



St Michael's Catholic Parish Traralgon

St Michael's Vision Statement: Inspired by Jesus Christ, we are a welcoming Catholic Community seeking to enrich lives. Come and join us!

St Michael's Mission Statement:

To provide opportunities for parishioners –

- to grow in holiness
- to discover and live out their personal and community call to mission to live as Catholics who effectively transform society.

www.smpt.org.au
email: sec@smpt.org.au

Statement of Commitment to the safety of children and adults at risk: Central to the mission of St Michael's Parish is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children, young people and adults at risk and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

Please contact our Safeguarding Officers Shane Reid or Sally Darby on 5174 2060 if you have any concerns.

St Michael's Parish Information

Fr Aju Varghese Parish Priest
Parish Centre 5174 2060
Priest's Residence: 5174 6765

Deacon Tony Aspinall
Email: deacontony8@gmail.com

St Michael's Parish Office
Telephone: 5174 2060
Address: 35 Kay Street, Traralgon
PO Box 103, Traralgon 3844

Office hours –
Tues to Friday 9:00am to 4:00pm
Parish Secretary: Catherine Hill
Email: sec@smpt.org.au
Sacraments / Youth: Jenifer Hanratty
Email: sacraments@smpt.org.au

After office hours - in case of an emergency please call 0499 162 313 and leave a message and your contact details. All non-urgent calls should be made during office hours.

Baptisms: Six weeks notice required

Weddings: Six months notice required

Parish Pastoral Council: Lia Di Corleto, Chairperson, Fr Aju, Steve Kimani, Greg Imhagwe, Watson Gomez, Jenifer Hanratty, Judi McLaughlin, Thomas Mathew, Amanda Reid, Jodie Ware, Michelle Charlton, and Doug Doherty.

Our Schools:

St Gabriel's School 5174 5515

Principal: Mrs Michelle Charlton

St Michael's School 5174 3295

Principal: Mrs Jodie Ware

Lavalla Catholic College 5174 5272

Principal: Mr Ryan Greer

Kildare Campus 5174 8111

St Paul's Campus 5174 7355



LIKE MARY WE ARE CALLED TO BE PROPHETS

By Gerard Hall SM

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In preparation for the birth of Jesus, today we celebrate the Annunciation, the announcement to Mary that she is being invited to become the mother of the Saviour. Moreover, we hear the story in the Gospel of Luke who portrays Mary as a true believer and first disciple of Jesus. While Mary is not a disciple like the Twelve who accompany Jesus in his ministry, she is presented as the true disciple who hears the Word of God and acts upon it.

Birth announcements play a significant role in the Hebrew Scriptures turning supposed barren wombs into surprising conceptions: Ishmael is born to Hagar; Isaac to Abraham and Sarah; John the Baptist to Zechariah and Elizabeth ["She who was thought to be barren is now in her sixth month!"]. Israel's God is ever full of surprises! The telling of the Annunciation story is also significant because it follows the pattern of the calling of the Jewish prophets (e.g., Moses and Jeremiah): there is a heavenly messenger or angel; the 'prophet' expresses fear but is told to not be afraid; God's intention is announced; objections are given; finally, a sign of divine power is presented.

Mary's objection to the idea of bearing a son is grounded in biological reality: "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel's answer is that the Holy Spirit will overshadow her and enable this 'miracle' to occur in the same manner the Spirit hovered over the waters at the origin of creation. This same Spirit was again present at the baptism and transfiguration of Jesus. Mary's final response – "I am the handmaid of the Lord; let what you have said be done to me" – is not an expression of passive servitude. Mary's fiat ('let it be done') demonstrates a conscious and active faith; and it shows an almost outrageous authority as she first questions the angel before making a decision that implies enormous risk and danger. After all, if the law of Deuteronomy was applied, as an unwed mother Mary could be stoned to death!

The birth of the Lord in human flesh coming into the world to deliver us from power and greed relies on this poor, peasant Jewish woman saying yes to God's invitation. Certainly, Mary's call is unique insofar as she alone is invited to conceive and deliver Jesus. Yet, like Mary, we are all called to give Jesus Christ in our own lives. God's gracious care and desire to repair our lives and planet earth is occurring today. Do we have Mary's faith, hope and courage to say "Yes" to the divine invitation to be missionary disciples of Jesus in the way of Mary. Like Mary, we are all called to be prophets, people who denounce the world's injustices, and cry out to God to bring peace and reconciliation to all peoples. As we prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ may we, like Mary, learn to hear the Word of God and put it into practice.

Mass Times	
Sunday Dec 24	9:30am Mass- 4 th Sunday of Advent 7:00pm Christmas Eve Family Mass 11:00pm Christmas Eve 'Midnight' Mass
Monday Dec 25	9:30am Christmas Day Mass
Tuesday Dec 26	9:30am Mass
Wednesday Dec 27	11:00am Reconciliation 11:00am Exposition 12:00pm Mass
Thursday Dec 28	9:30am Liturgy of the Word
Friday Dec 29	9:30am Mass
Saturday Dec 30	5:00pm Mass
Sunday Dec 31	9:30am Mass 5:00pm Mass
Monday Jan 01	11:00am Mass for Mary Mother of God

**This Thursday we will have liturgy with communion at St Michael's Church.*

PLEASE PRAY FOR: those who have died recently including Peter Hengel, brother to Fr Herman Hengel, Geovania Bezerra, Norm Siddle and John Ryan, and those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Lorraine Brady, Peter Glaubitz, Gerhard Reiss, Kerrie Jenkin, Maureen Rutter, Fergus Darmody, and William Hardbottle. *Lord, let your perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.*



WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK: including Ann-Maree Daly, Gary Donchi, Bernadette Formaran, Fr Frank Freeman, Carolyn Gleeson, Jacqui Granville, Barbara Greaves, Ellen Hammond, Jenny Hansch, Robert Hazelman, Imogen Hillier, Joyce Martin, Ivy May, Deborah McKerchar, Ben Melenhorst, Maree Morris, Henry Polo, Joan Riggall, Jerry Templer, Damiano Tripodi, Sharon Veleff, George Walkan, Roy Ward, Victoria Rohli, Fr John Speekman, James Whitty, John Waanders, Peter Dal Pra, Jane Eric, Rose Xuereb, Manuel Xuereb, Peter Lorinc, Don Barnes and all those we hold dear in our hearts.

Please let the office know if you, or anyone you know would like a visit from one of our parishioners, Fr Aju or Deacon Tony.

THANK YOU: Thank you for joining us to celebrate Father Aju's birthday last Sunday. He is very grateful for your company and best wishes and especially for his birthday cake which was made by our talented Adriana.

CHRISTMAS AT OUR AGED CARE HOMES: On Tuesday Deacon Tony and a group of our J-Walkers visited BUPA to celebrate Christmas and sing Christmas Carols. After celebrating Mass at Dalkeith the week before, Fr Aju was off to visit Margery Cole to celebrate mass with some of our parishioners, their families and friends. Unfortunately Fr Peter was not allowed to attend O'Mara House due to a COVID outbreak which he was very disappointed about. It is wonderful to have our parishioners young and old supporting our residents who have moved into Aged Care and we look forward to creating more opportunities to do so in 2024.

This Week's Events	
Sunday December 24	
6:30pm	Christmas Carols, St Michael's Church
7:00pm	Christmas Eve Family Mass, St Michael's Church
10:30pm	Christmas Carols, St Michael's Church
11:00pm	Christmas Eve 'Midnight Mass', St Michael's Church
Monday December 25	
9:30am	Christmas Day Mass, St Michael's Church

BAPTISMS: Our next Baptism Preparation Meeting will be held on **Tuesday January 16 at 7pm** in the church. Please contact the parish office for more information and to register your interest.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY: This week we celebrate two very special birthdays in our parish. Bronia Jurus is turning 102 and Olga Karapulka is turning 101. They are both receiving communion at home these days but have been long term members of our parish. Olga has been a parishioner since 1951 and has fond memories of St Michael's parishioners Miss Gladys Oats and Mrs Ted Malone who made her feel welcome and helped her with her English when she arrived. Happy birthday ladies, we hope you have a wonderful day.



ST VINCENT DE PAUL CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE: All the presents that were donated to the St Vincent de Paul Christmas Giving Tree have been collected from the church and delivered to children in need throughout our community. Thanks to your generous support, many presents were gifted and handed to families along with the Christmas Food Hampers from St Vincent de Paul. The Traralgon Conference were overwhelmed by the response of parishioners this year, and could not believe the number of gifts they received. It was one of the best years they have had and they are truly grateful for the support from parishioners this Christmas and throughout the year. Wishing everyone a happy and holy Christmas from St Vincent de Paul Traralgon Conference.



2023 ADVENT APPEAL FOR UKRAINE: This Advent, parishes around Australia are raising money to support people in the war-torn Ukraine through the work of *Mudra Sprava* (Wise Action), a Patriarchal Charitable Foundation in Ukraine. The organisation has three focus areas: Evacuation of people from frontline territories; Food packages for people in need; Shelters for internally displaced persons. This weekend we will have a special collection after each of our weekend masses to raise funds for the ongoing support of the people in the Ukraine.



CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

CHRISTMAS EVE: Sunday December 24

7:00 pm Family Mass, with Carols from 6:30pm
11:00pm 'Midnight' Mass, with Carols from 10:30pm

CHRISTMAS DAY: Monday December 25

9:30am Mass (No evening Mass Christmas Day)



JANUARY 01: MARY THE HOLY MOTHER

OF GOD: Pope Paul VI declared New Year's Day the World Day of Peace. It is appropriate because on this day we honour Mary who brought the Prince of Peace into the world. Better than anyone

else, she knew the peace that is at once her Son's gift and the fruit of a life lived in obedience to God. Join us for a special Mass here at St Michael's on Monday January 01 at 11am to celebrate the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God. All are welcome.

MICK'S KITCHEN NEWS: Thursday evening we held a special Christmas dinner at Mick's Kitchen which was open to all. It was a chance to celebrate and reflect on the past 12 months with our volunteers and guests, our new friends and our old. We are grateful to Jodie and the team at St Michael's School for letting us use the Mary MacKillop Hall for the evening as well as Thursdays during December. Our wonderful friends at Traralgon Aged Care made biscuits for Mick's Kitchen throughout the year and also collected many items to create Christmas Hampers which were given away at our Christmas Celebration. We are also grateful to the team at Fonterra for their food donation, and the weekly support we receive from both Banjo's Bakery and Baker's Delight. This year, like many years in the past, Traralgon Centre Plaza has sponsored our Christmas event, providing money for all the food, extra decorations and little gifts to make Christmas a little more fun. We are truly grateful for the ongoing support of all these groups, as well as the wonderful team at St Vincent de Paul, our volunteers and the parishioners of St Michael's. Mick's Kitchen is now closed for the school holidays and will re-open at the St Vincent de Paul Centre on Thursday February 01 2024.

CHANGES OVER THE CHRISTMAS BREAK: The office is now closed for the Christmas break and will re-open on Tuesday January 09 at 9am. RCIA will resume on Tuesday January 16. CWL will return on Tuesday January 30. Mick's Kitchen will re-open on Thursday February 01. The Charismatic Prayer Group will return on Thursday February 08. There will be no 5pm mass on Sunday December 24 or Monday December 25, otherwise Mass times will continue as normal during this period. Thursday morning mass will be in the church not at St Gabriel's Primary School.

We thank everyone for their support throughout the year and hope everyone has a joyful and peaceful Christmas break. We look forward to catching up with you all in the new year.



BISHOP GREG'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2023

Warmest blessings of peace as we celebrate the Feast of the Birth of Jesus.

In many of the churches where you gather, there will be beautiful stained-glass windows which depict the birth, the mission, the miracles, the love and life and death of Jesus on the Cross.

How blessed we are to gather in a country of peace to celebrate the birth of Jesus this year. I remember a few years ago going on pilgrimage to Bethlehem and as we gather this year, we are mindful of all that is going on in our world and in many countries, particularly in the Holy Land at this time. In Bethlehem you must bend low to honour the place of the birth of Jesus. God comes to us; God bows low before us to hold us and to honour us. We are a people of faith and joy and promise, so across our parishes and our schools, wherever you may be this Christmas, may that gift of joy and hope, the gift of Jesus himself, be yours.

Across the Diocese of Sale, we wish to reach out to all our communities and to welcome all people in the name of the One who comes to us: Emmanuel - God with Us, the Prince of Peace. My dear friends, as we gather with our families, our communities, our parishes, or wherever you are, may you have a blessed and Holy Christmas. May the gift of Jesus that we receive be the one you take to others by bringing His joy, His hope and His promise to all you meet.

Happy and Blessed Christmas and may 2024 give you every grace that you seek.

+Greg Bennet
Bishop of Sale

OUR OFFICE IS NOW CLOSED AND WILL RE-OPEN AT 9AM TUESDAY JANUARY 09, 2024

Wishing all our parishioners, and all those you love, a holy, safe and peace filled Christmas time. With best wishes from Fr Aju, Deacon Tony, Fr Peter, Cath and Jen.



STEWARDSHIP MATTERS:

"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" – Luke 1:28

After Jesus, we look to Mary as an ideal steward. Her entire life was lived in obedience to God's call. Mary teaches us to live with joy for all we have been given. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, Mary reflects the light of Christ. Like Mary, we are called to reflect Christ's light to the world through our gratitude and generosity.

Rosters for December 24 – 31, 2023		Christmas & The Feast of the Holy Family			
	Lector	Commentator	Welcomer	Musicians	
Sunday Dec 24 7:00pm	M & Z Hanratty	A Taylor	M Giddens & J McLaughlin	Jane & Simon	
Sunday Dec 24 11:00pm	B O'Brien & S Grout	T Denny	M Noone	Filipino Choir	
Monday Dec 25 9:30am	W & J Gomez	Volunteer	Volunteer	Jane & Simon	
Saturday Dec 30 5:00pm	K & L Roy	A Taylor	L Kennedy	Jane & Simon	
Sunday Dec 31 9:30am	M Hansen	Volunteer	M Blanchard & A Sykes	Jane & Simon	
Sunday Dec 31 5:00pm	E Harte	S Grout	B McNulty	Jane & Simon	

First Reading 2 Sm 7:1-5 8-12 14 16

A reading from the second book of Samuel

The kingdom of David will be established for ever in the sight of the Lord.

Once David had settled into his house and the Lord had given him rest from all the enemies surrounding him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'Look, I am living in a house of cedar while the ark of God dwells in a tent'. Nathan said to the king, 'Go and do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you.'

But that very night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: 'Go and tell my servant David, "Thus the Lord speaks: Are you the man to build me a house to dwell in? I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel; I have been with you on all your expeditions; I have cut off all your enemies before you. I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall dwell in that place and never be disturbed again; nor shall the wicked continue to oppress them as they did, in the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel; I will give them rest from all their enemies. The Lord will make you great; the Lord will make you a House. And when your days are ended and you are laid to rest with your ancestors, I will preserve the offspring of your body after you and make his sovereignty secure. I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me and your throne be established for ever."

Responsorial Psalm Ps 88:2-5. 27. 29. R. see v.2

(R.) For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

1. I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord; through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth.
Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever, that your truth is firmly established as the heavens. **(R.)**
2. I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your dynasty for ever and set up your throne through all ages.' **(R.)**
3. He will say to me: 'You are my father, my God, the rock who saves me.'
I will keep my love for him always; for him my covenant shall endure. **(R.)**

Readings for the Feast of the Holy Family

First Reading:	Genesis 15:1-6, 21:1-3
Second Reading:	Hebrews 11:8, 11-12 17-19
Gospel:	Luke 2:22 -40

Second Reading Rom 16:25-27

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

The mystery kept secret for endless ages is now revealed.

Glory to him who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery kept secret for endless ages, but now so clear that it must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things to be. He alone is wisdom; give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation Lk 3:4 6

Alleluia, alleluia!

*I am the servant of the Lord:
may his will for me be done.*

Alleluia!

Gospel Lk 1:26-38

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

You will conceive and bear a son.

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

