

### Glancing Thoughts - *Who Knew?*

Who knew the Messiah was born as the baby Jesus in Bethlehem in that wintertime?

In our Gospel Reading, a lot of people came to figure it out.

The chief priests and scribes knew where the Messiah would be born, because they could interpret the parts in the Old Testament that predicted the Messiah's birth. The magi from the East knew that the Messiah had been born, because they could interpret the presence of the star in the sky. When the magi followed the star to Bethlehem to see for themselves, Herod the King ordered them to come back and tell him too.

For all these people, there was a way to know the birth of the Messiah. The priests could interpret Scripture, and the magi could read the stars. King Herod had the political power to command their knowledge and wisdom for his own purposes.

But what about people who lack the advantages of the priests and magi and who have no power to command others? How are they to know? Does God make provision only for the fortunate?

Consider the shepherds. They lacked the money needed for education, and so they lacked the ability to use Scripture or stars to know the birth of the Messiah. They had no power to command others to share the fruits of their education with them either.

But it isn't powerlessness or poverty that keeps a person from knowing the birth of the Messiah. In the end, it was not the shepherds but the powerful and wealthy King Herod, with his evil-hearted intentions, who didn't know the baby Jesus was the Messiah. The magi didn't tell him, because God warned them in a dream not to. And so Herod the King didn't know.

In spite of their lack of all worldly advantages, the shepherds in fact outranked the king and all the others. They were by the side of the Messiah first, and they didn't have to figure it out for themselves either.

The shepherds may have been poor and simple, but they were trusting and open-hearted, too. And so they knew Christ Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem that cold winter night because they heard the angels sing.

*Eleonore Stump*

*Eleonore Stump is Professor of Philosophy, Saint Louis University*

### SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

1st January 2022

On the 1st January the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. This feast is the Octave Day of Christmas. In the modern Roman Calendar only Christmas and Easter enjoy the privilege of an octave.

"Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling place where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among men. In this sense the Church's Tradition has often read the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary. Mary is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the "Seat of Wisdom." — *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 721



### St Thomas Aquinas Parish Bulletin



168 Hawkesbury Road, Springwood, NSW, 2777  
PO Box 4410, Winmalee, NSW 2777  
Parish Office: 02 4754 1052

**Parish Office Hours:** Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm  
**Parish Email:** [springwood@parracatholic.org](mailto:springwood@parracatholic.org)  
**Parish Website:** [www.stachurchspringwood.org.au](http://www.stachurchspringwood.org.au)  
**Parish Facebook Page:** St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community Springwood  
**Parish Priest:** Fr Paul Slyney - 4754 1052 *Emergency ONLY:* 0418 461 316  
**Assistant Priest:** Fr Shinto Francis - 4754 1052 *Emergency ONLY:* 0415 077 969

**Weekend Masses:** Saturday Vigil Mass 5.00 pm, Sunday 8.00 am and 9.30 am  
**Weekday Mass:** Tuesday - Saturday 9.30 am

**Rosary Devotion:** Tuesday - Saturday 9.00 am  
**Adoration, Rosary & Chaplet:** 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month, 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  
**Funerals:** By appointment

**MASKS MUST BE  
worn in Church**

#### The First Reading

*Isaiah 60:1-6*

*Rise up in splendour, Jerusalem! Your light has come,  
the glory of the Lord shines upon you.*

Morning has opened.  
Its gentle light spills over all.  
Caravans come and nations stretch to see.

Hearts open up their sleepy eyes  
to the radiance that you  
have poured  
out on us.

Help us awaken.

*Anne Osdieck*

#### THE GOSPEL

*Matthew 2:1-12*

*He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ...  
"Go and search diligently for the child."*

Look!  
Look up,  
O Jerusalem!  
The world is coming,  
running to walk in your light.

We are the dull and the sparkling,  
the border agents and  
the undocumented,  
the kings and the  
hoboes.

Lord, please  
shine your light on us all.  
Let your star chase away our darkness  
and fill us with your radiant love!  
Make us your epiphanies  
overflowing with wonderful  
care for each other.

*Anne Osdieck*

**Today's Readings:** Isaiah 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3, 5-6; Mathew 2:1-12

**Entrance Antiphon:** Behold, the Lord, the Mighty One, has come; and kingship is in his grasp, and power and dominion.

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

**R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, alleluia! We have seen his star in the East; and have come to adore the Lord. Alleluia!

**Communion Antiphon:** We have seen his star in the East, and have come with gifts to adore the Lord.

**Next week: The BAPTISM of the LORD (First Sunday in Ordinary Time)**



**Sick:** Molly Hurley, Gerry Thistleton, Roshan Rupesinghe, Evelyn Robinson, Susie Ziino, James Wallace, Mischa Damaguc and family, Margaret Day, Adam McCully, Christopher Coombs, Kate Moore, 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.*

## Parish and Local Community News

**DISPENSATION:** On the 20th March 2020 Catholics from the Diocese of Parramatta were dispensed from their Sunday Mass obligation until further notice (Canon 1248 and Catechism 2181) by virtue of a Decree issued by Bishop Vincent Long. From the 15th December 2021 this Decree is now revoked and the Sunday obligation is imposed once again.

**SYNOD OF BISHOPS – HAVE YOUR SAY:** What would you say to Pope Francis if you had 10 minutes? Catholics across the world are invited to participate in a period of local consultation for the next international Synod of Bishops. Find out how to send your message at [parracatholic.org/synod-of-bishops](http://parracatholic.org/synod-of-bishops)

**COUNCIL'S BLUE MOUNTAINS PLANETARY HEALTH INITIATIVE:** Is leading the #AYearInADay campaign! From 1 January 2022, the Blue Mountains Planetary Health Initiative is ramping up its efforts to help grow local action for planetary health - with a new campaign. Each day the BMCC will be posting about a new action to restore planetary health - socially, environmentally or economically and we're turning to you, our diverse and inspiring community, to help. **IF 364 OF YOU JOIN EACH DAY TO SHARE A NEW ACTION WE CAN ACHIEVE THE ACTION OF A WHOLE YEAR IN ONE DAY!** Your action could be as small as planting a seed, starting to compost, pulling a weed in bushland, or choosing to not react negatively to someone on social media! Each of these actions will help us, collectively, restore planetary health. Subscribe to our daily A Year in a Day blog via: <https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/ayearinaday-campaign>

**SPRINGWOOD LIBRARY:** Kids workshop, Origami for Beginners - **THU 20 JAN 10:00 – 11:00am at Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub.** Learn how to make cool creatures and objects using the Japanese art of paper folding! (Ages 6 - 12 years old, \$6 booking). <https://library.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/>

**COMMUNITY AND THANK YOU DAY:** The postponed Community and Thank You Day is back on! **Join us on Saturday 26 February, from 10am-3pm.** After a long and hard two years, we wanted to take this opportunity to celebrate being together again, and say thank you to the helpers, frontline workers and emergency services personnel who have worked to keep us safe. The Blue Mountains community is wonderful and unique, and we know it's important to all of us to come together and give something back to the men and women who put their lives on the line for us in the hardest times. What's happening? The Community Day is being held at **all Council Leisure Centres and Pools.** Enjoy **free entry and access to the pools,** as well as activities, fun and games for the whole family. You can join us at any of our Leisure Centres and Pools (Glenbrook, Springwood, Lawson, Katoomba or Blackheath).

*We wish you a very Happy New Year*



*May your dreams turn into reality and  
all your efforts into great achievements.  
May the blessings of Christ be with you  
always.*

*Fr Paul, Fr Shinto, Veronica and Debbie*

## THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

**Sunday 9th Jan Readings:** Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11; Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7; Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

**Entrance Antiphon:** After the Lord was baptised, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and the voice of the Father thundered: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 24-25, 27-30. R. v. 1

**R. Oh, bless the Lord, my soul!**

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, alleluia! John said: He who is to come is mightier than I; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Alleluia!

**Communion Antiphon:** Behold the One of whom John said: I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.

*Please note that there will no Parish Bulletin next week.*

## The Perspective of Justice - The Holy Family

The Spirit descends on Jesus after he was baptised. It is the Spirit that anoints Jesus to “open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness, and to bring to the poor the good news of salvation.” This news is also “the good news of peace”: The Spirit comes in the form of a dove.

There is a gentleness about the dove that has earned for this bird a universal association with peace. But the dove also has a wail that reminds one of the wail of someone suffering, as in poverty or childbirth. The dove, therefore, joins together the themes of justice and peace, of compassion for the poor as well as harmony among people.



Luke makes clear that the descent of the Spirit in the form of a dove takes place as Jesus was at prayer. In other words, Jesus was open to the action of the Spirit. There is certainly a message in that for us.

Peace and justice will enter our lives only if we are open to the action of the Spirit, if we make time and space for the voice from heaven to be heard within our hearts. If we make that time and space, then “the Lord will bless his people with peace.”

In order that the demands of justice may be met and attempts to achieve this goal may succeed, what is needed is the gift of grace, a gift which comes from God. Grace, in cooperation with human freedom, constitutes that mysterious presence of God in history which is providence.

*Pope John Paul II, Centesimus Annus, 1991: 59*

*Gerald Darring  
Gerald Darring is an adjunct instructor of theology at Spring Hill College, Alabama*

Sunday, 16th January: Second Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Sunday, 23rd January: Third Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Wednesday, 26th January: Australia Day  
Sunday, 30th January: Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

