



Send O Lord, Holy Apostle into Your Church!

# St. Mel's Parish

## BULLETIN

### Looking at the Readings

**Joy, Praise, Happiness and Witness** are the key words of the First Reading the Response, the Second Reading and the Gospel. Would we take these words home in our minds and hearts we have captured the sense of the advent celebration. To express the Lord's year of favour and joy, Isaiah seeks new words to convey the great enthusiasm of the people. He uses similes of an overjoyed bride and groom, the fresh and fruitful earth and people leaping for joy. While he prophesies the first coming of the Lord we may justly interpret his words for the second coming of the Lord. We have the sense of now but not yet, he has come but yet to come.

The response to the reading is not a psalm but the words of Mary from Luke's Gospel – the **Magnificat**. It is a hymn of thanksgiving to God for his mighty deed for Mary and also and especially for the poor and lowly.

The Entrance Antiphon: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice," sets the tone, the name and the colour of the day's liturgy "**Gaudete**". Rejoice and be happy, Christmas is a week away!

### Advent Prayer

O God, most high and most near,  
you send glad tidings to the lowly,  
you hide not your face from the poor;  
those who dwell in darkness you call into the light.  
Take away our blindness, remove the hardness of our hearts,  
and form us into a humble people, that, at the advent of your Son,  
we may recognise him in our midst  
and find joy in his saving presence.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
whose coming is certain, whose day draws near. Amen.



### Advent Customs: Misas de Aguinaldo

In the Philippines, Advent is celebrated by attending nine Masses in a row. These are known as Misas de Aguinaldo – or Gift Masses. They begin on December 16 and end on Christmas Eve. After every Mass, families celebrate together by eating traditional desserts and sweets. Maligayang Pasko is how Filipinos would wish you a Merry Christmas!

### On the Lighter Side

Q: What does a chemistry teacher call a bunch of monomers in December?  
A: An Advent Polymer.

#### This Week's Readings

**Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11**  
**1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**  
**John 1:6-8, 19-28**



### Liturgical Jottings Blessings 3 – Christmas Tree

The use of the Christmas tree is relatively modern. Its origins are found in the medieval mystery plays which depicted the tree of paradise and the Christmas light or candle which symbolized Christ, the Light of the world. According to custom, the Christmas tree is set up just before Christmas and may remain in place until Epiphany. The Christmas tree may be blessed on or before Christmas during a celebration of the word of God, or during Morning or Evening Prayer. In the home the Christmas tree may be blessed by a parent or another family member, in connection with the evening meal on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time on Christmas Day. *Book of Blessings 1570-74*

St Mel's Parish would like to acknowledge the elders past and present of the Yorta Yorta Nation, and pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our parish and church is situated.



## Weekly Reflection

### Rejoice, the Messiah is Already Here

This Sunday is also known as Gaudete Sunday. It is not Christmas Day yet, but it is a day to celebrate the realization that the Messiah is already here and will appear soon. In the First Reading, Isaiah reminds us that the coming of the Anointed of the Lord (the Messiah) will bring good things and is a cause for rejoicing. The Anointed One will bring comfort and healing to those who are suffering and will bring freedom to the enslaved. Isaiah describes our reaction to the Messiah's coming as one of great joy, similar to Mary's Magnificat in Luke 1:46-55. In the Second Reading, St. Paul reminds us that we should always be joyful, even when things are not going well, because the joy that comes from doing God's will is greater than any temporary suffering. St. Paul encourages us to be led by the Spirit and to discern what is truly good and truly evil. In the Gospel, John the Baptist announces that the Messiah has arrived and he is heralding him. John identifies himself as the one who prepares the way for the Lord. He tells the priests, Levites, and Pharisees that the Messiah is already among them, but hidden. This Gospel is fitting for Advent because it reminds us that Our Savior is in Mary's womb, waiting to be born.

## St Anne's Year End Mass

On Friday December 8<sup>th</sup> St Anne's College community were blessed to have both Fr. Rene Ramirez RCJ and Fr Ruel Desamparado RCJ lead us in our end of school year Mass and celebration at Christ the King Church. The day was made more special for our students in Foundation to year 11, staff, and members of the St Anne's College community as we were joined by parishioners from St Mel's Parish.

Our students in all year levels had the opportunity to participate through ministries including Altar Servers, Lectors, Gospel procession, General Intercession, Offertory procession, Choir, Acknowledgment of Country and through being part of the wider community during the Mass. Some of our students who recently undertook their First Reconciliation brought up the gifts, two others were Altar Servers. Our Grade 3&4 students, including those who had recently completed their Sacramental Journey of Confirmation and First Eucharist, were in our very first St Anne's College choir, while others read the General Intercessions.

At the end of the Mass our College Captains and House Captains for 2024 were announced and as this Mass fell on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the end of the celebration our students in Foundation, grade 1 and grade 2 sang the Recessional Hymn, We walk with Mary.

For more details see our website <https://smps.org.au/news/stanne>

From all at St Anne's College we thank you for your ongoing support and wish you and your loved ones a blessed and safe Christmas.

*Elizabeth Holligan: Religious Education Leader*

## A message from Bishop Shane Mackinlay

Having received recommendations from the College of Consultors last week, I am pleased to announce a number of decisions relating to clergy and seminarians.

### Clergy Appointments

As a result of priests moving to a new parish, several associated responsibilities are no longer practical, and I have made the following new appointments:

Vicar Forane of the Goulburn Valley Deanery: Fr Jophin Joy ALCP/OSS (commencing 13 January 2024)

Supervising Priest of the Rushworth Parish: Fr Rene Ramirez RCJ (commencing 24 January 2024)

### 'Come and See' Program

Abishek Mandanu and Anil Madanu, who I met during my recent pastoral visit to India, will undertake a three-month 'Come and See' program in the Diocese in early 2024. During this time, they will visit the seminary and several parishes to gain an experience of ministry in Australia. Following this, a decision will be made about whether they commence as seminarians for the Diocese.

### New Seminarian

I have accepted Ryerson De Lai, from Sacred Heart Parish, Tatura, as a seminarian for the Diocese. He will commence formation at Corpus Christi College in February 2024.

I am grateful for the willingness of these priests and aspiring seminarians to make themselves available for service in the Diocese, and I ask you to join me in offering them your prayerful support.

Yours sincerely,

*+Shane Mackinlay*

Majellan Club have a tub at each door of the Church if you would like to donate non-perishable goods or gifts to Vinnies for Christmas

## Christmas Masses

### St. Mel's

Sunday, December 24  
9:30am 4th Sunday of  
Advent  
6:30pm Christmas Eve  
Family Mass  
9:00pm Christmas Eve  
Vigil

Monday, December 25  
9:30am  
The Nativity of the Lord  
(Christmas)

### St. Malachy's

Sunday, December 24  
5:30pm Carols  
6:00pm Christmas Eve  
Vigil

### St. Mary's

Monday, December 25  
9:30am  
The Nativity of the Lord  
(Christmas)

**Please complete  
our Parish  
Census today**



### Adoration for Vocations and Confessions

We would like to extend a warm invitation to everyone to join us every Thursday for a Holy Hour for Vocations. This is a wonderful opportunity to spend some time in prayer and reflection, and to ask for God's grace to send more workers into his harvest.

The Holy Hour takes place from 8:10am to 9:10am and during Adoration, there will be a priest available in the confessional for anyone who wishes to avail themselves of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

We hope that you will be able to join us and that you will find this time of prayer to be both rewarding and uplifting. Thank you, and we look forward to seeing you there!

### Do you have a Parish Key?

Over the many years, keys have been allocated to members of our community for various reasons.

For security and safety, along with up to date record keeping, we would like to collect all church, parish house, and office keys. If you still require a key, this will be numbered and re-allocated to you. Contact Mel or Ainsley in the office and they will help you, or place the keys in an envelope with your name, and drop through the slot next to the office door.

Thank you for your prompt response to this, we appreciate your understanding.



Subscribe to Flocknote, to receive parish news & updates about upcoming events: Subscribe by using the QR Code.



## Shepparton & Nagambie Mass Schedule

### St Mel's

#### SUNDAY

St. Mel's 9:30 am  
St. Mel's 5:00 pm

#### TUESDAY to SATURDAY

St Mel's 9:15 am

### St Malachy's

#### SUNDAY (1st & 3rd)\*

St. Malachy's 09:00 am  
St. Mary's 11:00 am

\*2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays  
Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion

#### CONFESSIONS

St. Mel's: Every Thursday at 8am - 9am  
St. Malachy's: 30min before Mass

#### BAPTISMS (St Mel's)

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month

#### MARRIAGE

2 months-notice required

## Parish Staff

**Fr. Rene Ramirez RCJ**  
Parish Priest

**Fr. Ruel Desamparado RCJ**  
Assistant Priest

**Ainsley Yandall Etuale**  
Administrative Officer

**Mel Shiels**  
Asst Administrative Officer  
Sacramental Program Coordinator

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18 Hamilton Street  
Shepparton VIC 3530  
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www.smps.org.au  
(03) 5831 2194

**Office Hours**  
Tuesday to Thursday: 9:30am- 2:30pm  
Friday: 9:30am -12:30 pm

# Commentators/Lectors/Special Ministers

Sunday, December 24th

Commentators  
9:30am Mick Hanlon

Lectors  
9:30am Trish Mathisen (L1) Xavier Tanner (L2)

Special Ministers  
9:30am Gita Kelleher & Lucy Ciancio

For our Christmas Masses roster, please check your emails, or see notice board in the Narthex

Next Week's Readings

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16  
Romans 16:25-17  
Luke 1:26-38

Today, Sunday, December 17, the second collections from both 9:30am & 5pm Masses will go towards the 2023 Advent Appeal for Ukraine

Sunday, January 14, the second collections from both 9:30am & 5pm Masses will go towards St Vincent de Paul

Change to Office Days during December 2023 & January 2024

The Parish office will close on Thursday, December 22, 2023 at 2:30pm  
It will re-open again on Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 9:30am

From January 2, to January 25, 2024 the office will only be open on Tuesdays & Thursdays from 9:30am to 2:30pm

**Anniversaries:** Lucia Villiani, Kathleen Anderson, Ron Tanner, Marco Poppa



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**Vincent Tassoni**  
Licensed Agent  
& Auctioneer



We are a child Safe Community. We promote the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all and a zero tolerance to child abuse.

To find out more ways on how you can help improve our Parochial Community please contact Ainsley or Mel at **(03) 5831 2194** [Tuesdays to Thursdays, between 9:30am to 2:30 pm](https://www.smps.org.au) email: [sheppartonsouth@sandhurst.catholic.org.au](mailto:sheppartonsouth@sandhurst.catholic.org.au) or visit our website at [www.smps.org.au](http://www.smps.org.au)



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