

PARISHES OF ST PETER, AND ST. FERGUS BULLETIN
WEDNESDAY 25 DECEMBER 2024: THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION



St. Peter's R.C. Church
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Parish Priest: Rev. Thomas John

Sunday Mass:

St. Peter's 4.00pm (Sat) & 10.00 am, St. Fergus' 6pm (Sat) & 11.30 am

Weekday Mass: St Peter's - Tue, Thu & Sat; St Fergus – Mon, Wed & Fri

Confessions: St Peter's 3.15-3.50pm, St Fergus' 5.20-5.50pm; and on request

Today we reflect on the Christmas Crib

In the first place I extend my warmest Christmas wishes to you and your loved ones.

After four weeks of waiting and preparation, finally the day has come for us to rejoice and celebrate. In our fast-changing world, the mystery of Christmas challenges us to welcome Jesus the new-born, into the manger of our own inmost souls. Jesus, the Son of God, the Emmanuel, the Prince of Peace is here with us today and forever and expresses the desire to come into our lives. Jesus says, "He who welcomes me welcomes him who sent me (Mt 10:40)." And so, hope, peace, joy and love are born again among us. Each one of us is challenged to ask, 'What does the Christmas message mean to me personally today.' The answer is found in the manger. It was in 1223, St Francis of Assisi created history's first nativity scene in Greccio, a small village in Italy. He wanted to bring to life the memory of that babe born in Bethlehem in order that ordinary people could understand the story of the birth of Jesus. He set up a stable scene with real people and animals.

It was a tradition in the past that every family had a crib at home. It was made by parents with the help of children as they had shown great interest in having one at home. This tradition, however, has gradually disappeared over the years. But it is possible for us to bring back this glorious tradition to encourage our younger generation to instil hope and faith in them. What do we see in the manger? It is not only a little babe surrounded by his parents and animals but also, we all know from our experience and faith that this little babe is the most powerful God in history – the God sent Son into our midst. Today as you participate in the mass, please visit the crib with your family and say a small prayer of gratitude to God and ask the little babe to bless you and your dear ones. When we look at the manger the first feeling should be one of joy. It is evident in the words of the angel, "I am here to give you good news, great joy for all people. Today a Saviour has been born to you in David's town; he is the Messiah and the Lord" (Lk 2:10-11). So, Jesus' birth is a simple and joyful proclamation of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. So, he has come to encounter each of us in our daily lives. It is scripture based because we read in St Luke's Gospel (2:7) 'Mary gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.' When we come together for the Christmas mass we notice the altar has been beautifully decorated and a gorgeous crib set at a prominent place in the Church. As we celebrate the Christmas Mass we experience an indescribable joy in the presence of this new born because there is a bond between the incarnation of the Son of God and the Eucharist. From the words of the angel that, "I am here to give you good news, great joy for all people" it is clear that the crib is a means of evangelization; we all need to share this



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good news with others. When we share it, our joy is doubled. This in turn will strengthen our faith. The crib is also a sign of God's love: we read in John's Gospel 3:16, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...." Here in the crib we find the Creator of the universe humbled himself to take up our human nature. It encourages to follow him along the path of humility, poverty, self-denial and to take up our daily crosses in faith. It challenges us to meet him and serve him by showing mercy to those of our brothers and sisters in greatest need. The two great characters of the nativity scene are Joseph and Mary. Their obedience, humility and trust in God encourage us to have devotion to them and put God's words into practice.

WORDS OF GRATITUDE: Dear brothers and sisters we have come almost to the end of the year 2024. I sincerely thank each of you for all your help and all what you have been to this parish. It is possible to have a parish when its members participate in the liturgical celebrations and extend their cooperation to all the activities of the parish life. And our experience has been one of love for the parish, collaboration and mutual support. All of us as a parish have tried to meet some of our goals and we did achieve some, however, there are some areas we still need to work together for betterment. As we begin the new year we have many challenges ahead to face including increase in membership, participation of more parents and children in parish activities, spiritual programmes, financial stability and more. When we reflect back it has been a year of blessing for us in spite of many setbacks, hardships, struggles, and sicknesses some of us might have had to face. Let us as parishioners of St Peter and St Fergus look forward to working together. May baby Jesus fill our hearts with his hope, peace, joy, and love.

Mass this week: Thursday 26th & Friday 27th no mass

Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th: Mass as usual in both parishes – Feast of the Holy Family – Inauguration of the Jubilee Year 2025

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM ALL AT ST PETER & ST FERGUS

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 THE WORSHIP OF THE WISE MEN

CLOSE THE DOOR OF HATE AND VIOLENCE

OPEN THE DOOR OF LOVE OVER ALL 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 THE CHRISTMAS

EVENING BRING US TO OUR BEDS WITH GRATEFUL THOUGHTS,

FORGIVING AND FORGIVEN

FOR JESUS SAKE

AMEN