



St Benedict's Parish Newsletter



**Parish Priest
Church**

Father Tony Kearns
St Benedict's Church: cnr Izard Road and Everest Street, Khandallah (closed for refurbishment till approx Easter 2012)
St John's Church: 36 Ngatoto Street, Ngaio

**Sunday Liturgy
Weekday Liturgy**

Monday 6:00pm (Vigil) St John's 9:00am & 10:30 am St John's (until renovations at St Benedict's are completed)
Tuesday – Saturday 9:00 am Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion (Day Chapel)
9:00 am Mass (Friday preceded by Exposition at 8:30 am) (Day Chapel)

**Reconciliation
Presbytery & Day Chapel**

By appointment
3 Everest Street Tel (04) 479 7777
Khandallah Fax (04) 479 7632
Email stbens@xtra.co.nz Webpage: www.stbenedicts.org.nz

**Parish Office
St Benedict's School**

Mon, Thu, Fri 9:30am – 3:30pm Tel (04) 479 7777
50 Nicholson Road Tel (04) 479 6878

CHRISTMAS DAY

25 DECEMBER 2011

Readings for

**25th Dec
Midnight**

First Reading
Second Reading
Gospel

Isaiah 9:1-7
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14

**25th Dec
Mass during
the day**

First Reading
Second Reading
Gospel

Isaiah 52:7-10
Hebrews 1:1-6
John 1:1-18



THIS DAY A CHILD IS BORN

Saturday 24 December – 5.45pm/6pm – Carols/Family Mass – St John's Church
Saturday 24 December – 11.30pm/Midnight – Carols/Midnight Mass – St John's Church
Sunday 25 December – 9am – Christmas Morning Mass – St John's Church



We have come to the end of another year, and today celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ at a stable in Bethlehem; and born anew into our hearts.

2011 has been a very busy year for our parish. Along with the normal cycle of liturgical celebrations of Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Confirmation, First Eucharist, etc, we have greeted new members into God's family in the Sacrament of Baptism, and those moving into our parish from other parts of the city, country and world. We have celebrated the God who is Love by joining young couples in the Sacrament of Marriage, and prayed farewell to dear family and friends whom God has called to himself.

As well as all this and the other normal events of parish life, the Building Programme which we have been working on for the past few years is being brought to physical reality. In October 2011 we closed St Benedict's Church for renovation work and temporarily have moved major liturgical services to St John's Church in Ngaio.

All these experiences of God's love and care are happy because of the life and service of parishioners who give of their time, talents and resources for the benefit of our parish and the glory of God.

To all those who have helped enrich our lives over the past twelve months, may I express my personal thanks and ask God's richest blessings on you all for a happy and holy Christmas and a blessed 2012.

Give glory to God in the highest,
For a child is born to us,
It is Christ the Lord
Blessings

Jr Tony

'I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW' – Rev 21:5 BUILDING PROGRESS

Work on the St Benedict's site has finished for the year and the workmen are taking a well deserved break until early January.

Recent progress includes new windows above the sanctuary, and the installation of Metra panels (which were lifted in by crane through the roof) on the back wall. Photos detailing some of the work taking place are available on the website. www.stbenedicts.org.nz

PEWS: If you would like to buy a pew from St John's, you are invited to ring the Parish Office to register your interest. The cost would be in the region of \$50 to \$100 per pew. Obviously the pews would not be available until work at St Ben's is completed.



SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMME ENROLMENTS FOR 2012

Now is the time of year when we ask that parents who would like their child to be a part of the Sacramental Programme for 2012 take and complete one of the enrolment forms which are in the foyer of the Church, and return it to the Parish Office. The programme is preparation for children who have been baptised into the Catholic faith and have reached **YEAR 4 or above** at school.

Last Week's Collections

Clergy Support	597.80	Thank you
Parish Collection	1463.60	

THANKS

Thank you to all those who contributed to the recent cake stall in aid of the Sacred Heart Cathedral Music Fund, and also to those who bought raffle tickets for the lovely hand-knitted Christmas doll. The owner of the winning ticket was Felicia Stevens, one of the youngest members of our congregation! Thank you all so much. Judith



WALK BY FAITH

Walk by Faith – a three year adult distance learning course in Religious Studies. The course is for those interested in deepening their knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Scriptures, the Church, and growing in personal faith.

Enrolment forms are available in the church foyer. For further information, contact National Centre for Religious Studies, P O Box 12243, Wellington 6144; phone (04) 819 8380, email ncrsnz@clear.net.nz



PRAYER INTENTIONS

Please remember in your prayers all those who are sick, in hospital, or unwell, particularly Fr Geoff Broad, Fr Edmund Little, Lynn Szpetnar,

Angela Houston, Jean Page, Betty Prendergast, Phyllis Ponsford, Tom McGrail, Paul Delaney, Brian de Joux, Maurice O'Connor, Margaret Butterworth, Jim Webber, Therese Shields, David Shroff, Agnes Dummons, Margaret Maroney, and Christine Smith.

We ask you to pray also for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently, especially John Revell, and for all those whose anniversaries occur at this time, especially Anne O'Donnell, George George, Irene George, Jim Hole, and Peter Crook; prayers are also asked for a special intention for Karen Crosby.

The Parish Prayer Group is always available to pray for your special intentions. A list of contact phone numbers is on the notice boards in both churches.

NZ CATHOLIC ON SALE THIS WEEKEND \$3 PER COPY

Headlines from the December 25th issue of NZ Catholic:

- Catholic man recognised for inspirational teaching
- many more pictures from NZ Catholic schools art competition
- 2011 reviewed in photos and text
- Christmas holiday features

The next issue of NZ Catholic will be published on January 29.



The Joy of Flowers

Especially when in honour of our God!

We all love flowers and some of us wonder just how florists arrange them with such flair, but nothing is hard when you know how! To this end, the parish is looking at arranging a series of flower workshops starting in early or mid March. The workshops will be guided by an experienced florist who also regularly adorns her own parish church.

It is hoped that by the end of the workshops you will have the confidence to arrange flowers with form and artistry, be it at home or for larger areas.

However please note: the workshop will not obligate you to do the church flowers.

If you would like to register an interest in taking part in some or all of our workshops, please contact Natalie Brockie 973 5553, or Margie Crook on 479 7777, so we can be in touch with you about dates and any materials that may be needed.

Details of services at St John's Church for the remainder of December and during January may be found in the green 'Christmas Season 2011' leaflets at the back of the church.

MISSION FAIR

The Annual Mission Fair of the Missionary Sisters of St. Peter Claver will be held on Saturday 25 February 2012 from 10am to 1pm at St. Francis de Sales Church Hall and grounds, 173 Clyde Street, Island Bay. Goods for the Fair & donations would be greatly appreciated. Goods can be posted to Missionary Sisters of St. Peter Claver, 1 Mersey Street, P. O. Box 7312, Wellington South. We will be most grateful for your support to make the Mission Fair successful to help the missionaries and the people they serve.

KHANDALLAH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Parishioners are invited to attend the Ordination and Induction of the Rev Ryhan Prasad on Tuesday 24 January 2012 at 7.30pm at Khandallah Presbyterian Church, Ganges Road.

The Parish offers congratulations to Dermot Byrne on becoming a Justice of the Peace earlier this week.



Wanted: Items for an Art and Craft Fair

10 March 2012 at St Catherine's College

Do you have a spare piece of Art or Craft you might donate to us? The Lions Club of Wellington Host & the PTA of St Catherine's College, Kilbirnie, will be selling both new items & items in good condition which have already been owned. Ethnic items most welcome! In supporting this venture you are supporting the learning of our emerging adults. Phone 388-5887 for collection



MARIST YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

The Marist Young Adult Ministry situated at the Grove, 7 Birch St, Lower Hutt, has two vacancies left for Young Adult men (20-35 years of age) who are seeking the experience of living in a Christian community rather than a flatting situation.

Applications may be made to Br Kieran and Br Doug by email: kieranfenn@gmail.com or brdougfms@gmail.com

Holy Land pilgrimage

Enquiries are invited for a Holy Land pilgrimage in September 2012, led by Pat McCarthy, former editor of *NZ Catholic*, and with Bishop Colin Campbell of Dunedin as chaplain.

The 16-day pilgrimage will visit the holy places in Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem and around the Sea of Galilee. For a free brochure, ring Pat on (09) 480-4463 or email him on contact@seetheholyland.net.

You can also see the holy places on Pat's website, www.seetheholyland.net

OTAGO UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

Otago University is offering courses in Theology and Religion by distance learning. Brochures relating to two courses are available from the back of the church.

CARITAS

The summer issue of the Caritas magazine Update is now available at the back of St John's Church and parishioners are invited to take a copy. Caritas would like to take this opportunity to thank parishioners for their generous support of Caritas appeals, and to wish them a peaceful and joyful Christmas and a very happy New Year.

Baby sitter available

Hi, I'm Moragh Graham, and in December 2012 I am travelling to Vietnam on a World Challenge expedition. During our time there we spend 2 weeks staying and helping in a local village and also go on projects working with groups of orphans and other needy people.

As part of the philosophy of this trip we are encouraged to raise the majority of the funds ourselves.

If you are needing a reliable and enthusiastic baby sitter over the coming Christmas period (and beyond), either during the day or evening, please contact me. I am 15 years old, a past student at St Ben's and involved in the parish community.

Please call me on 479 8582.

Sacred Heart School Invercargill 50th Jubilee 2nd - 4th November 2012

Come join us to celebrate 50 years of education at Sacred Heart School.

Saturday 2nd November - Meet and Greet for ex-pupils

Saturday afternoon Roll Call and Photos for Ex-pupils

Sunday Mass followed by Devonshire Tea School Fair

Please register your interest in attending by e-mailing jubilee@shsinv.school.nz Please pass this information on to other family members and ex-pupils/ staff that you know maybe interested in attending.

POMPALLIER HOKIANGA TRUST

Should you be visiting Northland during the holidays, you are invited to visit Totara Point, the site of the first official Mass in this country (where the annual Mass on Sunday 8 January 2012 will be celebrated at 11am), and Motuti, where Bishop Pompallier's remains are interred in St Mary's Church. The church is open all day. The Pompallier Hokianga Trust has the mission of preserving and promoting the memory of Bishop Pompallier as the first Bishop of Aotearoa New Zealand and his role in found the Catholic church here and in the Pacific.

Seeing your life through the lens of the gospels Luke 2:1-14

❖ A child is born and the heavens break into song. Remember the celebrations you have witnessed at the birth of a child.

❖ This was no ordinary child. It is the birth of the Son of God. In order to take in the implications of that, we can do well to recall Meister Eckhart's reflection and ask ourselves how the birth of Jesus takes place in us:

What good is it to me
if the eternal birth of the divine Son
takes place unceasingly
but does not take place
within myself ?

And what good is it to me
if Mary is full of grace
and if I am not also full of grace?

❖ Something great was happening in most inauspicious circumstances. Perhaps you can recall an important development in your life that started in a very humble way.

❖ The shepherds were both frightened and thrilled. Good news can sometimes be terrifying. Pregnancy and the birth of a child can give rise to both feelings. Hopefully the joy and wonder at new life outweigh the fear and apprehension. What has been your experience?

John Byrne OSA

Questions people ask

Q. Do we know for certain that Jesus was born on 25 December?

A. We have no way of knowing the actual date. Two reasons are given for the selection of this date. It took over from the Roman feast of the Unconquered Sun at the winter solstice. Christians decided to celebrate the birth of Jesus as the light of God who came to conquer the darkness of sin. The second reason is that it is nine months after the feast of the Annunciation and the conception of Jesus. The Annunciation was an older feast than Christmas. It was celebrated on 25 March to connect with the Jewish tradition that this was the first day of creation and the day when Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Thus the conception of Jesus was linked with creation and sacrificial death.

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap



The Deep End The X Factor

Some people may not acknowledge today as Christ's Day, that He is the X - Factor of the X-Mass scene. This world is crying out for Light, for Hope, for Joy, for Love and today we celebrate that God is present with us in this world: EMMANUEL. We must allow that Love to penetrate our hearts and celebrate with our family and friends the Joy that lives amongst us. And when we have finished celebrating the X Factor of Christmas, remember that then the real work of Christmas begins:

When the song of the angels is stilled.
When the star in the sky is gone.
When the kings and princes are home.
When the shepherds are back with their flocks.
The work of Christmas begins;
to find the lost;
to heal the broken;
to feed the hungry;
to release the prisoner;
to rebuild the nations;
to bring peace among people;
to make music in the heart. Howard Thurman
Jane Mellett

Week beginning Sunday, 1 January 2012

**Seeing your life through the lens of the gospels
Luke 2:16-21**

- ❖ The story tells us that the shepherds helped Mary to realise the significance of the child born to her. She treasured their words and pondered their meaning. Who have been the people who have helped you to understand the meaning of significant events in your life? Remember them gratefully.
- ❖ We are told that Mary 'pondered these things in her heart'. What part has prayerful reflection on life played for you? How has it been helpful to you in deepening your appreciation for the gift of life?
- ❖ When the shepherds realised that they had been witnesses to a wonderful manifestation of God's love for his people they glorified and praised God. Recall ways in which you have been made aware of God's love for you. How have you expressed your gratitude?

John Byrne OSA

Questions people ask

Q. While I do have devotion to Mary, I hesitate at calling her the Mother of God. How could any human being be the mother of God who existed long before her?

A. A little history lesson might help. Nestorians claimed that Jesus was only human, not divine, when born of Mary and that divine powers were somehow bestowed on him later in life. The Council of Ephesus, AD 431, rejected this teaching and declared that Jesus, born of Mary, was not only human but truly divine at all times. As a consequence, Mary can be called Mother of God, not from all eternity, but as his human body was formed in her womb. It is said that, when the people of Ephesus heard the Council's declaration, they danced around chanting 'Holy Mary, Mother of God' and this was the beginning of the second half of the Hail Mary.

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap

**The Deep End
Mary our model**

The words of today's First Reading are familiar to us as the blessing often used at the end of Mass: 'May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace.'

The image of God 'uncovering his face' is often used as a way of describing how God reveals himself to us. As Irish Archbishop Diarmuid Martin puts it: 'God uncovers his face in Jesus Christ who becomes God with us and does so in such a remarkable manner, in the humility and obscurity of his birth, far away from all signs and trappings of earthly power and wealth.'

Today, the first day of a new year, we reflect on Mary. Mary was the first one to whom God 'uncovered his face' and revealed the coming of Jesus. In today's Gospel we see her continue to accept God's will and to face the future.

I love the image of Mary 'treasuring' and 'pondering'. Like any pregnant woman, Mary marvelled at the new life growing inside her, all the while pondering

God's mysterious plan. And now that her son has arrived, strangers are hurrying to see him and telling her great things about him.

Mary is in the spotlight here for just one short sentence 'As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart.' The events of Jesus' arrival would be forever ingrained in her heart, and she must have reflected back on these special days many times as Jesus' life unfolded.

Let's make a new start. Let us take time to listen, to treasure and to ponder. May the Lord bless you and keep you, as you enter a new year.

Triona Doherty

The God Who Is Revealed in Christmas

'Christmas is God's answer to human longing, God's response to the centuries of prayers that lay hidden in our groaning, our sighs, our frustrations, and our religious efforts, each of them a plea, mostly silent, for a divine intervention, all of them asking God to come and rid the world of injustice and our hearts of loneliness and heartache.

'But God's answer didn't exactly meet our expectations, even as it surpassed them. What was born with Jesus' birth and what still lies seemingly helpless in mangers all around the world wasn't exactly what the world expected. Why? Why would God choose to be born into the world in this way?

'The power of God revealed in Christmas is the power of a baby, nothing more, nothing less: innocence, gentleness, helplessness, a vulnerability that can soften hearts, invite in, have us hush our voices, teach us patience, and call forth what's best in us.

'We have always been slow to understand this; we want our messiahs to possess more immediate power. But that's not the Christmas story, nor the power revealed in it. An infant lying in the straw in Bethlehem didn't outgun anyone. He just lay there, waiting for anyone, good or bad, to come to him, see his helplessness, feel a tug at his or her heart strings, and then gently try to coax a smile or a word out of him. That's still how God meets us.'

Fr Ron Rolheiser

Origin of the Crib

In 1223 St Francis of Assisi celebrated Christmas in the small town of Greccio in Italy. On that occasion, St Francis had people come to Midnight Mass in a cave where there was an ox and an ass and a manger filled with straw. And the story went around that the Christ child appeared in the straw and Francis held the Babe of Bethlehem in his arms.



*What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?*



*If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb.*

*If I were a Wise Man
I would do my part*



*Yet what can I give Him?
I give Him my heart.*

Christina Rossetti

