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Parishes of

**Mater Dei Blakehurst**  
**St Raphael's South Hurstville**



BULLETIN

5 January 2014

Feast of the Epiphany



WHERE  
IS THE  
NEW-  
BORN  
KING?

**Entrance antiphon:**

Behold, the Lord, the Mighty One,  
has come; and kingship is in his  
grasp, and power and dominion.

**First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6**

*The glory of the Lord shines upon you.*

**Psalm: 71**

**R.** Lord, every nation on earth will  
adore you.

O God, give your judgment to the king,  
to a king's son your justice,  
that he may judge your people in justice  
and your poor in right judgment. **R.**

In his days justice shall flourish  
and peace till the moon fails.  
He shall rule from sea to sea,  
from the Great River to earth's bounds. **R.**

The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts  
shall pay him tribute.

The kings of Sheba and Seba  
shall bring him gifts.  
Before him all kings shall fall prostrate,  
all nations shall serve him. **R.**

For he shall save the poor when they cry  
and the needy who are helpless.  
He will have pity on the weak  
and save the lives of the poor. **R.**

**Second Reading: Eph 3:2-3. 5-6**

*The revelation means that pagans  
now share the same inheritance,  
that they are parts of the same  
body.*

**Gospel Acclamation:**

Alleluia, alleluia!

We have seen his star in the East;  
and have come to adore the Lord.  
Alleluia!

**Gospel: Matt 2:1-12**

*We have come from the East to wor-  
ship the king.*

**Communion antiphon:**

We have seen his star in the East,  
and have come with gifts to adore  
the Lord.

GOSPEL COMMENTARY

by Fr. Reginald Martin, O.P.

The bad news about the feast of the Epiphany is that the details of today's gospel are very confusing. The good news is that we are not alone in finding them so. From the earliest days of our faith, the Epiphany has confounded the Church's greatest theologians and preachers.

There is, for example, little agreement about the occupation or identity of those individuals who, Matthew tells us, came to Bethlehem from the east. Some have called them astrologers; one of our Christmas carols identifies them as kings. Our lectionary calls them 'Magi,' which means wizards, and most of us grew up calling them by the somewhat equivocal term 'Wise Men.' Some early writers believed they came from Persia, others from Arabia. Still others preached that they were descendants of one of the kingdoms the Israelites had defeated when they entered the Promised Land.

We imagine these individuals must have been holy because they came to worship Christ, but that is precisely what the early Church did not believe. For St. Augustine, the Magi stood for sinners, just as the shepherds, who were the heroes of last week's gospel, stood for the unlearned of the world. Christ, he said, "joins them both to himself, who came to select the foolish that he might confound the wise, and to call not the just, but sinners, to repentance; so that no great one might take pride in himself, and no lowly one despair."

The one thing everyone seems to agree on is that the Wise Men were Gentiles. At the very least, then, they stand for us. People who originally had no place among the children of Abraham, and no claim on the promises God made to Abraham's children. With little to hope for from God's justice, today's celebration is a reminder of how much we have received from God's mercy.

Matthew tells us that the Magi brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. He does not, however, say how many they were who followed that star to Bethlehem. We imagine that because there are three gifts mentioned in the gospel, there must have been three givers, but one early Christian writer said that each individual must have offered all three gifts, so there may have been many more.

One ancient tradition tells us the gold acknowledged Christ as King, the frankincense was a tribute to Jesus as God, and the myrrh, because it was a preservative and embalming agent, was both a foreshadowing of Jesus' death and an acknowledgement of his humanity. Another tradition, however, says that these 'gifts' were the standard elements magicians used to dazzle their audiences. By laying them before the Christ Child, the legend goes, the Magi lay aside their tricks and embraced the truth. St. Gregory the Great preached that the gold represented wisdom, frankincense prayer, and myrrh, because it preserves the flesh, the good deeds of mortification and abstinence. One thing is clear – whatever these gifts represent, they are not cheap. Whoever we are, wherever we are called from, when we approach the truth, God demands that we give up whatever else we may hold dear to  
*(Cont'd over the page)*

**UNITED IN FAITH, GUIDED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT NOURISHED BY  
THE EUCHARIST,  
COMMITTED TO PROCLAIMING THE  
GOSPEL. WE STRIVE TO LIVE AS GOD ASKS  
"to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8)**

acknowledge Christ as God, ruler, and mortal.

There was no detail of today's gospel that the early Christian writers did not explore and exploit for the benefit of their congregations. The Wise Men were the first non-Israelites to respond to the Good News of the Incarnation.

Two final things the ancients noted in today's gospel. The first is a detail Matthew doesn't mention today – which is that the Wise Men would have found Jesus lying in a manger. The manger, of course, is the structure that would have held food for the livestock. The Wise Men didn't make their journey because they wanted to go sight-seeing in Jerusalem; they wanted to see a king. Somehow they didn't find it odd to find him in a manger, so neither should we. We seek Christ out because we're hungry. What better place to find him than a manger?

Finally, Matthew tells us that the Magi were told that they should not return to Herod, so they went home by another way. This says something about all our personal journeys to Christ. St. John Chrysostom says, "It was not possible that having come from Herod to Christ they would return again to Herod. [For the one who has rejected evil for Christ] ... now rejoices in the good he has found, and remembers the evil from which he has been delivered, and will not readily return to it." The gospel is a story told about us. The journey of the Magi is the journey of our souls. The journey to the Promised Land is a moral journey, and the road only goes one way. We may go home, but we can't go back to our old way of doing things. St. Gregory said "we left our land by the path of pride... by eating forbidden food. And so we must return another way: by the way of tears, by the way of obedience... by restraining the desires of the flesh."

The fruit we ate in the garden didn't prove very satisfying. In fact, the world has been hungry ever since. Today we draw near a manger, where we find a God who offers himself as our food. Selfishness and need drove us here, but we cannot hoard this gift for ourselves.

St. Paul tells us that we Gentiles are members of Christ – co-heirs and sharers in the promise – through the preaching of the gospel. The Magi were the first of us Gentiles to hear the good news. The Wise Men tell us that once we encounter Christ we have no option but to return to where we came from.

MASS TIMES this week		
	Mater Dei	St.Raphael's
Saturday	6.15pm	5.00pm
Sunday	10.00am	8.30am
Tuesday	8.00am	
Wednesday	8.00am	
Thursday		9.15am
Friday	8am	9.00am
<b>RECONCILIATION: (also by appointment)</b>		
Saturday		4.30pm
<b>EXPOSITION</b>		
Saturday	from	4.00pm

**Legions of Mary**  
**MD:** Meets 10am every Monday morning in the Piety Stall at Mater Dei.  
**St R's** Rosary and Meeting every Friday at 9:30 am downstairs in the Hall.  
**St Vincent de Paul Society**  
 Meets second Tuesday of each month in the Kennedy Centre at Mater Dei at 7.30 pm.

**HOME ROSARY**  
 Rosary breaks until later in January.  
 Participants wish everybody a very happy and holy Christmas and a happy new year.

Please pray for the work of this Council which has been set up as part of the Church's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Please pray especially, too, for the victims of child sexual abuse by clergy, religious and Church employees.

**Please pray for**  
**Deceased:** Giuseppina Dragone, Anna Maria Chizzoniti, Irene O'Connell, Joseph McGloin  
**Sick:** Br Joe, Mary Krone, Ann, Sr Maree Henderson, rsc, Margaret Hopkinson, Blaza Kursar, Howard Courtney, Paul Foley, Ann Davies, Joanne McRea, Patrick & Sidney Yenson, Matthew Tuffin, Joanne Martin, George & Therese Mir, Jack & Sylvia Wood.

Both Churches have a hearing loop installed: switch your hearing aid to "T-coil".



*This Christmas, give the gift of friendship*  
 Christmas is a hard time of year for people who are alone. Could you spare an hour a week to ease someone's isolation?

Compeer is a mental health friendship program which matches volunteers in one-to-one friendship with someone in their local community who is isolated and living with a mental illness.

There is a huge need for adult male and female volunteers across Sydney to spend an hour a week doing social activities with a new friend, such as having coffee, watching the footy, or going for a walk.

Training and ongoing support is provided, and you will be connected to a welcoming community of volunteers through social events and catch-ups.

Your friendship can make a big difference to your new friend's quality of life, and help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.

"Compeer is a simple, meaningful way of making a difference." - Volunteer

To find out more about Compeer volunteering phone 9568 0295, go to [www.compeer.org.au](http://www.compeer.org.au) or send an email to [compeer.sydneycitysoutheast@vinnies.org.au](mailto:compeer.sydneycitysoutheast@vinnies.org.au)

**City Silence**

A weekly Holy Hour for young adults (18-35) will begin at St Mary's Cathedral from 4 February 2014, followed by dinner and drinks at Puntino Italian Restaurant (41 Crown St, Woolloomooloo). Join Catholic Youth Services every Tuesday from 6:30-7:30pm for Adoration, music and reflection with young people from across Sydney.

Young musicians are also needed to help with the music at City Silence. If you, or someone you know, can help on a rotating roster contact [events@catholicyouthservies.org](mailto:events@catholicyouthservies.org).

Ministry 4&5	St Raphael's THISWEEKEND		Mater Dei THISWEEKEND		
	January	5.00pm V	8.30am	6.15pm V	10.00am
Acolytes/SS	Vincent	Max	Sofi	Ray	
EMHC	Moya Ellen	Annie Rosie		Marguerite	
Readers			Louise Volunteer	Gail Luisa	
Altar	Volunteers	Volunteers	Luke	Amy, Alex	
Servers	Please	Please	Emma	Bianca	
Music	Michele	Julia	Jan	Kim	

Ministry 11 & 12	St Raphael's		Mater Dei		
	January	5.00pm V	8.30am	6.15pm V	10.00am
Acolytes / SS	Daniel	Michael	Michael	Graeme	
EMHC	Shirley Jan	Michelle Monica		Marguerite	
Readers			Ronnie Louise	Joan Jean	
Altar			Adam	Amy	
Servers			Maxine	Bianca	
Music	CD	Julia	Jan	Peter	

**EXCERPT FROM EVANGELII GAUDIUM**  
 (Apostolic Exhortation by Pope Francis, issued November 2013)

178. To believe in a Father who loves all men and women with an infinite love means realizing that "he thereby confers upon them an infinite dignity". To believe that the Son of God assumed our human flesh means that each human person has been taken up into the very heart of God. To believe that Jesus shed his blood for us removes any doubt about the boundless love which ennobles each human being. Our redemption has a social dimension because "God, in Christ, redeems not only the individual person, but also the social relations existing between men". To believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in everyone means realizing that he seeks to penetrate every human situation and all social bonds: "The Holy Spirit can be said to possess an infinite creativity, proper to the divine mind, which knows how to loosen the knots of human affairs, even the most complex and inscrutable". Evangelization is meant to cooperate with this liberating work of the Spirit. The very mystery of the Trinity reminds us that we have been created in the image of that divine communion, and so we cannot achieve fulfilment or salvation purely by our own efforts. From the heart of the Gospel we see the profound connection between evangelization and human advancement, which must necessarily find expression and develop in every work of evangelization. Accepting the first proclamation, which invites us to receive God's love and to love him in return with the very love which is his gift, brings forth in our lives and actions a primary and fundamental response: to desire, seek and protect the good of others.



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**a FUNNY**  
 Dear Santa,  
 This year I would like a fat bank account and a small body.  
 P.S. Please don't mix them up like you did last year!

**Life Ascending Australia**, a spiritual movement for Seniors, will meet in the Marian Hall, St Joseph's Church Oatley at 10 am on Friday, January 10. Visitors are welcome! Access is through the Church. Enquiries Ray Byers 9570 3507 [ray.byer@bigpond.net.au](mailto:ray.byer@bigpond.net.au)

The Fr Colin McKay Institute of Counselling, established in 1969, offers a course designed to develop skills in personal growth, communication, parenting and general counselling principles. Participants can learn new skills in dealing with daily personal challenges and the issues that arise within families, the school environment and in the workplace. It is conducted on Tuesday evenings within the school term between 7.30pm – 9.45pm at Holy Cross College, Victoria Road, Ryde commencing on Tuesday 4 February. For enquires please contact: Michael Hill - 9869 3774 or 0410 774 432; Carol Harding - 9639 0096 or 0411 022 478; Janelle Carlile - 0431 598 004 (Mon – Fri between 7.00 & 9.00 p.m.); Email: [counselling1969@gmail.com](mailto:counselling1969@gmail.com)

On the weekend we welcome Chiara Curcio into the family of the Catholic Church at St Raphael's. Congratulations to her parents Claudio & Margherita



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**SCHOOLS:**  
**Mater Dei Primary** 9546 7298  
 Principal: Mrs Jenni Payne  
**St Raphael's Primary** 9546 4898  
 Principal: Mrs Jo Stores