

Reflection - God Made Flesh

If anything, Christianity - and especially Catholicism - takes human flesh seriously. Our central mystery is the Incarnation - God's "enfleshment," the necessary condition for the life and teachings of Jesus, his redemptive death, and his glorious resurrection.

God marries our human flesh and finiteness. In Jesus the eternal Word of God becomes wombed in time. Thus, we who bear his name and live his life are a people who see the transcendent in the particularities of names, places, historical events.

To others, our faith and practice may seem embarrassingly concrete and physical.

I remember a non-Christian woman, after weighing the possibility of becoming Catholic, saying to me, "But it seems all so primitive, so fleshy."

It is strange, when you think of it. We celebrate conceptions, circumcisions, and purifications; we ritualize marriage so highly that some of those who have left our communion are struck by the leanness, even barrenness, of some other marriage ceremonies. Births and deaths we linger and pray and play over. Food and blood characterize our Eucharists.

It is unsettling for many—and sometimes for us—that God would penetrate and inhabit our ordinariness. It might be more reassuring if our Child-God had sprung fully matured from the head of Zeus, instead of appearing in the midst of such inadequacy and vulnerability. Sure, we have the angels, but they tell us merely to "fear not." And they point, like the star, to things so utterly undramatic and common as a makeshift bed and plain people.

Even early pseudo-documents of Jesus' birth and childhood seem uncomfortable with the common condition of the "baby Jesus." They would have this infant more splendidous, this child more ominously powerful, someone shooting lightning bolts from his fingers.

And yet the plain humanity of Christmas is what it is all about, our lives and God's. In the last analysis we are as defenceless as a child before the great forces of time and consciousness. What is more, we are reminded that our very God, as well, is somehow like a child, defenceless before us. Perhaps that is why the heavenly advice so often given in the infancy narratives is "fear not."

It is fitting that the holiness of the family also be celebrated at this time. For it is only by the ordinariness of being born, nurtured, and taught, so frail and dependent upon those who have welcomed us into their lives, that we ever grow in strength and grace.

God enters these intimacies, too, just as surely as God wants entry into all of human history. And so the wisdom of the father and the authority of the mother and reverence of the child reveal the splendour. Sometimes the wise old ones in our midst, like Simeon, help us name the glory. Other times, it is the prophetic ancient, like Anna, who sees the truth of our ordinary radiance.

Paul reminds us that the virtues of daily life - kindness, thankfulness, patience, and forbearance—embody our good and gracious God, who has willed to dwell in us. Our submission to each other, our love, our care lest the frail among us lose heart, is the making, once again, of the Word into our flesh.

John Kavanaugh, SJ

Position Vacant - Parish Secretary - 6 hours per week - Sacred Heart Parish Blackheath

The Parish of Sacred Heart, Blackheath invites applications for the position of Parish Secretary. The role of Parish Secretary will entail providing secretarial and administrative support to the Parish's Priests and the Parish team. The successful applicant would need to: a) demonstrate an ability to relate to a variety of people and develop sound working relationships with other members of the Parish team; b) have a strong commitment to the Catholic faith; c) have a professional manner and excellent people skills; d) have high level computer skills, attention to detail and a well ordered approach to work; e) have the right to work within Australia and undertake a national police and working with children check.

Applications must include a cover letter, resume and names and contact details of at least two referees, one of whom includes your Parish Priest.

Closing date for applications is: Friday 15 January 2021.

Please send your application, resume and full referee details to: blackheath@parracatholic.org with the subject title: PARISH SECRETARY APPLICATION.

For more information, please contact the parish office at blackheath@parracatholic.org or visit <https://parracatholic.org/employment/>.

St Thomas Aquinas Parish Bulletin



Parish Website:
Parish Facebook Page:
Parish Priest:
Assistant Priest:
Parish Pastoral Council:
Parish Office Hours:

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PO Box 4410, Winmalee, NSW 2777
Phone: 02 4754 1052
Email: springwood@parracatholic.org
www.stchurchspringwood.org.au
St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community Springwood
Fr Paul Slyney - 4754 1052 **Emergency ONLY:** 0418 461 316
Fr Shinto Francis - 4754 1052 **Emergency ONLY:** 0415 077 969
Email - springwoodppc@gmail.com
Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm

Weekend Masses: Saturday Vigil Mass 5.00 pm, Sunday 8.00 am and 9.30 am
Weekday Mass: Tuesday - Saturday 9.30 am
Rosary & Devotions: Tuesday - Saturday 9.00 am
Adoration, Rosary & Chant: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 7.30 - 8.30 pm
Intercession & Adoration: None until further notice
Baptisms: 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month - 10.30am and by appointment
Reconciliation: By request
Weddings: By appointment - restricted numbers
Funerals: By appointment - restricted numbers

**We will be closed
from 1.00pm
Wednesday, 23rd
December until
8.30am Tuesday,
12th January 2021**

A Poem to sit with

The Gratitude

For my birthing
and breathing

for land and sky
for clouds
for the sea

for one anemone

for the beauty of women
for the beauty of men
for the beauty of children

for my mother
who bore me

who gave me the heart
to embrace the universe.

J.Janda

THE GOSPEL

Luke 2:22-40

He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: "Now Master, you may let your servant go in peace. ..."

The Spirit called.
Simeon and Anna came forth.

Call us too, O Spirit.

Let us recognize Christ, our brother,
the one object of our longing,
and find him in all people,
in all of creation,
in our midst
here and
now.

Teach us
above all else, how to love
as you and the Father and the Son love.

Make each and every one part of your Holy Family.

Anne Osdieck

Today's Readings: Gen 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40

Entrance Antiphon: The Shepherds went in haste; and found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in a manger.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 104:1-6, 8-9. R. vv. 7, 8

R. The Lord remembers, his covenant for ever.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, Alleluia! In the past God spoke to our fathers through the prophets; now he speaks to us through his Son. Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon: Our God has appeared on the earth, and lived among us.

1 January: SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

Next Week: THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD Is 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12



Sick: Luca Hurley and all Private Intentions.

Due to the strict privacy laws, names of the deceased and sick can only be included in the Bulletin with the express permission of the immediate family. Thank you.

A Poem to Sit With

What Child is This?

*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means
"God is with us."*

How could it be
that the Creator of the Universe
would think of me?
How could it be
that the Creator of over
a trillion galaxies
would care for me
as a mother, her baby?
How could it be
that the Creator of over
300 hundred billion stars of our galaxy
would comfort me
as a father, his child?
How could it be
that the Creator of the Universe
would conceive of pomegranates
peaches, plums, and apples
to feed me?
How could it be
that the Creator of the Universe
wishes me to call Him, Father?
How could it be
that the Creator of the Universe
would come to me
as a helpless baby
lying in straw in a manger?
How could it be
that the Lord of the Universe
would come to me as a child,
the Christ Child
telling me he needs a
home in my heart?

J.Janda

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES 2020:

Springwood

Christmas Eve, Thurs 24th Dec

5.00pm Children's Mass (FULL)

8.00pm VIGIL (in church) (FULL)

Christmas Day, Fri 25th Dec

8.00am, 9.30am

Boxing Day, Sat 26 Dec

9.30am Communion Service/Rosary

Sun 27th December

8.00am, 9.30am

Tues 29th, Wed 30th Dec

9.30am

Thurs 31st Dec

9.30am

Fri 1st January

9.30am

****NEW** TAP and GO Donation Machine**

*** MAKE A CASHLESS CONTRIBUTION ***

On guidance from the Diocese we have received a new Tap and Go Donation Machine.

This will be for the second planned giving collection

(You may still give via our Offer-tory Boxes)

SIMPLY tap on the device near the contactless logo

The machine has been pre-set at \$10.00 per transaction



A Christmas Blessing

Loving and gentle God, as we light a candle this Christmas Day, we ask your blessing for our family and those we love.

May this light remind us that you are with us now and always.

May this light remind us that there are no greater blessings than Love, Family, and Home.

May this family always know your love,
And may our love for one another always burn brightly.

May this family always know your peace.
May this family always know peace in our home,
In our hearts, and peace with one another.

May this family always rejoice in your gifts,
May we always rejoice in the gift of love for one another.

May we always keep a light in our home and in our hearts
The blessing you share with us
And which we share with one another.

May your presence make this home
A place of love and peace.

May our family always rejoice in love and peace
With you, our God, with one another, and with all people.

*'Welcome Lord, this and all days,
To our home,
To our Family,
To our Hearts.'*

Amen