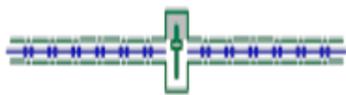


St Catherine Labouré Gymea Parish

The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

Year C

1 / 2 January 2022



Happy New Year!

2022



Dear Parishioners, It was such an uplifting occasion to welcome in the New Year of Grace, 2022, in front of Our Lord in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and then to celebrate Midnight Mass here at St Cath's. I said to the parishioners who attended (and I was impressed by the number) that it should give us strength and hope to think that our first thoughts in 2022 were of Our Lady and her Divine Son. After the homily, I invited the parishioners to pray a special prayer of consecration; asking God, through the intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, 'to bestow upon us and all our loved ones Christ's redeeming grace in order to lead us to always choose to do the good that we ought to do.' I really hope and pray that 2022 will be a wonderful year of growth for our parish community – growth in both personal holiness and in apostolate with others. This depends, first and foremost, on prayer being at the heart of all that we do here at St Cath's, Gymea. (Hence, I hope, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will continue to become an even more regular part of our parish life.) From this strong foundation will flow the new evangelisation – the new spiritual epiphany – of our parish that will hopefully attract many souls back to the joy of the Catholic faith. In the bulletin last week, you should have received an A4-sized notice that lists some of the new ventures/activities/events that will be introduced in our parish in 2022 to help facilitate this new epiphany. I am very open to hearing any of your own thoughts and suggestions as to what you believe would help our parish to grow in faith over the coming year (and beyond). The list included: fortnightly talks, guest speakers, a monthly men's breakfast and formation morning, a women's retreat, a mothers prayer group, a youth mass, children's liturgy, various opportunities to promote the Church's corporal and spiritual works of mercy, but to name a few. Although we live in turbulent times, it is important to stay positive and keep Christ at the centre of all that we do. I commit myself once again to serving you in this New Year with all my heart and soul. God bless you all and be assured of my love and prayers for each of you always. Fr Greg

In your charity, please pray for our recently deceased;

Joseph 'Joe' Hansel, Judith King, Carmel Farnham, Baby Atticus, Leoni Bashall, Mary Fitzgerald, Geoffrey Jones, Elaine Matthews, Kevin Fennell, Kevin Cannon, Frank Humphries, Aileen McDonnell, Jonah Iona, Valerie Joan Tye.

We remember those whose Anniversaries we commemorate at this time:

Joe Caputo, Tracy de Lyall, Roy & Mary Esplin, John Vincent Sidgreaves, The Holy Souls.

We pray for all the sick of our Parish Community and their carers. Especially:

Catherine Bassiuni, Gerry Banister, Jean Bell, Pamela Buckley, Patricia Butler, Hugh Casey, Elaine Coughlan, Patricia Cutcliffe, Alice Elliott, Dorothy Fraser-Bell, Trevor Gittoes, Jeff Greenaway, Patricia Gordon, Maree Hinton, Gloria Klein, Laurence McDonnell, Doug Maybon, Evie Morgan, Anthony Morris, Julia Quach, Marie Rayner, Tony Ryan, Evelyn Spiteri, Yin Kwan Tsang, Lindy Webb, Marie & Norm Whittaker, Gary Wood.

HAPPY NEW YEAR OF GRACE, 2022: The parish staff and I (Fr Greg) would like to wish you and your families God's choicest blessings for the New Year of Grace, 2022. I pray especially that we will all put Our Lord at the centre of our lives; knowing that our Catholic faith is the ultimate gateway to true joy in this life and eternal beatitude in the next! It is such a privilege to be your parish priest and I am very excited about the year ahead. But this is your parish, so please think of how you might use your gifts and talents to get more involved. God bless!

FROM THE CATECHISM: "The *Epiphany* is the manifestation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, Son of God and Savior of the world. The great feast of Epiphany celebrates the adoration of Jesus by the wise men (*magi*) from the East, together with his baptism in the Jordan and the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee. In the magi, representatives of the neighboring pagan religions, the Gospel sees the first-fruits of the nations, who welcome the good news of salvation through the Incarnation. The magi's coming to Jerusalem in order to pay homage to the king of the Jews shows that they seek in Israel, in the messianic light of the star of David, the one who will be king of the nations. Their coming means that pagans can discover Jesus and worship him as Son of God and Saviour of the world only by turning towards the Jews and receiving from them the messianic promise as contained in the Old Testament. The Epiphany shows that 'the full number of the nations' now takes its 'place in the family of the patriarchs', and acquires *Israelitica dignitas* (is made "worthy of the heritage of Israel").'

TRAINING OF NEW ACOLYTES: I am delighted that a number of individuals have indicated a desire to serve as future acolytes at Mass. I would like to host a training session for new acolytes on Saturday 5th February from 10:30am-11:30am. I will be contacting the new acolytes in due course. If you are interested in getting involved, please let Fr Greg know.

TRAINING OF NEW READERS: I am delighted that a number of individuals have indicated a desire to serve as future readers at Mass. I would like to host a training session for new readers on Sunday 30th January from 3:30pm-4:30pm. I will be contacting the new readers in due course. If you are interested in getting involved, please let Fr Greg know.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING ENVELOPES: are still available at the back of the Church – with the words "Christmas Offering". Money placed into these envelopes goes into a central fund that supports the Clergy of the Archdiocese and covers certain housekeeping expenses here in our parish. It would be great if St Cath's is able to raise enough funds such that we are able to support poorer parishes that are unable to pay for such expenses. Thank you for your generosity. You can place the Christmas envelopes in either the first or second collection.

COLLECTIONS: Following a recent and independent audit of the parish finances, we have been asked to now follow Archdiocesan protocols/policy with respect to collections. The first collection goes towards Pastoral Revenue (the central fund described above), the second collection goes into the Church Account.

From henceforth, the 1st Collection will be taken up after Father's Homily.

The 2nd Collection will be taken up after the Prayers of General Intercession and is for the Parish (Planned Giving/Envelopes).

Volunteers are sought to assist the Church Wardens for each of the 4 Masses. Please see Fr Greg if you are interested and he can provide your details to the Wardens of each of the Masses.

REFUGEES FROM AFGHANISTAN: I have had further communication with the local council about supporting refugees from Afghanistan. Besides offering our community car to help transport them to English classes across Sydney, I have also offered to support them with low-cost housing/appliances/furniture. We already have sourced a few items, but if you possess (or know of someone who does) any such items that are in good working order but are no longer needed, please have a chat to me in the new year.

FR GREG: I will be away from Monday 3rd January to 6th January for academic work. Adoration/Masses will be supplied by one of the three priests that currently reside at Our Lady of Fatima, Caringbah. (Please make the celebrating priest(s) welcome in our parish. During the academic year, I will need to rely on a bit of help from other priests when lectures clash with Mass times. At this stage, I don't envisage too much difficulty.)

BONNIE VIEW DEVELOPMENT: Thank you to all those parishioners who took an interest in the suggested redevelopment of 10 & 12 Bonnie View Street by Catholic Care. As I said the other week, the patrimony of this parish does not belong to me but to you, the parishioners, and, thus, I appreciate everyone taking a vested interest in such matters. For those of you who have completed the feedback forms, feel free to put them in the parish letter box or in the box at the back of the Church. A question has been raised about the exact remuneration to the parish. We are expected to receive \$100,000 PA (CPI indexed) over the proposed 15 year lease. Further details will be given in the new year from members of the Parish Finance Committee.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: The parish community would warmly welcome anyone interested in assisting with **reading/serving/acolyting** at Mass. We are also looking for anyone who might be able to assist with the **care of our gardens and for new catechists**. All are welcome to chat with Fr Greg if they are open to getting involved. I am delighted with the number of people who have already come forward, but I would love for everyone to be involved. Training will be provided in the new year (dates TBC).

COVID-19 UP-DATE: Whilst there are no density limits placed upon Churches, we are still required to wear masks. You might also take note that we are only considered a "close contact", and, thus, need to isolate, if we have spent more than four hours with a person who has tested positive to Covid-19. (A close contact is someone "who lives with a case or has spent **more than four hours** with them in a house, accommodation or care facility setting...", said the Prime Minister.) I don't expect any Mass here at Gynea to go for four hours (but if you would like a very, very long homily



just let me know). So, unless you begin to manifest symptoms, then there is no reason to isolate if a case emerges in our Church. Please stay home if you are feeling unwell. I will be ensuring the Church is regularly cleaned/sanitized going forward.

CORPORAL AND SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY: I would like to ask the members of the committee to meet on Thursday 17th February to begin plan for activities in 2022.

CONFESSIONS/BENEDICTION: will be available before and after every Weekday Mass (including Saturdays). Just approach me. On Saturdays, I will be in the confessional immediately following the 9:15 am Mass for as long as necessary and from 4:30 – 4:55 pm.

Benediction will take place henceforth *every* Friday and Saturday immediately prior to the 9.15am Mass.

GRATITUDE: Fr Greg would like to say "thank you very much indeed" for the kind and thoughtful gifts/cards he has received from parishioners over the Christmas season. Thank you very much again to all.

FRIENDSHIP CLUB: Is a marvellous asset to our parish. The Club provides a fun and faith-filled forum for senior members of our parish/local community to form new (and sustain old) friendships. New members are always welcome!

LEGION OF MARY: Meets every Thursday morning at 10am (in the parish conference room). New members always welcome!

MEDJUGORE PRAYER GROUP: Did you know we have a wonderful group of faith-filled parishioners who gather each Thursday evening at 6pm in our church to say the rosary and some special prayers? Why not join them? Everyone is welcome! The next prayer meeting will take place on the 6th January.

FACEBOOK PAGE: Remember to like our Facebook Page! I am very grateful to one of our younger parishioners who is running this now.

CATECHIST CORNER: Please get in touch with Fr Greg if you would like to become a catechist next year. **Now is the time to step forward!** Training will be provided and you get to join a wonderful group of parishioners. A great way to make new friendships, too!



DOLLY GORMLEY: Congratulations to Dolly the Dog who was awarded 'Best-Dressed-Parishioner' by popular vote this Christmas. Dolly is a near-daily Mass goer and can often be found sitting outside or at the back of the Church. Her family spent one and a half hours tying the

