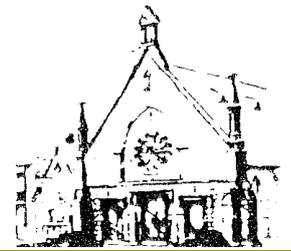




## ST. BEDE'S AND ST. JAMES'



### The Nativity of the Lord Sunday 25th December 2016

#### Why Shepherds?

The first visitors to the infant Jesus that St Matthew mentions are 'wise men from the East', the Magi, led by their astrology, and consultation via King Herod with the chief priests and scribes. No doubt Matthew assumes they came from Persia or Babylon (Iran or Iraq), perhaps priests of the Zoroastrian religion (represented today by the Parsees in India) --- perhaps signalling an 'inter-faith' dimension, so to speak, which culminates in the Lord Jesus's last words --- 'Go and make disciples of *all* nations' (Matt 28:19).

According to St Luke, however, the first to visit the infant Jesus were shepherds, minding their flocks near Bethlehem. They come as a result of pure revelation. They are surrounded by the glory of the Lord, terrified, told not to be afraid, and so on, the usual circumstances for an angelic message.

'The good news of great joy for all the people', they are told, is that 'there is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord'. They consulted among themselves, decided to go into the city, found Mary and Joseph and Jesus, and 'made known what had been told them about this child' --- at which 'all were amazed', while Mary 'treasured it all and pondered it in her heart'.

Over the centuries, obviously, Matthew's Magi have largely eclipsed Luke's shepherds. Indeed, if relics were the measure of fame, there is no contest. The relics of the Magi may be visited in a wonderfully embellished shrine in Cologne cathedral, where they have been since 1162 as part of the loot brought back from Italy by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa.

After the Reformation, the shepherds pop up in Christmas hymns, such as 'While shepherds watched their flocks by night, all seated on the ground', by the Irish Protestant Nahum Tate (1652-1715).

But why shepherds?

One story goes as follows. Luke, it is claimed, is the Evangelist who makes the 'option for the poor' his central theme. Hitherto excluded people are now to be honoured, and outsiders to be brought into the community, such as tax collectors, women, and the poor --- the first of whom, then, would be the shepherds. For, according to some Jewish writings, herdsmen were on the list of those ineligible to be witnesses in legal cases since they grazed their flocks on other people's lands and were thus (like tax collectors) archetypal sinners.

The more classes of people the Pharisees excluded, the more inclusive Jesus looks. Shepherds have to be brought in from the cold.

Fine --- except that, throughout the Bible, shepherds have a very positive profile. We hear a great deal about *wicked* shepherds, it's true, especially in Ezekiel, feeding themselves rather than the flock, clothing themselves with wool and slaughtering the fat

sheep, and so on. But such savage critiques only confirm the importance of the shepherd imagery that applies to leaders, whose task lies in protecting and guiding their people as a shepherd tends his flock.

The Lord himself is our shepherd (Psalm 23). Among biblical 'heroes', Moses, Jacob and of course David, were all literally shepherds, if not for very long, and then figuratively so, in their own histories and especially in subsequent iconography. The shepherd symbolism is everywhere.

Why should it not seem fitting, then, to St Luke, to highlight shepherds as the ones who were divinely chosen to identify the infant Jesus, born in the city of David, near where they tended their sheep?

After all, it was to Bethlehem that the prophet Samuel came in search of a king over Israel: Jesse's youngest son David had to be summoned, indeed, precisely from keeping the sheep (see 1 Samuel 17). Perhaps Luke expected us to assume that, when the angel revealed the good news to them, the shepherds were out in the fields in which David once tended his family's flock.

No great leap of imagination is required to conclude that, for Luke, shepherds were the most appropriate class of people to visit the child first --- the child descended from David, who inherited the throne of David, the shepherd king, and who would, in due time, identify himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10).

In short, the revelation to the shepherds in the hills outside royal David's city seems to embed Jesus from the beginning within this pervasive biblical shepherd imagery and symbolism.

Perhaps we need not choose between these two interpretations. The option for the poor is not incompatible with the identification of the shepherd-king --- on the contrary, 'The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep' (John 10:11).

Yet, it surely makes a difference: are the shepherds the first of the despised sinners whom Christ brings into communion with himself, or are they the heralds of the good news that the shepherd has come who will feed his flock, gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom and gently lead those that are with young (Isaiah 40: 13)?

The shepherds returned to their flocks 'glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen'. What they had heard and seen was surely, in the incomparable old metaphor, the birth of the shepherd who would care for his flock throughout their lives, through the valley of the shadow of death, and even beyond, in the 'house of the Lord for ever' (Psalm 23).

## **NOTICES**

### **PARISH OFFICE HOURS**

The parish office will be closed from Saturday 24th December 2016 and will reopen on Tuesday 3rd January 2017.

### **CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM ST JAMES CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

On behalf of St James school community we would like to thank the Parishes of St James' & St Bede's for their support throughout the year.

Christmas is the hope for the world it begins in God's heart and it's complete when it reaches the heart of man with love and understanding. May you all experience the beauty, holiness and purity that is the Christmas season.

### **CATHOLIC CARE: SUPPORTING THE PEOPLE OF SYDNEY FOR 75 YEARS.**

CatholicCare services assist people to live and thrive at every age. We provide disability services, counselling and support for children, young people and families and deliver ageing services in the home. We can assist you to navigate the new world of the NDIS and My Aged Care. To find out more call **13 18 19**, email [connect@catholiccare.org](mailto:connect@catholiccare.org) or visit [www.catholiccare.org](http://www.catholiccare.org).

### **A PALMS ENCOUNTER WITH OUR CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES IN EAST TIMOR**

A last minute gift that will deliver the real message of Christmas and be remembered forever. Palms long-term volunteers guide this intimate, immersive, inter cultural experience providing insights that challenge perceptions and deepen understanding. **Get a Christmas gift voucher** for any 2017 Encounter. Register now for our **2 – 14 April Encounter** and receive **\$400 off a 2nd ticket**. Call Roger on **02 9560 5333** or go to [www.palms.org.au/Encounters](http://www.palms.org.au/Encounters) for more.

### **PARISH LIFE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITY**

Storytellers wanted! Have you or someone you care about ever lived, or are currently living, with a disability of any kind? The Archdiocesan Justice and Peace Office is doing a research project exploring people's experiences of living with disability in our parishes. It will explore the stories of people with disability, their families, carers, friends, pastors and fellow parishioners. We are looking for people who want to share their stories so that we can listen deeply to how our people are travelling in their journeys and how our parish communities are walking alongside them. Participation simply involves telling your story and having it recorded and used for research publications anonymously. This is a wonderful opportunity to help us reflect on our strengths and weaknesses and learn how we can grow together into more hopeful, connected and love-filled communities. For more information or to participate please call or email Dr Kimberley Doyle. **02 9307 8461**; [kimberley.doyle@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:kimberley.doyle@sydneycatholic.org).

### **SYDNEY CATHOLIC SYSTEMIC SECONDARY SCHOOL INFORMATION**

From 2017, all Sydney Catholic Secondary Systemic schools will be enrolling students for Year 7 two years before their intended start date. This means that, for students in Year 5 in 2017, enrolment applications, interviews and offers of places will be conducted at Sydney Catholic Secondary schools over the course of 2017. The earlier enrolment timing will give parents greater assurance of securing a place so that they can follow a continuous Catholic education pathway from Kindergarten to Year 12. For more information, please contact the Principal at your child's Sydney Catholic School.

### **CHARISMATIC RETREAT 27 TO 29 JANUARY 2017 – "LIVING IN THE FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT."**

Have we ever experienced the fullness of the inner transformation and empowerment that the Holy Spirit has available for us? Perhaps our walk, once strong has become jaded and we need renewal. Perhaps we simply know that there is always something to learn about the ways of the Spirit. This retreat could be the answer. COME AND SEE! Your prompt booking by **13 January 2017** would be appreciated. The CCR Service Team for New South Wales will be there to welcome you. Please refer to the attached flyer for more details or visit [www.ccrnsw.org.au](http://www.ccrnsw.org.au).

### **BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT REFLECTIONS MORNINGS**

Third Wednesday of Every Month 10.00am – 1.00pm. For family and friends who grieve and their companions. Understanding and managing life's changes in Loss, Grief & Bereavement. Morning tea provided. For further information please refer to the flyer attached or contact Bereavement Support Ph 02 9646 6908 / [bereavementsupport@catholiccemeteries.com.au](mailto:bereavementsupport@catholiccemeteries.com.au).

### **BURSARIES – 2017 AND 2018**

St Aloysius' College is an Independent Catholic School for boys in Years 3 to 12 conducted by the Society of Jesus and located at Milsons Point. The St Aloysius' College Bursary Program aims to make a Jesuit education accessible by providing financial support to eligible boys and their families. St Aloysius' College seeks to graduate 'men for others' who are faithful and committed, integrating a deep spirituality with a passion for justice and academic excellence. Apply now for means-tested bursaries in Years 7 and 11 for 2017 and Year 7 for 2018. Information may be obtained from the College Website: [www.stalloysius.nsw.edu.au](http://www.stalloysius.nsw.edu.au) **02 9936 5535** or email: [registrar@stalloysius.nsw.edu.au](mailto:registrar@stalloysius.nsw.edu.au).

### **ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY APP**

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney had released a Smartphone App (for iPhones and Androids only) for parishioners in the Archdiocese, featuring parish Mass times, the latest news from the Archdiocese of Sydney and the Catholic Church in Australia, information about upcoming Archdiocese events, as well as announcements from the Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP, Archbishop of Sydney. The App is available to download for free – search for "Archdiocese of Sydney" in the Google Play and App stores.

### **ST BEDE PYRMONT SESQUICENTENARY (150 YEARS)**

The St Bede sesquicentenary committee are planning celebrations for 2017. The dates are to be confirmed but celebrations will include Fr Colin Fowler's book launch on the history of St Bede's Pyrmont, a parish picnic, concert, luncheon and a blessing of the church. If you have any photos (historical or current) or newspaper clippings that you would like to share, please email them to Brooke at the parish office on [info@stjames-stbede.org.au](mailto:info@stjames-stbede.org.au) or drop them into the office.

Readers for next Sunday, 1st January 2017

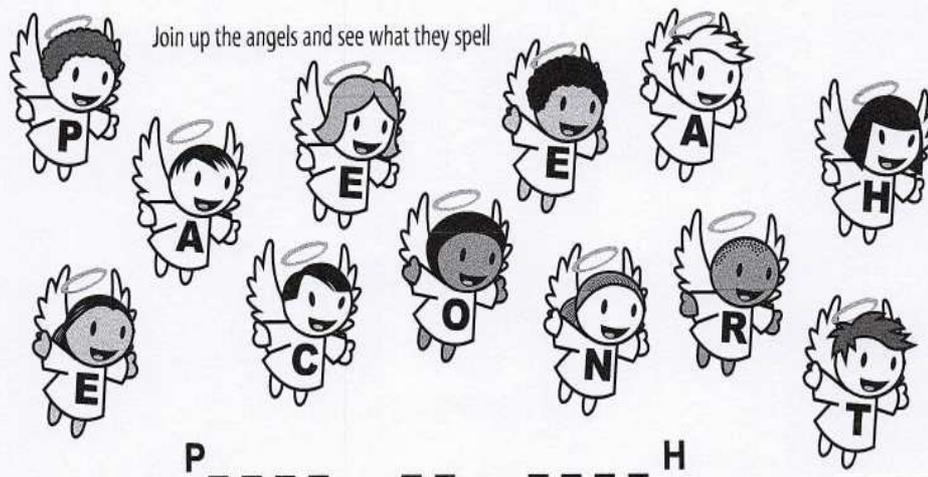
	St. James' 6pm	St. Bede's 8am	St. James' 9:30am	St. Bede's 11am
<b>First Reader</b>	Moira Kelly	Tony & Julie Adamo	Paul Bizannes	Antonia Budriah
<b>Second Reader</b>	Sr Diana Hayes	Tony & Julie Adamo	Paul Bizannes	Finola McMahon

Please pray for the sick:

Gillian Ellis, June Ebert, Debbie Julius, Hazel Spratt, Archbishop Anthony, Fran Campisi, Irene Malin, Meryl Tapsell, Fr. Michael Walsh, Allan Hoad, Aziz Latif, Bp Geoffrey Robinson, Kate Mara, Leslee Hoad-Mara, Lee Tillam, Noreen Hayes, Kay White, family members, parishioners, friends.

Please pray for the deceased:

Fr. Peter Lucas OP, Catalina De'Vea, Martin Keane, Barry Lynam, Aida Cabal San Buenaventura, Noelene Reddie, Barry Sonter, Fr. Frank Furfaro, Mary Loh, Hazel O'Connor, Ken Owens, Pam Mara, Geof Gale, Bill Donnelly, Peter Walsh, Terrie McCabe, Adife Cetin, Graeme Blackburn, Sam Tinman, Georgia Hoad, Maria Lo, Rosie White, Petra Seranilla, Benedicto Zamora, Dr Lucy Landia, Eric Russell-Smith, Betty Rowswell, Laurie Zammit, Tom Gibbons, Mick Kennedy, Allan White, Phil Garde, Sean & Pat Flanagan, Frank & Melina Galluzo, O'Connor family members & all the faithful departed Parishioners.



**Wordsearch**

Try to find these words:

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



angels  
Christ  
engaged  
happy  
inn  
Jesus

Joseph  
manger  
Nazareth  
peace  
sheep  
travelled

## **ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

A child is born for us, and a son is given to us; his sceptre of power rests upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Messenger of great counsel.

## **GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.

## **COLLECT**

O God, who wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and still more wonderfully restored it, grant, we pray, that we may share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

## **FIRST READING**

### **Isaiah 52:7-10**

How beautiful on the mountains, are the feet of one who brings good news, who heralds peace, brings happiness, proclaims salvation, and tells Zion, 'Your God is king!' Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices, they shout for joy together, for they see the Lord face to face, as he returns to Zion. Break into shouts of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord is consoling his people, redeeming Jerusalem. The Lord bares his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

## **RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

All the ends of the earth have seen the

## **SECOND READING**

### **Hebrews 1:1-6**

At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son, the Son that he has appointed to inherit everything and through whom he made everything there is. He is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful command; and now that he has destroyed the defilement of sin, he has gone to take his place in heaven at the right hand of divine Majesty. So he is now as far above the angels as the title which he has inherited is higher than their own name.

God has never said to any angel: You are my Son, today I have become your father, or: I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Again, when he brings the First-born into the world, he says: Let all the angels of God worship him.

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

A holy day has dawned upon us. Come you nations and adore the Lord. Today a great light has come upon the earth. Alleluia!

## **GOSPEL**

### **John 1:1-5, 9-14**

In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him. All that came to be had life in him and that life was the light of men, a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower.

The Word was the true light that enlightens all men; and he was coming into the world. He was in the world that had its being through him, and the world did not know him. He came to his own domain and his own people did not accept him. But to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to all who believe in the name of him who was born not out of human stock or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself. The Word was made flesh, he lived among us.

And we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father,

## **NICENE CREED**

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven & 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, 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.

## **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Make acceptable, O Lord, our oblation on this solemn day, when you manifested the reconciliation that makes us wholly pleasing in your sight and inaugurated for us the fullness of divine worship. Through Christ our Lord.

## **MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION:**

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

## **COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Grant, O merciful God, that, just as the Saviour of the world, born this day, is the author of divine generation for us, so he may be the giver even of immortality. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.