



St Bernard's Parish

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Parish Team

Fr Sang Ho (Parish Priest)

Marina Dias (Admin Officer - Mon, Wed & Fri)

Chrissie Puls (Sacramental Coordinator - Tues)

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17th December 2023

Third Sunday of Advent Year B

Reflection

St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa) and Advent joy:

Through her ministry in Jesus' name, Mother Teresa brought untold blessings and joy to the poor who lay unattended and forgotten on our streets.



When asked about the source of her joy, Mother Teresa replied:

'Joy is prayer — joy is strength — joy is love — joy is a net of love.'

A joyful heart is the normal result of a heart burning with love . . . loving as He loves, helping as He helps, giving as He gives, serving as He serves, rescuing as He rescues, being with Him twenty-four hours, touching Him in His distressing disguise.' (Malcolm Muggeridge). Prov 3:6

Our community prays :

For those who are unwell:

Frances Butler

Marion Andrew

Katherine D'Arcy

George Koch

Jennifer London

Jeanette Freijah

Melissa Bann

Lila Moorfoot

Josephine Mariah

Vanessa Eldridge

Judy Robertson

Colin & Linda Boyd

Lynette Stott

Margaret Walker

Maria Pereira

Gerry O'Donoghue

Brittany Schultz

Rev Alan Ansell

Sofia Solisty

Joan Hepworth

Riley Swander

Andrew Pamvouoglou

Christie Raj

Isobel Symons

David Butler

John Orders

Frank Whyte

We welcome for Baptism:

Aithan Gamage



Christmas at St Bernard's

4th Sunday of Advent

Sat 23rd Dec 6.00pm

Sun 24th Dec Sun 9.00am **ONLY. NO 10.30am mass**

Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve, Sun 24th Dec 6.00 pm Family mass in ground. Bring

Christmas Eve, Sun 24th Dec 9.00 pm (Carols 8.15-9.00pm)

Christmas Day, Mon 25th Dec 9.00 am **(one mass only)**



St Bernard's Office Hours over Christmas and New Year

The office will be closed from 5.00pm Friday 22nd December and will reopen at 10.00am Tuesday 2nd January.

Holy mass on New year eve & Solemnity of Mother of God: Thank the Almighty God for 2023 and welcome 2024 in the presence of the Lord. Eucharistic adoration starts at 11 pm on 31st December followed by Holy mass. St. Mary McKillop Church, Bannockburn. All are welcome! Cuppa after mass.

A **big thank you** to everyone who supported our **Café** in 2023.

Fr Peter's Café is having a break over Christmas.

The cafe will be **closed on Sun 24th Dec** and will **reopen on Sunday 4th February.**

Mannya Hall Fund raising :
Please note new account details

BSB 083347 ACC#358514559

Reference : **surname & hall.**
Customized donation certificates are available as Christmas Gifts. Please contact Parish Office.

Charismatic Prayer Meetings have concluded for 2023 & will resume in March 2024

Children's Christmas Mass

Children are invited to come dressed as a character from the nativity story.

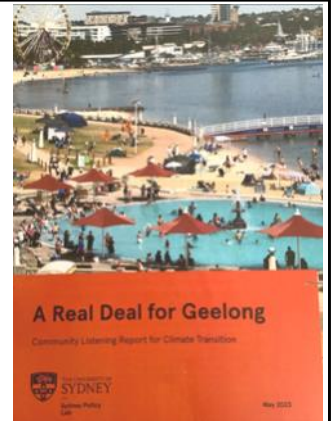
Advent Reflections

If you have not received one by email, please collect a reflection after mass .

The Real Deal event—7th December 2023

The inspirational *Real Deal* event attended by 130 people was booked out. We heard stories of disadvantage from Rebecca of the BSW Homelessness Network, Isaara's powerful story of how social housing transformed her life, escaping from family violence to ultimately entering tertiary education. Claire, a retired teacher, locked out of superannuation until half way through her working life with not enough funds to obtain secure housing and relying on the provision of social housing.

We heard from community members about the policy solutions we believe will make a difference to the Issues we identified in the Listening process earlier this year, to build commitment and power to achieve wins together.



'One of the great Christian messages is that we are all in this together. At last night's Real Deal Forum, churches, unions, service and special interest groups, plus the Deputy Mayor representing Council, shared a powerful hope that by working together we could make Geelong a better and fairer place. I was grateful to have experienced the sense of care participants had for one another and for the whole Geelong community'. Len Monk

On Thursday 7th of December, 7 seven Parishioners attended an inspirational forum for the Real Deal Geelong.

Encouraged by Pope Francis Laudato Si' principles, all St. Bernard's parishioners have a wonderful window of opportunity to live the Gospel messages, by being a physical presence with the Real Deal.

Collectively with numerous other local organisations combining resources, we aim to bring permanent life changes to local people affected by disadvantage and inequity in life's basic needs in the areas of— Affordable housing, Fulfilling employment and Community connection.

People power is inspirational and difficult to be ignored and you are being asked to stand for justice and improved well being in Geelong, by being in attendance at the next public forum for the Real Deal and be part of the " Good News" in action.

LET'S HAVE 70 PARISHIONERS AT THE NEXT FORUM MARCH 14, 2024! Yvonne Paturzo

St Vincent de Paul Christmas Hampers

On Wednesday, the St Vincent de Paul Belmont Conference delivered 49 hampers to people in need in our local community.



Items were donated by Clairvaux School and the hampers were packed by 5 Sacred Heart students on Monday. The hampers included festive food for Christmas, personal care items and food vouchers.

Commitment to human rights never ends: Pope

Pope Francis marked the 75th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. *'It is like a master plan,'* he said. *'Many steps have been taken, many still need to be made, and, unfortunately, at times, steps backward have been taken.'*

'The commitment to human rights is never finished!' he said, adding that he is close to all those who work and fight to defend human rights in everyday life.



Pope Francis went on to ask for prayers for all peoples suffering from war. *'We are heading toward Christmas: Are we able, with God's help, to take concrete steps for peace?'* he asked. While acknowledging the difficulties of resolving conflicts that have deep historical roots, the Pope invited everyone to follow the example of *'men and women who have worked wisely and patiently for peaceful coexistence.'*

And, returning to the issue of human rights, the Pope called for civilians, hospitals, and places of worship to be protected, for hostages to be freed, and for humanitarian aid to be guaranteed in conflict areas.

'And let us not forget tormented Ukraine, Palestine, and Israel,' he added Edited extract Cathnews

Make Space For Christ in Life

I have always been struck, reading the Christmas story, at the seemingly unbelievable act of the innkeeper. Who could turn away someone pregnant with Christ? The story doesn't suggest that the innkeeper was malicious or inhospitable. It says only that *'there was no room in the inn'*



No room! No place for more guests! Booked up! No space for hospitality! In these expressions, I see the real reason why there is so little of Christ left in Christmas. It is not so much our excesses in shopping, decorating or partying that deprive Christ of a place, as it is our busyness, preoccupations, hurriedness and agenda which fill the inn and leaves no place for him. *Our hearts and lives are too full for Christ to have a place.*

Looked at from the outside, our lives often do look selfish, inhospitable, idiosyncratic, and un-Christian. However, we are not bad people, nor are we, deep down, inhospitable. Beneath all the hurry, pressure and preoccupation, our hearts are warm, unselfish and welcoming. Then why aren't we more warm and hospitable? In brief, because we haven't the time.

Love and hospitality are not abstract. *To have Christ in our lives, to put him back into Christmas, involves something much more than protesting commercialism. It involves creating time for him, time for the poor, time for hospitality, time for celebration, time for prayer, time for the itinerant couple who show up unannounced on a busy night.* To make a holiday is to, ultimately, make a holy day. We must create some room in the inn!
Fr Ron Rolhieser

Witness to the Light

St John's Gospel never calls John, 'the Baptist'. No, he is *John the Witness*: 'a witness to speak for the Light'. We discover in this Gospel that *this light is embodied in Jesus Christ*, most graphically portrayed in the Transfiguration when Christ's body is radiant, translucent, with Divine Light.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the One who came to liberate human beings from the many dark captivities which imprison them, *the One who vanquished the inky blackness of the tomb.*

We can become partakers in the life of this Divine Light. At baptism, this is symbolised by the lighting of a small candle from the great Easter candle which is sung into the church on the Easter Vigil as '*Christ our Light*', the Conqueror of Death.

As a baptised people our allegiance to '*The Light*' is not to be a private matter between '*me and God*'. No, like John, we must bear witness to '*The Light*' by being instruments of His power to dispel the darkness which can enshroud people's lives.

We could pause for a moment to commit ourselves to fulfil the promise of our baptismal candle so that we might more authentically celebrate the birth of the Divine Light come into human history.
Fr Michael Tate



20
23

The Pope's prayer intention for the month of December is dedicated to '**people with disabilities**,' and in his message, he says, '*programs and initiatives are needed that promote their inclusion*'.

'People with disabilities are among the most fragile among us,' Pope Francis said. *'Some of them suffer rejection, rooted in either ignorance or prejudice, which then marginalises them.'*

'Civil institutions need to support their projects through access to education, employment, and places where they can express their creativity,' he said.

But '*above all else*,' the Pope said, '*big hearts are needed*'.

'It means changing our mentality a little and opening ourselves to the abilities and talents of these people who are differently abled, both in society as well as in the life of the Church,' the Pope said.

'And so, creating a completely accessible parish does not only mean eliminating physical barriers,' he said. *'It also assumes that we stop talking about 'them' and start talking about 'us.'*

'Let us pray that people with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society and that institutions offer inclusion programs that enhance their active participation,' he said.

Edited extract Cathnews

We pray for Mohammad

Eleven years on, Mohammad still waits for a visa. The Office of the Immigration Minister, Andrew Giles, has received his application. The immigration lawyers are hopeful, the refugee advocates are hopeful, but perhaps we just need prayer.



For the people of Israel, Palestine, Ukraine & other war torn countries.

May there be peaceful resolutions.

St Bernard's community

MILLMARKET

Collection for items for our Mill Market stall will conclude this year on December 16th.

Recommencement date is January 20th 2024.

Child Safety at St Bernard's

Call Victoria Police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child's safety. St Bernard's Parish has an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe and supportive environment in which to flourish.



The Geelong Community ...

Free Lunchtime Organ Recitals 12.30-1.15pm on Mondays at the Basilica of St Mary of the Angels Geelong

Monday 18 Dec: Frank De Rosso



Friday 15 December, 7.30pm
Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels, 136 Yarra St. Geelong

**Windfire Choir
CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

Oratorio de Noël Saint-Saens
Fantasia on Christmas Carols Vaughan Williams
Tickets \$50/\$45/\$40 from www.trybooking.com/CFGTN
Children and school students - free

The Wider Community.....

Advent Appeal for Ukraine

Please take a Christmas Blessing from the Archbishop and an envelope from the foyer.



Cartias Gaza Crisis Appeal—to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the help affected by the conflict. Donate www.caritas.org.au/gaza or 1800 024 413

Mannya Hall Fund raising :

You can make a payment *in person* at the Parish Office or via *direct bank transfer* to **BSB 083347**

ACC#358514559

Reference : **surname & hall.** Please note new account details



'In the spirit of reconciliation, St Bernard's Parish acknowledges the Wadawurrung People, the Traditional Custodians of country and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.'

Mass Times this week

Saturday: **6pm**
Sunday: **9am & 10.30am**
Tue & Fri: **12 noon**
Wed & Thur: **9.30am**

*The **Rosary** is prayed after each weekday Mass*
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament held **First Friday** of each month after 12pm mass

To receive the **bulletin** by **email** please subscribe via the parish website:

<https://stbernards.org.au/>

Contact the Office - 52 432 739 to arrange :

**** Communion at home (Friday am)**

New volunteers welcome to assist with this ministry.

**** To receive an email link to the Passionist Fathers recorded Mass each weekend.**

**** To receive an emailed worksheet for children,** linked to the Sunday readings.

Sunday Mass on Radio :

7.00am Light FM 89.9

10.00am Pulse 94.7 FM (*St Mary's*)

Sunday Mass on TV :

Channel 10 6-6.30am

Channel 31 or 44 11am *St Patrick's Cathedral*

Parish Office hours

Mon: 9am—4pm

Tues: 10am—3pm

Wed: 9am—4pm

Thurs: 10am—1pm

Fri: 9am—4pm

*** St Bernard's Play Group** Every Tuesday of school term 9-10.30am Gold coin donation

*** St Vincent De Paul** Membership enquiries : through Parish Office

*** Men's Group - 2nd Tues** of the month 10.30am Church cafe

*** Charismatic Prayer** meeting will resume in March 2023

*** Ladies Coffee and Chat Group, 3rd Mon** of the month, 10.30am at **FULL Circle**, Belmont opposite Car Wash, cnr Roslyn Rd.

*** Mill Market donation & Book Fair drop off** at Clairvaux Hall on Saturdays 9am and 10am.



To assist the Mannya communities :

direct bank trf to :

BSB : **063 504** acc : **008 005 74**

Ref : **surname & support project**

i.e Hall or education or General needs.

<https://mannyacoffee.or.ug/> Thank you

Readings this week : Isaiah 61:1-2. 10-11 ; Lk 1:46-50. 53-54 ; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 ; John 1:6-8. 19-28

Next Week's Readings : 2 Samuel 7:1-5. 8-12. 14. 16 ; Ps 88:2-5. 27-29 ; Romans 16:25-27 ; Luke 1:26-38

