

24th Dec. 2013 (A)

**CHRISTMAS VIGIL MASS
(6pm)**

1ST READING: Isaiah 62:1-5

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

2ND READING: Apostles 13:16-17. 22-25

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Alleluia, alleluia!

Tomorrow the wickedness of the earth will be destroyed: the Saviour of the world will be our king. Alleluia!

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:1-25

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind will see the saving power of God.



24th Dec. 2013 (A)

**CHRISTMAS NIGHT MASS
(11pm)**

1ST READING: Isaiah 9:1-7

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

2ND READING: Titus 2:11-14

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Alleluia, alleluia!

Good News and great joy to all the world: today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord. Alleluia!

GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-14

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

The Word of God became man; we have seen his glory.



St Michael's Catholic Church

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Deepen your faith-find answers on
Tim Staples; Catholic Sacraments.
www.vocationcentre.org.au



25th Dec. 2013 (A)

**CHRISTMAS DAY (8am,
9:30am & 5pm)**

1ST READING: Isaiah 52:7-10

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

2ND READING: Hebrews 1:1-6

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 1:1-18

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

WEEKEND MASS TIMES:

Sat. Vigil: 5pm

Sunday: 8am, 9:30am & 5pm

WEEKDAY MASS TIMES:

Mon, Tues & Thurs: 7:30am

Wed: 6pm

Fri: 9:15am

Sat: 9:15am (Sthn Cross Apts)

HOLY HOUR: Wed: 5pm

RECONCILIATION:

Wed: 5:15 – 5:45pm

Sat: 4:15 – 4:45pm

BAPTISMS:

Sundays 9:30am Mass

BAPTISMAL PROGRAMME &

WEDDINGS:

By appointment

ANOINTING MASS:

Quarterly: 1st weekend

1ST SAT OF EACH MONTH:

11am Mass in honour of Our Lady.

PLANNED GIVING PROGRAMME:

100% tax deductible. Please join by contacting parish office.

FAITH FORMATION:

Sundays 3:30pm (in presbytery)

OFFICE HOURS:

Mon, Wed & Fri 9am to 2:30pm

The Liturgy of the Word for the Nativity of Christ offers the option to read a longer or shorter form of the Gospel. If we read the longer form, we hear Matthew recount the ancestry of Jesus. This genealogy sets Jesus' birth within the context of the history of Israel, highlighting two of Jesus' ancestors—Abraham, the father of the Hebrew people, and David, the most important king of Israel. Jesus' ancestral lineage reinforces a central theme of Matthew's Gospel: Jesus is the fulfilment of the prophecies made to the people of Israel. The Gospel of Matthew tells the story of the birth of Jesus from Joseph's perspective. During his betrothal to Mary, Joseph learned that Mary was pregnant. Betrothal in first-century Jewish culture was more than an engagement period; it was part of the marriage contract. A breach of this contract was considered adultery. If adultery was proved, the punishment might be death. Joseph had rights under Mosaic Law, but he chose to act discreetly in his plans to break the marriage contract so as to protect Mary.

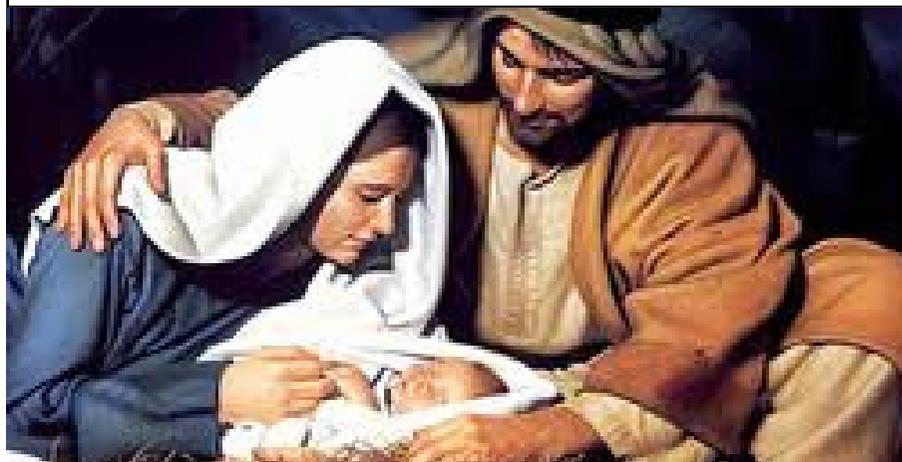


Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...



The way that Joseph and Mary faced these extraordinary circumstances tells us much about these holy people and their faith in God. The message the angel gave to Joseph in a dream reveals many important theological details about the child Mary will bear and about the child's role in God's plan. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. His name will be Jesus, which in the Hebrew means "God saves." He will be the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy. He will be Emmanuel, "God with us." This is the mystery we celebrate at Christmas, the Incarnation. God chose to become a human being in the person of Jesus. Joseph did as the angel of the Lord directed. He took Mary to be his wife and accepted the child in her womb as his own. When Jesus was born, Joseph followed the directions of the angel and gave the child the name Jesus. We often recall Mary's cooperation in God's plan for our salvation. Today's Gospel reminds us of Joseph's important role, which was also crucial to God's plan for Jesus' birth.

BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR 2014



Reflection.

It would be wonderful if we can make time to be aware that in the very midst of our busy preparations for the celebration of Christ's birth in ancient Bethlehem, Christ is reborn in the "Bethlehems" of our homes and daily lives. Take time, slow down, be still, be awake to the Divine Mystery that looks so common and so ordinary yet is wondrously present. An old abbot was fond of saying, "The devil is always the most active on the highest feast days. The supreme trick of Old Scratch is to have us so busy decorating, preparing food, practicing music and cleaning in preparation for the feast of Christmas that we actually miss the coming of Christ. Hurt feelings, anger, impatience, injured egos—the list of clouds that busyness creates to blind us to the birth can be long, but it is familiar to us all."

On What Day Was Jesus Really Born? No one knows for sure what was the month, not to mention which day, on which Jesus was born. Various theories have been raised that put Jesus' birth in April, October, and September. But no one knows for sure.

The Origins of Christmas

The origins of Christmas go back to before the time of Christ when many ancient cultures celebrated the changing of the seasons. In the northern hemisphere in Europe, for example, the winter solstice, which was the shortest day of the year, occurs around Dec. 25th. These celebrations were based on the decline of winter. Since during winter animals were penned, people stayed in doors, crops didn't grow, etc., to know that winter was half over and on its way out was a time of celebration. In the ancient Roman system of religion, Saturn was the god of agriculture. Each year during the summer, the god Jupiter would force Saturn out of his dominant position in the heavenly realm and the days would begin to shorten. In the temple to Saturn in Rome, the feet of Saturn were then symbolically bound with chains until the winter solstice when the length of days began to increase. It was this winter solstice that was a time of celebration and exchange of gifts as the hardness of winter began to wane and the days grew longer. December 25th specifically coincided the day of the birth of the sun-god named Phrygia a culture in the ancient Balkans. In the Roman Empire, by the time of Christ the winter festival was known as saturnalia. The Roman Church was unable to get rid of saturnalia, so early in the 4th Century, they adopted the holiday and tried to make it a Christian celebration of the Lord's birth. They called it the Feast of the Nativity. This custom has been part of western culture ever since.

Additionally, our calendar is inaccurate. It is set about 4 years too late. This is known by comparing the biblical accounts of gospels and the extrabiblical records known about Quirinius, the governor of Syria (Luke 2:2) and Herod the Great (Matt. 2:19) who died in 4 B.C. in the year of Jesus' birth. Humorously, that would make Jesus, born in 4 B.C.