

### With Thanks and A New Year's Blessing

Our Christmas celebrations were a wonderful testimony of faith and joy. They surely touched the great numbers who attended. I want to express my gratitude to those who prepared the church by cleaning it, those who decorated the church and made it so beautiful and fitting for our celebration; those who served on the altar, the acolytes, ministers of the word of God and the Eucharist. The singers and musicians did us proud and helped everyone participate fully in the liturgy. The Parish staff and volunteers worked very well behind the scenes. I want to thank all those who attended and entered into the Christmas Feast of the Infant Jesus and his mother the Blessed Virgin Mary to ensure that everything worked out well.

I especially want to thank everyone for their prayer, good wishes and gifts to our Carmelite Community. We are very appreciative of your love and support.

Along with Frs Tadgh, John Pallipaddan and John Follent, I wish you health, wellbeing and every blessing for 2018. May it be a great year for you, your family and our parish:

*Deep peace of the Son of God to you,  
Who, swift as the wave and pervasive as the air,  
Quiet as the earth and shining as a star,  
Breathes into us his peace and his Spirit  
Deep peace of the Son of God to you.*

—A Celtic Blessing

### Annual Leave

I am taking part of my annual leave from 3 January and will be back on duty on 20 January. In my absence we welcome Fr Justin Paeck, a young Korean Carmelite who has served in Sydney for five years. I am sure you will appreciate his lively and friendly presence.

—*Blessings, Fr Greg*

## Papal Reflections on Christmas and our World Today

"I am also repeatedly struck by the Gospel writer's almost casual remark that there was no room for them at the inn. Inevitably the question arises, what would happen if Mary and Joseph were to knock at my door. Would there be room for them? And then it occurs to us that Saint John takes up this seemingly chance comment about the lack of room at the inn, which drove the Holy Family into the stable; he explores it more deeply and arrives at the heart of the matter when he writes: "he came to his own home, and his own people received him not" (Jn 1:11). The great moral question of our attitude towards the homeless, towards refugees and migrants, takes on a deeper dimension: do we really have room for God when he seeks to enter under our roof? Do we have time and space for him? Do we not actually turn away God himself? We begin to do so when we have no time for God."

*Pope Benedict XVI, preaching on his last Christmas Mass as Pope, 2012*

In Bethlehem, Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary. He was born, not by the will of man, but by the gift of the love of God our Father, who "so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

This event is renewed today in the Church, a pilgrim in time. For the faith of the Christian people relives in the Christmas liturgy the mystery of the God who comes, who assumes our mortal human flesh, and who becomes lowly and poor in order to save us. And this moves us deeply, for great is the tenderness of our Father.

Today, as the winds of war are blowing in our world and an outdated model of development continues to produce human, societal and environmental decline, Christmas invites us to focus on the sign of the Child and to recognize him in the faces of little children, especially those for whom, like Jesus, "there is no place in the inn" (Lk 2:7).

We see Jesus in the children worldwide wherever peace and security are threatened by the danger of tensions and new conflicts. We see Jesus in the children of unemployed parents who struggle to offer their children a secure and peaceful future. And in those whose childhood has been robbed. We see Jesus in the many children forced to leave their countries to travel alone in inhuman conditions and who become an easy target for human traffickers. Through their eyes we see the drama of all those forced to emigrate and risk their lives to face exhausting journeys that end at times in tragedy. Jesus knows well the pain of not being welcomed and how hard it is not to have a place to lay one's head. May our hearts not be closed as they were in the homes of Bethlehem.

*Pope Francis, Urbi et Orbi Blessing, Christmas Day 2017*

Important Notice

### IMPORTANT NOTICE CHANGE TO SATURDAY VIGIL MASS AND CONFESSION TIMES

Following the recent survey of Mass attendees at the **Saturday Vigil Mass**, I have decided to change the start time of this Mass to **6pm**. Due to the change of Mass time, Saturday evening **confessions** will be held from **5pm until 5.30pm**. This change will start from **Saturday 13th January**. Also, effective immediately when there is a **public holiday**, there will not be two morning Masses. We will have only **one morning Mass at 8.30am—Fr. Greg**



**PILGRIM STATUE:** This week in the home of Mrs Cecelia Khin Si; 12/86 Railway Pde, Baywsater. Ph: 0430 148 090.

### Parish Prayer Concerns

**Recently Deceased:** Fr James McCaffrey OCD and Tyrone Nathanielsz;

**Deceased:** Tan Duy Nguyen, Deceased members of Peters family and Lawrence Ferguson;

**Anniversaries:** Fr Hubert Doyle OCD and Josie Martella;

**The Sick of the Parish:** Darryl Miranda, Cecil Parnell and all the sick who are in need of our prayers.

*"For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord."*



### PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

The parish office and parish centre will be closed from **Friday 22nd December, 2017 and reopen on Monday 22nd January, 2018.**

The phone answering machine will be attended

regularly, but in an emergency, please call the priory directly on 9276 8497.