



New Zealand Advent Reflections 2015

By Father Brian Carmine

Whanganui, New Zealand

1st Week of Advent – The week of Hope

Sunday 29th November: Luke 21:25-28 34

These little reflections are intended to help us all prepare for Advent.

Sometimes we take things for granted, things that are essential, the things mentioned in the first sentence of our Gospel, Sun, Moon, and Stars. Some people don't see the stars. In the South Island there is 'A Dark Sky Reserve' at Aoraki in the Mackenzie Basin. People travel from all around the globe to visit and see the Stars.

Just as some peoples can no longer glimpse the beauty of the stars, the sun and of the moon, there are also people who have lost sight of God. Their sight may not have been affected by forest fires and pollution, but by numerous different opinions and razzmatazz created by people pushing their own agenda of philosophy, with opinions that cut at the very edge of Christianity and Christian principles. Their agenda is often not towards God, but towards their own idea of self-importance. Towards the end of the passage the Gospel says "be valiant, or be awake," or be vigilant to falsehood and the dumbing down our Faith. In this advent season, can we all unite and pray that we use this time of preparation wisely, that we note some of the corrosion in our spiritual life, and remedy the weakness, so our eyes and life can see more fully the God who loves us.

Did you know Advent has been celebrated since 16th century

Monday 30th November: Romans 10:9-18 (Feast of St Andrew the Apostle)

'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the Good News.'

One of my health professionals suggested to me watch the Jones channel, or hire DVDs that have a comedy section. Why? News outlets often concentrate on the negative, the sad or gossip stories of whinging and opinionated people.

In this season of Advent and this week of Hope, we need to share our good stories and our funny stories, we need to go out and Gossip Positively. We in our Parish have many great stories to tell, of healings, retreats, new families to our community, and the many parish volunteers, that enable us to share the Good News.

Today, think of the positives and share the good stories, share your delights, and share hope with others, allowing them to see the Good News in their lives.

When you are able get out of your chair place your feet firmly on the ground, go and share with someone this good news. If that's too difficult, ring someone and have a chat, conclude the conversation saying "God Bless."

Did you Know Advent is the beginning of the Church Year

Tuesday 1st December: Isaiah 11:1-10

'Jesse, Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, Counsel and of Strength, Knowledge and Awe of God.'

There is a television add about a couple of elderly people noting some young people are a little intoxicated, have a discussion with them about driving. In the television commercial the older men had Wisdom and Understanding. They provide Counsel to the young men.

The Bible, hymns, Christian songs, Christian media are all trying to provide these gifts from God. They provide to us another vehicle or channel for God to mediate or to communicate with us. These gifts found in Isaiah are critical to our spiritual development for us, for those we have influence with. Wisdom is the awareness of God, Understanding is to comprehend, Counsel is to be open to God's

actions in your life, Strength is courage, knowledge is to be shared, and awe of God is the holy factor.

Today be thankful for these gifts that others have provided for us in the hope that we might be open to them. Please pray how we can share these gifts of hope found in Isaiah with others.

Did you know that Advent means arriving?

Wednesday 2nd December: Isaiah 25:6-10

'Rich food choice wines, juicy rich food, and pure choice wines. Behold the Lord for whom we look: Let us rejoice and be glad that he saved us.'

There is wine and then there is wine, wine in a cask, and wine in a bottle, wine with a screw lid, wine sealed with a cork, the only thing they have in common is that they are labelled wine.

God does not give us cheap plain skins of wine, or wine in cardboard boxes, he gives us Rich choice, pure choice wines, Juicy rich foods, God is not stingy or mean with plain packaging. God gives us the very best. Can we become connoisseur of God's desire to feed us richly with his goodness? ABSOLUTELY. God desires that we reach deeper into his journey with us and draw more from his cellar of hope and love, and then we will naturally start to rejoice with God and others. To go deeper is so natural, our body and soul is designed always to move out of the inferior and into a rich deeper meaning of God. We are wired to move towards the pure choice that is Christ Jesus. Today pray about being more willing to allow God's richness to touch your heart and actions.

Did you know you can have an Advent Wreath at home?

Thursday 3rd December: Isaiah 26; 1-5 (Saint Francis Xavier)

'A strong city we have, he sets up walls and ramparts to protect us, Open the gates'

For better or worse, I am not getting into this debate about dams but we have many rivers damned to enable the water behind the dams to produce power. The surrounding area is well protected by walls of earth, or concrete to hold the water before being used to produce power. Occasionally the gates are opened to let the flow increase. Our church is a strong city that we protect by doing the prescriptive gathering, praying, meditating and doing instructions. Sometimes we are asked to open the gates to let others also into the party. Perhaps we should always have the gate open.

Personally I believe we ought to always have the gate of the walls of the Gospel open. When we open the gates of the Gospel, we have guidelines where authentic people are happy and able to work within. Sacraments are an extremely important aspect of our Catholic Tradition. They are applied or recognized with symbols like water, bread, or oil, but we also have spiritual sacraments, were the desire is like reception of the sacrament. Again we open the gates so as not to block their entrance but provide guidelines that allow our people to fully participate. There may be some sacraments you or your children have missed. In this season of preparation we pray that you and your children participate in the sacraments of the church so you all may float naturally on the waters of God's church

Did you know we can add a white candle to the wreath in the period between the 4th Sunday of Advent until Christmas Day?

Friday 4th December: Isaiah 29:17-24

'On that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book. Those who err in spirit shall acquire understanding and these who find fault shall receive instruction'

It was over 40 years ago when I heard the first talking book. I can't remember the title but it was on a bus in Europe. Many on that bus ignored the talking book, others were positively enthused. In this Advent season we are asked to hear words of preparation of hope, joy, peace and love. Let us be enthusiastic about the Word. When we err, let us be encouraged to read more of the Word, which will assist us to understand its teaching more. May those who are critical of us, be encouraged to return to the Word for further instructions. God's Word in ancient time was shared by oral tradition. Today we are fortunate for we can not only read God's Word from the Bible, or other publications, but we may even hear the Word on line. Reading and hearing are part of the conversation we are able to have with God. The Word equates God's voice to action. Reply and respond, because Advent is preparation time not just for Christmas but for an improving relationship by us with God in every aspect of our life. God wants us to be attentive to his Word. The church hopes that we are attentive to God's Word. Today allow more time to take in the Word, to prepare by prayer before reading, or listening to the Word, and then live the Word.

The Advent Wreath is also called the Advent Crown.

Saturday 5th December: Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26

'He will be gracious to you when you cry out, and as soon as he hears he will answer. The Lord will give.....'

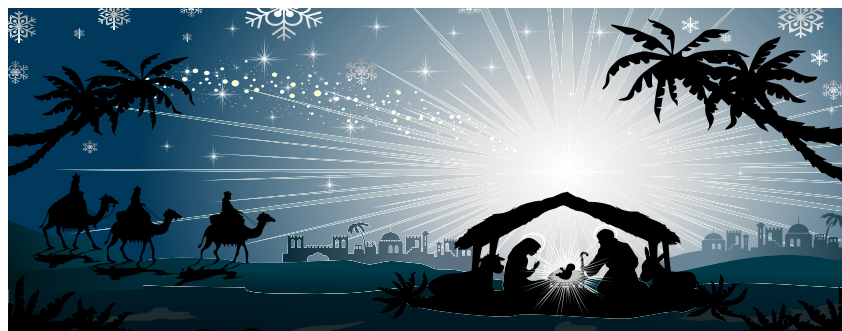
I am at home in New Plymouth returning some of the love given to me by my mum. Even in her old age, mum still hears and answers our family's cries. God has more qualities than can be found in any human. He always answers our pleas. When we cry out we don't need to explain, God knows already and will respond in His way, not necessarily in our way. Sometimes we may be disappointed when we don't see the result we were hoping for, but often in hindsight we see his answer. The Lord heard, answered and responded in His own way.

This advent let's hear the cry, of the overstressed neighbour, let's be attentive to peoples plight, to their anxiety, their frustration, their pain, and ANSWER them. It might be as simple as offering time. Let us see hope, joy, peace and love, God provides, but he needs us to also respond.

Did you know that the majority of all retail shops in Europe are closed on Christmas Day

Sunday 6th December: Luke 3:1-6

All flesh shall see the salvation of God



2nd Week of Advent – The week of Peace

The psalms are beautifully composed lyrics and this week we will explore the responses to these psalms.

Monday 7th December: Psalm 85. (Feast of St Ambrose)

“Our Lord will come and Save”

The ambulance service, the fire department, the local lifesavers will come to all call outs to try to save life, and when life is threatened, they will use extraordinary means to save life or to breathe life back into the victim's lungs and beings. Actually God is behind all these pursuits of saving life. Jesus came to save us. Humiliated by others, treated as criminal yet at the focus of his ministry, Jesus came to save us. It would be rude to think that Jesus came to save only me, or us, he came to save all. Jesus came to bring salvation to all. How does this action of saving, or salvation happen? Jesus is not Superman, or Zorro, Spiderman, or Wonder woman a flash in the pan. Jesus is God's only Son. He came with a message that He delivered and wisely calls on us His community, on the family, and on His disciples, to assist in this saving of others. In this Advent Season the greatest gift you can give back to God is a greater participation in sharing His love and returning that love back to the giver God. I invite you to consider what genuine Love is and then live that love and within the community.

Did you know that the French called Carols Noels?

Tuesday 8th December: Psalm 98

“Sing a new song for he has done marvellous deeds”.

The children at our primary schools are all practicing singing for the end of year concert. Parents and grandparents will arrive at a predetermined place to watch, giggle, squirm, smile, wave and applaud. All the actions, the outfits, the sounds, the dance, the smiles all come from “He who has done marvellous deeds.” Without God's genius, our human bodies, and those of your families, all would be dull, all would be nothing. The psalms bring excitement and vitality in describing God. They bring pain and sadness, but also delight and meaning. **They are about us** and about us in the past and in the future, they describe our weakness and our awareness, our sadness and our joy, both in our family and community, and also in our relationship with God.

In this advent week our new song might be to slow down and acknowledge Gods marvellous deeds. Our new song in this hectic season might be to do less in the material life and more in the spiritual life or prayer. We are to recognize God's marvellous deeds and pray better.

Did you know that Christmas cards were first used 1846?

Let's hope that when we send Christmas greetings, we write words of love, joy and peace.

Wednesday 9th December: Isaiah 40; 25-31

“Do you not know or have you not heard? The LORD is the eternal God, Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint nor grow weary, and his knowledge is beyond scrutiny”.

There is a wise old saying that slow and steady wins the race and slow and steady is a good recommendation for our spiritual journey. Humanity gets tired, we get confused, we get anxious, however, God does not get tired or weary, and He is more learned than we mere mortals. God was at the beginning and He will be there at the end.

The opening line of the scripture verse has a significant message for us during Advent leading towards Christmas, we could ask a few colleagues “do you know that Jesus is the reason for Christmas Day” If we are too afraid to state this how will people ever know. Isaiah made sure people knew about the Eternal God, the Creator, and that God had knowledge beyond belief. Today we need to be like Isaiah, we need to inform people what Christmas is about, it is only about the birth of Christ. Everything comes after this and not before it. Sometimes we put the cart before the horse allowing people to put religion and faith second. We ourselves need to educate our families and friends, and today that takes courage. What would you be rather called, a coward or a hero? The complete Christmas story is about courage by all participants expect one, and that was a secular ruler King. Is Christ first in your home, office and school?

Did you know that over 160 countries celebrate Christmas?

Thursday 10th December: Isaiah 41:13-20

“I am the LORD, your God who grasps your right hand; It is I who say to you, “Fear not, I will help you.”

It’s swimming time and the lifeguards are out, and if you get into trouble in the water, you will be grateful for the hand that grasps hold of you and saves you. God does the same, he puts out his hand, and we are invited to clench it. God will draw us back to safety. Fear not, He will not let go. God will hold on in hope that we remain strong and reaffirm our grip. If we let go we journey towards a perilous slippery slope and even though we fear we are sliding into oblivion, God’s hand is still being extended, and all we have to do is to reach out. This belief in God and our Catholic faith is precious and a real important gem for us and creation. It’s a gift; please allow the gift to open and flourish.

**Did you know that the Christmas Crib was popularized by St Francis?
Unfortunately it’s almost extinct in retail stores, like the Maui Dolphin**

Friday 11th December: Isaiah 48:17-18

“I, the LORD, your God teach you what is for your good”

People tell me that you are never too old to learn, and I suppose I say the same things to younger people. Today we read that God is always willing to teach us. God’s vast knowledge of us is superior to Google’s storage of our data files. God teaches us true facts, not like certain computer encyclopaedias that are filled with errors. God can communicate with us better than Wi-Fi, better than fibre optic cable, better than anything created by humanity. God knows us by name. God’s Son Jesus emphasized two commandments to live by,” love your neighbours as yourself” , and love God with all your heart... simple, not complicated like some mathematical calculations but straight forward Love. When we give God 25% God gives 100 %, our love of God does not depend on what God Gives, he gives all, it depends on what we give, the more we give the more enlightened we are and the more exposed to his love and teaching. God is already teaching you all, now it might be time for us to improve our grades and to seek more of him as our guide and protector. This Advent please give back to God, for yourself, for the church and for our nativity family.

Did you know that Jingle Bells was played in space in 1965 by 2 astronauts?

Saturday 12th December: Zechariah 2:14-17 (Our Lady of Guadeloupe)

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion! See, I am coming to dwell among you, says the LORD”.

Skype, Facebook, Telegram, Fax, Letter, Pigeon, Postie, Email, Instagram; just to name a few. These are some ways we send messages to people, they might be kilometres away and we try to communicate with them by sharing our stories and the stories of our families and surroundings. However, better still is the doorbell ringing and on opening the door we see, our friend, our sister or brother. God does dwell among us. He lives not in a cloud, he dwells and lives inside all of his creation, of which women and man are God's best creation. Yes, we more beautiful than a monarch butterfly, more beautiful than a Panda, more amazing than a bumble bee. This is so incredibly amazing for we humans are made in the image and likeness of God. Unfathomable if we were to use any other measuring device other than our faith. God is not out there! God is in us, in our love, actions, and empathy. We receive all this in our diverse creation.

This Advent, please reflect on the awesomeness of God, who dwells within us and call on God to have a greater presence in our decisions of life.

Did you know that some countries save their Christmas giving until the arrival of the Three Wise Men on the Feast of the Epiphany?

Sunday 13th December: Luke 3:10-18

The crowds asked, “What should we do?”

3rd Week of Advent – The Week of Joy

Monday 14th December: Psalm 25 (Memorial of Saint John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church)

‘Your ways, O LORD, make known to me; teach me your paths, me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my saviour’

The coaches taught their players the best they could prior and during the Rugby World Cup. The players knew the paths they were to run, and the medical team got the injured match fit. Yet this preparation is minimalistic; not worth a rating compared to the planning from God for the entrance of his Son Jesus into our world. So Jesus showed us the way we should live, compassionately and not judgementally. He taught by example and being involved not removed by distance. God teaches us the best moves, how to hold on to these commandments, and how to push forward with others behind us. God emphasis all the skills of a team game to get the very best out of His family. So this advent do not walk along, try not to be the flash “Hurry, and contribute to our team, our Parish, our church, by sharing your skills, that are still being developed, and your wisdom.

Tuesday 15th December: Matthew 21:28-32

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people: “What is your opinion? A man had two Sons.

We know this story of two sons, one said no and eventually did the task, the other said yes and forgot about the task and never got back to it. Which one is the prompt in your life or your family? I am sure you all have 100s of stories in your lifespan where someone said No, but then turned up

and did exactly what was required. This is brilliant, this means your conscience is working, or the family values are working, and we respond to the needs. Sometimes we respond with drudgery, we go through the movements but the desire is not there. Even with a bad attitude, doing the task is better than saying yes, and deliberately not showing up. God calls us to turn up, and while sometimes we are not in the right space and initially say no, we ultimately respond, and do the task, that's great. It's a 1000 % better than being a quitter. This advent Christmas you will be pressured to do more, if you can't do the task, be brave and say I am sorry I can't . If you say you can't and then find time, ring or text and contribute, all will be well, but **never say yes** and leave others stranded.

Wednesday 16th December: Luke 7:18-23

John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask? Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?"

Luke's Gospel is a rich tapestry of stories and our scripture today is well known to us all. John the Baptist sends his disciples to Jesus to ask "**Are you the Man**" or is there another? Many years ago I was mistaken for Mr Bean, I dinned out on that for a while as some people did not really know who I as. Often we have to ask a person who they are, or who sent you. Today Jesus not only says who he is, but also shows them the power he has by performing miracles, such as healing the sick. Jesus was sent to find us and for us to find him. He not only used words, words that carried weight, but not words of empty promises. He spoke with authority and kindness, He was never condescending. He could be no other but authentic. Do people really know who we are and what do we stand for? Do we hide behind a Halloween mask, pretending to be a different person in different audiences or crowds? John and Baptised was authentic, Jesus was authentic, and the Gospels call us to be authentic and to stand up for what we believe. Today let's pray that we remove our mask of fright, and let people see what we truly believe.

Thursday 17th December: Matthew 1:1-17

"The genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, and the Son of Abraham found in Matthew Gospel."

Before genealogy became a business, people used to search family trees to find out where their ancestors came from. In our Maori Culture when entering a Marae, we are asked to give a Whakapapa about our genealogy or lineage of ancestry, to create layer or a base so strangers can connect our relationship with the land and People. So today we read and learn about Jesus' genealogy and trace his lineage through the peoples of the Old Testament, some whom are famous characters of the Jewish people. There a key in all people's lives; today is a good opportunity to reflect on the instrumental figures that have shaped you, enhanced you, and allowed you to grow, often by praying to God. For young married couples, today might be a good opportunity to pray with your children to God's parents. God parents have a great love relationship with God, so their enthusiasm and love for God allows a growth of love in yet to be born generations.

O Antiphon – Wisdom

O Wisdom of our God Most High, guiding creation with power and love:
Come to teach us the path of knowledge!

Friday 18th December: Matthew 1:18-25

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a Son, and they shall name him Emmanuel”

Eight days out and the readings are picking up the pace., The rose candle of Joy has been alight for 6 days now so we are well on track for what we have been waiting for. The first candle of hope and the second candle of peace also flicker in our advent wreath, the wreath round because God has no beginning and no end. The weekday readings are encouraging us, they are explaining that the Virgin Mary from the ancestry of David will have a child, not any child but a child from God. Immanuel, or God is with us. What hat are we wearing now? The secular, Ho Ho cap? WE hope not. This season is about Christ the Son of God so we have a few more days to pray and reflect on this holy time. Prepare, by giving more time to God in prayer, slow down and realise time is ticking. We may like to pray today for mothers who are carrying new life, and their spouses, and all those with young children. It's an opportunity to remember others, praying for them as they journey, particularly young parents, especially families, who will certainly benefit from our prayers for them.

O antiphon – Oh Lord and Ruler

O Leader of the House of Israel, giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai: come to rescue us with your mighty power!

Saturday 19th December: Luke 1:5-25

But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah.

The cousins have been contacted, more good news this time for Zechariah and Elizabeth, they too are now involved, they will bring forward a messenger to announce who the prophet is, to name him, to give his public name. Incredibly two women are probably in shock, and the two men are probably having grape juice, one doubted and was made mute but both were probably in some sort of awe. Some of the villagers might be pointing the finger, others will be rolling up their sleeves helping others, wondering is this the revelation we have been waiting for “The Jewish Spring” is this the time predicted in the first reading from Zechariah 2:14-17.

The Church hopes we are not afraid of God, we need to be open to God, open to his advice, open to his calling, open to His presence and aware of that presence. If we are timid, let us pray that we can become freer and more aware of God's love. So have Hope, trust in yourselves, slow down, take a depth breath, settle yourself for a few minutes and pray, communicating in prayer to God our Saviour about being freer and not so afraid of God. Take the advice from the Angel, “be not afraid.”

O Antiphon – Root of Jesse

O Root of Jesse's stem, sign of God's love for all his people:
Come to save us without delay!

20th December Sunday: Luke 1:39-44

Why has this happened to me, that the mother of the Lord come to me?

O antiphon - Key of David

You open and no man closes; you close and no man opens. Come, and deliver him from the chains of prison who sits in darkness and in the shadow of death

Monday 21th December: Luke 1:39-45

For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”

As a child we had family Christmases, and one of the highlights was waiting for our cousin's to come up from Wellington in their Morris Oxford (that's a Car) 7 children two adults. Christmas was still a few days away, but we were excited. We enter into the countdown of the last week, the Birth of Jesus. The underlying theme this week is joy, and excitement. The waiting is almost over, Mary, pregnant travels to her elderly cousin's place to care and assist. Undaunted by her own health and her own safety, Mary travelled a dangerous route to be there. It's an inspiration we might like to take up and follow. The journey we make might just be to a neighbour, to an estranged relative, or a greeting to a stranger at a liturgy or Mass or similar gathering. Elizabeth says her baby leaped for joy at the sound of Mary's voice, who can we share joy with? In the spirit of Christmas please give someone hope.

O Antiphon – Rising Dawn

O Radiant Dawn, splendour of eternal light, sun of justice: come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Tuesday 22th December: Luke 1:46-56

Mary said: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my saviour.

In one of my homilies over the last few weeks, I spoke about my entrance into the swimming complex at Wanganui and how I was made welcome by a gentleman I had never seen, or seen since. I believe many people commit to an organization because of the initial greeting. Mary's greeting back to Elizabeth is a prayer of thanksgiving and a prayer of trust and acceptance a prayer looking at the past present and future. This phrase the past present and future and key for us, in each Mass, we celebrate exactly this belief, we draw from the past our history the Old Testament the life of Jesus In the Gospels, the other letters in the New Testament the Saints, and those passed away and those present, and we also prayer towards the future, for the next generation of Faith and our eternal dwelling place. So can we also rejoice and believe in the greatness of God. Perhaps we need to look at our past, and what has been handed down to us, and cherish our faith. I believe key about sharing our faith is the example of Mary, though difficult her situation was, she still shared joy, belief, and faith. As Christmas roles forward please invite your family to your faith community, failing that at the opening of the gifts pray a prayer, and at the Christmas table please ask to celebrate a grace before, for those less fortunate then bless the food.

O Antiphon – Oh King of the Nations

O King of all nations and keystone of the Church: come and save man, whom you formed from the dust!

Wednesday 23th December: Luke 1: 57-66

All who heard these things took them to heart, saying, "What, then, will this child be?" they wondered. And indeed the hand of the Lord was with him."

The scene is set, John the Baptist has been born, and the family have taken him to the Temple for the Jewish rites, and those gathered were in shock. There was much to be shocked about, a woman thought to be barren delivered a child, her husband Zechariah was suddenly mute, and then at the naming of the Child they took a name **not from** the genealogy but what Zechariah wrote on a slate. His name is John and finally Zechariah spoke. You can sense the shock, the questions being asked, you can hear the murmuring and questioning. Your children and your neighbour might be asking questions about the Christmas season or about Jesus, or Mary or prayer. Even the Apostles asked Jesus teach them to pray. So speak about the birth of Jesus, invite people to Christmas celebrations, have a crib in your home. Or just create a card that says Jesus is the reason for the season. Please put our faith on a lampstand so all people know, what we believe and the season for the season and so if strangers or friends have questions they know where to go.

O Antiphon – O Emmanuel

O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law come to save us, Lord our God!

Thursday 24th December: Luke 2:1-16

To you is born this day a Saviour, who is the Messiah.

Friday 25th December: John 1:1-18

The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

24th December – Christmas Eve

St. Mary's Church 7.00pm Carols, 7.30pm Mass

Holy Family Church 9.30pm Carols, 10.00pm Mass

Jerusalem 7.00pm Mass

25th December – Christmas Day

St. Mary's Church 9.00am Carols, 9.30am Mass

Kaiwhaiki 9.00am Mass

St. Patrick's Church, Patea 9.30am Mass

Weekend Masses (as of 26th December)

Holy Family Saturday Vigil 5.30pm

St. Mary's Sunday Mass - 9.00am
6.00pm

Christmastide: 26th December – 3rd January

The bunting will be down in most shops, the Boxing-day sales will be on, but the story is not over, the three wise men are still on their journey following the star. Herod still has to do his despicable deed, by eliminating, and numerous babies trying to destroy a future King.

27th December: Luke 2:41-52 (The Feast of the Holy Family)

His parents found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers and they were astonished.

Holy Family is the name given to the family unit of Jesus: The Divine Son of God Jesus, his mother the Virgin Mary, and his foster-father Joseph. We know very little about the life of the Holy Family, The Gospels speak of the early years of the Holy Family, including the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, the flight into Egypt, and the finding of Jesus in the temple. Various non-canonical works,

3rd January: Matthew 2:1-12 (The Feast of the Epiphany)

We have come from the East to pay homage to the king.

The Epiphany, is traditionally celebrated the 12th day after Christmas, January 3rd Regardless of the day, this "Twelfth Night" should be a day of feasting and celebration.. A Fourfold Feast Epiphany originally celebrated four different events, in the following order of importance: the Baptism of the Lord; Christ's first miracle, the changing of water into wine at the wedding in Cana; the Nativity of Christ; and the visitation of the Wise Men or Magi.

I hope that you are all free to have a wonderful experience of Christmas, and allow God to be at the centre of everything. Christmas is not about abundance of gifts, or abundance of Food, it's about the abundance given to us by the birth of our saviour Jesus Christ. So my wish is that we give abundantly back to Jesus, the Gospel and our Catholic Church. Bless the Lord, God has come to dwell with us, we join his family called the church. We can only be free if we embrace more of God, by unwrapping spiritual gifts, and sharing them. My prayer is that we give God more of a chance to direct and change our ways to have fewer things, and to have more quality time with God His Church and Family. You are always welcome at any Catholic church, so please accept this as an invitation to come and start to be free.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Fr Brian Carmine