.30am
Friday 23/12	9.30am

CHRISTMAS SERVICES CAROLS PRECEEDING ALL MASSES

Christmas Eve - 24th Dec	5.30pm
Christmas Eve - 24th Dec	8.00pm
Christmas Day - 25th Dec	Midnight
Christmas Day- 25th Dec	8.30am
Christmas Day- 25th Dec	10.30am

Monday 26/12	No Mass
Tuesday 27/12	6.30pm
Wednesday 28/12	9.30am
Thursday 29/12	9.30am
Friday 30/12	9.30am

Sunday Masses

Saturday 31/12	5.00pm
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New Year's Eve 11.00pm Adoration/Benediction/Rosary and Mass at Midnight

Sunday 1/1	8.30am & 10.30am
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ST BERNARD'S BACCHUS MARSH 19/12/2022-1/01/2023

MASS TIMES:

Monday 19/12	No Mass
Tuesday 20/12 (No Holy Hour)	9.30am
Wednesday 21/12	9.30am
Wednesday 21/12	Sacrament of Reconciliation 7.00pm-8.00pm
Thursday 22/12	9.30am
Friday 23/12	9.30am

CHRISTMAS SERVICES CAROLS PRECEEDING ALL MASSES

Christmas Eve - 24th Dec	6.30pm Mass
Christmas Eve (Korobeit)	8.30pm Mass
Christmas Eve - 24th Dec	10.00pm Mass
Christmas Day- 25th Dec	8.30am Mass
Christmas Day- 25th Dec	10.30am Mass

Monday 26/12	No Mass
Tuesday 27/12 (No Holy Hour)	9.30am
Wednesday 28/12	9.30am
Thursday 29/12	9.30am
Friday 30/12	9.30am

Sunday Masses

Saturday 31/12	5.00pm
Sunday 1/1	8.30am & 10.30am

PARISHIONER'S FIRST COLLECTION/SECOND COLLECTION

Parishioners who normally give cash each weekend for the collections, if they wish to donate, are now able to go to the link below and make their payments online.

The link to the St Anthony's Parish is: <https://bit.ly/CDFpayMeltonSouth>

The link to the St Bernard's Parish is: <https://bit.ly/CDFpayBacchusMarsh> Please put your name and thanksgiving number if you know it as a reference.

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

KOROBET

MASS TIMES

CHRISTMAS EVE	24/12	8.30pm
VIGIL	31/12	6.30pm

REFLECTION 4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR A-Sr Mary Fermio

For parents, and sometimes even more for the father, the birth of a child is a life-changing event. This expression of a couple's love draws them closer and the miracle of new life brings love and wonder into this family.

So one can imagine Joseph's confusion, when Mary's pregnancy was visible, he knowing he was not the father. To publicly denounce her would mean her death and he loved her too much for that. So he decided he would free her if she loved someone else. He must have prayed much to do the right thing. God came to his rescue and assured him all was okay and to take Mary as his wife, for this child was meant for greatness. And like Mary, Joseph willingly took on this responsibility.

The future lies hidden from Joseph, just as the future of any child is hidden from the parents.

Mary and Joseph trust the future into God's hands. Perhaps this is the image we all need today – to trust the future to God. We look at the crib scenes of Jesus resting peacefully in Mary's arms or the crib. Can I dare to place myself so peacefully in the arms of God – Emmanuel – God-with-us?

May this loving God bring life and peace to your homes this Christmas.



PARISH & EVENTS NOTICES

NEWS FROM THE PARISH OFFICES

FAITH FORMATION Sessions begin at 7.00pm every Tuesday at St Anthony's Church of Padua, 67-75 Exford Road, Melton South (Age 16+) Faith Formation talks coming up: **20th December**– Sr Mary Ruth– Natural Law. This will be our last session for the year and we will resume 24th January 2023.

MELBOURNE OVERSEAS MISSION SPECIAL COLLECTION

Last weekend we had a special collection for Melbourne Overseas Mission. St Anthony's Parish collected \$660.00 and St Bernard's Parish collected \$376.65. Thank you for your generosity.

SAVE THE DATE St Anthony of Padua Catholic Parish, Melton South would like to invite you to Reign 2023

Theme: "SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD", Matthew 6:33

A program for youth aged 15+ to learn more and deepen their spirituality as young Australian Catholics.

It will be a weekend filled with inspirational talks, activities, sacraments, prayer and most of all an intimate encounter with Our Lord and Our Lady, pillars of our Catholic faith. Dates: January 13-15, 2023 Times: 9:00am - 6:00pm

Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/998905>

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Dear Parishioners please note there will be no newsletter next Sunday –Christmas Day, and on the weekends of the 1st and 8th January 2023, we will publish a 'holiday' version of the newsletter. The parish offices will be closed for 2 weeks over the Christmas/New Year period. (See below). **PLEASE SEE THE MASS TIMETABLE ON PAGE 2.**

MONDAY EVENING ADVENT REFLECTION

Reflection talks are held at St. Anthony's in the MacKillop room from 7.00pm to 8.30pm. **Monday 19th** will be the last of the Advent Reflections and will be on THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD.

WEDNESDAY EVENING ADVENT TALKS The Advent Talks are held on Wednesdays at St Anthony's in the MacKillop room from 6.00pm-7.15pm. **Wednesday 21st December**– The visit of a "great prophet" (Lk 7:16)

ST ANTHONY'S

RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation will be held at St Anthony's Church on **Tuesday 20th December 2022– 6.00pm-7.30pm**

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

If you or your family are spending Christmas alone this year we would like to invite you to join us in the Padua Hall for lunch on Christmas day. Time: 12.00 noon– 4.30pm. Please add your name to the clipboard in the foyer. For more information contact Elizabeth 0422 882 562.



CHRISTMAS FLOWER DONATIONS

If you would like to contribute to the cost of the flowers for our Christmas services, please place your donation in the box provided on the sanctuary. Thank you.

BINGO- CHRISTMAS BREAK

Our last night for Bingo in 2022 will be Tuesday 20th December and we will return in 2023 on the Tuesday 17th January.

ST BERNARD'S

RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation will be held at St Bernard's Church on **Wednesday 21st December 2022– 7.00pm-8.00pm**

FUNDRAISING CHRISTMAS SOCIAL EVENT AND ADVENT PAGEANT -DECEMBER 18TH.

We are holding Cake Stalls after every Mass over the weekend of **17th/18th December**. There will be a beautiful Advent Pageant held in the hall after the 10.30am Mass with tea and coffee served, followed by the raffling of prizes, Fundraising BBQ, and then fun games and races for the children - and a visit from Santa. Please come and enjoy the Christmas spirit with our friendly community! (Cash preferred but eftpos available).

ST VINCENT de PAUL BACCHUS MARSH

Bacchus Marsh Conference will be providing hampers to families we have assisted throughout the year. If you would like to make a contribution to the cost, please contact Margot Short 0419 507 438 or Peter Kennedy 0407 778 119. Cash donations can be placed in the St Vincent de Paul Poor Box which is located on the end of the seat directly opposite the Church entrance.

HISTORY REQUEST 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF

ST BERNARD'S CHURCH Please see notice available for collection in the gathering space.

St Anthony's Parish Office will be closed from the 24th Dec and reopen on the 9th Jan.
St Bernard's Parish Office will be closed from the 23rd Dec and reopen on the 10th Jan.
We wish all our Parishioners a very Happy & Holy Christmas
and a Joyful & Peaceful New Year.
Best wishes from Lesley, Dolores, Naim and Judy



OH HOLY NIGHT!

WORSHIP NEWS

ALL VOLUNTEERS IN OUR PARISH MUST HAVE A CURRENT VALID WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK AND A CODE OF CONDUCT FORM SIGNED.

ST ANTHONY'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 24th & 25th December
Please present yourself to the Mass Coordinator
15 minutes before the scheduled Mass time or a replacement
will be found. Thank you.

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

To be advised

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

To be advised

MASS COORDINATORS

24th December

5.30pm: Coleen & Godwin
8.00pm: Julie & Lillian

25th December

Midnight: Annonika & Godwin
8.30am: Lillian & Godwin
10.30am Annonika & Godwin

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for those whose death anniversaries occur at this time:

Noe Taupi Asiata, Consiliya Bonnici, Andrea Butcher, Eustace Christian & Dan Hassett

Please pray for the Sick:

Hazel Michael, Nickolia & Klara Butkovic, Maria Caruana, Mary Caruana, Christabelle, Lydia De Vega, Melanie Fue, Bruce Hynes, Kotinis Cornelia Kani, Judy Layton, Peter Manicaro, Reg Marslen, Lisa Melia, Damien Michael, Tony Michael, Veronica Michael, Nickol, Ian Novak, Caleb O'Brien, John Osborne, Catherine Roberts, Peter Roberts, Pat Roberts, Samantha Smith, Charlie Spiteri, Janko Stojanovic, Christina Tuigamala, Uatoa Tuigamala, Clint Abela Wadge, Wai Walsh and all those who have requested our prayers. **PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED ON THIS LIST.**

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Father we lift up all those who are facing illness. We ask that You bring healing, comfort and peace to their bodies. Calm their fears and let them experience the healing power of your love.
 Amen



ST BERNARD'S MINISTRIES

MINISTERS OF THE WORD : THIS WEEKEND

5.00pm: Vikki Benson
8.30am: Dominican Sisters
10.30am: Dudley Rodrigues

MINISTERS OF THE WORD: 24th & 25th December

To be advised

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

December: Jan Carragher

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for those whose death anniversaries occur at this time:

Patrick Green, Raymond Hare, Walter Ibbs, Michael Kenny, Kevin Long, Michael Marshall, Eddie Mullane, Imelda Pace, Pat Pigott, Sheila Rice, Vicki Riddell, Jane Sammut, Brian Shanahan, Alice Sloan, & Joan Younger.

Please pray for the Sick:

Patricia Allison, Noah Barlow, Chaiel Balcombe, Michael Barrett, Peter Bennett, Steven Braszel, Tina Bower, Fred Capuano, Gary Ching, Chris, Josephine Cilia, Robyn Cola, Ted Cooling, Lindsay & Kathleen Dally, Judy Delahey, Theresa Dockter, Allison Evans, Helen Evans, George Farrell, Justin Fernandez, Pasquale Gagliarbi, Mario Galea, Cynthia Goodyear, Gwen Green, Joe Gristi, Adam Hillier, Leonie Kervin, Elle Hillman, Kiahni Holamotutama, Alicia Holborn, Chaiel Jackson, Matthew Jansen, David Kasprzak, Michael Larkin, Marie Maloney, Patricia Marechal, Brian Marshall, Debbie Marshall, Jordanis Mary Pauline McDonald, Ian McKechnie, Marcus Meno, Paul Mullin, Arthur Pape, Michael Paterson, Georgia Peacock, Mitchell Prendergast, Peter Roberts, Ken Shaw, Terry Sims, Marian Smith, Elizabeth Stehmann, Colin Taffe, Catherine Time, Susan Trist, Stephen Van Eede, John Van Orsouw, Angela Vicum, Louis Vogels, Barry Walsh, Cath Wheelahan, Jayne Wilkins, Patricia Yazbek, Betty Young and all those who have requested our prayers. **PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED ON THIS LIST.**

SERVICE / COMMUNITY

ALL VOLUNTEERS IN OUR PARISH MUST HAVE A CURRENT VALID WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK AND A CODE OF CONDUCT FORM SIGNED.

ST ANTHONY'S

WEEKEND VOLUNTEERS: 24th & 25th December

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

5.00pm Vigil:

8.30am:

10.30am:

CUPPA VOLUNTEERS

Cuppa Weekend will resume in 2023. Thank you to all our volunteers that helped put on our cuppa weekends in 2022.



CHURCH FLOWERS

December: Gloria

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

Welfare Number: 1800 305 330

The Melton South Conference meet every 3rd Tuesday morning in the Meeting Room 10.30am.

New members most welcome, training provided.

Non perishable items within the use by date can be left in the 'drop box' in the Church foyer.

We cannot accept re-packaged food.

COMBINED CHURCHES CARING MELTON INC

We're here to support City of Melton residents get ahead through access to our foodbank and other community programs. It's never just about the food or the budget help, it's about recognising the beauty that is in the person and bringing it out so they can be their best.
Address: 100 Coburn Road Melton South 9747 6811

God, strengthen and sustain all those who volunteer in our Churches; that with patience and understanding they may love and care for your people; and grant that together they may follow with Jesus Christ offering to you their gifts and talents.



ST BERNARD'S

WEEKEND VOLUNTEERS : 24th & 25th December

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

Saturday: 5.00pm

Sunday: 8.30am
10.30am

CHURCH FLOWERS

December: Melinda Martin -Blooms



PRESBYTERY & CHURCH GROUNDS-MOWING

December: Colm Carragher & Ron Geurts

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY:

Welfare Number is 1800 305 330.

The Vinnies Store is now located at Shop 19, The Village, 164-190 Main Street Bacchus Marsh

The store is open 7 days a week. If you are able to volunteer and would like some more information, please contact the Store Manager on 8199 4205.

THE NEIGHBOURS PLACE

The Neighbours' Place is a Christian not-for-profit organisation whose aim is to serve people of the **Moorabool Shire**, west of Melbourne Australia, who are disadvantaged, at risk or temporarily unable to feed themselves or their family and who are in need of emergency food relief.

NILS is a **No Interest Loans Scheme** for assistance of up to \$1500 for things like white goods, furniture and minor car repairs to keep life going.

We are located at [77 Main Street, Bacchus Marsh](#)

Phone: 03 5367 6222

Email: neighbourspl@inet.net.au

Hours of Operation: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9.30am-12.30pm. Closed on public holidays.

SOUL FOOD

Soul Food provides a free community meal each Wednesday (excluding school holidays), in the Uniting Church Hall, Gisborne Rd, Bacchus Marsh. Meals are served up at 12noon. All are welcome and this is a free event. No need to book, just come along.

PARISH CENTRE BOOKING

Tel: 5367 3427 Mon—Fri 9.00am to 6.00pm

Hall Managers: Marie & Terry Casey

FAITH FORMATION

ST ANTHONY'S AND ST BERNARD'S

BAPTISM PREPARATION PROGRAM– ST ANTHONY'S AND ST BERNARD'S

Dear Parishioners

Keeping in line with the Archbishop's vision for Mission, the Parishes of St Anthony's and St Bernard's have put together a new Baptism Preparation Program, for any parents who wish to have their child Baptised. Preparations for Baptisms will take place on Saturdays alternating between both Parishes. A welcome Mass must be attended prior to the Baptism. Baptisms will be held on Saturday mornings at 11.00am. Parents must attend two sessions. Sessions will run from 12.00pm-4.00pm. Godparents must attend the 2nd session. Bookings must be made to attend these sessions.

Please visit our website for a detailed description of the new program.

[Baptism of Infants | St Anthony of Padua Catholic Parish](#) [Baptism of Infants | St Bernard's Catholic Parish](#)
(stbernardsbacchusmarsh.com.au) If you have any questions please call the Parish Office.



ADULT PREPARATION Adult preparation for the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist or Confirmation are through the R.C.I.A Program. Please see Fr Fabian, Fr Samuel or Fr Lucas .

FATIMA STATUE—ST ANTHONY'S

These families are praying together for the mission of the Parish:

Group 1: Shane & Dolly Barrow	0439 386 130
Group 2: Kalolaine & Sam Forma	0432 295 121
Group 3: Josephine German	0478 288 761

DIVINE MERCY NOVENA

1st Sunday of the Month-3.00pm



PRAYER TO ST MICHAEL

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle,
be our protection against the wickedness
and snares of the Devil; may God rebuke him,
we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the
heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits, who prowl
through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.



NEO-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

[bow during the next line]

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen



Lord, we ask you to continue
to be with us as we
' TAKE THE WAY OF THE GOSPEL '
together in prayer.
May we open ourselves to you
with a new depth of trust and conviction
in your guiding hand,
so that we may discern our journey
with compassionate and humble hearts
and come to know your Holy Spirit
Moving within and amongst us,
And so be transformed Amen.



LITURGY OF THE WORD

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

Drop down dew from above, you heavens,
and let the clouds rain down the Just One;
let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

FIRST READING Isaiah 7:10-14

The Lord spoke to Ahaz and said, 'Ask the Lord your God for a sign for yourself coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights above.' 'No,' Ahaz answered 'I will not put the Lord to the test.'

Then Isaiah said:

'Listen now, House of David:
are you not satisfied with trying the patience of men
without trying the patience of my God, too?

The Lord himself, therefore,
will give you a sign.

It is this: the maiden is with child
and will soon give birth to a son
whom she will call Emmanuel,
a name which means "God-is-with-us".'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 23

Commentator: Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

All: Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

The Lord's is the earth and its fullness,
the world and all its peoples.
It is he who set it on the seas;
on the waters he made it firm.

Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?
Who shall stand in his holy place?
The man with clean hands and pure heart,
who desires not worthless things.

He shall receive blessings from the Lord
and reward from the God who saves him.
Such are the men who seek him,
seek the face of the God of Jacob.

Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

NEXT WEEKEND'S READINGS-

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD-(DAY)

First Reading: Is 52:7-10;

Second Reading: Heb 1:1-6;

Gospel: Jn 1:1-18



SECOND READING Romans 1:1-7

From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus who has been called to be an apostle, and specially chosen to preach the Good News that God promised long ago through his prophets in the scriptures.

This news is about the Son of God, who, according to the human nature he took, was a descendant of David: it is about Jesus Christ our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in him, was proclaimed Son of God in all his power through his resurrection from the dead. Through him we received grace and our apostolic mission to preach the obedience of faith to all pagan nations in honour of his name. You are one of these nations, and by his call belong to Jesus Christ. To you all, then, who are God's beloved in Rome, called to be saints, may God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send grace and peace.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

A virgin will give birth to a son;
his name will be Emmanuel: God is with us.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 1:18-24

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'. When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son;
and his name will be called Emmanuel.

Advent 2022 Week IV

Fourth Sunday of Advent

"Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:28-33)

Today is the third of the O Antiphons, "*O Radix Jesse*" (O Root of Jesse). Christ the King, the Lord! Divine Wisdom, the powerful God, is at the same time a man with flesh and blood of the house of Jesse, the father of King David. The glory that once clothed the royal family had faded and withered, leaving only a blighted and withered root. But from this root is to spring a glorious blossom, the King of the world. "He shall rule from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Before Him the Ethiopians shall fall down and His enemies shall lick the ground. The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents: the kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall serve Him" (Psalm 71:8-11).

The First Reading this Sunday is taken from the Prophecy of Micah 5:1-4. In it we hear words of hope that focus on one who is to be born in Bethlehem and who will bring in the day of peace when all nations will look to Jerusalem. The Second Reading is from Hebrews 10:5-10. The perfect offering of Christ restores us to oneness with God. Jesus came to do the will of God perfectly. He overcame the power of evil that separates us from God and became our bridge back to God when we fall into evil. David prefigures Christ's sacrifice. The Psalm is now seen from the perspective of Christ.

The Gospel of this Sunday, Luke 1:38-45 recounts the visit of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth. An ancient title of Mary is Ark of the Covenant. The Church Fathers saw the parallels between the Old Testament wooden chest containing the divine presence and the Virgin about to give birth to Jesus.

There are several similarities between today's Gospel and the ascent of the Ark to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:1-15): 1) As the Ark is brought to Jerusalem, King David is overcome with awe, saying: "How can the Ark of the Lord come to me?" (v 9); 2) The Ark remains three months in the hill country near Jerusalem, bringing great blessings to the house of Obed-Edom (v 11); 3) King David leaps for joy, dancing before the Ark. (v 13)

In today's Gospel, Elizabeth says to Mary: "Who am I that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" She tells how the babe (John the Baptist) leaped in her womb as she became filled with the Holy Spirit. Finally, Mary remains three months with her kinswoman before returning home. This Sunday, so close to Christmas, the Church invites us to focus our attention on Mary, round-wombed because of the God-child.

Excerpted from Fr Phil Bloom

catholicculture.org

This is the last Sunday of our preparation for Christmas, the anniversary of Christ's birth. Like Joseph, we can all feel unworthy of the honour of welcoming him into our hearts and our homes. We are indeed unworthy, not because we have little of this world's goods, but because we have so little humility, so little charity, so little faith and trust in God's goodness.

Let us try to imitate Joseph and Mary, the humblest of the humble, the kindest of the kindly, and the greatest-ever believers in God's goodness and mercy. We can never hope to equal them, but we can follow them humbly, from afar.

The feast of Christmas should draw the hearts of every child of God towards the furnace of divine love. In the manger, the infinite love of God for us miserable sinners is dramatically and forcefully portrayed before our eyes. In that helpless Baby, represented by a statue, we know that the person, and the power, of the omnipotent Creator and sustainer of the universe lie hidden: "He emptied himself, taking the form of a slave" for us. He became a creature, like ourselves, so that he would make us sharers in his divine nature. He came on earth to bring us to heaven. He hid his divine nature so that he could cover us with it.

"Unsearchable indeed are the judgements of God, and inscrutable his ways." But though we are unworthy of his infinite love, it nevertheless stands out as clear as the noonday sun in the Incarnation. We realise that we can never make ourselves worthy of this infinite love, but let us imitate Joseph and accept the honour which God is giving us, as we trust that he will continue to make us daily less unworthy.

from *The Sunday Readings*,
by Fr Kevin O'Sullivan, OFM

"Come to deliver us and tarry not." The world cries out for Christ its King, who shall cast out the prince of this world (John 12:31). The prince of this world established his power over men as a result of original sin. Even after we had been delivered from the servitude of Satan through the death of Christ on the cross, the prince of this world attempts to exercise his power over us. "The devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

In these trying times, when faith in Christ and in God has largely disappeared, when the propaganda of a pagan culture is broadcast everywhere, and the forces of evil and falsehood rise up to cast God from His throne, who does not feel the power of the devil?

"Come, tarry not." Observe how thoroughly the world of today has submitted to the reign of Satan. Mankind has abandoned the search for what is good and holy. Loyalty, justice, freedom, love, and mutual trust are no longer highly regarded.

Establish, O God, Thy kingdom among us, a kingdom established upon truth, justice, and peace. "Come, tarry not." "Thy kingdom come."

From *The Light of the World*, by Benedict Baur, OSB