

# Parish Bugle

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 www.stpatricksbeenleigh.com.au

**“Unto YOU is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord”**

Christmas day is an important day of the year!! The day is one of the wonderful times of the year when almost all the world celebrates their existence. The day is so magical that its name alone brings that lovely smile on the faces of people!! All the streets and houses illuminate with bright lights as well as the happiness in hearts of the people. The great and wonderful spirit of people is worth seeing as there is such a special feeling in every heart. On this day people send different types of Christmas messages to their friends and family to wish them good luck for their present and future.

The birth of Jesus Christ is indeed, *“the reason for the season”*. When we speak of the Lord’s incarnation, we refer to the fact that He became man. He became man without ceasing to be God. Isaiah 9:6 reminds us of a very important aspect of the birth of Christ. It says “Unto us a Child is born”. Not only was a child born, like the birth of any other child, but, unlike any other birth, *unto us a son is given. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3: 16)*



*Nativity set in Bethlehem town square*

So Christmas provides an opportunity for us all to pause, reflect, and celebrate the things that we rightly cherish. It is a time when we, as children of God, as families, and as communities turn our minds to what is really important - family, friendship, neighbourliness and homecoming. At Christmas we have an opportunity to renew our appreciation of these gifts; gifts which we hope will sustain us through the coming year.

The year is just about to end and I am sending New Year and Christmas greetings to all of you. This is a celebrating season and the Lord has been so good to me throughout the year. I guess he has been good to you too. I want you and your family to join me in thanking God for his wonderful blessings upon us both as an individual and as a family. So Christmas is not only a time of celebrating but also the time of reflection in my life. Happy Christmas and New Year 2019 that is just ahead. May you be blessed in Jesus name.

*Fr. Joseph Kanatt mcbs, Your Parish Priest*

**St Patrick’s Mass Times:**

Mondays and Tuesdays 7am  
 Wednesdays 7pm  
 Thursdays and Fridays 7am  
 Saturdays 8am and 6pm  
 Sundays 7am, 9am and 6pm  
 1st Friday of month, Healing Mass 9am  
 Fridays Exposition of Sacrament 7am-7pm  
 Saturdays Mass/Novena 8am, Rosary 9am

**St Patrick’s Christmas Masses:**

**Christmas Eve, Monday Dec 24th:**

Children’s Mass—6pm  
 Youth Mass—8pm  
 Christmas Carols—11:30pm  
 Midnight Mass—12am

**Christmas Day, Tuesday Dec 25th:**

Mass—7am and 9am

# The Christmas Story as told by Luke

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see-- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!"



*Photos from our recent Holy Land trip: Painting of the Nativity, inside the Church of the Shepherds in Bethlehem, the location where the angels appeared to the shepherds to lead them to the birthplace of Jesus; the very place where Jesus was born indicated by the star in the Church of the Nativity, crib in the Church of the Nativity.*

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Luke 2:1-14(15-20)

# Events in our Parish



Fr Clesio Mendes congratulating Peter Meerleveldt on Peter's 90th birthday.



Fr Joseph at Family Mass recognising 50 & 60th anniversaries, a 90th birthday as well as welcoming St Joseph's new APRE, Maree Wright.



## Congratulations Marian

Marian Ward was speaking about training, job opportunities and treatment of people with disability by job agencies at the recent Queensland Community Alliance Accountability Assembly on November 7th in front of a crowd of 700 people.

Marian's speech was very moving and she has already received some response and promise of action from job agencies as a result.



## Improvements to the Chapel

If you have not already, please take the time to visit our refurbished chapel and spend a quiet moment in prayer.

Thank you to Pipo and John for giving the Chapel an uplift and making it so beautiful in its simplicity.



*This year we celebrated Remembrance Day with two minutes silence as it was 100 years since Armistice at the end of WWI on the 11/11/1918. Lest We Forget!*

# Sisters responding to Gods call

As the Year of Youth comes to a close for the liturgical year of 2018, St. Patrick's Beenleigh will be the host of the final Reflection Day event for the Logan deanery on the 1st of December. The year of youth called for "dialogue and active engagement focused on the reconnection and renewal of a new generation of young people in the life of the Church."

For two sisters in St. Patrick's Parish Beenleigh, leading and educating a new generation of youngsters has only just begun.

Mary and Abby Se are both studying a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care at Academy of Training in Beenleigh. Being very active in the church both are involved with Charity events, Youth Band, Youth Mass, Family and Multicultural Masses and have participated in NET Ministries and Year of Youth Events. Mary is also part of the Children's Liturgy of the Word Program where she is able to apply skills she has learnt in her course.

"When I am rostered with another volunteer, all I am required to do is sit with the children and listen to the primary volunteer teaching the Gospel. Other times, I am the one reading the Gospel to the children and asking them questions on what they have learnt from the story. I do my best to speak in a language they can all understand and I encourage the children to talk more that way I am able to slowly develop trusting relationships with them. I am still a new volunteer and I am aware Sunday school is not exactly a "child care" scenario however; I really do love being there with the children."

Abby recently transferred from a Certificate IV in Ageing Support also in Academy of Training to her current Diploma course.

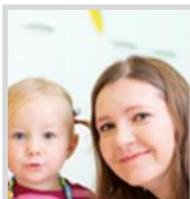
"While studying in ageing support, I realised it was far more physically demanding as I see the carers in the nursing home where I volunteer". "Personally, I have more experience working with children. I have been helping my older sister with children in the past, which made me realise that I want to learn more about Early Childhood.

Mary's calling to guide children came when she was given the role of Coordinator for Kids for Christ.

"Truthfully there was still a part of me that remained skeptical of the proposition God had in store for me. I was not yet 100% confident in my ability to be a good facilitator and coordinator as I felt was too young for such a challenge. Well, let's just say God had other ideas in mind for me.

It's a blessing for our parish to have sisters, Mary and Abby who are not only guiding our next generation but setting an example by listening to God's call and using their gifts to Glorify the Lord.

*Michael Zarate*



\*CHC50113  
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Education and Care



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# Palm Lakes Resort – Bethania

As another year is coming to a close I would like to wish all my “Holy Communion Group” a holy festive season and I thank you all for your attendance every Thursday which is a social morning as well as a sacred time with Peter Haack our pastoral associate. I have loved those mornings but I feel I need more help.

I visit some of our group who have succumbed to more care. They are Alina who is in Tel-egenda, Mary who is in “Season” and Jenny and Violet in Bethania Nursing Home and Beverley is down in Sydney with her daughter.

We lost Key, Hazel, Jessie and Dora – may they rest in the Lord.

A special thanks to Fr Joseph for his support and the visits to give Anointing and Communion. We will once again join the community in celebrating a Christmas Service in St Patrick’s and join everyone in a morning tea on Friday the 14th December.

*Yours in Christ,  
Roslyn Classen*



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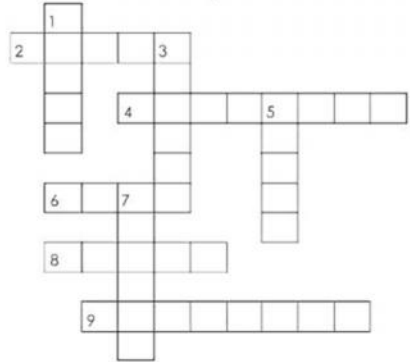


An initiative of the Knights of the Southern Cross

# Kid's Stuff



Fill in the crossword puzzle!



BOAT DISCIPLE PETER NIGHT SPIRIT  
AFRAID HOREB JESUS KINDNESS

ACROSS

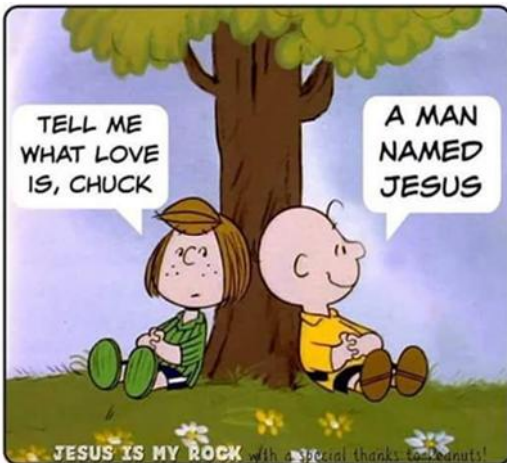
2. Son of God
4. The disciples went in this over the water
6. "Lord, let us see your \_\_\_\_"
8. The mountain of God
9. The ones who followed Jesus

DOWN

1. One of Jesus's disciples
3. Holy \_\_\_\_
5. The time when the disciples saw Jesus walk on water
7. "Take courage, it is I; Do not be \_\_\_\_"

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Photo: iStockphoto.com



Submitted by Erica Ng Philips

Submitted by John Truelson



## A Police STOP at 2 AM

An elderly man is stopped by the police around 2am and asked where he is going at this time of night.

The man replies: 'I am going to a lecture about alcohol and the effects it has on the human body, as well as smoking and staying out late.'

The officer then asks: 'Really? Who is giving that lecture at this time of night?'

The man replies: 'That would be my wife.'

## Year of Youth

This year, we have been involved with a number of charities such as the Trivia Night Fundraiser that happened this month (3<sup>rd</sup> November) – With this, we have raised \$1,900. With the money raised, our thoughts were with the people in Africa and their struggle for clean water. Thank you to everyone who took part in this fundraiser!



As the Year of Youth will soon be coming to an end, there are some events you should keep in mind.

The St Patrick's Youth will be attending an Archdiocesan Celebration - Year of Youth event that will be happening at Bowen Hills on **Saturday, the 24<sup>th</sup> of November.**

Next month, on **Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> of December** our parish is hosting a Logan Deanery, Year of Youth - Reflection Day. David Clarke and Sister Melissa will be our guest speakers for the day. This reflection day will conclude with a 6pm mass, celebrated by Bishop Ken Howell. Hope to see you there!

Abby Se

## Together-in-Faith

Together-in-Faith prayer group was first started five years ago, in November 2013. The purpose of our group is to pray especially for addicts and the challenges that their families also face. The last couple of months the group started to find it hard to meet night times - So we have decided to quit NOT FROM PRAYING but to stop from meeting together as regularly at the church.

In the meantime I have made a little altar in my home where I have placed the book with the registered names for us all to keep praying for them. Also every now and then each of us in the group randomly pick a name from the book and pray for the person for the whole week. The group wishes to still assist the families of those touched by addictions by getting together-in-prayers or to request to place their names in our prayer book. (All is confidential)

Let us come together and pray as Jesus says!!! 'Faith Moves Mountains.'

Marleine Azar



## Flowers for our church



We must all agree that St Patrick's Church has the most amazing flower arrangements. Celine has for many years spend lots of time planning, buying and arranging the flowers and making sure the display looks great for each weekend. A great thanks to Celine for making the church so magnificent at all special occasions and throughout the year.

If you would like to help out towards the cost, please leave an envelope marked "flowers" with your donation in the collection basket. Greatly appreciated.

# Our Schools

As we near the end of another school year, we give thanks to God for all the gifts and blessings we have received throughout 2018. St Joseph's and St Patrick's are wonderful communities in which we will continue to nurture the bonds between school and parish in 2019. As we lead up to the end of the school year, we especially give thanks for our Year 6 students who will be moving to secondary education. It has been wonderful to work with such a wonderful cohort and we wish our Year 6 students all the best for the years ahead in secondary school and beyond. We pray that they will pursue their dreams using their gifts and talents, always drawing on the seven core values of dignity, compassion, courage and resilience, justice, camaraderie, reconciliation, and trust and faith in God, that the students were immersed in here at St Joseph's. God bless and have a wonderful Christmas.



## Grandparent's Day

It was wonderful to see many grandparents celebrating Grandparent's Day as we honoured and thanked God for the gifts they bring to our community here at St Joseph's. With the theme for the liturgy being, 'Grandparents are worth their weight in gold', we gathered to bless and celebrate the gift of our grandparents and God's unconditional love. We prayed too for those grandparents who were unable to be with us and asked God to bless those who are sick.

## Blessing: for Grandparents

Dear God, Bless our grandparents. Thank you for the life they gave my parents and for the life they give to us. For the ways they helped us and made us strong, we give thanks. For the ways they love us no matter what, we rejoice. For the ways they have paved the road that leads us here, we are grateful. Let them grow in wisdom and joy in life. Let them find peace and rest from their work. Let them be healed of every sickness and pain. And let them see with their own eyes the glory of your Son, Jesus, in the love of their children and grandchildren. Bless them always until they come to rest in you.



We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

## Catholic Mission Visit

In October we welcomed David McGovern from Catholic Mission who spoke to the students about their work and specifically this year's theme in support of Myanmar, '*Heal a Nation through Education*'. The students participated in the 'Soccer Challenge' kicking goals for poverty. Shooting goals with their own hand made recycled 'Sockballs', students experienced how soccer is played in Myanmar. Thank you to David for visiting St Joseph's and sharing the work of Catholic Mission with the students.



## World Teacher's Day

This year as we celebrated World Teacher's Day, we will acknowledge Sr Jennifer Scari and Roslyn Mendo who have reached thirty and twenty years respectively of generous service and dedication to Catholic Education in Queensland. We congratulate Sr Jenny and Roselyn and thank them for their dedication, in particular to the St Joseph's community.

*Maree Wright, APRE St Josephs Tobruk School*



# Our Schools

Mother Teresa school prides itself on doing small things with great love and it was evident again during Mother Teresa Week. They celebrated her deep love for helping others in need as well as her love for living her faith through thoughtful and heartfelt prayer. During the week students dressed up like a farmer for a day and were asked to donate a gold coin for the privilege. As a school we raised over \$640 and divided the proceeds between to drought affected schools in Western Qld. Students in Yr. 2 and Yr. 4 also compiled messages of support to give to the students at each school.



*Mother Teresa students*

## Sock Drive

Our local area was not forgotten as our sock drive demonstrated, with families donating simple items of clothing and personal care for those without permanent housing or limited shelter. As part of the week each class devoted time to prayerfulness in different ways – using labyrinths, praying with colour and coming together as a whole school to celebrate Mother Teresa and her devotion to living simply and always giving. They are at it again currently, as families are giving generously to the Vinnies Christmas Appeal.

## The Choir

The choir has done the school proud this year winning a number of awards at different festivals and shows. Our Junior Choir received a 2<sup>nd</sup> and Senior Choir received a 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Queensland Catholic Music Festival at Villanova and received 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Ormeau Fair out of 12 groups. Mother Teresa school have appreciated the time, effort and skill from their music teacher and choir conductor Mrs. Addison and her able assistants Miss Rutland and Mrs. Evans.



*Students participating in Sock Drive to help raising money for schools in draft affected areas*

## Remarkable Moments in Learning

Mother Teresa school also celebrated their Remarkable Moments in learning with a great display of kites. The kites were made by each student and strung together to represent their growth in learning as individuals and as cohorts together. On each kite was written a personal reflection from each as to what remarkable learning they achieved this year. It was jointly celebrated with Annette Duffy from Brisbane Catholic Education who has been with them on the learning journey this year.



*Choir students enjoying Ormeau Fair*

*Ben Torenbeek  
APRE, Mother Teresa Primary School*

# Holy Land Trip—Jordan



In 2006 I had the privilege of going to the Holy Land. We visited many places where Jesus ministered around the sea of Galilee and walked the Via Dolorosa, the way of the cross. It brought the scriptures alive for me.

I always had a deep desire to go back there one day, but never thought it would happen. When Fr Joseph said he was taking a group to the Holy Land, I had the opportunity to go too.

We landed in Amman, Jordan. We visited Mount Nebo, where Moses saw the Promised Land.



*View of Promised Land from Mount Nebo., Fr Joseph, Ludy and Cyril inside church of Mount Nebo, the group ready to explore the Holy Land with Jibu in the lead*



We went to Petra. The Nabateans carved the magnificent structures into the rose-red coloured rock, amazingly beautiful.

Petra was cut off from the West for over 1000 years.

Our prayers go to all those who are suffering hardship from the recent floods.

*Al Khazneh (The Treasury), the Amphi Theatre with Anna and Elizabeth right*

# Holy Land Trip—Israel



From our Amman hotel it was two hours drive to the border. We walked across the Sheikh Hussein bridge into Israel where there was another bus waiting.

The scenery was always interesting, lots of desert, amazing colours.

In the afternoon we went to Cana, near Nazareth. Fr Joseph celebrated Mass in a beautiful church called The Cana Catholic Wedding Church, where Jesus performed his first miracle, changing water into wine. We then enjoyed a small drink of very nice Cana wine.



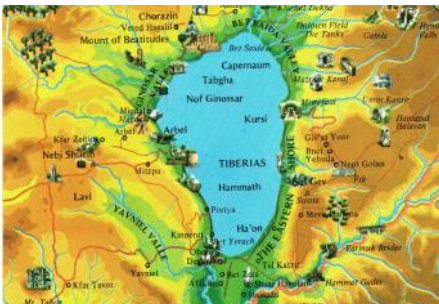
On Sunday we went to the the Mount of Beatitudes. Next to the church is a garden with an altar and seats all around. There Fr Joseph celebrated Mass with the sea in the background. The joy of being there again was overwhelming. I will never forget it.

Capernaum where Jesus cured the sick and Tabgha where he fed 5000 with two fish and five loaves were so moving. Most of Jesus' ministry was around the sea of Galilee. It is easy to see why because there is so much desert all around.



My favourite place will always be the see of Galilee. Being on a boat in the middle of the sea with the engine turned off was amazing! So peaceful and quiet. It was easy to reflect on Jesus and His disciples in that place. I felt so blessed to be there. From the shore you can look across the sea and see the other side. The sea of Galilee is fresh water. It's the catchment for the Jordan River. The sea is 13 miles long and 7.5 miles wide.

We visited many holy places. The Basilica of Transfiguration on Mount Tabor. A very winding road to the top. In the Basilica you can see the earth through glass where Jesus was transfigured with Peter, James and John in his presence.



The Shepherds Fields church, built in the shape of a tent, where the Angel appeared to the shepherds. Inside are the most beautiful paintings on the walls from the Nativity.

# Holy Land Trip—Israel



We visited so many more places in the Holy Land, especially Jerusalem. To see the ancient olive trees, over 2000 years old in the garden of Gethsemane, and the rock where Jesus prayed to his Father, was so moving, just to be there.

Around the rock is a large crown of thorn made of iron. It was a gift to Jerusalem from Australia. The church built over it is called 'The Basilica of the Agony', also known as the Church of all Nations.

Another precious time for me was the renewing of our baptismal vows, next to the Jordan River. I was baptised the day I was born, so that was a special time for me at the Jordan to answer for myself. We were blessed with water from the river.



*The Garden of Gethsemane; the men in the group in the Synagogue Church, built above the old synagogue where Jesus studied; cooling our feet in the Jordan river*



There were many moving moments during our pilgrimage. Joe Boucek recalls: 'We were waiting in a queue with other pilgrims from all over the world for nearly two hours in the Holy Church of the Sepulchre to see the tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ where he resurrected as our scriptures say.

We eventually walked into the tomb, which was surprisingly small so we had to bend down to enter it. As I was kneeling down beside the marble slab where Jesus was laid I put my forehead on the slab and it felt as cold as ice, but suddenly I felt as if I was hit by a bolt of lightning which forced my head back. As I got back up to my feet I felt weak at the knees and as I got out I staggered down to the Basilica floor. I still felt weak at the knees and tried to work out what had just happened. I'm sure I was touched by my Lord and in the future my faith will be strengthened. I'm looking forward to the day when I'll see him face to face.'

'My thanks go to the group, which was very supportive and fun, to Flyworld Travel and Jibu for organising the trip and looking after all our needs, to the excellent guides we had and to Fr Joseph for giving us the opportunity to come along.'

*The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is in the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. The church contains, according to traditions dating back to at least the fourth century, the two holiest sites in Christianity: the site where Jesus of Nazareth was crucified, at a place known as "Calvary" or "Golgotha", and Jesus's empty tomb, where he was buried and resurrected.*

# Holy Land Trip—Egypt



We finished our pilgrimage in Egypt. It was a five hour journey in the bus from Bethlehem to Egypt, lots of desert. We passed Mt Sodom on the way.

We stayed in a hotel with the Red Sea in the background. The colours of the mountains were so amazing. We enjoyed the sea.

The next day we travelled to St Catherine's monastery, where Moses saw the burning bush. It is where Moses went up to Mt Sinai to receive the ten commandments. There was so much we saw on our pilgrimage. I thank God for his goodness and kindness to us, keeping us safe, and for his Creation for all of us to enjoy, wherever we may be.

To Fr Joseph; Thank you. I'm grateful to you for the chance to be there again. God knows our hearts desire. Praise him!

*Anna Battle*



Our Holy Land Trip was organised by Flyworld Travels and the tour was led by Mr Jibu Anthony. As a tour manager Jibu was very professional, supportive and caring. The itinerary was very full and Jibu ensured we were all punctual and no one got left behind.

We travelled with a very nice group of people, fun to be with and share this experience with. The hotels were amazing, we had all meals included, and the food was excellent.

We had three guides, one each in Jordan, Israel and Egypt. They were outstanding, full of knowledge of local conditions and geography, religion and history and many other things.

The coaches were very modern with lots of comfort, some even with Wi-Fi on board. Look out for any Flyworld tours in the new year as they are lots of fun and great value.

*Monica Boucek*



# St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal

Our Parish will conduct this year's Australia wide Christmas Appeal on Sat 1st and Sun 2nd December.

The concept for this year's Appeal is "A Christmas Without Joy" with the focus on the real-life impact of poverty on families at Christmas time. Struggling to just keep the lights on and make rent, with barely enough money left each fortnight to buy food. This is the reality for close to one in seven Australians experiencing poverty.

Many of the families Vinnies assist report feeling that they have failed; they are ashamed and embarrassed by not being able to provide for their children. Poverty denies people opportunities, both present and future, to participate equally in Australian society. Poverty takes a high emotional and physical toll creating stress and anxiety, causing people to miss out on everyday essentials such as food and medicines, and limiting the choices that people can make about their lives.

Despite 25 years of unbroken economic growth, Australia has failed to reduce its overall levels of poverty in the last decade. This is where VINNIES must step in. Vinnies is committed to enabling all families to experience joy, dignity and security this Christmas. We are working to alleviate immediate need and to empower people we serve to regain control of their lives.

Your donation could help to change lives. Through your support at least some of these individuals and families will be able to have the Christmas they deserve; a Christmas without fear and anxiety but instead a Christmas of hope and joy.

How to donate:

## Donation envelopes will be available on both the weekend prior to the Appeal 27th /28th Nov and on 1st/2nd December. These envelopes can be placed in the offering bag at any Mass.

## Donations can be posted to St Patrick's Conference, Beenleigh.

## Donations can be dropped off at the Piety Stall or Parish Office.

XXX Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible XXX



## CHRISTMAS TREE

Each year our Conference provides up to 100 Christmas Hampers which provide some basic items for a Christmas Lunch/Dinner. The cost of each hamper is approx \$55. In addition to food, we provide a toy for children 12 years and under.

If you can help, please take a tag from the Christmas tree at the front of the Church and place your gift in the box provided.

*John Maksimas*



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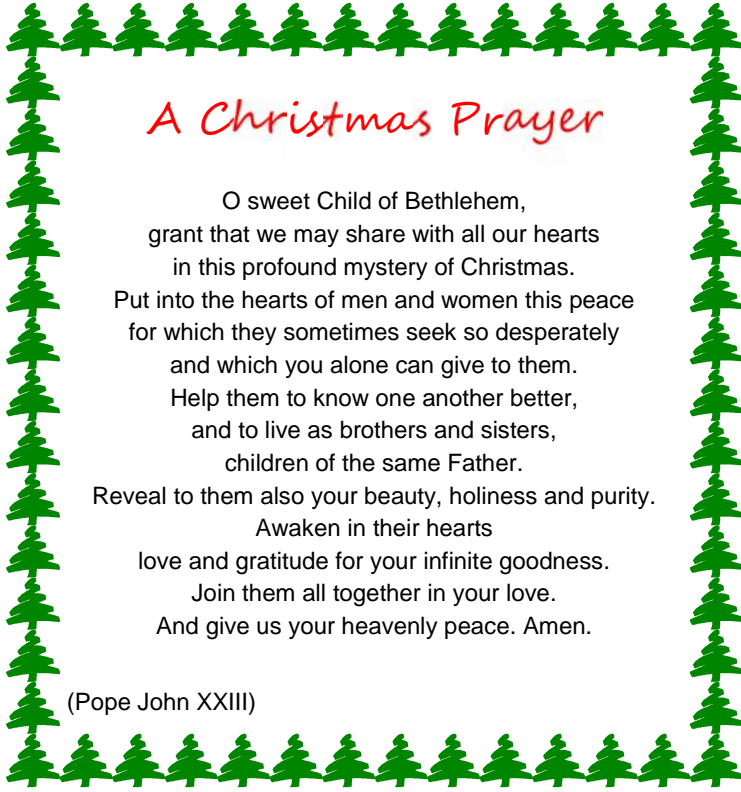
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## *A Christmas Prayer*

O sweet Child of Bethlehem,  
grant that we may share with all our hearts  
in this profound mystery of Christmas.  
Put into the hearts of men and women this peace  
for which they sometimes seek so desperately  
and which you alone can give to them.  
Help them to know one another better,  
and to live as brothers and sisters,  
children of the same Father.  
Reveal to them also your beauty, holiness and purity.  
Awaken in their hearts  
love and gratitude for your infinite goodness.  
Join them all together in your love.  
And give us your heavenly peace. Amen.

(Pope John XXIII)



# *J. G. Lohrisch*

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# A Miraculous Meeting

My wife Jan and I recently returned from a 7 week trip to Europe. As well as visiting my homeland Lithuania, we also spent time in Latvia, Estonia, Norway and Italy. We especially wanted to return to Germany and specifically Freiburg which is in the south-west of the country, in the foothills of the Black Forest. The reason was that my parents and I arrived in Freiburg in June 1944 as refugees, having left Lithuania in the middle of the night ahead of the Russian advance. Together with many others, we spent time in a "displaced persons camp" in Germany. After a few months our family was found accommodation in the suburb of Littenweiller about 10 km outside the city of Freiburg. Safe at last!

Unfortunately this was also the time of Allied air strikes, during which many German cities were demolished. Freiburg's turn came on November 27, 1944 when the city was completely destroyed. "Operation Tigerfish" was over in 23 minutes. 292 Royal Air Force Lancaster bombers dropped 3002 explosive and 11523 incendiary bombs on Freiburg. As a nearly 6 year old boy, I stood on a little hilltop with my mum and dad and numerous neighbours and watched the city go up in flames. 2797 people died in those 23 minutes.

Our family survived the war and lived in Littenweiller until June 1949 when we migrated to Australia nearly 70 years ago.

Jan and I made the decision to return to Freiburg not knowing if I would be able to find where we used to live. We arrived on 1st September and the next day caught the tram to Littenweiller. Nothing was familiar but I remembered that we lived behind St Barbara's Catholic Church. We eventually found the church and slowly I began to recognise certain landmarks. The street, the little creek beside the road, the women's hospital and we found the house where we lived more than 70 years ago. I was about 80% sure.

Jan and I walked up the street a little way while our travelling companions Russ and Robyn stayed near "the house". Robyn started talking to an elderly lady who was walking with her granddaughter who spoke English very well. Robyn asked if they lived nearby and they pointed to the house that I had recognised. The lady said that she had lived here all her life. Her name is Monika and the granddaughter is Melanie.



*1945 Monika in the middle and me on the left.*

When Jan and I returned to speak to them, I told them that I thought I had lived in that same house with my mum and dad. I also said that I remembered the church and various landmarks and that I remembered standing on that little hilltop on that fateful night in November 1944 watching Freiburg burn. Monika then said that she also had stood in the same place on that night. She then said that she had memories of two Lithuanian families living in that little street, one family in her parents' house and the other in the house opposite which had been demolished many years ago. I told Monika that I was sure that my family had lived in her house. After comparing notes, taking photos and exchanging email addresses we eventually parted ways.

Much to our astonishment, a week later, we received an email from Melanie. Monika had rummaged through her old photos and found a group photo which showed her (14 years of age) in the middle, with the other Lithuanian children and their father AND a 6 year old ME on the left. That photo is about 74 years old. We still cannot believe the chain of events which led to our meeting with Monika and Melanie. It was just meant to be!

**John Maksimas**