

Gospel

2:1-14

The holy Gospel according to Luke

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn. In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'

The Gospel of the Lord.



Reflection by Dianne Bergant CSA

The Gospel situates the birth of Jesus within Roman rule of the first century. Through the Incarnation, the ordinary becomes transparent and reveals the extraordinary; the divine is known in the child. Only those of humble heart experience this wonder. They behold it and they come to embrace it. In fact, it is the nature of this child, born in history, to reverse the orders of power.

God is portrayed as a valiant liberator who champions the cause of justice and who brings a liberation that reverses history and the ways of war, power and oppression. This reversal is made more shocking by the fact that the one who is the mighty warrior and conqueror of the nations is a child. This child is the weak and voiceless one, the one who has neither power nor legal rights. God's reversal of the long-standing realities of this world is accomplished through the apparently insignificant, through the gift of this child who is given to us in the middle of the night.

Something new has happened: the age of God's fulfilment has arrived. The age of grace and fresh hope, made available to all people of good will, is an era of redemptive presence. Now all people can walk in the newness of life and grace. Yet, while this new age has begun, it is not yet fully realised. We live believing in its presence and awaiting its fulfilment. Although we are celebrating Christmas, we still await the final coming of the Lord.

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Our Sunday Word

St Michael's Parish, Nowra

nowraparish.org.au

Christmas Day - the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ

25 December 2008



First Reading

9:1-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone.

You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase; they rejoice in your presence as men rejoice at harvest time, as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.

For the yoke that was weighing on him, the bar across his shoulders, the rod of his oppressor, these you break as on the day of Midian. For all the footgear of battle, every cloak rolled in blood, is burnt and consumed by fire.

For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him:

Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.

Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end, for the throne of David and for his royal power, which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity.

From this time onwards and for ever, the jealous love of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The word of the Lord.

'Glory to God in the highest...'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 95

R/ Today is born our Saviour - Christ the Lord!

1. O sing a new song to the Lord, sing to the Lord all the earth. O sing to the Lord, bless his name.
2. Proclaim his help day by day, tell among the nations his glory and his wonders among all the peoples. (R.)
3. Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad, let the sea and all within it thunder praise, let the land and all it bears rejoice, all the trees of the wood shout for joy at the presence of the Lord for he comes, he comes to rule the earth. (R.)
4. With justice he will rule the world, he will judge the peoples with his truth. (R.)

Second Reading

2:11-14

...from the letter of Paul to Titus

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation

Lk 2:10

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



St Michael's Parish, Nowra – Tel: 4423 1712 E-mail: office@nowraparish.org.au

Website: nowraparish.org.au Incorporates the Church Communities of St Michael, Nowra; St Patrick, Berry

Sacred Heart, Bomaderry; Mary, Help of Christians, Culburra; St Joseph, Kangaroo Valley; Holy Spirit, Vincentia.

Christmas [Year B]

25 December 2008



“The Word was made flesh. He lived among us.” – John 1.14

To all parishioners and visitors, a very holy, joyful and peaceful Christmas! Welcome home to all who are visiting their families for Christmas.

NOTE: There will be **NO** evening Mass in the Parish on Christmas Day

Thank You!

As an expression of appreciation and gratitude for the support and generosity of so many parishioners throughout the year, and especially at Christmas time, a **Triduum of Masses** will be offered for your intentions and needs over the Christmas season.

Our prayer is that you and your families will have a blessed, peaceful and joyful Christmas.
(Fathers Pat, Richard, Ronan and Leo).

CHRISTMAS - 2ND COLLECTION – a portion of the second collection is distributed to some of the Nursing Homes in the area in appreciation of the care they give to residents, many of whom are parishioners. We will also contribute to **Caritas**.

Sunday Holiday Masses:

NOWRA:6pm Vigil; 8am, 9.30am & 6pm
BERRY: 8.00am
BOMADERRY: 9.30am
CULBURRA BEACH:.....6pm Vigil & 8.00am
VINCENTIA: 6pm Vigil, 8.00am & 9.30am
KANGAROO VALLEY: 11.00am
SHOALHAVEN HEADS: Vigil 6.00pm 27th Dec, 3rd & 10th Jan 09 only (Community Centre)

Feastdays this week:

Fri 26 - Stephen, first martyr: **Mass 8.00.a.m. only**

Sat 27 – John, apostle, evangelist – Mass; 9.a.m.

Confession/Reconciliation:

Nowra: Sat 11.30.-12.30pm. 5.00 - 5.30pm.

K Valley: Sat 4.30 – 5.00pm

Vincentia: Sat. 5 - 5.30pm.

CHRISTMAS TELEVISION – ABC1 TV will provide live coverage of the Pope's Midnight Mass from St Peter's Basilica at 11.00am on Christmas Day.

YOUTH MINISTER POSITION. Nowra Parish and St John's High School are jointly seeking to employ a suitably qualified youth minister for 15 hours a week to start in 2009. The position would be focused on integrating students and young adults aged 15 to 25 years into the life of the parish. The youth minister would train and empower a core team of volunteers to run youth groups/ formation/prayer events. The person appointed will be available to work at St John's in RE support, school retreats and reflection days and a lunchtime prayer group (up to 6 hrs/week). In the Parish they will support existing Youth and Young Adult ministries and facilitate additional events. Application Forms are available from the Parish Office. Visit nowraparish.org.au for more information and application form.

A special thank you all of our Organists and musicians who are helping to provide music for the Christmas Masses throughout the parish. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Pope Benedict at a general

audience Dec 17th: *“Christmas speaks to everyone; it celebrates the gift of life – often fragile or endangered – and the fulfilment of our deepest hopes for a world renewed. The present economic crisis, causing so much suffering, can however help us to focus on the spiritual meaning of Christmas, and to welcome into our hearts the hope brought by God's coming among us as man. The Word became flesh to offer humanity the salvation which can only be received as a gracious gift from God. The same Word by whom the universe was made, the Word which gives all creation its ultimate meaning, has come to dwell among us: he now speaks to us, he reveals the deepest meaning of our life on earth, and he guides us to the Love which is our fulfilment. In the Christ Child, God humbly knocks on the doors of our hearts and asks us freely to accept his love, his truth, his life. At Christmas, let us rekindle our hope in God's promises and, in humility and simplicity, welcome the light, joy and peace which the Saviour brings to us and to our world”.*



LIVE LIFE TO THE FULL! – The New Year can be a time to pause and ask God and others what life we are being called to live. God calls us all to live life to the full in our chosen vocation. Enquiries about the priesthood can be directed to Fr Mark O'Keefe 4271 1068 or Fr Richard Healey 4423 1712. For more information about married life, religious life or committed single life visit Life Choices for Catholics www.catholicozvocations.org.au



We prayerfully remember our relatives, friends and parishioners at Christmas. *Mass will also be offered over the Christmas period for all parishioners who have died over the past 12 months. May they rest in eternal peace.*