

Weekday Masses
*If there is a Funeral Mass on
Wed, Thurs, the advertised Mass
will be cancelled.*

Tues: 7.00 p.m
Wed: 9.10 a.m
Thurs: 9.30 a.m
Fri: 5.40 p.m

Weekend Mass Times
Sat: 10.00 a.m Sat: 6.00 p.m.
Sun: 9.00 a.m, 5.00 p.m.
Irymple: 8.30 a.m.

Fr. Michael McKinnon PP
Fr. Neville Stanislaus, Fr. James McKay
Fr. Frank Monaghan PE
Secretarial Staff: Carmel Russo

Sacred Heart Parish Mildura/Irymple

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St Francis Xavier's Church
Elms Street, Irymple

**FEAST OF MARY
MOTHER OF GOD**

Our Parish Schools

Sacred Heart Primary School –
Principal Greg Lane 50231204
St Paul's Primary School – Princi-
pal 50234567
Catholic Secondary College
St Josephs – Principal Darren At-
kinson 50188000

Our Parish Vision

*"Our Parish is a Eucharistic Com-
munity united by our faith in Jesus
Christ.*

*We work together in the power of
the Holy Spirit to spread the good
news of God's Kingdom."*

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

First Reading: Nm 6:22-27

Psalm: Ps 66:2,3,5,6,8. R.v.2

Response: May God bless us in his mercy

Second Reading: Gal 4:4-7

Gospel: Lk 2:16-21

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

First Reading: Is 60:1-6

Psalm: Ps 71:1-2, 7-8, 10-13, R. see v.11

Response: Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

Second Reading: Eph3:2-3, 5-6

Gospel: Mt 2:1-12

RECENT DEATHS:

ANNIVERSARIES:

Francesco Nesci, Giovanni Dimasi

Sunday 1st January 9.00am: Nicola D'Orazio (40th Anniver-
sary)

*Only members of the deceased's immediate
family are permitted to arrange anniversary Masses.*

WEEKLY PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES

Monday Prayer Group: 2.00- 4.00 p.m.

Prayer of the Church: Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri. 8.40 a.m.

Scripture Reading: Thurs 10.30 a.m 20 Beasy Court

Christian Meditation: Sat – 11.30 a.m. Hillman Rm.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament – held the 1st

Friday of each month in the Church from 12 noon – 5.00 p.m.

Reconciliation: Saturday 11. 00 a.m to 12.00 p.m

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK:

If you want a sick person prayed for, please ask for their permission.

Please let us know when to take their name off the list.

Jenny Jones, Noel Smith (Harvey Bay), Dorothy Norris,
Maureen Belej

**THE PARISH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED
FROM TUESDAY 27TH DECEMBER AND RE-
OPEN ON TUESDAY 3RD JANUARY 2012.**



Mary treasured all these words
Luke 2:19 Good News Bible



REFLECTION

The celebration of Mary as Mother of God has very ancient roots. Mary was venerated in the East from the early third Christian century as theotokos, a Greek term that means God-Bearer. This designation for Mary was affirmed by the Council of Ephesus in 431 CE. The subsequent Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE, in the face of arguments to the contrary, declared that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine, and that Mary could rightly be called theotokos. The title, Mother of God, is a loose equivalent of the more ancient designation, theotokos. It affirms the Christological affirmations of Chalcedon and reminds us of the fullness of the humanity and the divinity of Jesus. It also reminds us of the extraordinary role of Miriam of Nazareth in the mystery of the incarnation.

At Christmas, the liturgy invites us to focus on Luke's story of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth and John's reflection on the Word made Flesh. Today's liturgy shifts the focus ever so slightly to Mary, through whose 'yes' the mystery of the incarnation is realized. Today's gospel takes up the Lukan account of the birth of Jesus. Mary has given birth to her son, wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, a feeding place for animals. An angel has announced the good news to shepherds who are tending their flocks in the fields. The shepherds have listened to the proclamation of the angel and the heavenly host that joined the angel and set out in search of the child. They find Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger, just as the angel had told them. The shepherds, outcasts in their society, have become the agents and proclaimers of the good news of salvation.

The all-knowing narrator tells us that Mary treasured, or carefully preserved, all these happenings and pondered them in her heart. A little later, we hear the story of the twelve year old Jesus going up to Jerusalem with his parents for Passover and staying behind in the temple, teaching the teachers. Mary and Joseph listen to his explanation about remaining 'in his Father's house' or 'being about his Father business' though they fail to understand. The narrator tells us that 'his mother treasured all these things in her heart.' While a different Greek verb is used for 'treasured' in this passage, the meaning is the same as in today's gospel passage. Mary has to struggle to comprehend the ways of God in her life. She is presented as a grace-filled woman forever pondering the mysterious ways of God. We too are called to treasure 'all these things' in our hearts and trust that their power will transform our lives even if we do not always understand.

The gospel for Christmas morning Mass comes from the prologue to the Gospel of John. It presents Jesus as the Word of God made flesh, as the locus of life, as the light that is coming into the world, as the one through whom truth is revealed, and the one who makes God known to us. The opening words of the gospel, 'in the beginning' evoke the opening of the biblical story found in Genesis. The Word that becomes flesh was 'with God' even before the spirit of God swept over the chaos and brought all else into being. John's prologue foreshadows the suffering and rejection that Jesus will experience at the hands of 'his own'. To those who receive him, however, to those who believe in his name, he gives power to become 'children of God'. John weaves a rich tapestry of wonderful images that will yield their meaning little by little as the gospel story unfolds. As we celebrate with family and friends this Christmas, we might take a moment to ponder the mystery of God-with-us, of the Word made flesh who 'tents' among us, and give thanks for all we have received.

Veronica Lawson rsm

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS

1st Collection (support of Priests & Presbytery)	\$4170.00
Christmas Offerings	\$1,720.40
2nd Collection (including loose plate)	\$4451.75
Bishop's Christmas Appeal:	\$2,745.00

WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

Thank you so much to all those who contributed to our Christmas Masses. Each celebration drew large numbers, the Children's Mass being huge as always. We are particularly impressed with the crowd of midnight. Thank you to everyone involved in that very special celebration. After such celebrations, our Parish has reason to be very proud.

WEDDINGS



We would like to congratulate David Siladi & Holly Sherry on their recent wedding and Rachel Bunney & Jacob Slimmon who will be married during this coming week.



PARISH GATHERING SPACE

Rationale:

Our Church building is the primary gathering space for our Parish community. It is the place where we gather for Sunday and weekday Eucharist, baptisms, funerals, marriages and other liturgical celebrations, including those of our schools. Whilst the physical structure is an obvious symbol and expression of the Parish, our local Church is entrusted with pastoral and social responsibilities that are a consequence of our Sacramental life and vital expressions of our Christian mission. One would hope people entering, whether during a celebration or not, recognise signs of the community's life, vitality and purpose.

Our local Church faces a complex challenge in terms of contemporary mission. Large numbers of young Catholic families still present their children for the Sacraments of Initiation. Many continue to seek the services of our Catholic schools. However, statistics indicate that 50% of primary school aged children in the Sunraysia area who are Catholic are being educated in Government schools. Our challenge is to engage those younger families and maintain a meaningful relationship with them. If this task is not embraced with the urgency that it demands, not only do we continue to lose active participants, but the financial viability of the Parish community in the future becomes alarmingly tenuous.

The Church, in the broader social setting we find ourselves today, competes for the attention, interest and commitment of even those who profess to be Catholic. Whilst a large part of our mission is to engage with younger families, in secular terms, the Parish must also face the task of effectively marketing itself. Beyond its Sacramental life it needs to engage creatively with the spiritual, social and cultural needs of all age groups. The purpose of a gathering space is not solely a place for a cuppa after Mass, but a place where pastoral strategies, programs and initiatives can be planned and executed. It would also be a space where we can engage in a creative and purposeful way with the wider community.

Taking into account the reality in which we find ourselves, there are two options we could consider: Firstly, to accept that the current trend in terms of participation is irreversible and await the inevitable demise of Sacred Heart Parish; or secondly, embrace the mission that is presented to us, investigating responses which include the use of our current facilities as well as creative interaction with younger families and the broader community. This implies an investment in our future, which obviously includes a cost including time, finances and human resources. The Parish has faced this challenge continually throughout its history. Optimistically there is no reason why we can't do so at this time.

In light of the above reflections, a committee is being established comprising representatives of the Finance committee and the current Parish Council, and including Parishioners with specific expertise in building programs to investigate all aspects of the proposed gathering space.

Father Michael McKinnon PP
20/12/2011

NEW YEAR WISHES

On behalf of all the priest, we wish you many blessings over the coming year. Thank you too to the many people who have contributed so generously to the life of the Parish over 2011.

- Fr Michael



MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS

'Mary has a special role in the Catholic Church. After Christ, Mary is the most important figure in heaven. As one who has experienced the resurrection of the body, Mary is also very close to us as we live our life here on earth. Catholics do not worship Mary but give her due honour because of her role in bringing

Jesus Christ to birth.'

Excerpt from *Call and Response*, p. 69, Catholic Enquiry Centre <http://www.catholicenquiry.com>

THE WORD COMES TO KNOCK ON THE HEART OF EVERY PERSON

'The mystery of the Holy Night, which historically happened two thousand years ago, must be lived as a spiritual event in the 'today' of the Liturgy. The Word who found a dwelling in Mary's womb comes to knock on the heart of every person with singular intensity this Christmas.'

- Pope John Paul II

QUOTES

'The object of a new year is not that we should have a new year. It is that we should have a new soul.'

- G. K. Chesterton



VINNIES

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all the Volunteers at Vinnies.

Vinnies Family Groceries will close from Saturday 24th December and will re-open at 9.00am on Tuesday 3rd January 2012.

Vinnie's Family Groceries are a non-profit organisation. It is able to maintain competitive prices due to dedicated volunteers. More support means lower prices for Mildura's community. All welcome

FEAST DAYS OF THE WEEK

Mon Dec 26 St Stephen – the First Martyr

Mon Jan 2 Sts Basil (330 – 379) and Gregory Nazianzen (330 - 389)



PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

We pray that this new year will bring us closer to you.

May we take the time to get to know you.

Help us to truly celebrate the gifts you have graciously given us and use them to serve you and to spread your word,

May we also see and love you in all the people we meet, so that in turn, they can see you in us.

Amen.

DON'T FORGET TO COLLECT YOUR COPY OF ADVENT 2011 – A PASTORAL LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF THE DIOCESE OF BALLARAT AND A COPY OF AUSTRALIAN CATHOLICS OUT NOW.

THE YEAR OF GRACE

Earlier this year, the Australian Bishops announced the celebration of a *Year of Grace* for the Australian Church to take place from Pentecost 2012 to Pentecost 2013. Essentially, this *Year of Grace* is a summons to the whole Australian Church to undertake a spiritual journey, a time of listening and prayer, a fresh encounter with Jesus. In the recent visit of the Australian Bishops to Rome, **Archbishop Philip Wilson, President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference** spoke the following words in his address to Pope Benedict:

In the attempt to "start afresh from Christ" (Novo Millennio Ineunte, III), in the communion which is in Jesus, we have decided to call the whole Church in Australia to celebrate A Year of Grace from Pentecost 2012 to Pentecost 2013. Through this time we will seek to contemplate the face of Jesus and to listen to his voice at a new depth, in the belief that only he can lead us into the future, that only he can make us one in faith, in hope, in love. Through this year, we will implore a new sending of the Holy Spirit, who alone can breathe new life into the Church.

Holy Father, we entrust the "Year of Grace" to your prayer and we seek your Apostolic Blessing upon the Church in Australia, that we may be able to build upon the graces of recent times and work together to build the future with the words of the Psalmist in our hearts: "If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do the builders labour" (Psalm 127:1).

Archbishop Wilson has written to all Dioceses and Parish communities around the country to announce the launch of the forthcoming *Year of Grace - Starting Afresh from Christ* on the Feast of Christ the King

FOR THE CHILDREN



ROSTERS FOR THIS WEEKEND
DEC 31ST & JAN 1ST

ROSTERS FOR NEXT WEEKEND
JANUARY 7TH & 8TH

EUCCHARIST MINISTERS		
6PM	9AM	5PM
P Kelleher	F Carbone	J Macri
M McDonald	G Raita	A Dimasi
K Quinlan	C Maugeri	M Conte
B Weightman	A Chalkey	C Carmichael
E Frauenfelder	A Vartuli	M Towns
M Roper	N Zudetich	
S Tisler	S Visona	
MUSIC		
M Sullivan	Italian Choir	M Hammond
J Macri	N Armsden	J Ljubic
READERS		
B Bleaser	M Jackson	M Ransome
COUNTING TEAM 1		
GERRY LAVERY 5021 1918		
IRYMPLE		
EUCCHARIST MINISTER	READER	
Marita Jensen	Pat Riordan	

EUCCHARIST MINISTERS		
6PM	9AM	5PM
K Girke	B Bunting	K Towns
S Girke	M Haynes	W Finn
T McNamara	L Belej	T Finn
M Henderson	N Leonardis	P Cox
K Groves	M Speed	M Ransome
L Kearney	U Williams	
L Crowe	E Garreffa	
MUSIC		
Filipino Group	M Sullivan	M Guthrie
N Armsden	B Lewis	Leaders welcome
	J O'Bryan	
READERS		
R Barnes	M Haynes	B Dolence
COUNTING TEAM 2		
JOE DeJONG 5023 7802		
IRYMPLE		
EUCCHARIST MINISTER	READER	
Wendy Smith	Marty Smith	