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Working with St John's Bulimba

Two Parishes – One Mission

Community Information

Web Edition

19 December 2010

Fourth Sunday of Advent

9.30am Sunday Sung Mass

The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary".

Welcome

With this fourth Sunday of Advent we bring our Advent preparation to full circle. As you will recall the first Sunday of this season was about the end of time. This was followed with two Sundays about John the Baptist, which focussed on the preparation of the ministry of the Messiah. Today, the fourth Sunday is setting the final stage of preparation for the birth of the Messiah and the two key players involved; Mary and Joseph. Joseph was of the house of David, but this once royal and powerful family had been reduced in circumstances and the leading representative a tradesman. Yet this faithful descendant of David will be a key player in the reign of Christ the King.

Celebrating Christmas 2010

CHRISTMAS EVE

6.00pm Family PowerPoint Mass, Camp Hill

8.30pm Traditional Christmas Night Mass

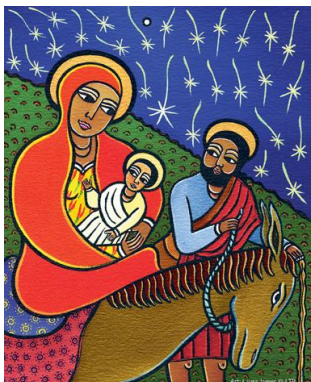
CHRISTMAS DAY

8.00am Christmas Family Mass, Camp Hill

SUNDAY 26 DECEMBER,

SUNDAY 2 & 9 JANUARY

8am Said Mass with Sermon



Teaching & Comments by Father Martyn

This Advent season marks the beginning of the Church's new liturgical (worship) year. It also means a shift of attention to a particular Gospel. This year is designated Year 'A', which means that Matthew is Gospel we will hear from the most. Because of this we hear about Saint Joseph this Sunday, because Matthew is the one who writes about his part in the birth of the Messiah. This seems a bit unusual, because our Christmas celebrations tend to focus on Mary and her Child – Joseph seems like a shadowy background figure. Now Matthew's attention on Joseph comes about because of the community he writes for. Scholars tell us that Matthew's community has a large proportion of Jews who have become Christians, Naturally, they would be aware of the Jewish expectations of a national Messiah who is a descendant of David - and Joseph is a descendant of that royal family. This is emphasised in our Gospel reading when the angel speaks to him as, "Joseph son of David"

Matthew has another device about Jesus' ancestry when he writes up his genealogy. He begins with Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, both biologically and spiritually, but it does not take long to shift to the family of David. Twenty-eight generations of that family are listed – and some of them you would not invite home to meet mum. Quite a few are far from perfect and some are abhorrent who sat on bloody thrones. Solomon, David's successor, was the child of adultery and murder! So this is a family tree you might want to keep quiet about. What is Matthew doing? Two things; first, before anybody boasts about their Jewish heritage and their Jewish Messiah, he points out there is no ground for boasting. This is not about human achievement and improvement over the ages. Incarnation is a gift of grace and it is a gift to sinful humanity. Christ is born into the mess of humanity. The arrogance and impiety of the Davidic princes is countered by the poverty, humility and simple obedience of one member of a family, Joseph, that is now impoverished. Secondly, in Matthew's gospel the genealogy reads "so and so *fathered* so and so". But when it comes to Joseph there is a break in the sequence with the statement: "Joseph, the husband of Mary, *from whom* was born Jesus, called the Christ". The virgin birth of Christ has as its focus the pure gift and action of God – it is not about biology – and the one Davidide who was obedient.

The Next Sunday Bible Study: 11am 30 January 2011

Bible passage: Luke 2:22-40. The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple.
the Last of the Infancy stories in the Gospels

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Christmas Trees & Christmas Tree Decorations

Since the blessing of our new "Tree of Life" banner we have become more familiar with the symbolism and concept of the Tree of Life. This symbol also applies to the Christmas tree. In this case it is because of the Christmas tree being an evergreen. Ancient custom saw it as the symbol of life during winter. When all other trees looked dead in the dark and cold of the Northern Hemisphere the evergreen Christmas tree becomes a sign of life that does not die. Naturally this was applied to Christ. When all was death and darkness Christ our life is born into its midst to change and transform it.

Another tradition emerges, not so obvious, with the Mediaeval Mystery Plays that were performed in the square in front of the local cathedral. Various guilds of the town would be sponsors for each play. In Chester the "Fall of Lucifer" was sponsored by the Guild of Tanners, "Creation and the Fall" by the Guild of Drapers. Before the plays were performed there was a procession of actors – good advertising for your sponsors. The one playing Adam carried a tree representing the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and, of course, during the Christmas mystery plays it was an evergreen. The so called 'apples' that Adam was tempted with were brightly coloured wooden balls. So decorating a tree was the next step – except there was a change – for Christ is the Tree of Life and his fruit is eternal life. To conclude with Christmas tree decorations the topmost branch was decorated with an angel – *not a fairy* – the angel that spoke to the shepherds of Bethlehem. Or it could be a star – the star that guided the Three Wise Men.

Our life is 'evergreen' & decorated when we make a gift of ourselves to others of sincere affection and willingness to pardon, forgive, & and help.

Prayer Poem on the Second Reading

*Son of God,
you came down from David, into our flesh, into our time.
You suffered all that we daily undergo.*

*And we became princes,
kissed by God,
our Lord.*

We thank you.

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Regular Sunday Services

8am Family Service

Easy to follow PowerPoint Service with Crèche & Sunday School

9.30am Sung Eucharist

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Wayne Elliott: *as above*, Robyn Casey, *as above*

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Hall Bookings Go to our web page www.easternhillsanglicans.com.au
check the *Hall Bookings Calendar for availability and then*
E-mail request to :Pat Bowman patricia.bowman@bigpond.com
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