

ST. TIMOTHY'S PARISH NEWS

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CHRISTMAS DAY - YEAR B

25 December 2020

Parish Priest / Administrator: Fr. Tony Kerin

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Corrie: Wed - Thurs: 9am - 3pm

CHRISTMAS IS JESUS: A MESSAGE FROM ARCHBISHOP PETER A COMENSOLI

Christmas celebrations in the city of Bethlehem are likely to be very quiet this year. Under the weight of a global pandemic, and the ongoing troubles in the Middle East, this special destination for thousands of pilgrims and tourists will resemble something more akin to that familiar Carol, 'O little town of Bethlehem... how still we see thee lie...'

Perhaps it was a similar stillness that met the Holy Family more than 2000 years ago, as they sought a place of safety to welcome the birth of their child. Doors had been shut to them, amidst their own time of worrying restrictions. How familiar is this aspect of the nativity story to our own lives this year? Jesus was born in such a time as this, and in fact, is born for such a time as this. He comes to us always in our need and our reality.

There has been much said about what a 'COVID Christmas' will be like, but is that the question we need to be asking? This year has challenged us in ways that have been unimaginable, it has turned our levels of comfort and security on their head. And whilst we've sought creative ways to engage in our worship and our connections, it's never been about reinventing something.

Christmas too is not of our own making. The tinsel and gifts, food and holidays certainly play their part in how we acknowledge the festivity of the season, but they're not Christmas.

Jesus is Christmas: then – now – always.

Whether it is into a peaceful landscape, or a war torn one; a time of uncertainty and isolation, or one of abundant friendship and family; whether it is in poverty or in plenty – the question we should ask is what is the kind of Christmas we want to live? Isn't it one that holds close the promise of life and hope that the birth of Jesus gives us? And in that very gift, is not our calling to bring this life and hope to the world? Jesus is the gift beyond all gifts, which we receive; and He is the gift we can always give.

Which brings me back to the next part of the Carol: "Yet in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting light. The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight"

When you gather this Christmas, in whatever way that is, don't labour on the darkness and of this year - recall the wonder of that birth and the light by which we can see ahead.

May you, your families, loved ones, your friends and neighbours be filled with the everlasting light of life and hope this year.

Jesus is Christmas.

PENITENTIAL RITE:

Lord Jesus, your light brings us faith and hope.	Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Christ Jesus, you are the word made flesh who dwells amongst us.	Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
Lord Jesus, you are the splendour of the Father.	Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

FIRST READING: *Isaiah 52: 7-10*

How beautiful on the mountains, are the feet of one who brings good news, who heralds peace, brings happiness, proclaims salvation, and tells Zion, 'Your God is king!' Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices, they shout for joy together, for they see the Lord face to face, as he returns to Zion. Break into shouts of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord is consoling his people, redeeming Jerusalem. The Lord bares his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

1. Sing a new song to the Lord for He has worked wonders. His right hand and His holy arm have brought salvation. **(R)**
2. The Lord has made known His salvation; has shown His justice to the nations. He has remembered His truth and love for the house of Israel. **(R)**
3. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout to the Lord all the earth, ring out your joy. **(R)**
4. Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp, with the sound of music. With trumpets and the sound of the horn acclaim the King, the Lord. **(R)**

SECOND READING: *Hebrews 1: 1-6*

At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son, the Son that he has appointed to inherit everything and through whom he made everything there is. He is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful command; and now that he has destroyed the defilement of sin, he has gone to take his place in heaven at the right hand of divine Majesty. So he is now as far above the angels as the title which he has inherited is higher than their own name.

God has never said to any angel: You are my Son, today I have become your father, or: I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Again, when he brings the First-born into the world, he says: Let all the angels of God worship him.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Alleluia, Alleluia! A holy day has dawned upon us. Come you nations and adore the Lord. Today a great light has come upon the earth. **Alleluia!**

GOSPEL: *John 1:1– 5, 9– 14 (short form)*

In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him. All that came to be had life in him and that life was the light of men, a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower.

The Word was the true light that enlightens all men; and he was coming into the world. He was in the world that had its being through him, and the world did not know him. He came to his own domain and his own people did not accept him. But to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to all who believe in the name of him who Was born not out of human stock or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself. The Word was made flesh, he lived among us. And we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.