

# St Michael's Parish, Nowra

Incorporating the Catholic Communities of St Michael's, Nowra – St. Patrick's, Berry – Sacred Heart, Bomaderry - Help of Christians, Culburra – St Joseph's, Kangaroo Valley – Holy Spirit, Vincentia.



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*Bookings for Weekend Masses, please see notice inside bulletin*

*Second Sunday of Advent*

*6th December 2020*

## *A St Nicholas' Day – 6<sup>th</sup> December*

### **Who kidnapped St Nicholas?**

It never ceases to amaze me how easily we hand over our most treasured traditions, customs and beliefs to the secular and commercial world. We know that Christmas in some parts of the world has simple become "the holiday season!" or at best "Xmas". It's almost as if the mere mentions of 'Jesus' or 'Christ' is an embarrassment to some. Yet no one complains about taking the holiday.



Doubtless one of the most loved Saints, very little is known about the life and death of Nicholas of Bari (Italy), except that he lived in the first half of the fourth century and was Bishop of Myra in Asia Minor.

His legend recounts how, on returning from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he came to Myra, and was consecrated. He suffered imprisonment during the Diocletian persecution, but was freed by the Edict of Constantine and is known to have attended the great Nicaean Council I (c.325), which gave us the Nicaean Creed, which we recite at Mass.

The principal miracle-legends that highlight Nicholas' reputation for generosity and kindness speak of his liberation of 3 unjustly condemned officers; his secret provision of dowries for three daughters of an impoverished nobleman—he threw gold-filled

purses in through the window during the night, thus making him the "bringer"; and his deliverance of three innocent youths condemned to death.

After his death, the Myra Christians honoured his memory by leaving surprise gifts for their children by their bedside during the night before his anniversary. This tradition was gradually transferred to our Christmas, and "Saint Nicholas" has in popular parlance become corrupted to "Santa Claus"!

However, in certain parts of Europe, as in Catholic Austria for instance, the practice of giving to well-behaved children a small present and to naughty ones a piece of black coal, on 6 December still prevails.

The relics of St Nicholas were allegedly stolen from his Church in Myra in 1087 and brought to Bari in southern Italy by some Italian sailors or merchants. Now enshrined in the church of St Nicola, Bari, they are venerated to this day for their power of healing.

On his feast day, his image is taken out to sea in a boat and returned in the evening with a torchlight procession. Regarded as the Patron of mariners and travellers, he is honoured especially in seaport towns. He is also the Protector of the innocent and the wronged in particular and of all children in general. Finally, he is also the Patron of Russia, Greece, Sicily, Lorraine, Limerick and Naples.

### **A change for the worse!!**



In 1822, Clement Clarke Moore, an Episcopal minister, wrote a long Christmas poem for his three daughters entitled, "An Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas." Moore's poem, which he was

Initially hesitant to publish due to the frivolous nature of its subject, is largely responsible for our modern image of Santa Claus as a "right jolly old elf" with a portly figure and the supernatural ability to ascend a chimney with a mere nod of his head! Although some of Moore's imagery was probably borrowed from other sources, his poem helped to popularize Christmas Eve - Santa Claus waiting for the children to get

to sleep the now-familiar idea of a Santa Claus who flew from house to house on Christmas Eve - in "a miniature sleigh" led by eight flying reindeer, whom he also named - leaving presents for deserving children,

"An Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas," created a new and immediately popular American icon. In 1881, political cartoonist Thomas Nast drew on Moore's poem to create the first likeness that matches our modern image of Santa Claus. His cartoon, which appeared in Harper's Weekly, depicted Santa as a rotund, cheerful man with a full, white beard, holding a sack laden with toys for lucky children. It is

Nast who gave Santa his bright red suit trimmed with white fur, North Pole workshop, elves, and his wife, Mrs. Claus.



The commercial world also saw potential in 'marketing' this image, far removed for the reality Man of God and Pastor of the People. In 1931, Coca-Cola commissioned illustrator Haddon Sundblom to paint Santa for Christmas advertisements. Since then we have seen a succession of imposters advertising anything from swimwear, food stores and even adult products.

### ***Look for the meaning first!***

There are many Religious feasts such as Christmas, Easter or even All Saint day, and Social/Cultural observances such as ANZAC day, Mothers' (or Mothering day as it was first known) and Fathers' day and other Commemorations. These were established for and by people who saw the importance of keeping some memory alive in order to appreciate and celebrate some past event which contributes to and helps to shape our future. Most of these commemorations have a clear and essential message. And in the celebration of our these events we are more likely to let them bring about some positive change in us.

Celebrating these events can and should be rewarding and enjoyable but they don't necessarily need to be commercial events, at least not to the extent that most have become. Commercialism and Popularism have the potential to destroy or obscure the message. It a matter of relearning the 'meaning' of how, and why the tradition was established.

Christmas need not be reduced to buying presents and stuffing turkeys. It can be a time when we unpack the most precious gift we have to offer, ie., our hearts.

As for **St Nicholas Day** the lesson of kindness, Christian integrity and caring for one another is not only for children but adults as well. In a sense we, the adults should be just as excited as the children about because **Santa Clause is Real!**

When children are taught about (the real) Saint Nicholas they will be introduced to a figure who can accompany them not just in December or just throughout their childhood but as they grow they can draw from the knowledge that the gifts he brings will last for ever.

And wouldn't it be wonderful to know that this childhood figure can accompany them into their adult life and offer them the REAL, CHRISTmas gift ... HOPE.

### ***Thank you from Father Pat.***



As you would have read in last week's Bulletin the Parish Pastoral Council and representatives from the various communities and groups from within the parish gathered to make me a presentation, on the occasion of my retirement as Parish Priest of St Michael's (1992-2020).

I have been humbled but deeply appreciative by the many messages of good wishes, generosity and the spirit of the occasion.

As many of you will be aware, I was here as an assistant priest 1970-1975, which means that in many instances I have known four generations within families. It was a very significant decision for me as it would have been for many of you, who have had to make a similar decision. I came to know parishioners very well over that period of time. So many committed, supportive, generous and faith-filled people. I have been profoundly touched and inspired by so many messages and expressions of gratitude, and appreciation since I retired. I thank you most sincerely for the good, faithful, prayerful, and supportive people that you are, and have been, over the years. Together we have shared joys and sorrows, success and challenges.

As our parish history says in its title, you are indeed- A Faithful People. I will offer a Triduum of Masses for your needs and intentions over the Christmas Season. May the Lord continue to bless and protect you, your families, and all near and dear to you.

May you have a safe, peaceful and blessed Christmas. Peace and God bless. Fr Pat.

To View the presentation go to our **Webpage** or **Facebook page**; or directly **Fr. Pat's Presentation Night** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhIKcZcme6I>

### **Registering for weekend Masses:**

For Nowra, Culburra, Berry and Bomaderry - call **0477 427 396** (Mon to Fri between 10am & 3pm)

For Mass at Kangaroo Valley, please email [ronankangaroo1@gmail.com](mailto:ronankangaroo1@gmail.com)

For Mass at Vincentia - call **0435 862 156** or email [holyspiritvincentia@gmail.com](mailto:holyspiritvincentia@gmail.com)



**St Vincent de Paul (Nowra) Christmas Appeal** will be held this weekend. Envelopes will be collected at the end of each Mass. If you are unable to support the appeal this weekend, please take an envelope with you and return next week.

**Catholic Weekly, Calendars and Christmas Cards** – PLEASE SEE the **attendance monitors** will be selling items, after Mass.

**The LMC Soup Kitchen** would like to sincerely thank all our most generous benefactors including **IGA** and **Nowra Fresh Meats**, and volunteers who have once again supported us in so many ways over the past year. Mass will be offered for your intentions on **Tuesday 14th December at 8:00am**. We encourage you to come along and share in our thanks to God for His providence. Morning tea will be served directly after. We hope to see you there. Shannon Chittick and Sue Hill



**The LMC Soup Kitchen** is holding its Christmas Party on **Friday 18th December** and is after donations of small gifts, for approx. 10 children. If you would like to contribute, something small, please give to the attendance monitor. Call Shannon Chittick 0414 521 404 for more info.



We prayerfully remember the recently deceased **Adolphine Golle, Faye Gray, Margaret Rice** and **Frank Landers** and all those whose anniversaries occur at this time, **Geoff & Lillian Wilkins, Margaret Pryde, Kathleen Lynskey, John Broomhead, Krysia Brimmer** and **Maurie Hanley**.

We pray also for all who have died from Covid-19 in Australia and worldwide.

### **Christmas Masses and services**

Dear parishioners,

You will notice that there is already one change with the addition of a Vigil mass at Bomaderry. We can expect some **more changes from the Premier's office and from the Bishop's office**, hopefully for the better.

We will continue with the **pre-Registration again for this week**.

We have also been asked to introduce a 'QR' system to help streamline our attendance.

For those like myself, fear not, it will be explained at the point of registration.

After this weekend, we will open bookings to the general population.

If you know IF any changes to you plans PLEASE LET US KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Also I ask that you be flexible but above all, take all the precautions necessary.

Fr Leo Mifsud

#### **Christmas Vigil**

Nowra	5:30pm (Outdoor Mass)	8:00pm	9:30pm
Berry	7:00pm	(outdoor – weather permitting)	
Bomaderry	5:30pm		
Culburra	6:00pm	7:30pm	
Kangaroo Valley		8:00pm	
Vincentia	5:30pm	7:00pm	8:30pm

#### **Christmas Day**

Nowra	8:00am	9:30am
Berry	8:00am	
Bomaderry		9:30am
Culburra	8:00am	
Kangaroo Valley	10:00am	
Vincentia	8:00am	9:30am

**Second Rite of Reconciliation - be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> December at Nowra at 7:00 pm**

## Entrance Antiphon Cf. Is 30:19,30

O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.

## A reading from the prophet Isaiah Is 40:1-5. 9-11

'Console my people, console them' says your God. 'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for, that she has received from the hand of the Lord double punishment for all her crimes.' A voice cries, 'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low, let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley; then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion. Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem. Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God.' Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him. The prize of his victory is with him, his trophies all go before him. He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

## Responsorial Psalm Ps 84:9-14. R. v.8

(R.) Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

1. I will hear what the Lord God has to say,  
a voice that speaks of peace,  
peace for his people.  
His help is near for those who fear him  
and his glory will dwell in our land. (R.)
2. Mercy and faithfulness have met;  
justice and peace have embraced.
- Faithfulness shall spring from the earth  
and justice look down from heaven. (R.)
3. The Lord will make us prosper  
and our earth shall yield its fruit.  
Justice shall march before him  
and peace shall follow his steps. (R.)

## A reading from the second letter of St Peter 2 Pt 3:8-14

There is one thing, my friends, that you must never forget: that with the Lord, 'a day' can mean a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises, as anybody else might be called slow; but he is being patient with you all, wanting nobody to be lost and everybody to be brought to change his ways. The Day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire and fall apart, the earth and all that it contains will be burnt up.

Since everything is coming to an end like this, you should be living holy and saintly lives while you wait and long for the Day of God to come, when the sky will dissolve in flames and the elements melt in the heat. What we are waiting for is what he promised: the new heavens and new earth, the place where righteousness will be at home. So then, my friends, while you are waiting, do your best to live lives without spot or stain so that he will find you at peace.

## Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all people shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

## Gospel Mk 1:1-8

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way. A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight, and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

## Communion Antiphon

Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.

Mass Times		Sunday Mass Times									
		MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY					
Saturday Vigils		Nowra	8:00 am	9:30am	5:00 pm	Nowra	8:00 am				
Nowra	5:00pm	Berry	8:00 am			Berry		5:30 pm			
Culburra	5:00pm	Bomaderry	9:30 am			Culburra			5:30 pm		
Vincentia	5:00pm 6:15pm	Vincentia	9:00 am	10:15		Bomaderry				5:30 pm	
		Kangaroo Valley	11:00 am			Vincentia	8:00 am	5:30 pm	5:30 pm	8:00am	8:00 am
						Kangaroo Valley		9:00 am	9:00 am	9:00 am	