



St Michael's Parish

Incorporating the Churches of Holy Family Bell Park, Ss Peter & Paul's Geelong West & Holy Spirit Manifold Hts.

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OFFICE HOURS:	Mon-Wed, Fri 9am-5pm, Thurs 9-2pm.			
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Reflection by Richard Leonard SJ

Recently some Christian scientists got to work trying to explain the star that led the wise men to Bethlehem. They came up with a complicated, and no doubt plausible, astronomical theory about how a certain brilliant star may have appeared around the time of the birth of Jesus. Though I was intrigued by their methods, I wondered why they bothered. Matthew's wandering star is not about astronomy. It's religious shorthand for describing how the heavens preside over and guide the events of the world. The image of a star is used in similar ways in the Books of Deuteronomy, Numbers, Isaiah and the Psalms. This entire feast is all about symbols, not science. Reported by Hippolytus as early as the third

century, it is celebrated twelve days after Christmas, the number itself echoing God's goodness in creating and recreating us.

The wise men's star is on a par with the other images Matthew uses. At the centre of each of the first three chapters of his Gospel there is an extraordinary event. In chapter one Joseph hears the message of an angel in a dream. In chapter two the wise men find Jesus by following a star. And by chapter three the heavens open and God speaks at the baptism of the Lord. By any standards that's quite an opening to a biography! It's all about the manifestation, or epiphany, of God's glory in the world.

And let's look carefully at where and for whom this glory is revealed. The first instance is to Joseph while he's in bed asleep. The second is to gentile astrologers

who, by reporting their news to Herod, set up an immediate threat to Jesus. The third instance is to all those Jews who were coming to hear John the Baptist. Within three chapters of Matthew's Gospel the circles of God's glory revealed in Jesus become more public and change lives. The lives of Joseph, the star gazers, John the Baptist and those who heard Jesus preach will never be the same again.

The Feast of the Epiphany is not an ancient version of Halley's comet. It is about how God's glory changes human hearts. T.S. Eliot got this point in his poem 'The journey of the Magi'.

/Cont'd P3...



We wish everyone at St Michael's Parish a Happy, Holy and Safe New Year

- The Epiphany of the Lord - (Year C - January 6, 2019)

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

Arise, Jerusalem, and look to the East and see your children gathered from the rising to the setting of the sun.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Lord, every nation on earth will adore you!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Alleluia, alleluia!
We have seen his star in the East; and have come to adore the Lord.
Alleluia!

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

The Baptism of the Lord

1st Reading: Is 40:1-5,9-11
2nd Reading: Titus 2:11-14,3:4-7
Gospel: Lk 3:15-16,21-22



PARISH PRAYER:

God our Father, bless this parish so that we may love you more. Help the parents to be a good example to the children and our youth to grow in strength as good Christians.

Encircle our families with your loving care. To the sick grant health, to the aged bring serenity and to those in sorrow, joy. May we grow stronger in faith and may our love for one another become deeper in our daily living. Amen.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS:

Heavenly Father, help us to respond to and live out our mission in the Church, and in the world.

Help all your people to know their vocation in life and assist them to live it well.

For your greater glory and for the service of your people, call many to be priests and religious.

Give those whom you call the grace to respond generously and to persevere faithfully.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

ST MICHAEL'S PARISH AT PRAYER



WEEKEND MASSES:

Holy Family, Bell Park:

English... 8am and 9.30am Sunday

Croatian... 11am Sunday

Slovenian.. 12.15pm every 2nd Sunday of the month

Holy Spirit, Manifold Hts:

11am Sunday

Ss Peter & Paul's, Geelong West:

5.00pm Saturday

WEEKDAY MASSES:

Holy Family:

9.15am Tues (followed by Novena to St Anthony), 9.15am Thurs

Holy Spirit:

9.00am Wed, 11am Fri and 9am 1st Sat. **Reconciliation after Saturday Mass**

McKellar Centre:

10.15am - 1st Tuesday (3rd & 5th Communion Service)

Multicultural Centre:

1.30pm - 1st Friday;

Elstoft House (formerly Vincentian Village): 3.00pm 1st & 3rd Tuesday, (2nd & 4th Communion Service)

St John of God Hospital: 11.30am every Thursday in SJOG Chapel

BAPTISMS:

1st & 3rd Sundays 12noon at Holy Spirit, 2nd & 4th Sundays 12.30pm at Ss P&P, 3rd Sunday 2pm at Holy Family

COMMUNAL PRAYER:

Mon... Holy Family Women's Prayer Group

10.00am

Holy Family Community Centre

Tues... Meditation Group

5.30pm

Holy Family Community Centre

Wed... Prayer of the Church

Before 9am Mass

Holy Spirit Church

Wed... Holy Family Women's Prayer Group

10.00am

Holy Family Community Centre

Thurs... Italian Prayer Group

10.00am

St Patrick's Chapel

Fri... Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

After 11am Mass

Holy Spirit Church

Fri... Divine Mercy

3.00pm

Holy Spirit Church

Sat... Rosary

After 9am Mass

Holy Spirit Church

OUR LADY'S STATUE:

If anyone would like to have Our Lady's Statue or if you could spare an hour a month to help, ph Tina Montalto on 5278 9314.

AS A COMMUNITY WE PRAY FOR:

RECENT DEATHS: Mato Tadic

ANNIVERSARIES: Patricia Dickinson, Tony Langerano, Vito Cammarota, Rosa, Antonietta, Salvatore, Valentino & Giovanna Bove, Tony Langerano and 1 year anniversary of Joe Taylor

BAPTISMS: Cohen Carr, Zaeli McWilliam, Paddy Swindells and Maxwell Wyndham

PRAY FOR THE SICK: Joe Vanjek, Frank Mason, Val Howard, Kylie Kotic, Anita Capicchiano, Sandra Klinge, Allan Ansell, Marie Brown, Cheryl Lambert, Elizabeth Topic, Allan Ansell, Alexander, Val Howard, Peter Brown



PRAYING FOR ALL SOULS FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER:

Tues Jan 8... Bourke family members

Wed Jan 9... Chrimes and Cotter family members

Thurs Jan 10... Fazio family members

Fri Jan 11... Bartolo family members

Roster for Next Sunday

(2nd Sunday of the Month)

Ss PETER & PAUL'S - 5.00PM

Commentators M Carson
Lectors P Power
Special Ministers P McGlinchey
Welcomers D Dougherty
Projectionist B Middleton
Co-Ordinator M Gifford, 5229 1656

HOLY SPIRIT - 11AM

E Strzelecki
M Martin
V Trinder

R Martin

HOLY FAMILY

8.00AM
Commentators M Howard
Lectors F O'Neill
Special Ministers R Allum, J Genova, C Marcantonio
Welcomers C Marcantonio, L Allum
Projectionist R Allum
Co-Ordinator L Kelly, 0409 291 138

9.30AM

C Simpson
D Lunn, A Negro
H Verdnik, M Baird, E Glynn
V Resciniti, E Glynn
C Resciniti
J Mann, 0488 784 802

RECURRING ACTIVITIES IN ST MICHAEL'S:

St Michael's Luncheon...	First Sunday of each month at the Holy Spirit Hall from 12noon. BYO food and drink to share.
Holy Family Luncheon..	Third Sunday of each month at the Community Centre from 12noon. BYO casserole & drink to share.
Holy Family Women's Group...	First Monday evening of each month at the Community Centre 6.30pm
St Vincent de Paul...	Holy Family meet 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at the Community Centre 7pm. Holy Spirit meets 1st and 3rd Tuesdays 5.00pm in Holy Spirit Hall
Legion of Mary...	Every Friday 9.30am in the Holy Family Community Centre
Baptism Preps	4th Mondays 7.30pm in the Community Centre
Holy Family Choir Practice...	Every Wednesday night at Holy Family Church 7pm
Manifold CWL...	Holy Spirit Hall, 1st Wednesdays in the month
Italian Mass...	First Thursday of the month in St Patrick's Chapel
Catholic Diners' Club...	2nd Tues of each month, 6.15pm at Capri Receptions. Dinner/Guest Speaker - ph 0431 959 584

If you wish to know more about these groups, as well as about our Sacramental Program for children in non-Catholic schools, our Baptism and Wedding procedures, our Partnership with the Columbans in the Philippines and so on, please visit our webpage:

www.pastoralclustergeelong.org

St Michael's News:

OFFICE HOURS:

This week the office will operate on restricted hours. Please leave a message on the phone if the office is unattended. Normal office hours will resume from Monday January 14, 2019.

HEARTFELT THANKS:

To all those who played a particular role in our Christmas Liturgies - our musicians and choirs, lectors, commentators, special ministers and collectors. Thankyou very kindly for a job well done! Your efforts enable the whole community to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas - God so loved the world that He gave us His only Son.

THE COMBINED SOCIETIES OF MARY welcomes you to a beautiful **Our Lady of Lourdes Celebration** on Sunday February 10th at St Colman's Church, 293 Carlisle St Balaclava. 1.40pm Rosary and 2pm Adoration, Prayers, Benediction, Healing Mass Blessings with Lourdes Water and a Procession, with Veneration of the First Class Relic of St Bernadette.

Reflections from Pope Francis

JANUARY 1: THE GAZE OF THE LORD

I ask you: How do you abide in the presence of the Lord? When you visit the Lord, when you look at the tabernacle, what do you do? Without speaking . . . "But I speak, I talk, I think, I meditate, I listen . . ." Very good! But do you let yourself be looked at by the Lord? Letting ourselves be gazed upon by the Lord. He looks at us and this is itself a way of praying.

Do you [let] yourselves be gazed upon by the Lord? But how do you do this? You look at the tabernacle and you let yourselves be looked at . . . it is simple! "It is a bit boring, I fall asleep." Fall asleep then, sleep! He is still looking at you. But know for sure that he is looking at you!

— Address, September 27, 2013

Reflection: Spend some time in the Lord's gaze. How does he view you? What does he think about your life?

/Cont'd from P1...

Birth or death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.

We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.'

And so may this feast change our hearts and enable us to die to self so as to be born to God's glory that can and does shine through

us. And may we remember that this epiphany is not meant for us alone, but that we are called to go public with it and demonstrate our belief in today's feast by the way we live, the world we help create, and the one we strive to recreate.

Advent is such a wonderful time! We prepare ourselves to celebrate the coming of sweet baby Jesus, the lover of our souls and king of our hearts. And we ponder the humility, gentleness, and openness of Mary and Joseph as they prepare to welcome into the world their Son, who also happens to be the Son of God. There is always so much to be grateful for, to anticipate, and to celebrate in this period of waiting, yet this year was a stretch for joy for me. I walked into Mass each week leading up to Christmas to hear songs exclaiming that I should “rejoice” and that I should “prepare him room.” But it felt as if this heart of mine had no room to offer. I felt more like the innkeepers that rejected Mary and Joseph as they searched for a place to rest – unprepared and unable to make room for the coming of the Lord. Then Christmas arrived and, somehow, he still came. The Savior came and I left him at the door of my heart just waiting for me to invite him inside.

So now I am in this weird place of wanting to let him in while also wanting to add more locks to the door of my heart to shut him out. It is not that my heart has turned into a brick, or that I am turning into the Grinch (before his heart grew three sizes); I am just trying to dig into these ebbing emotions and thoughts to figure out what is actually filling the rooms of my heart. And you know what I have been finding? A whole lot of pride and a lack of faith. Pride is something that I have been struggling with for years, unknowingly (the devil is a sneaky one, let me tell ya). It is not that I often think “wow, I am an amazing human being that deserves all the praise in the world.” No, it is far more subtle than that. This is the type of pride that planted itself in my heart and grew into the belief that God would never reveal his will for my life. These weeds filled up one room, knocked down a wall, and overtook another whenever I decided to grasp onto my own will to save myself from waiting. And, before I knew it, half of the rooms within the walls of my heart were full of these hideous, obtrusive weeds that know no bounds. And, since they have been feeding me these lies that the Lord will never show me his will, I fell into a lack of faith.

Much like Thomas, I often find myself seeking tangible/visible proof of God’s presence in my life. “Where are you, Lord?” is a common question in my prayer life, even when I am in a place of great faith and trust. But, when I allow pride to turn my heart into a home, this question transforms from curiosity into condemnation. I go from seeking to understand the Lord’s role in every aspect of my life to placing blame on the Lord for, what seems like, a lack of an answer to repeated prayers. So then I despair, I lean on my own understanding, and I find ways to somehow scrape by on my own terms.

This is where I am this Christmas season. My mind knows that the Lord is always with me waiting at the door, but my heart has left no room for trust as it has filled itself to the brim with pride and a lack of faith. And this is the heart that should be rejoicing and preparing him room?

But, what if the Lord is not asking me and you to stress ourselves out to make room for him this Christmas season, or during this new year? What if all he is asking for is a simple ‘yes’ to allowing him to enter into the messy, weed-filled rooms of our hearts so that he can help us pick the different weeds that grow within us all? What if he wants to be the one to redeem our Grinch-like hearts, to help them grow in size, and to teach them how to love once again? That is what he wants, friends. He just wants us to say yes. He just wants us.

So even though I am not feeling very joyful right now, I am seeking solace in knowing that Christ just wants my ‘yes’ this Christmas. For he is a humble, patient God who was willing to make himself small, as small as a baby in a manger in Bethlehem, in order to prove just how great his love is for us. And I am grateful to begin this new year with this kind of love at my side.

Christ came for those with room in their hearts and for those who, like me, felt unprepared to invite him inside. Let us try to recognize* what is filling the rooms of our hearts so that we may feel more inclined to open the door and answer with a genuine ‘yes’ when he, once again, asks if he may be invited inside.

Praying for you all through the remainder of this Christmas season, and as we start of this new year,
Katie

*One good way to recognize these weeds is to do a daily examen or to go to confession!

(Katie Fitzgerald)

Katie is a photographer, designer, adventure seeker and fan of all things beautiful and holy. She loves to use her talents and passions to serve God. Katie is Texas A&M class of '16 and works at St. Mary's Catholic Center as Development Digital Media Specialist.