

The Feast of the Epiphany

Sunday 2 January 2022



Readings for
this week:

Isaiah 60:1-6
Ephesians 3:3-3,5-6
Matthew 2:1-12



Readings for
next Sunday

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11
Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7
Luke 3:15-16, 21-22



Liturgical Jottings

Epiphany Proclamation

Somewhat hidden in the Roman Missal (2011) at the end of Appendix I is the chant commonly called the Epiphany Proclamation. A little known rubric appears within the prayers for the Feast day (p 212): "Where it is the practice, if appropriate, the moveable Feasts of the current year may be proclaimed after the Gospel, according to the formula given below pp1505-1506." There are six mentioned in the chant but the table of moveable feasts published in the 2022 Ordo list 14. Nine depend on the date of Easter and five depend on the day of the week of Christmas. In some years we have three other feasts in March: St Patrick (17) St Joseph (19) and the Annunciation of the Lord (25) that are moved should they fall on a Sunday or during Holy Week.

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Focus on the Readings

Each year we have the same readings for the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord - no cycle A, B or C. An obvious reason is the account of the wise men coming to Bethlehem is only recorded in one gospel, the Gospel according to Matthew. This evangelist is keen to make the link between Christ and the royal line of David. David was a born in Bethlehem, began as a shepherd and became a king to guide the people Israel. The identity of wise men are hidden from the reader purposefully to emphasise the new king born for us is for all nations. The Child Jesus is not just shown to a select group but to ones representing the peoples of the world. And indeed the whole world holds this feast as a celebration of Christ coming among them.

The Prophet Isaiah, as with the other prophets contemplates on present events and give visions of new quasi-events when retribution, new order, salvation or re-creation will take place. Here Isaiah speaks of the glory of God becoming manifest in a new age. St Paul in the second reading speaks of the promises of God revealed in Christ are for all generations and all believers and those yet to come to faith.

What Matthew omits from his Gospels future generations of believers have imagined: Let us imagine not the titbits of minutia but the importance for us today to find, celebrate God our salvation with us.

Epiphany Litany

Glory and praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ!
Christ, shown forth in the flesh, Glory and praise to You!
Christ, made just in the Spirit, Glory and praise to You!
Christ, who was seen by the angels, Glory and praise to You,
Christ, proclaimed among the nations, Glory and praise to You!
Christ, received in faith through the world, Glory and praise to You!
Christ, exalted in glory, Glory and praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ!

Quotable Quote

"What are you doing, O Magi? Do you adore a little Babe, in a wretched hovel, wrapped in miserable rags? Can this Child be truly God? Are you become foolish, O Wise Men? Yes, these Wise Men have become fools that they may be wise."

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153)

On the Lighter Side

Five year olds can have epiphanies. Walking home from Mass on a showery day and vivid rainbow appeared in the sky. The 5yo exclaimed "God painted that" Mum asked, "How's that?" The wise reply was: "Because Our Father who do art in heaven!"



	Those who are recently deceased and those who are grieving	Norm Dean, Marie Wearden
	For those whose anniversary occurs at this time	Joe Vraca, Joe Milanese, Anne Maree Dixon
	Our sick and their carers	Phyllis Newman

Two Week Mass Timetable Week commencing 3 January

Weekday Mass

Mon 3rd Jan No Mass
 Tue 4th Jan No Mass
 Wed 5th Jan 9:15 am Mass
 Thur 6th Jan No Mass
 Fri 7th Jan 9:15 am Mass

Weekend Mass

Sat 8th Jan No Mass
 Sun 9th Jan 10:00 am

Weekday Mass

Mon 10th Jan No Mass
 Tue 11th Jan No Mass
 Wed 12th Jan 9:15 am Mass
 Thur 13th Jan No Mass
 Fri 14th Jan 9:15 am Mass

Weekend Mass

Sat 15th Jan 6:00 pm Mass
 Sun 16th Jan 10:00 am Mass

Reconciliation (1st Saturday of the Month)
 Saturday 5th February 2022

NEW YEAR GREETINGS FROM Fr John Paul

This time last year when we were bringing in 2021, we were praying for the end of the pandemic, but that was not God's plan for us. We saw more online Mass services as we were once again in lockdowns. For a short period of time, we had to have separate services for those who were fully vaccinated and those who vaccinated status was unknown. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the support and understanding as we navigated all the changes that could come upon us at a moment's notice.

We are starting 2022 with new variant of the virus which is more virulent, but at this stage does not seem to make us as sick. We now must learn to live with this virus and make sure we continue to look after each other.

What we must do is look forward to 2022 with hope and love, and know that no matter what happens in 2022, it is in accordance with God's will. Jeremiah 29:11 tells us "for I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

It is always a blessing to see the light of a New Year and this year more so than ever we have every reason to be thankful for God's countless blessings during 2021, and be hopeful for His ever-abiding presence with us in 2022.

I would like to wish all our Parishioners and the Tatura Community a very happy, healthy and safe 2022. Let's start the new year with peace, faith and a thankful heart. .

Parish Pastoral Associate – Wangaratta and King Valley

An exceptional opportunity exists to be an integral member of the parish pastoral team for the parishes of Wangaratta and King Valley. For more information, a copy of the position description and how to apply go to the Employment Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst website or click

<https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/positions-vacant/pastoral-associate-wangaratta-parish>

APPLICATIONS CLOSE: 5:00 p.m. 24th January 2022.

St Stephen

Saint Stephen was one of the first ordained deacons of the Church. He was also the first Christian martyr. The Greek word from which we derive the English word martyr literally means witness. In that sense, every Christian is called to bear witness to Jesus Christ, in both their words and their actions. Not all are asked to shed their blood.

Those who do shed their blood for the faith are the greatest of witnesses. They have been especially honored since the very beginning of Christianity. Stephen was so conformed to Jesus in his holy life that his martyrdom was both a natural and supernatural sign of his love for the Lord. It also inspired the early believers as they faced the first round of brutal persecution.

His behavior, even forgiving those who were taking his life while he was being stoned to death, was a beautiful reflection of how conformed he truly was to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is recorded in Chapter 7 of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 7:54-60), which immediately follows the Gospels in the New Testament.

The 6th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles contains an account of the choice of the first seven deacons of the Church. As the Apostles worked to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ as his elders, some of the Greek-speaking widows were being neglected in their practical needs. The Twelve decided to ordain seven deacons to oversee their care. In doing so, the deacons extended the pastoral care of the Apostles, the first Bishops of the early Church, enabling them to attend more to teaching.

Of the seven ordained, Stephen was the oldest and given the title of "archdeacon," the chief among them. Little is known about him before this account. Like most of the early Christian leaders, he was Jewish, but may have come from among the Greek speaking or Hellenistic believers, the ones feeling slighted in the distribution of alms.

Great preaching and miracles were attributed to Stephen. The Bible records that Stephen "full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people." Stephen's popularity created enemies among some Jews, members of the Synagogue of Roman Freedmen. They debated with him, to generate evidence against him in furtherance of their persecution of the early Church.

They accused him of blasphemy, of speaking against God and Moses. The charges inflamed the local populace which demanded he be tried and punished. When Stephen was put on trial, several false witnesses were brought forward by the Sanhedrin to testify that he was guilty of blasphemy. He was charged with predicting that Jesus would destroy the Temple and for preaching against Mosaic law.

Stephen was filled with wisdom from heaven. He responded by detailing the history of Israel and outlining the blessings God had bestowed upon his chosen people. He also explained how disobedient Israel had become, despite the goodness and mercy of the Lord. Stephen explained that Jesus had come to fulfil the law

of Moses, not destroy it. He quoted extensively from the Hebrew scriptures to prove his case.

Finally, he admonished the Sanhedrin, saying, "You stubborn people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears. You are always

resisting the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. Can you name a single prophet your ancestors never persecuted? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Upright One, and now you have become his betrayers, his murderers. In spite of being given the Law through angels, you have not kept it." (Acts 7:51-53)

As Stephen concluded his defense, he looked up and saw a vision of Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He said, "Look, I can see heaven thrown open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." That vision was taken as the final proof of blasphemy to the Jews who did not believe Jesus was the Messiah or Son of God. For them, Jesus could not possibly be beside the Father in Heaven. The crowd rushed upon Stephen and carried him outside of the city to stone him to death. As Stephen was being brutally stoned, he spoke his last words, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Lord, do not hold this sin against them." Words which echoed the very words of Jesus on the Cross. Following those words, Stephen died, in the Lord.

Watching the trial and execution was a Rabbi named Saul of Tarsus, a virulent persecutor of the early Church. Shortly thereafter, that Rabbi would himself encounter the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus and be dramatically converted. His encounter is recorded in the 9th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. He took the name Paul as a sign of his new life in Jesus Christ and went on to become the great apostle to the Gentiles.

Stephen was buried by Christians, but the location of his tomb is not specified in the New Testament and may have been forgotten for a time. In 415 a Christian priest claimed he had a vision of the tomb and located Stephen's remains. A name inside the tomb confirmed the find.

St. Stephen is often depicted with stones, a Gospel Book, a miniature church and a martyr's palm frond. He is the patron saint of Altar Servers, bricklayers, casket makers and deacons and his feast day is celebrated on December 26.

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