



ST JAMES' PARISH

St James Muswellbrook
St Thomas Aberdeen



We acknowledge the traditional owners who cared for this land for thousands of years and their descendants who have maintained these spiritual connections and traditions

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THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD – YEAR A

8 January 2023

First Reading **Is 60:1-6**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The glory of the Lord shines upon you.

Arise, shine out, Jerusalem, for your light has come,

the glory of the Lord is rising on you,

though night still covers the earth

and darkness the peoples.

Above you the Lord now rises

and above you his glory appears.

The nations come to your light

and kings to your dawning brightness.

Lift up your eyes and look round:

all are assembling and coming towards you,

your sons from far away

and your daughters being tenderly carried.

At this sight you will grow radiant,

your heart throbbing and full;

since the riches of the sea will flow to you;

the wealth of the nations come to you;

camels in throngs will cover you,

and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;

everyone in Sheba will come,

bringing gold and incense

and singing the praise of the Lord.

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

(R.) Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

1. O God, give your judgement to the king,
to a king's son your justice,
that he may judge your people in justice
and your poor in right judgement. **(R.)**
2. In his days justice shall flourish
and peace till the moon fails.
He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the Great River to earth's bounds. **(R.)**
3. The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts
shall pay him tribute.
The kings of Sheba and Seba
shall bring him gifts.
Before him all kings shall fall prostrate,
all nations shall serve him. **(R.)**

4. For he shall save the poor when they cry
and the needy who are helpless.
He will have pity on the weak
and save the lives of the poor. **(R.)**

Second Reading **Eph 3:2-3. 5-6**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

The revelation means that pagans now share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the same body.

You have probably heard how I have been entrusted by God with the grace he meant for you, and that it was by a revelation that I was given the knowledge of the mystery.

This mystery that has now been revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets was unknown to any men in past generations; it means that pagans now share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the same body, and that the same promise has been made to them, in Christ Jesus, through the gospel.

Gospel Acclamation **Mt 2:2**

Alleluia, alleluia!

We have seen his star in the East;

and have come to adore the Lord.

Alleluia!

Gospel **Mt 2:1-12**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

We have come from the East to worship the king.

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east. 'Where is the infant king of the Jews?' they asked. 'We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 'At Bethlehem in Judaea,' they told him, 'for this is what the prophet wrote:

And you, Bethlehem, in the land
of Judah,
you are by no means least
among the leaders of Judah,
for out of you will come a leader



who will shepherd my people Israel.'

Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared, and sent them on to Bethlehem. 'Go and find out all about the child,' he said 'and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And there in front of them was the star they had seen rising; it went forward and halted over the place where the child was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

REFLECTION by Fr Victor

The Epiphany is the manifestation of Jesus Christ to the world. The Magi saw His manifestation in the form of a star. The star led them through a long and perilous journey to Bethlehem in Judaea. They arrive with strange gifts as they bend low and kneel in front of the King of Kings. These Magi from far off lands are humbled in the presence of Jesus. The birth of Jesus is no longer meant just for the People of Israel, but for the whole human race.

People reacted differently to the birth of Jesus. The shepherds recognised one of their own in that animal shed; someone who would later say of himself, 'I am the Good Shepherd.' The kings (Magi), too saw one like themselves; someone would later say of himself, 'Yes, I am a King.' Herod, however, who was a powerful and influential king was worried, anxious and even threatened by this child. It was Jesus who had the real power, not Herod.

Angels came and told the shepherds where Jesus was to be found. The kings followed the light of a star that led to Jesus. Today, we experience God in far more ordinary ways. God continues to break and burst into our world and our lives in many different ways. We have to be looking for them or else we will miss them. An act of kindness, compassion, or generosity from someone reminds us that God is with us. A silent hand on our shoulder when we are struggling can reveal God to us. An apology made and a hand offered as a sign of peace; these are all small daily epiphanies. These are the ways and times that God continues to break into our world time and time again each and every day. The feast of the epiphany of the Lord is not about something that just happened along ago – this great feast reminds us to look for and find God within and around us.

The ways we experience God are not always in loud and dramatic ways. God often just whispers to us gently and nudges us to hear something, notice something or do something. We have to be looking and searching for these signs or we will miss them. We have to be listening or we will miss the whisper.

The Magi had the wisdom and courage to follow the star wherever it led them. Today in my own daily life, do I have the courage, wisdom, and faith to let God guide and direct me?

On this great feast of the Epiphany of our Lord, we pray for ourselves and all people of good will who are searching for God. May we have the light of faith to guide us through the ordinary events of our daily lives.

Stay Healthy, Stay Safe and Stay Blessed!

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Magi

In some translations, the 'wise men' of this passage are referred to as 'Magi'. Magi was the name given to the Persian priestly caste. Persia (now, Iran) lies to the east of Israel. These wise men are also sometimes portrayed as astrologers, but that is largely because of the reference "We saw his star as it rose". It is interesting that the passage describes 'some' wise men; tradition has developed a specific number of three – based on the three gifts presented. These anonymous (and purely literary) figures have been given names and their 'relics' lie in honour beneath the Cathedral of Cologne.



Prayer for the Appointment of our new Bishop

Shepherding God you reveal your way of unfailing love in the image of the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost, shows compassion, knows and is known by the sheep and lays down his life for them. We your people of Maitland-Newcastle are without a bishop to shepherd us. We ask that your Holy Spirit who moves through this great south land, inspire the choice of our new Bishop, empower his 'yes' and open our hearts in hospitality and love. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help pray for us.
Mary MacKillop of the Cross pray for us.

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL - A GREAT SUCCESS!

The Vinnies Muswellbrook Christmas appeal was very well supported. Thank you for your contribution towards the works of St Vincent de Paul, especially during this time of year when many are struggling.

Vinnies Muswellbrook are very appreciative.

KEEGAN/WOOD GROUP PLANNING

MEETING

Please join us for our 2023 planning meeting on **16 January 2023 at Everest Restaurant RSL Club**. Meet at **12 noon** to enjoy lunch and share ideas for the next 6 months (Feb 2023 – July 2023). Come along brimming with ideas. Names to Shirley, Robyn, Margaret by **Friday 13 Jan 2023**



CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FUND

For more than 60 years, the Catholic Development Fund has given back to our Diocese.



It might have been by financing the construction of schools, supporting CatholicCare's Community Programs or funding parish initiatives – their contribution to our region can be measured in many ways.

And while the team continues to do their incredible work, they have a new sense of excitement for the future after launching a new name for the organisation – Catholic Community Fund (CCF).

The new title encapsulates their work and dedication to the growth of our Diocese.

"We have changed our name because we believe Catholic Community Fund reflects what our Fund stands for, what we represent and our focus for the future," Fund and Treasury Manager Jenny Chung said.

"Many people may not know that over the last 10 years alone, the Fund has provided or given back over \$43 million to support the charitable works of the Diocese and its agencies. "The community is at the heart of everything we do, so it made sense for us to represent this in our name."

To learn more about the Catholic Community Fund visit:

<https://myccf.com.au/>

Collect your free 2023 magnetic calendar compliments of CCF at Masses this weekend.

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

Please come and join us to spend time with the Lord on Saturday evening after Vigil Mass until 9pm in St James Church. All are most welcome!

CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS

Please continue to send in your Christmas Offerings. This contribution supplements the First collection which supports the Priests in our Diocese. Thank you in anticipation of your support.

SAVE THE DATE: TORONTO MEN'S WEEKEND

A MenALIVE Men's Weekend will be held at the St Joseph's Toronto Parish on the weekend of 25 and 26 March 2023. The weekend is suitable for all men from 18 years of age and provides an opportunity for attendees to explore what makes them feel fully alive. More information will be provided closer to the date.

For more information visit: www.menalive.org.au

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE



CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA MOURNS DEATH OF POPE BENEDICT XVI

MEDIA RELEASE: December 31, 2022

Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB says Pope Benedict XVI will long be remembered fondly in Australia as the Pontiff who led young people from around the globe in prayer at World Youth Day in Sydney in 2008.

Pope Benedict, born Joseph Ratzinger, led the Church from April 2005 until February 2013, becoming the first Pope in centuries to resign. He had earlier served as head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, one of the Vatican's most influential departments, for more than two decades.

Pope Benedict died in Rome, where he had lived since his papal retirement, on Saturday evening, Australian time.

"From his time as an expert adviser – or peritus – at the Second Vatican Council onwards, there was no question that Joseph Ratzinger was a major figure within the Church around the world," said Archbishop Costelloe, president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

"His papacy will be remembered as one of rich teaching, including his encyclicals on love, hope and truth, as well as his book series *Jesus of Nazareth*, and for important reforms in areas like liturgy and in the handling of child sexual abuse."

Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP, the bishop who oversaw World Youth Day in 2008, said Pope Benedict had been a key influence and someone with whom he became close.

"I had the great privilege of spending some private moments with Pope Benedict, away from the spotlight," Archbishop Fisher said.

"They were moments I will forever cherish. He had a great intellect, which he shared through his work as a professor, a Church leader and ultimately as Pope.

"He did not seek nor enjoy the spotlight, but he produced some magnificent works that have shaped and will continue to shape Catholic thought and Catholic life."

Archbishop Fisher said he was very grateful to spend some time with Pope Benedict during his visits to Rome.

"Reminiscing about his time in Australia and learning from this gentle father figure was a real joy," he said.

Archbishop Costelloe said parishes around the country will hold special memorial Masses for Pope Benedict in the coming days, encouraging those wishing to attend to visit local church and cathedral websites for more information.

"These Masses will be a chance to celebrate the life and faith of Pope Benedict, but also to pray for the repose of his soul – just as we do for anyone who has died," he said.

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Weekly Mass Diary

Monday 9 January	Tuesday 10 January	Wednesday 11 January	Thursday 12 January	Friday 13 January	Saturday 14 January	Sunday 15 January
<i>The Baptism of the Lord</i>						2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
9.00am Private, Personal Prayer and Adoration St James Muswellbrook		9.00am Mass St James Muswellbrook	11.30am Adoration and Benediction 12.05pm Mass St James Muswellbrook	9.00am Mass St James Muswellbrook	5.30pm Mass St James Muswellbrook	10.00am Mass St James Muswellbrook
	5.30pm Mass St Thomas Aberdeen					8.00am Mass St Thomas Aberdeen

Minister Roster Sunday 15th January 2023

3rd Sunday of the Month	Readers	Cantors	Musicians	Gifts	Extraordinary Ministers	Altar Servers	Sacristan
5.30pm Saturday Muswellbrook	S. Bernard J. Jacobs	C. Hayes	Sr. Dorothy	Can you fill this position?			C. Hayes
8am Sunday Aberdeen	K. Mason	M. Edwards	C. Bowen				M. Hamilton
10am Sunday Muswellbrook	C. O'Brien Can you fill this position?	M. Kelly	C. Kelly	Can you fill this position?			K. Goodwin
Counters	Therese Bristow and Esther Molloy						

MASS AND PRAYER REQUESTS:

We remember and pray for those who are ill at home and in hospital at this time, may they know the healing presence of Christ: Iris Spittles, Pauline Coleman, David Curran, Pat Hogan, Abbie Sweeper, Kym Mason, Mollie Hofman, Melanie Hoch, Kim Goodwin, Anne Hugo, John Presland, Margaret Blake, Rodrigo Canete, Fay Biddle, Helen Tumbers, Hilda Carey, Lucrecia Casia, Anne Rawson, Enrique Tuazon, Victoria Diputado, Vinitia Fernando, and Maree Bible.

Baptism:

Recently Deceased: Pope Benedict XVI and Baltazar Punzalan

Anniversary:

Privacy Laws. All parishioners are encouraged to pray for the sick. Masses will be offered on request. Due to privacy laws, names of the sick and deceased can only be put in the bulletin with the permission of the immediate family.

St James and St Thomas - Pray for Us

BULLETIN

Please contact the Parish Office on 6543 1167 if you have any notices for the bulletin, or alternatively email:

muswellbrookparish@mn.catholic.org.au

The Parish bulletin can be accessed on our website: muswellbrookcatholicparish.org.au

or on our Facebook page: **Catholic Parish of St James Muswellbrook**

Please email muswellbrookparish@mn.catholic.org.au if you would like the bulletin emailed to you each week.

SAFEGUARDING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Please visit our 'Safeguarding' page to access a range of safeguarding resources: muswellbrookcatholicparish.org.au

Have a complaint or wish to provide feedback? Visit: officeofsafeguarding.org.au/feedback/

"Our mission is to spread the Kingdom by being an alive and informed Community, united as one family in care and consideration for each other in the love of God."