

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Weekend of 24/25 December 2023

First Reading: Is 52: 7-10 Second Reading: Heb 1: 1-6 Gospel: Jn 1: 1-18

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Man alter'd was by sin from man to beast;
Beast's food is hay, hay is all mortal flesh;
Now God is flesh, and lies in manger press'd,
As hay the brutest sinner to refresh:
Oh happy field wherein this fodder grew,
Whose taste doth us from beasts to men renew!

This is the last stanza of a poem called 'The Nativity of Christ' written in the 16th century by a Jesuit Priest Robert Southwell. I think it speaks profoundly to the humility and love of God. Let's unpack it a little.

Let's start with the first line. It says, that sin had altered humanity in a way that made us less of what we were. We know that at the entry of sin, in the book of Genesis, humanity lost its original innocence but the poem refers to it as an *animalistic-like* state. When we think about it for a second the word 'beast' makes sense because our lowest reflections of humanity is seen when we lose control of our cognitive functions and act out of instinct like a beast, think of a drunk person or a drugged person.

But then it goes on to say in the second line that the animal's normal food, which is hay, is like the mortal sinful flesh of humanity, which we know entices and tempts us all the time. When we fall to the temptations of the mortal flesh, it's like we're eating of the food of animals, we are not ourselves, or at least who we are meant to be.

The third line says that God has taken on this flesh and lies in a manger, a food trough for animals. And then my favourite line says, "As hay the brutest sinner to refresh" meaning that in God's great humility, the reach and concern he has for the lowest reflections of human sinfulness and brokenness is still held within God's care. Redemption is for all.

The depth to which our God has stooped down to reach us and meet us is so low and profound that no one is exempt from God mercy and concern. We all come from different stories in life and maybe we feel weighed down by our mistakes and actions but Christmas is for all of us, because Christ is for all of you.

May this season of Christmas be a time that we receive again of Jesus in renewal that we may rise to new heights as humans, who are created in the image and likeness of love.

The Week Ahead

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which our communities celebrate liturgies and live out our faith. We pay respects to leaders past, present and emerging. May their example of stewardship be reflected in our lives.

Monday, 25 December

♦ CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

- ♦ Christmas Day Monday 25th Dec
- ♦ 6:30am Stella Maris, Maroochydore
- ♦ 7:30am St Peter's, Coolool
- ♦ 9am Stella Maris, Maroochydore
- ♦ 9:30am St Mary's, Buderim

Tuesday, 26 December

- ♦ NO MASS

Wednesday, 27 December

- ♦ NO MASS

Thursday, 28 December

- ♦ Mass (8.30am, St Peter's Church)
- ♦ St Vincent de Paul Society Meeting (Coolool)
- ♦ 2pm Rosary & Divine Mercy (Stella Maris)

Friday, 29 December

- ♦ Mass (9am, Stella Maris Church)
- ♦ Community Meal for the Homeless, Vulnerable and Disadvantaged (6pm, Stella Maris)

Saturday, 30 December

- ♦ Reconciliation 8.30am to 9.30am (Stella Maris)
- ♦ Vigil Mass (4.30pm, St Peter's Church)
- ♦ Vigil Mass (6.00pm, Stella Maris Church)

Sunday, 31 December

The HOLY FAMILY of Jesus Mary and Joseph

- ♦ Mass (6.30am, Stella Maris Church)
- ♦ Mass (7.30am, St Peter's Church)
- ♦ Mass (8am, St Catherine of Siena Church)
- ♦ Mass (9am Stella Maris) with Children's Church
- ♦ Mass (9.30am, St Mary's Church)
- ♦ Mass (5pm, Stella Maris Church)

VINNIES HAMPERS

Congratulations to Vinnies for giving away xxx hampers over the weekend. We thank them for the work they do in the local area.



OFFICE CLOSURE

A reminder that the Office will be closed from the end of Friday 22nd of December and will reopen on the 8th of January 2023. If you would like to make contact with the priests simply send an email to admin.suncoast@bne.catholic.net.au or ring the Parish Emergency Phone.

WELCOME ONE AND ALL

Around about this time of the year, we have visitors from all around the world. We want to take the time to welcome each and every one of you. We hope that your time with us helps to facilitate a renewed encounter with the living God born to us in these days.