



Parishes of Mater Dei Blakehurst & St Raphael's South Hurstville

The Epiphany of the Lord *Bulletin*

7th Jan 2024

Entrance Antiphon : Cf Malachi 3:1; 1 Chr 29:12

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.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 71:1-2. 7-8.

(R.) Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

1. O God, give your judgement to the king, to a king's son your justice, that he may judge your people in justice and your poor in right judgement. (R.)
2. 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.)
3. 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.)
4. 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: Ephesians 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 Matthew 2:2

Alleluia, alleluia!

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

Gospel : Matthew 2:1-12

We have come from the East to worship the king.

Communion Antiphon: Cf Matthew 2:2

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

REFLECTION by Greg Sunter

The gospel of Mark, the first of the four canonical gospels to be written, does not bother at all with the question of the birth of Jesus. Written some ten or more years later, the gospels of Luke and Matthew both present a version of the circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus. The gospel of John, written later still, also avoids details of Jesus' birth. The two accounts of the infancy that we do have from the gospels tell very different stories because they have each been used to place the rest of the gospel in a particular context. Unfortunately, the two stories have been mashed together so much that we now have one notion of the Christmas story that is a poor amalgam of the two unique narratives.

In the gospel of Luke, Joseph and Mary are living in Nazareth and travel to Bethlehem and are forced to give birth out in a field because there is no room at the only inn in Bethlehem. The ones who bear witness to the birth in this account are shepherds – some of the lowest of the low – as the gospel of Luke identifies Jesus as having a preferential option for the lowly ones. In the gospel of Matthew, Joseph and Mary are living in Bethlehem and give birth in their own house. They later flee to Egypt and then settle in Nazareth. The two towns need to be included in both accounts because they are named in some of the ancient prophecies about the Messiah. In the gospel of Matthew, the witnesses to the birth are wise men, dignitaries from another land. The Matthew writer wants to emphasise the 'kingship' of Jesus and it is fitting that foreign dignitaries present gifts on the birth of a king. The two stories deserve to be dealt with uniquely and should be unravelled from the muddled, entwined version that dominates our Christmas imagery.

Historical Context – The Magi

In some translations, the 'wise men' of this passage are referred to as 'Magi'. Magi was the name given to the Persian priestly caste. Persia (now, Iran) lies to the east of Israel. These wise men are also sometimes portrayed as astrologers, but that is largely because of the reference 'We saw his star as it rose'. It is interesting that the passage describes 'some' wise men; tradition has developed a specific number of three – based on the three gifts presented. These anonymous (and purely literary) figures have been given names and their 'relics' lie in honour beneath the Cathedral of Cologne.

Have you thought? – Epiphany

The feast of the Epiphany celebrates the revelation of Jesus to humankind. The wise men are the representatives of humanity bearing witness to this revelation. However, the Epiphany celebrates the revelation of Jesus as not only the Messiah of Israel but the Saviour of the whole world. Interestingly, in this gospel that emphasises the 'Jewish-ness' of Jesus, the witnesses to the birth are gentiles from a foreign land. Their inclusion is a powerful declaration that the revelation of Jesus is for all people. Regardless of the liturgical year, this reading is always used on the feast of the Epiphany to celebrate this pivotal moment.

Gospel Focus – Going home

The wise men, or Magi, are warned in a dream not to go back to Herod and they go home by a different way. How could they do anything but go home another way – indeed, go home as different people? They are changed by their encounter with the child Jesus and they go home a different way; in a different state; in a whole different frame of mind. When we genuinely encounter Jesus – in scripture, in life, in prayer, in ourselves – then we cannot go home the same way; we must go home by a different way as the Magi did.


MASS TIMES		
	St Raphael Church	Mater Dei Church
Tues		9:15am Mass
Wed		9:15am Mass
Thurs	No 9:15am Mass	No 9:15am Mass
Friday	7:30pm Adoration resumes 2 Feb 2024	9:15am Mass
Sat	4:30pm Reconciliation 5:00pm Vigil Mass	No Vigil Mass during School Holidays. Next mass is on 17th Feb 2024.
Sunday	8:00am Mass	10:00am Mass

"Whatever we have can bear fruit if we give it away – that is what Jesus wants to tell us – and it does not matter whether it is great or small. The Lord does great things with our littleness." - Pope Francis

Mater Dei & St Raphael's Parish Calendar 2024

31-01-2024	Schools re-open	MD & SR
13-02-2024	Mater Dei Council meeting 7:00pm	MD
14-02-2024	Ash Wednesday. Mass at SR: 6:30am & 11:30am. MD: 9:15am & 7pm	MD & SR
15-02-2024	St Raphael Council Meeting 7:00pm	SR
24-03-2024	Palm Sunday	MD & SR
29-03-2024	Good Friday	MD & SR
31-03-2024	Easter Sunday	MD & SR

6/7th Jan (1st Sun)	St. Raphael's		Mater Dei	
	5:00pm	8.00am		10.00am
Acolytes	Greg Driver	Gary C.	No Vigil Mass	Paul Watson
EMOHC	Susi	Volunteer		
Readers	Volunteers	Volunteers		Gail Abbott Luisa Galea
13th /14th Jan (2nd Sun)	St. Raphael's		Mater Dei	
	4:30pm	8.00am		10.00am
Acolytes	Greg Driver	Carl Pavia	No Vigil Mass	Volunteer
EMOHC	Gail D.	Ronnie C.		
Readers	Volunteers	Volunteers		Joan Hanson Jean Dorahy

 There will be morning tea in Raphael's Church hall after the 8:00am mass this Sunday

HOMILY by Fr Geoffrey Plant
Here is the link to Sunday's homily, the Epiphany of the Lord Year B . To watch the homily on YouTube, [click here](#). To access the text of the homily in PDF format, [click here](#).

Recently Deceased: Pat Masson

Pray for good health of : Yvonne Amy, Gisselle Clark (Oscuro), Joan Rounds, Graeme Dorahy, Anne Lo, Sunga Family, Adele Shehata, Anna Liza Torres Zapata.

Pray for the deceased: Rafael Monserrat, George, Joan & John Beater; Mary & Patrick Derrig, Souls of all the departed Legionaries and their Families. Meri Beljo, Mary Toohey, Antonius Widjaja, Fr Isidore, Jeffrey Bishop, Fr Kennedy, Fr Kerr, all priests, Holy Souls in purgatory.

ST MICHAEL'S CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP
Will resume on Thursday 1st February 2024 at 6:30pm.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK (WWCC)
All parishioners who undertake ministries where children are involved are required to procure a WWCC. It is free for volunteers. **Ministries that require a WWCC:** Parish Secretaries, Youth ministers, workers or leaders; Pastoral Associates; Sacramental coordinators; Catechists in state schools; Children's liturgy Coordinators; Children's Choir Ministry Leaders; Acolytes and Senior Altar Servers; Eucharistic Ministers. If you need help, please contact the Safeguarding Officer, Michael Fernandes on 0437 517 758.

ROSARY	
St Raphael's Church	Mater Dei Church
Mondays 7:30 pm Rosary & Adoration will resume on 15 January 2024. ----- Fri night 7.30pm Adoration will resume on 2nd Feb 2024	Sunday 9:30am before the 10am mass (Will Resume in Feb 2024)

Archdiocese safeguarding website:
<https://www.sydneycatholic.org/safeguarding-and-child-protection/>

Safeguarding Policy is displayed in both the Churches' entrances/foyers.

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND		
TYPE	St Raphael's	Mater Dei
First	546.00	163.35
Second: loose	2024.00	441.70
Envelopes	560.00	550.00

Mater Dei Home Rosary
Rosary will resume on the 6th Feb 2024

PARISH DIRECTORY
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Three Wise Men
While they were talking about the story of the three wise men, a woman asked her parish priest this question, "Do you know why God gave the star to the wise men?" When he professed his ignorance, she told him: "God knows men are too proud to ask directions. If there had been three wise women instead of three wise men, they would have asked for directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole, and given some practical gifts!"

