



# @ HOME NEWSLETTER

Holy Family Parish Como-Kensington

Issue #21

DECEMBER 2018

Also available online at: [www.holyfamily.com.au](http://www.holyfamily.com.au)

## Song and Joy at Parish Christmas Carols

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, we were blessed with a balmy evening for our annual carols night. About 120 parishioners attended. Hosted by the indomitable Marie Tiley and the inimitable Tony Bray, this was a fun and festive evening. We were treated to performances from the Burmese Catholic Community Choir (who also set up the extensive PA system), D'Cantor choir, and the combined 8.30am and 6pm Mass choir led by Kerry Hardwick and Judy Priestley. This wonderful display showcased the varied musical talent within Holy Family, and the hard work that goes into the music ministry.

**MARIANNE  
TAYLOR**

As well as the talented musicians, our thanks go to Marie Tiley for coordinating the event, Tony Bray for MCing, Dom and Julie Palumbo for cooking the sausages, Bob and Jenny Albonico for preparing the onions, and Cecilia Bray and Maggie Doyle for their assistance with catering, cleaning up and the raffle. Colin and Therese Howarth won the bottle of Veuve Clicquot.



## MINISTRY TEAM

**Parish Priest:** Fr Ossie Lewis  
**Resident Priest:** Fr Greg Carroll  
**Parish Pastoral Assistants:**  
 Rose Hart & Tony Pires  
**Sacristan:**  
 Joseph Muttupulle  
**Office Staff:**  
 Cecilia Bray & Joanne Zappia  
**Safeguarding Officers:**  
 Breda Pires & Jim Phillips

**Liturgy Committee Chair:**  
 David Ho  
**Adult Faith Formation:**  
 Tony Pires  
**Sacramental Preparation:**  
 Mark Ferroa  
**Sacred Environment:**  
 Megan Phillips  
**Holy Family Care:**  
 Maggie Doyle  
**St Vincent de Paul Society:**  
 Mike Cosson

**Parish Pastoral Council Chair:**  
 Marie Tiley  
**Finance Committee Chair:**  
 Leon Hanrahan  
**Maintenance Committee:**  
 Jim Phillips  
**Grounds Committee:**  
 Colin Howarth  
**Social Team Coordinators:**  
 Leo Dias, Marina Pavey, Marie Tiley  
**Archivist:**  
 Lucia Steeman

Contact details for the above parishioners are available from the Church Office Tues-Fri 9.30am-12.30pm

## HOLY FAMILY DIARY 24 - 30 December 2018

### MONDAY 24TH DECEMBER

- 8.30am Nativity Play Rehearsal
- 6pm Christmas Carols
- 6.30pm Children's Christmas Mass
- 11.30pm Christmas Carols
- Midnight Christmas Mass

### TUESDAY 25TH DECEMBER CHRISTMAS DAY

- 8.30am Christmas Carols
- 9am Christmas Mass

### WEDNESDAY 26TH DECEMBER

- 8.30am Rosary
- 9am Mass

### THURSDAY 27TH DECEMBER

- 8.30am Rosary
- 9am Mass
- No Adoration

### FRIDAY 28TH DECEMBER

- 7pm Mass

### SATURDAY 29TH DECEMBER

- 5.40pm Holy Rosary
- 6pm Mass

### SUNDAY 30TH DECEMBER HOLY FAMILY

- 8.10am Holy Rosary - Church
- 8.30am Mass
- 9.40am Holy Rosary - Church
- 10am Mass
- 11am - **HOLY FAMILY FEAST DAY LUNCHEON**

## ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

**Please note:** Adoration will return Thursday, 10th January 2019 and during the summer months, hours will be **9.30am - 12.00pm**. Normal hours will resume in March.

## WE THANK THE FOLLOWING MINISTERS FOR THEIR SERVICE THIS CHRISTMAS

Christmas Masses	Christmas Eve 6.30pm Children's Mass	Christmas Eve Midnight Mass	Christmas Day 9am
Acolytes	Daniel Bianchini	Hasan Sidi	James Chong
Altar Servers MC	Marcel Bianchini	Aaron Richards	Bryan Chong
C	Ben Bianchini	Cameron Richards	Shenaya Wijeyekoon
S1	Preston Pereira	Jessica Sidi	Volunteer
S2	Leo Newman	Dalena Tran	Volunteer
S3	Sam LeFebvre	Volunteer	Volunteer
Commentators	Tony Pires	Colette Shack	Tony Bray
Readers	Jill Haterley	Pascale Ng	Cecilia Bray
	Marianne Taylor	Gwen Woodruff	Amy Khoo
Extra-Ordinary Ministers of the Eucharist	Vicky Ha Marie Tiley Breda Pires Virginia Scanlan	Jonathon Shack Christina Sidi Jill Browne Leo Burke	Fiona Wee Paddy Embry Jackie Embry Anne Armstrong
Children's Liturgy		In Recess	

## SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

**Breda Pires: 0422 237 261**  
**Jim Phillips: 0419 964 806**



## WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES DECEMBER 2018

We congratulate the following parishioners celebrating their anniversaries this month:  
 Dorothy & Bill **Chin**,  
 David & Katherine **Gan**,  
 June & Malcolm **Young**,  
 Bob & Pascale **Tin**,  
 Dot & Greg **Oliver**,  
 Wendy & Leo **Burke**,  
 Michael & Stella **Pang**,  
 Alvin & Jacqueline **Kang**,  
 Roland & Cathy **Ordonez**,  
 Shehani **Alles** & K Don **Dixon**  
 Eleanor & Julius **Fernandez**,  
 Astrid & Coilles **Ducame**,  
 Brian & Sheila **Walker**,  
 Jessica & Don **Wall**,  
 Marisa & Colin **Kwok**.

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## THE POWER OF PRAYER

Please keep the following people in your prayers this week: **Bill W, Jill, Mona Jones, Carolyn Gonsalves, Anne, Jenny, Wayne, Milly, May K, Edward, Rosemary, Noreen, Sonja Terry F, Jessica, Chelsea, Barb B, Maureen H, Ethan, Betty (dec'd), Maurice Fernandez (dec'd), Isaac, Dylan, Julie, Amelia, Caleb, Norah Langshaw, Dolores Black, Vincenzo Varriale**

If you know someone **who has asked for prayers** please add their name to the list in the church foyer. Names will be highlighted in the next Parish Bulletin & remembered in the Prayers of the Faithful in the Sunday Masses.

**Are you new to our Parish?**  
 If you have recently moved into the area and would like information about our Parish, please introduce yourself to Fr Ossie and complete a New Parishioner Enrolment Form

# 2018 Christmas Message from Fr Ossie

Dear parishioners and friends,

I am very glad to have this opportunity of sending to you my warmest and heartfelt greetings for this wonderful **Feast of the Birth of our Saviour**.

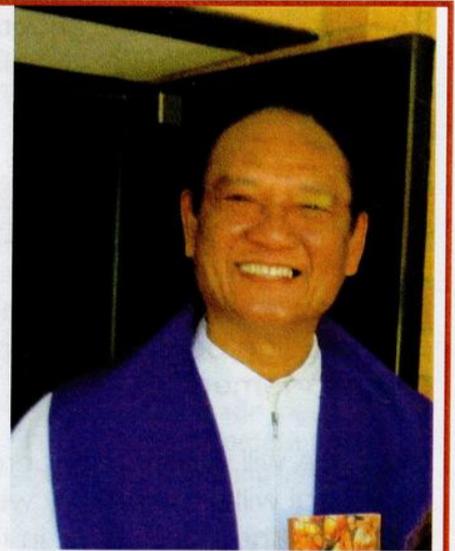
Since Christmas is the feast of family, I would like to share with you some reflections on the family. The saying goes that the family is the basic unit on which our society is built. Where families flourish society flourishes and dysfunctional families create dysfunctional society. Recent reports on television concerning a group of juveniles as young as nine terrorising neighbourhoods begs the question, where their parents are. That shows that the mainstay of a family is the parents.

At different times our pope, Francis, has identified a number of parts of the crisis facing the family. Among them he speaks of the important role of the parents in families and how their failure contributes to the crisis. ABSENCE is one of the causes. Here are some suggestions he puts forth. These days to make ends meet both parents have to work and in some cases away from the family for long periods therefore they really need to plan how to spend quality time with their children as much as possible. Their presence to their children is essential. They cannot teach or nurture them in absentia, they have to be present. They have to be present to one another, supporting and affirming one another in their duties as parents not leave it just to one.

The church too is a family and we the members of the church must be supportive of parents. Especially to parents who bring their young children to church. They deserve our patience, tolerance, acceptance, appreciation and welcome.

A Very Happy and Holy Christmas and a Peace-filled New Year!

Fr Ossie Lewis PP



## PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

MARIE  
TILEY

During 2018 the *Year of the Youth*, Holy Family Parish has seen a strong group of young parishioners gather regularly to share their challenges, faith and friendship. We pray that our youth will continue to come together and grow in their faith. May they be inspired by the Australian Catholic Youth Festival to be held in 2019. The theme of the festival is "Listen to what the spirit is saying." (Rev2:7) Young people will gather and explore their faith and vocational discernment.

The Archdiocese has released the revised Constitution for Parish Pastoral Councils. The guidelines aim to energise Parish Pastoral Councils in their endeavor to place at the heart of the parish, a consciousness and enthusiasm promoting the mission of Christ proposed by the Gospels and taught by the Church. It presents a model fashioned on collaborative practices. We are called to collaborate in meaningful engagement as parishes, Archdiocesan agencies and organisations to achieve shared goals.

Supporting the revised Constitution is the Ehandbook. It is divided into six sections that are fundamental and foundational to the role, function and responsibilities of Parish Pastoral Councils. At Holy Family the Pastoral Council has begun to familiarise themselves with the content. We have discussed the necessity for a 'collaborative pastoral model of practice' that requires walking together as a parish. We are presently making inquiries regarding our involvement with a cluster of parishes leading to the implementation of a Hub. The desired outcome is that all parishes work as one within the Archdiocese to carry forth the mission of the Church.

Christmas Blessings to all parishioners from The Holy Family Parish Pastoral Council.

**Chairperson**  
Marie Tiley

## A New Pastoral Assistant for Holy Family

As you may know, **Nola Smith**, has moved with her family to Queensland. She fulfilled her PA Role diligently here in our community over the last few years; Coordinating numerous areas of parish life. We thank her for her energy, organisational skill and superb devotion to the parish.

**The role of the Parish Pastoral Assistant** is to provide support to the Parish Priest working in collaboration with Parish groups; supporting Identity and Community, Worship and Prayer, Formation and Education, Mission and Outreach. A primary role of the Pastoral Assistant is to be an enabler, seeking out volunteers, encouraging participation, calling forth gifts, and providing needed support and encouragement.

The P P A will work in cooperation with the Parish Priest and report to him. As well, the individual will work closely with the Parish Council and committees in order to fulfil the mission of the Parish and, in the process, promote discipleship among parishioners as they share their time and their talents.

**We are delighted to welcome Rose Hart** as she accepts the responsibility to fulfil this role in our Community. Fr Ossie has commissioned her to assist him in some pastoral areas of parish life.

She has accepted this distinctly Pastoral role that entails the following aspects:

- To be an **'enabler'** – seeking out volunteers; encouraging participation in all areas of parish life; calling forth people's gifts
- **Supporting** these newcomers - and ALL committed to roles in our parish community – then assisting them to carry out their duties.
- **Coordinating various ministries** (and assisting all involved) in the areas of Music, Sacramental Ministries, Parish Sacramental Programme, Parish Office.
- **Pastoral Care** – Assisting Fr Ossie – to discern, create and promote ways through which the Parish can reach out in service to its own members and to those outside the Parish Community.
- To work for the continued **formation** of our Parish.
- To foster **a sense of community** within the Parish where all – new and old – feel a sense of belonging to each other, the parish and the larger Church.
- She is committed to **working in coordination with the Parish Pastoral Council, the Finance and Liturgy Committees.**
- Hers is a **voluntary** role and is not remunerated.
- She will not be involved with finance/account matters. As such, it is not the same role Nola performed in the recent past.



Rose will seek to use her significant people skills and energy to build a community marked by Openness, Honesty, where all are listened to, heard and supported.

**She will need, and be dependent upon, the support and encouragement of the whole Parish Community.**

**Please pray for Rose and offer her the support she needs.**

# SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM

MARK FERROA

This year, our parish expanded its Sacramental preparation program by introducing a Pre Confirmation course for children in Year 5. This course, which is compulsory for those who wish to be Confirmed, is intended to give children a deeper understanding of our faith and better prepare them to participate in the Confirmation preparation program when they are in Year 6.

The 2018 Sacramental preparation program commenced on 17 February when children who enrolled for the program participated in enrolment ceremonies with their parents. The enrolment ceremonies were conducted at all the Masses that weekend.



Thirteen children made their first confession at a ceremony which was held on Saturday 23 June. On 26 August, thirty children made their first holy communion at the 10am Mass.

The Pre Confirmation program started on 5 May. The class was made up of children who had made their first holy communion in 2016 and 2017. Nine of the sixteen children who completed the Pre Confirmation program went on to prepare for Confirmation this year, while the remaining seven children were placed on the waiting list for the 2019 Confirmation class.

This year's Confirmation program, which was attended by the nine children from the Pre Confirmation class, commenced on 21 July. These children were confirmed at the 6.00pm Mass on Saturday 3 November.

The catechists for our Sacramental preparation program in 2018 were Ellen Miller, Clare Burke, Marie Tiley, Nola Smith, Joni Wijaya and Mark Ferroa.

The 2019 Sacramental Preparation program will commence on the weekend of **23 & 24 February** when all the children who enrol for the various courses attend enrolment ceremonies during Mass.

- The First Reconciliation program will start on Sunday, 3 March. Classes will be conducted on Sundays from 10.00am to 11.00am. The First Reconciliation Ceremony (First Confession) will be held on Saturday, 22 June.
- The First Eucharist program will start on Saturday, 4 May. Classes will be conducted on Saturdays from 4.45pm to 5.45pm. The First Eucharist Ceremony (First Holy Communion) will be held on Sunday, 25 August.
- The Pre Confirmation program will start on Saturday, 4 May. Classes will be conducted on Saturdays from 4.45pm to 5.45pm. The module ends on Saturday, 22 June.
- The Confirmation program starts on Saturday, 27 July. Classes will be conducted on Saturdays from 4.45pm to 5.45pm. The Confirmation Ceremony will be held on Saturday, 26 October.

From 1 Jan 2019, enrolment forms for next year's courses will be available in our church foyer as well as on request at the following email address: [comocath.sacramental@ymail.com](mailto:comocath.sacramental@ymail.com)

## Confirmation Ceremony

On Saturday 3 November, nine candidates received the Sacrament of Confirmation during the 6.00pm Mass. The Presiding Celebrant at the ceremony was Fr Ossie.

The confirmation candidates were: Jake Brennan, Harry Edmiston, Luke Herbert, Annalise Herrmann, Leonard Kool, Joshua O'Brien, Preston Pereira, Zsafia Ranieri and Brandon Theseira.



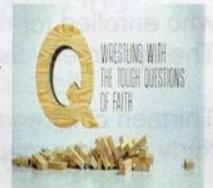
# ADULT FAITH SESSIONS | TONY PIRES



**What do we believe?..... What does the Church teach?.....is there middle ground?**

Our **Adult Faith Sessions** help develop our faith life by investigating / studying Church Teaching:

- There is information presented / reflections from a couple of parishioners / lots of time for questions and discussion.
- These sessions are informal – no pressure – simply sit and listen – or – get involved – your decision.



In 2018 we looked at 'What it means to be a Catholic' and "Conscience and Church Teaching".

Issues I'm considering presenting in 2019:

- **"The Bible – How do we understand it as Catholics? – What and how does it teach?"**
- **"Marriage – What does the Church expect? – Understanding Annulments?"**



Any other suggestions you would like on the agenda for other sessions?  
Contact – Tony Pires – 0418 900 046

## VINNIES COMO CONFERENCE | MIKE COSSON

The Como Conference of St Vincent de Paul (Vinnies) provides emergency assistance for needy people in South Perth, Como, Kensington, Manning and Karawara. The most common request for assistance is for food. However, we are also asked to assist with petrol and clothing vouchers; furniture; and to contribute to the payment of bills, such as electricity and rent. We also refer people experiencing severe financial difficulty to Vinnies' full time Financial Counsellors. Here is a brief report summarising activities undertaken by our Conference since the beginning of this year.

We have received 606 calls for assistance and provided 909 emergency relief services to 211 families in our area of which 56 were new i.e. visited for the first time in 2018.

The 909 emergency relief services, included 535 for food vouchers, 69 for fuel vouchers, 63 for clothing vouchers (for use at Vinnies shops); 117 for bedding & furniture vouchers (from Vinnie's furniture depot) and 50 for assistance with utility bills. The total value of the assistance provided is almost \$50,000.

The visits are undertaken by Conference members with 5 teams of 2 operating from the beginning of February to Thursday December 13th. This enables us to visit clients 5 days per week.

We currently have 19 members in Como Conference. 15 of our members belong to Holy Family Parish.

Before I finish I'd like to reiterate our very sincere thanks to Fr Ossie and to the Parish Pastoral Council for the great support you provide to Vinnies throughout the year, both moral and financial. The Holy Thursday, Winter and Christmas hamper appeals are very well supported and we are most grateful. We also very grateful of your great day-to-day relationship with Fr Ossie and the PPC.

Parishioners have also donated very kindly to our Christmas hampers which we will be delivering to needy families in our area during weekend of December 15/16. We have had an amazing response this year with Parishioners from St Pius X in Manning also contributing as well as school children from St Pius X and St Columba's Catholic Primary Schools in Manning and South Perth respectively. We hope to deliver around 90 hampers this year up from 70 hampers last year.

Our Conference will be in recess from December 17 to February 3 2019.  
Hopefully you will find this report to be of interest. God bless.

# Year of Youth

Open New Horizons for Spreading Joy  
Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment

DIMITRIO  
SIDI

When the Australian Bishops announced that 2018 will be identified as the Year of Youth, the theme that they had in mind was "Open new Horizons for Spreading Joy. Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment" and this theme encapsulates well the journey of the Holy Family Youth Group over the course of this year.



Having attended this parish for a little over a decade, it was always clear to see that Holy Family has a welcoming atmosphere that draws children in. The recent mass of children who completed their Sacrament of Holy Communion at the Parish is a testament to this. This has always then been supplemented by a strong altar serving ministry through which many of our young parishioners take that extra step to get a little closer to God. Needless to say, the Parish also has a plethora of adults who are willing to help in all facets of Parish life. I witnessed all this as I attended church week in, week out but the one thing that always struck me was this: Where can those who no longer identify as children but are also not quite adults belong?

So in this Year of Youth, the Parish initiated the formation of a youth group and open a new horizon for spreading joy within the community. As various youth member of the church community participated in various games nights and pizza nights, this year has brought about the beginning of a youth community within the Parish; a place of belonging to help complete a lifelong journey of faith within our Parish.

Whilst the Year of Youth ended with the beginning of the Advent season, this is really where the journey for our youth begins. Officially commissioned by Archbishop Timothy Costello at St Mary's

Cathedral on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November as Youth Ambassadors for the next year, Amabel Wijaya and I are committed towards furthering the development of our local youth community. As we look back on the goals set out by the Parish at the beginning of the year: To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person; to draw young people into responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith community; and to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today; we know that our journey as Youth Leaders within this Parish is only just beginning.

As we close out this year, we look forward with hope and excitement as we continue to build a 'second home' for our youth within the Parish; a home where they can grow deeper in faith together with their family in Christ. The next year will see a continuation of our monthly Youth events, with a greater focus on faith and vocational discernment whilst still maintaining the fun aspects of our gatherings that brought our youth together in the first place. We will also aim to find more ways to be active in the greater Parish community as we look to prepare our youth and the Parish for the Australian Catholic Youth Festival that will be held in Perth at the end of 2019.

# SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

TONY  
PIRES

## 5 Habits worth developing

Here are five habits of the heart . . . patterns of receiving, interpreting, and responding to experience - that involve our intellects, emotions, self-images, and concepts of meaning and purpose. These five habits, taken together, are crucial to sustaining a community/society.



**"We're All In This Together"** **Understand that we are all in this together.** Everything and everyone belongs and no one needs to be scapegoated or excluded...

**Develop an appreciation of the value of "otherness."**... This can remind us of the ancient tradition of hospitality to the stranger - even though they are very different...



**Cultivate the ability to hold tension in life-giving ways...** When we allow tensions (situations we can't resolve as we would like) to expand our hearts, they can open us to new understandings of ourselves and our world, enhancing our lives and allowing us to enhance the lives of others...

**Generate a sense of personal voice and appreciation...** Insight and energy give rise to new life as we speak and act, expressing our version of truth while checking and correcting it against the truths of others...



**Strengthen our capacity to create community...** The steady companionship of two or three kindred spirits can kindle the courage we need to speak and act as citizens.

**Our Parish Small Communities** provide opportunities to reflect on these and similar habits we can develop as we seek to support one another on our life journey. Please consider joining one of our Communities or forming one with parishioners and friends you know. Speak to a parishioner who belongs to one. Contact Tony Pires for any further info. 0418 900 046.

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# SOCIAL EVENTS

MARIE TILEY

*Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much. (Helen Keller)*

What a wonderful quote to reflect on as we interact with our fellow parishioners. Social events are organised within the parish to allow parishioners to come together and share common experiences and forge friendships. Our Morning Teas each fortnight after the Sunday Masses are well supported. Our thanks to rostered groups for your generosity with the culinary delights you serve to our parishioners.

It is necessary to fundraise to assist the parish with daily running costs. To date we have held a successful Mad Hatters Tea Party for the children of the Parish and enjoyed our annual International Luncheon. We had the Parish Christmas Carols recently and the celebration of the Feast of the Holy Family to look forward to.

If you think you could help in any way to lend support to social and fundraising events we would welcome your ideas. Everyone has busy lives and we are called on to 'work miracles' to serve our fellow man. Many hands make light work!



‘For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.’

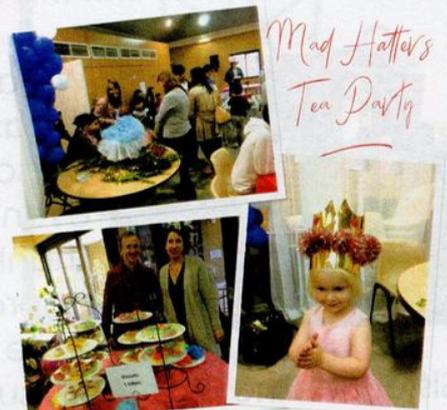
Matthew 18:20



## Holy Family Feast Sunday 30 December 11am

Come along and join us for a special Feast as we celebrate the Holy Family Feast Day. We ask that you bring a plate to share. BYO drinks. Tea, Coffee and chilled water will be provided.

**For catering purposes please add your name to the sign up sheet available in the church foyer.**



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# 2018 PARISH RETREAT Reflections



On Saturday October 13th, fourteen souls (parishioners & friends) gathered for a Reflection Day in the beautiful grounds of St. Joseph's Convent/ Mackillop Centre, South Perth.

**Sister Pauline Dundon**, who had travelled from Bunbury, lead us gently to a deeper place within ourselves, reminding each person present that, **every place named in the Gospels where Jesus walked, is a sign of that place within us.** We are part of Creation, not separate from it.

Our gathering opened to the haunting Celtic strains of "Gates of Dawn". Our promise to ourselves for the day was,

**"Clear a little space in your crowded everyday, and everyday reclaim the Sacred Site there at the heart of you."**

After quiet reflection on the Gospels, we came together in a circle to reveal to each other, how Jesus words spoke to us in a personal way.

- From the intriguing dialogue between Jesus and the woman at the well,
- to the compassion shown by Jesus in raising to life the only son of a widow,
- to the contrite and repentant Zaccheus,

**each of us could link this to ourselves as we reflected on our life's journey.**



We are not so far from the people of that time after all. It was indeed, a Spiritual, reflective day, finding the inner person, who often seeks refuge from the hectic and sad events of life.

Thank you to Sister Pauline, whose guidance was much appreciated, and all who brought tasty morsels that were enjoyed at our shared meals. (We also discovered

Sister Pauline is an AVID supporter of The Dockers).

**Jill Browne-correspondent**

 **St Pius X**  
Catholic Primary School  
Cnr Ley St & Cloister Ave  
Manning WA 6152  
www.stpiusx.wa.edu.au

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# For our children...

## CHRISTMAS DAY

The Roman Emperor Augustus ordered a count to be made of all the people in the land. This meant that Joseph and Mary had to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem, because Joseph had been born there, The journey was long and difficult, and the time was coming for Mary to have her baby.

## LET US PRAY...

Dear Lord Jesus, on this Christmas morning, may our hearts and our homes be filled with the peace and love you shared with the world.



## CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

Find the words of Christmas in the word search and have lots of fun!

E F  
L T  
H D S L  
T N U O  
F R A S V V  
U I C E E A  
F J H T E E R T B H J T D Y H P E S O J  
S A V I O U R E O C N A V E A O K M V Y  
V K I N G A C O L F R E K F H A O O  
N Y O J T A U R L B N N R C Q Q  
G W I S E M A N E T O W C C  
C Y R P Q M T L E D D H  
D D W B E T H L E H E M R J  
B A B Y J U R V C E B E I A  
C H R I S T M A S L P C G S N S  
G D G O C E K U O U O T G T  
L A P Y R A M H U D Y E F J  
Y S H S G C L L I Y  
Q G Q L A G D I  
R G R H

- |           |        |           |
|-----------|--------|-----------|
| ADVENT    | ANGEL  | BABY      |
| BETHLEHEM | BIRTH  | CANDLE    |
| CELEBRATE | CHRIST | CHRISTMAS |
| DONKEY    | GIFTS  | GOD       |
| HOPE      | JESUS  | JOSEPH    |
| JOY       | KING   | LOVE      |
| MARY      | PEACE  | SAVIOUR   |
| STAR      | TREE   | WISEMAN   |



Make a bookmark for your Missal by colouring in this picture and cutting it out.



Catholic men are invited to join  
Como Circle of  
**THE CATENIAN ASSOCIATION**  
enquires to  
Michael Taylor 9367 6647  
Frank O'Connor 9367 2897



Catenians are Catholic men  
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**Vivian Richards**  
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raywhitecityresidentialperth.com.au

# CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

## Christmas

Christmas means many things, but, at its heart, lies the concept that God takes on human flesh, a human body, becomes physical. At Christmas, "the word was made flesh."

Contemporary bible scholars like to tell us that we don't really know exactly where Jesus was born and that the gospel writers don't necessarily want us to believe that he was born in a barn and physically placed in a manger. But the gospels do want us to take those symbols seriously, and clearly makes the point: Jesus' birth is placed inside a stable. There's a brute earthiness to a barn, smells you don't get in church. As for the manger, the feeding trough, well, that makes sense too, given that Jesus will tell us that his "flesh is food for the life of the world". If one of the main purposes of Jesus' life is to end up as food, as Eucharist, on a table (we call an altar), shouldn't he be born in a feeding trough? The wood of the manger and the wood of the altar are one and the same, feeding tables, both of them.

But it's difficult for us to imagine and to accept how truly physical, earthy, and messy all of this really is. Everyone struggles with this; some people are forever wanting to make Jesus' actual physical birth a miraculous event, with Mary delivering Jesus in some privileged way so that there isn't at his birth the normal groaning, blood, and mess of childbirth. Others are forever trying to turn the event of Jesus' birth into something more symbolic than physical – again, without any real blood.



The same is true for most World Religions. Invariably salvation is seen as an escape from the flesh, an escape from the physical, an escape from dirt, an escape from mess, all done in the name of the spiritual. The way to God, in most religious traditions and in most ordinary imaginations, involves escaping the physical and frowning upon mess.



But that's not the way of Christianity, as the birth of Jesus makes plain. In the incarnation, Christmas, God enters the world, becomes physical, and, by doing that, assures us that the spiritual does not set itself against the physical, that the sacred is not separate from the smells of the human body, and that God is not just found in churches and in places that are clean and reverent. The old moral dualisms – the spiritual against the physical, the clean against the messy – break down at Christmas – the incarnation.

**What Christmas teaches us is that God is as much domestic as monastic, a God of the body as well as of the soul, a God who is found in barns as well as in churches, in kitchens as well as in cathedrals.**



**Among the many things we celebrate at Christmas therefore is the sacredness of our own lives, in all their physicality. What's made holy by Jesus' birth? Most everything that's physical: nature, our homes, our kitchens, our workplaces, our sheds, our restaurants, our bars, our sports facilities, and, not least, our own bodies, including sex and the way babies are born.**

**Spirit too, of course, is blessed and made holy by the incarnation, but the Word was already spiritual. At Christmas, it "was made flesh."**

# A Time for Giving