

The local Catholic parish is having
the following celebrations
this Christmas:

A Christmas Prayer

by Robert Louis Stevenson

*Loving Father,
Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.*

*Close the door of hate
and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing
which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.*

*May the Christmas morning
make us happy to be thy children,
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds
with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven,
for Jesus' sake.*

Amen

Contacting the Catholic Enquiry Centre

If you or someone close to you is interested in finding
out more about the Catholic faith, please contact
Catholic Enquiry Centre
on 1300 432 484
or email info@catholicenquiry.com
or visit www.catholicenquiry.com



Catholic Enquiry Centre

Reaching out in faith
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

1300 432 484 email: info@catholicenquiry.com



Christmas

Celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ

About Christmas

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. It is a time for remembering God who came into the world as a human being, and brought the precious gift of new life.

For some the Christmas story will be familiar due to popular carols like Silent Night, Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, Joy to the World, Away in a Manger, and Little Drummer Boy. These are popular not only in churches, but also in homes, shopping centres and on radio during the festive season.

Films, too, tell different versions of the Christmas story, like *The Bells of St Mary's* (1945), *A Christmas Story* (1983), *The Nativity Story* (2006).

But what is the real story behind Christmas?



The birth of Jesus

Here is an account of Jesus' birth from Luke's Gospel*:

Now it happened that at this time Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be made of the whole inhabited world. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to be registered, each to his own town. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee for Judaea, to David's town called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

Now it happened that, while they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the living-space.

In the countryside close by there were shepherds out in the fields keeping guard over their sheep during the watches of the night. An angel of the Lord stood over them and the glory of the Lord shone round them.

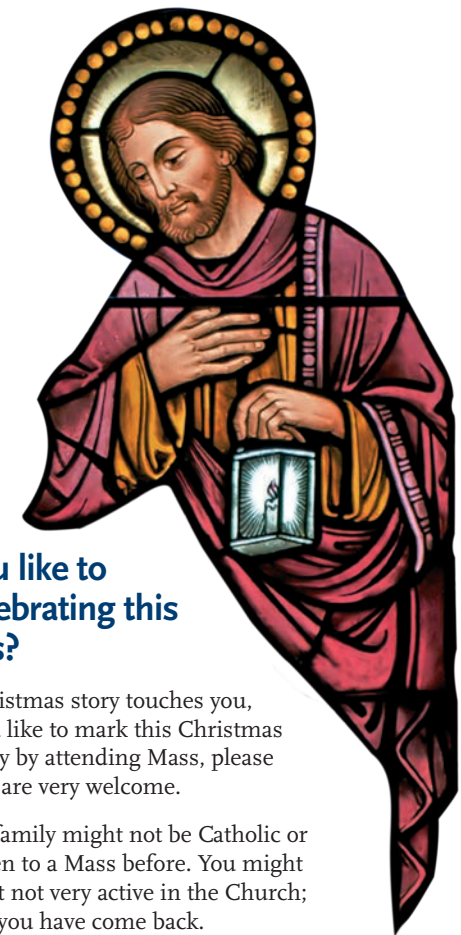
They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Look, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.'

And all at once with the angel there was a great throng of the hosts of heaven, praising God with the words:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace for those He favours."

(Luke 2:1-14)

* Translation The New Jerusalem Bible, 1985.



Would you like to join in celebrating this Christmas?

If the first Christmas story touches you, and you would like to mark this Christmas in a special way by attending Mass, please know that you are very welcome.

You and your family might not be Catholic or have never been to a Mass before. You might be Catholic but not very active in the Church; it is great that you have come back.

Just listen and hear God speaking to you through the readings, the prayers and the homily (or teaching). Be present when, through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ that Catholics receive in Holy Communion.

Happy Christmas!

