



St Kevin's Catholic Parish

26-44 Herlihys Road, Templestowe Lower



Mass Times St Kevin's: 5.30pm Saturdays 9.15am Sundays St Gregory the Great: 6.00pm Saturdays 9.00am, 10.30am and 5.00pm Sundays Reconciliation at St Gregory the Great every Saturday morning at 9.30am	Parish Priest: Fr Charles Balnaves Assistant Priest: Fr Anton Aseervathampillai Business Manager: Mr David Hii Pastoral Worker: Mrs Ana Saro	Postal Address: PO Box 985, Templestowe 3106 Telephone: 9850 5983 Email: templestowe@cam.org.au Website: stkevinsparish.org.au Facebook: St Kevin's Parish
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Christmas Thoughts From the Desk of the PP...

It took me some time to get started with these words till I was inspired to start with “Thank you.” Yes, as our Christmas celebrations begin, I think perhaps ... thank you is a good place to start.

At which point I realise of course how many I need to say “thank you” to.

First of course is thank you to God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) for gracing my live and the life of St Greg’s and St Kevin’s Parishes for whom I am called to be shepherd. During a meandering conversation on Monday evening, the group I was with got onto the subject of ‘passing on the faith’ - a complex matter indeed. It is easy to veer off into almost exclusively teaching the rules, the dogma, the catechism. It is easy to veer off into almost exclusively providing an experience of doing Good Deeds. Both things are needed but along with the teaching and the good deeds we need to be drawing people into having a personal experience of Jesus the Christ. It is this personal experience which grounds me, grounds each of us, in knowing God’s work in our lives and in the world around us. I know, deep inside, when I see God’s hand at work in my life and (often) in the lives of others. I want that for you, and for everyone. One of my primary objectives as your Parish Priest is to try and ensure that I provide you with bounteous opportunities to have a personal experience and relationship with Jesus the Christ or to enrich your existing relationship with him.

Which leads me to other important areas of thanks. Thanks to the Staff of each parish (Nadia, Vera, Luisa, Ana, David, Frances, Bernadine), the Parish Pastoral Councils, the Parish Finance Councils, the Support Group, the various multitudinous ministries present in each parish and doubly the Sacristans, Liturgy and Music Ministries that help make sure that the Mass is provided in a meaningful way each Sunday and for the Major Seasons of Christmas and Easter. And this year thank you to the two ministries that are helping to intentionally spread the Good News and bring people into sharing the Good News: the Alpha team and the Rite for Christian Initiation of Adults Team (two teams that work across both parishes).

And a thank you to all the parents of the children and the children who have been Baptised, received Holy Communion for the first time, been Confirmed, or received the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is not easy raising children. It is not each keeping a focus on faith and the practice of faith. Please: don’t allow the challenges to get in the way of actually focussing on the practice of our Catholic faith.

And a thank you to our schools as they seek to provide a Catholic Education (no easy task in today’s complex world).

Finally, thank you to each of you: the broad sweep of parishioners in St Greg’s and St Kevin’s. I look at your faces each Sunday. In you I see—love of Christ, thirst to know more, desire to be full, conscious and active participants in the Word and the Eucharist and to take that love of Christ out to the world around you. Please keep coming. Please keep growing in faith by opening your hearts to Jesus’ Please keep reaching out and inviting others to join us—simple invitations “would you like to come and see.” Often this would start with an invitation to join Alpha—a toe in the water of getting to know Jesus before approaching the glory of the Mass.

Have a joyful and blessed Christmas Day and Christmas Season.

God bless, Fr Charles



LITURGY ROSTER

Feast of the Holy Family – 27/28th December 2025

1st Read: Eccl 3: 2-6, 12-14 2nd Read: Col 3: 12-21 Gospel: Matt: 13-15, 19-23

Time	Commentator	Lector	Special Ministers
5.30pm	Pauline Erickson	Bredenia Raquel	Lawrence Cecconello Maryanne McNamara
9.15am	Vianney Shiel	Marie Arbogast	Liz Polidano Lyn Robinson Carmel Purdey

We pray for Better Health:

Alexandra Bateman, Alan Benn, Federico Aspromonte, Peter Ryan, Eugenia Pozzebon, Aileen Kent, Ruth Shiel, Rachel Hally, Vin Natoli, Bob Ulehla, Dot Sharkey, Shirley Loo, Lianny Susanto, Jewly Wylie, David Cullen, Peter Ryan, Julie-Anne Oldfield, Dylan, Shane, Lyn Murphy, Marie Cameron, Peter Zeantti and Tony Whelan.

Anniversaries:

John Rowland (4th),
Nina Luca,
Dorothy Childers and
Albert Oates



We proclaim a crucified Christ
1Cor1.23

An Extract from A Pastoral Letter on the Conclusion of the Jubilee Year 2025

“Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ

Peace be with you.

As the Jubilee Year 2025 journeys toward conclusion in our local churches on 28 December, I write to you with gratitude – gratitude to God above all, and gratitude to you, the people of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, for the way you have received this year of Jubilee with faith, trust, hope and generosity”.

The remainder of this letter is available from the table in the Gathering Space. Please feel free to take home a copy.

New Year's Eve/Day Masses

will be celebrated as follows:

Wednesday 31st December – 6.00pm
at St Gregory the Great Church

Thursday 1st January – 9.15am
at St Kevin's Church

9.00am at St Gregory the Great Church

10.30am at St Gregory the Great Church

5.00pm at St Gregory the Great Church

Fr Charles' Prayer Intention for Christmas:

For all those for whom the
Christmas/New Year Holiday
presents great challenge,
difficulty and even violence:
that Christ's love and the
grace of the Holy Spirit will
support them.

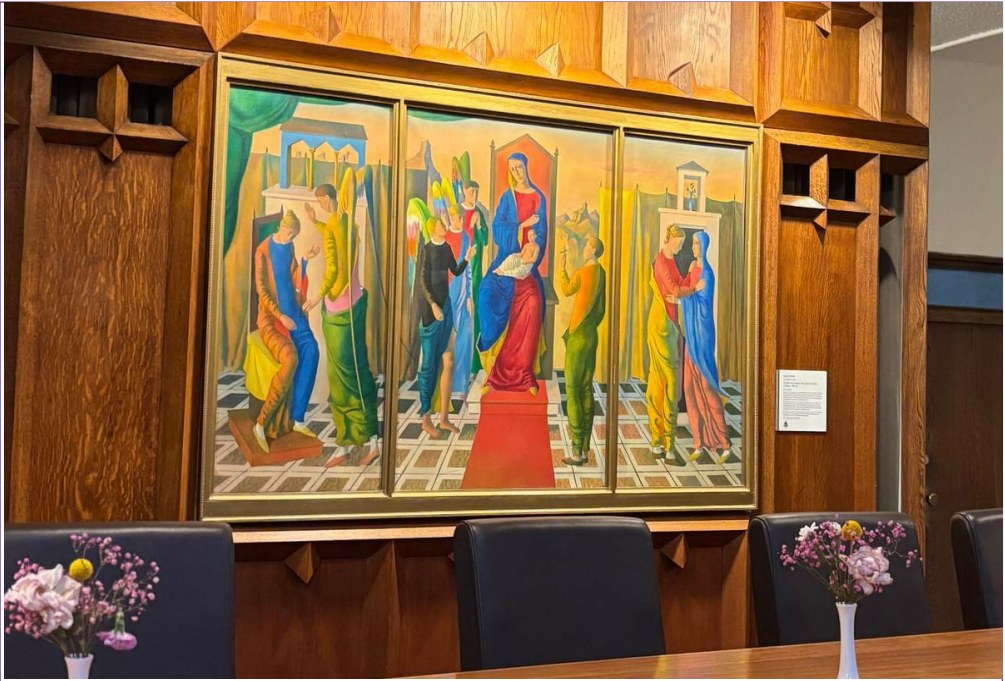


*Thank
You*

for the cards, gifts and best
wishes expressed to me
over this Christmas Season.

You are very special people.

Fr Charles



Putting a Stamp on Christmas

Australia Post had selected a religious artwork by artist Justin O'Brien as the 2025 Christmas stamp. The Triptych depicts Mary holding the infant Jesus in the centre panel, with the events of the annunciation and the visitation featured on either side. The artwork hangs in the dining hall of Newman College in Melbourne.

Australian Nativity Scene 2025 Until Friday 9 January 2026

Experience Australia's largest and most renowned traditional nativity scene, now in its 22nd year, on display at St Elizabeth's Parish. The Australian Nativity Scene (ANS) has become a beloved tradition, growing each year and gaining recognition as one of the best nativity scenes in the country. This display is free and open to all ages, providing a magical experience for families, parishioners and visitors alike. Visitors from near and far arrive early to secure their spot to witness this beautiful Christmas tradition. The ANS display follows the story of the nativity, from Mary and Joseph's search for shelter to the birth of Jesus, the visit from the shepherds, the three kings, and ends with the holy family fleeing to Egypt.

Viewing times

After Mass services and by appointment only

Venue

St Elizabeth's Parish
107 Baker Road
Dandenong North



A Christmas Reflection from our Archbishop of Melbourne

What is this hope we wish each other?

When we wish someone a ‘Happy Christmas’, there’s a quiet gift that comes with those words. Hope is that gift. We are saying, I hope that you and those you love may be well, whatever your circumstances.

‘Happy Christmas’ is more than a seasonal greeting. It’s a small ritual of kindness that says, ‘I want what is good for you, even if life is imperfect.’

Hope is a kind of glue. It binds our relationships together across time. At Christmas especially, hope takes on a gentle but persistent strength—the belief that peace and joy are possible, even in difficulty.

For children, hope at this time of year looks like anticipation: presents, surprises, family moments. It is immediate and tangible.

For us adults, especially parents, hope often becomes an intentional responsibility: the desire to provide, to make each day a blessing, even under pressure.

For grandparents, and those gone before us, hope is often about peace, endurance and unity. They cherish what they have, knowing how fragile life can be.

In our Christian life, hope goes far deeper. It is not merely a feeling; it has become enfleshed in a person. Our hope has a name: Jesus Christ, Emmanuel—God-with-us.

At Christmas, we remember not only the child in Bethlehem but the God who came through to us and for us, and who continues to do so.

This is hope beyond optimism. It is a light the darkness cannot overcome. Christian hope is the light of the world.

The birth of Jesus is part of each of our stories. His coming assures us that this broken world is still destined for goodness and beauty.

In your challenges, burdens and suffering, take heart: God’s love and peace are truly present for all who thirst for him.

So, when someone wishes you a ‘happy Christmas’ in the Christian sense, they offer more than goodwill. They offer a gift: *You are not alone. Hope is real—today and every day.*

I wish you and your families a joyful and hope-filled Christmas.

—Archbishop Peter A Comensoli



Thank you!

Great liturgies don't just happen

they come about because people dedicate themselves to helping us celebrate wholeheartedly. Let us join as a community in thanking the Lord, for the thoughtful and skillful work of many of our fellow parishioners.

Fr Charles



Gospel Focus – A Great Census?

The decree of a census for the whole Roman world appears to be an unlikely event. A census of people in local regions was not unusual but a census that required people to return to their place of birth carries no historical validity. The gospel writer correctly places Mary and Joseph in their home town of Nazareth but prophecy indicated the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. The author needed an excuse for Mary and Joseph to travel to Bethlehem. We must remember that the gospels are not to be read as historical accounts but rather as faith accounts of the life of Jesus.

Christmas Hampers

Many thanks – once again – very well done.



Ana, Frances, David, Nadia, Fr Anton and Fr Charles wish you all peace and joy this Christmas season.

May you bask in the wonder of God's care for each one of us.

Christ Is Born



Joyful and triumphant: the stories of four beloved Christmas carols

At this time of year, Christmas carols float through the air and through our lives, blending sacred themes with rich melodies and connecting us to centuries of tradition. Originally sung in churches, homes and even taverns, they have become a beloved part of our Christmas celebrations.

Today, whether they're performed by choirs or hummed under our breath as we hang fairy lights and wrap our gifts, Christmas carols continue to draw our focus back to the mystery and joy of the incarnation. So as we celebrate the magic of the Christmas feast, we take a moment to share the inspiring stories behind four of our most cherished carols.

‘O Come, All Ye Faithful’

Known in its original Latin as *Adeste Fideles*, ‘O Come, All Ye Faithful’ is a timeless call to worship and adoration of the Christ child. The carol’s melody, rich in crescendos and lyrical reverence, lends itself to grand choral performances as well as intimate gatherings. Its ability to evoke both the majesty and humility of the Nativity continues to make it one of the most treasured carols around the world.

‘Hark! The Herald Angels Sing’

Few carols are as triumphantly joyful as *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*, a hymn that has been a Christmas staple for nearly three centuries. The hymn was penned in 1739 by Charles Wesley, a prolific and popular hymn writer and the brother of John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement. Its first line originally read, ‘Hark, how all the welkin rings.’ The archaic word *welkin*, meaning ‘the heavens’, was later changed to ‘herald angels’ by Wesley’s colleague George Whitefield—despite Wesley’s objections—giving the hymn a clearer connection to the Nativity story described in Luke’s Gospel

‘The Little Drummer Boy’

A relatively modern addition to the Christmas repertoire, ‘The Little Drummer Boy’ tells the simple but profound story of a boy who, having no tangible gift for the infant Jesus, instead offers his talent—playing his drum. Written in 1941 by American composer Katherine Kennicott Davis, the song was initially called ‘Carol of the Drum’. Davis—who said the idea for the carol came to her in the middle of the night—is thought to have drawn inspiration from Czech folk music, giving the carol its iconic, rhythmic ‘pa rum pum pum pum’ refrain that mimics the sound of a drum.

The carol gained widespread recognition in 1951 when it was recorded by the Trapp Family Singers—whose story was later made famous in the movie *The Sound of Music*. A later arrangement by musician Jack Halloran was popularised by a wide array of artists, including Frank Sinatra, Bob Seger, Boney M, Joan Jett and Justin Bieber. Bing Crosby and David Bowie’s famous duet of the song, recorded for a 1983 television special, went on to reach number 3 in the UK charts.

The message of ‘The Little Drummer Boy’ is universal and relatable: no matter how little we have, we can offer our talents and love to God, so that even the smallest acts of kindness or creativity can carry deep spiritual significance.

‘What Child Is This?’

‘What Child Is This?’ is a carol that invites reflection on the mystery of the Nativity, pairing poignant lyrics with the haunting melody of ‘Greensleeves’.

The lyrics were composed by William Chatterton Dix (1837–98), an English insurance manager who wrote hymns and sacred poetry in his spare time. Born in Bristol, he was named after the poet Thomas Chatterton, whose tragic life and creative legacy had inspired his parents. Dix lived a comfortable life as the manager of a maritime insurance company in Glasgow until his life took a dramatic turn.

Struck down by a severe illness at the age of 29, Dix endured a deep personal and spiritual crisis during the months and years of his slow recovery. During this time, he experienced a profound renewal of his Christian faith, inspiring much of his religious writing. Along with another popular Christmas hymn, ‘As With Gladness Men of Old’, the text for ‘What Child Is This?’ was written during this period, starting out as a poem, ‘The Manger Throne’, from which three stanzas were adapted to create the carol. Set to the Elizabethan tune *Greensleeves*, which has long been associated with love ballads, Dix’s lyrics gave the melody a sacred purpose.

The carol’s poignancy is rooted in the hard-won faith of its composer, forged in suffering and transformed by hope.

What makes ‘What Child Is This?’ particularly compelling is the way it juxtaposes the peaceful image of the infant Jesus with a foreshadowing of his suffering and redemptive mission. Lines such as ‘nails, spear shall pierce him through’ remind us of the intimate association of cradle and cross.