

ST MARTHA'S PARISH STRATHFIELD

Parish Priest: Father John Hayes
Assistant Priest: Father Liem Duong

Administration Coordinator: Nicolle Mazzaferro (Mon, Tues & Thurs) admin@stmarthas.org.au

Administration Support: Larissa Argiro (Friday) office@stmarthas.org.au
Sacramental Coordinator: Linda Praum sc@stmarthas.org.au

Safeguarding Officer: Dianne Dawson & Helen Williamson safeguarding@stmarthas.org.au

Parish Ministries Coordinator: Helen Williamson Music Ministry: Marcella Ayoub & Marion Li Children's Liturgy Coordinator: Alannah Hickry Plenary Council Ambassador: Helena O'Neil

'We have come from the East to worship the King'... Matthew 2

70 Homebush Rd Strathfield NSW 2135

Phone: 9746 6131 Fax: 9764 3040

Email: office@stmarthas.org.au

Website: www.stmarthas.org.au

Parish Office Hours:

Mon, Tues & Thurs 9am-5pm & Fridays 9am-3pm



St Martha's School: 9764 1184

Email: info@stmstrathfield.catholic.edu.au

Principal: Carolyn Parsell

Assist Principal: Steven Belcastro

Acting REC: Cindy Ronzini

THE PARISH OF ST MARTHA'S ACKNOWLEDGES THE WANGUL PEOPLE AS THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND ON WHICH THE CHURCH IS BUILT

Vision:

Welcoming
Eucharistic
Transformed by the Word
Full of Grace
Proclaiming Good News



Mission:

Alive with the Spirit
Inspired by St Martha
We Celebrate & Witness
God's love
Using our Gifts & Talents



MASS TIMES

Tuesday: 7.30am Wednesday: 9.10am Thursday: 9.10am Friday: 9.10am

Saturday: 9.10am, 5pm Vigil Mass **Sunday:** 8.00am; 10.00am & 6.00pm

1st Saturday of every month:

8.30am Adoration followed by Mass at 9.10am.

Divine Mercy Prayers recited every Thursday after 9.10am mass. We welcome and encourage you to come along.



ACU Strathfield Campus celebrates Mass every Wednesday and Friday at 12:00pm. The Campus is located 25A Barker Road, Strathfield. Everyone is welcome.

RECONCILIATION:

Saturday after 9.10am Mass or by appointment.

BAPTISM:

2nd & 4th Sundays of the month at 11.00am
Please introduce yourself to Father after Mass to request a Baptism
Information pack. Contact the Parish office for more information.

MARRIAGES: By appointment only. (6 months' notice is required).

ROSARY:

Tuesday & Saturday after morning Mass
Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 8.30am
7.30pm on Fridays in conjunction with Marian Movement of Priests
Cenacle and Divine Mercy Chaplet.

ST MARTHA'S PRAYER GROUP:

Mondays 10.30am – 11.30am (during the school term only)

PLAYGROUP:

St Martha's Primary School Playgroup is a great opportunity for children aged 0 to 5 years to enjoy some books and craft activities and get to know each other. From 8.50am to 10.00am in the upstairs school hall.

Playgroup runs every Monday during the <u>school term only</u>. Contact: <u>elena.razzoli@syd.catholic.edu.au</u>



SAFE GUARDING



A reminder to parents that the Notice-Board located at the side entrance contains various resources for children regarding Safeguarding.

A MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY.
Child sexual abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with crimes are the police.

contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office at (02) 9390 5810 or safeguardingenguiries@sydneycatholic.org
You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and

If you, or anyone you know, have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can

You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and guidance. The Archdiocese has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.

Commitment Statement

The Archdiocese of Sydney is wholly committed to ensuring the safety, well-being and dignity of all Children and Adults at Risk, and it acknowledges its important legal, moral and spiritualresponsibility to create a safe and nurturing environment for Children and Adults.



Please be aware that if you "TAG" St Martha's in photos on your Facebook page, the images also appear on an "unofficial" St Martha's Facebook page. This "unofficial" page was created automatically by Facebook and is not controlled by St Martha's. We kindly remind you to take care when uploading photos of any children without parent consent.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

IF YOU PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING MINISTRIES YOU ARE REQUIRED TO <u>SIGN IN</u> - ACOLYTES; READERS; EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS; CHOIR; CHILDREN'S LITURGY (LEADERS & CHILDREN) & SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM (LEADERS & CHILDREN). SIGN IN FOLDERS ARE KEPT IN THE SACRISTY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.

ALTAR SERVERS ARE <u>NOT</u> PERMITTED IN THE SACRISTY WITHOUT A PARENT/TEACHER. THE SIGN IN FOLDER IS LOCATED IN THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE SACRISTY.

GLUTEN FREE HOSTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ANY CELIAC PARISHIONERS. IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION PLEASE TELL THE CHURCH WARDEN OR SEE AN ACOLYTE IN THE SACRISTY PRIOR TO MASS.

Please support our Catholic Press Copies of the Catholic Weekly are in the Church Foyer \$2.

The Feast of the Epiphany

The Greek word Epiphany ($\epsilon\pi\iota\phi$ άνεια), means appearance or manifestation. First, the angels revealed Jesus to the shepherds. In the Western Church, the Feast of the Epiphany celebrates Jesus' first appearance to the Gentiles, represented by the Magi, while in the Eastern Church, the feast is the commemoration of the baptism of Christ where the Father and the Holy Spirit gave combined testimony to Jesus' identity as Son of God. Later, in the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus revealed himself as the promised Messiah, and at Cana he revealed his Divinity by transforming water into wine. These multiple revelations are all suggested by the Feast of the Epiphany.

Nicolle will be on annual leave from Monday 6th January and return on Tuesday 28th January. Please be aware that the Parish Office will only be open limited hours during that time. Please see calendar below.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS DURING JANUARY

		CD HOCKS DOME TO	- O ·	
MONDAY 6 TH JANUARY	TUESDAY 7 TH IANUARY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
LARISSA	/ · · · JANUARI	8 TH JANUARY	9 TH JANUARY LARISSA	10 TH JANUARY LARISSA
9AM – 3PM			9AM – 3PM	9AM – 3PM
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
13 TH JANUARY	14 TH JANUARY	15 TH JANUARY	16 TH JANUARY	17 TH JANUARY
LARISSA			LARISSA	LARISSA
9AM - 3PM			9AM - 3PM	9AM – 3PM
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
20 TH JANUARY	21 ST JANUARY	22 ND JANUARY	23 rd JANUARY	24 TH JANUARY
LARISSA			LARISSA	LARISSA
9AM – 3PM			9AM – 3PM	9AM – 3PM
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
27 TH JANUARY	28 TH JANUARY	25 TH JANUARY	26 TH JANUARY	27 TH JANUARY
AUSTRALIA DAY	NICOLLE		NICOLLE	
PUBLIC HOLIDAY	9AM – 5PM		9AM - 5PM	

Background on the Gospel Reading (Loyola Press): The visit of the Magi occurs directly before the story of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt. Matthew's Gospel tells a version of Jesus' birth that is different than the one in Luke. Of the actual birth of Jesus, Matthew tells us little more than, "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod . . . " The story of the census is found only in Luke's Gospel, but we hear about the visit of the Magi only in Matthew's Gospel. We know little about the Magi. They come from the East and journey to Bethlehem, following an astrological sign, so we believe them to be astrologers. We assume that there were three Magi based upon the naming of their three gifts. The Gospel does not say how many Magi paid homage to Jesus. In Matthew's Gospel, they represent the Gentiles' search for a savior. Because the Magi represent the entire world, they also represent our search for Jesus. We have come to consider the gifts they bring as a foreshadowing of Jesus' role in salvation. We believe the meaning of the gifts to be Christological. Gold is presented as representative of Jesus' kingship. Frankincense is a symbol of his divinity because priests burned the substance in the Temple. Myrrh, which was used to prepare the dead for burial, is offered in anticipation of Jesus' death. The word Epiphany means "manifestation" or "showing forth." Historically several moments in Christ's early life and ministry have been celebrated as "epiphanies," including his birth in Bethlehem, the visit of the Magi, his baptism by John, and his first miracle at Cana.

Family Connection: The tradition of giving gifts at Christmas is thought by some to be rooted in the gift giving of the Magi. In many cultures, gifts are not exchanged at Christmas, but rather on the feast of the Epiphany. Whenever you exchange your Christmas gifts, take some time to reflect on this tradition of gift giving at Christmas. Think of the best gift you have received. What was it? What made it special? Was it the gift itself, the thought that went into it, or the person who gave it to you? Read today's Gospel, Matthew 2:1-12. The gifts of the Magi—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—have come to be understood as symbols of Christ's royalty, divinity, and eventual suffering and death. They are special because in giving them, the Magi acknowledge who Jesus was to be: our Savior. We pray that we will acknowledge Jesus as Saviour in all that we do and say. Conclude by singing together "We Three Kings."

We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar, field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.

REFRAIN:

O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again, King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign.

REFRAIN:

Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a Deity nigh; prayer and praising, voices raising, worshiping God on high.

REFRAIN:

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom; sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

REFRAIN:

Glorious now behold him arise; King and God and sacrifice: Alleluia, Alleluia, sounds through the earth and skies. REFRAIN:

Reflections for the Feast of Epiphany

Epiphany celebrates Jesus' first appearance to the Gentiles, as represented by the Magi, while the Eastern Churches commemorate the Baptism of Christ, where the Father and the Holy Spirit give combined testimony to Jesus' identity as the Son of God.

Gospel exegesis: The Magi and the star: The Magi were not Kings, but a caste of Persian priests who served Kings by using their skills in interpreting dreams and the movements of the stars. The sixth century Italian tradition that the magi finding Jesus were three, Magi, Casper, Balthazar, and Melchior, is based on the fact that three gifts are mentioned in Matthew's Gospel: gold, frankincense and myrrh. "Matthew nowhere says that there were three wise men from the East. This assumption has probably been drawn from the fact that three gifts are mentioned, and it could easily be presumed that each of the Magi brought one, although this is going beyond what the text itself says. "They are supposed to have been kings, but this stems from a very literal translation of a psalm verse: 'The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall offer gifts' (Ps 72:10). Ancient depictions of them never involved symbols of royalty, but simply the Phrygian cap and garments of noble Persians" (Dr. M Watson). The Magi may actually have been Persian priests or Babylonian astronomers or Nabataean spice-traders. Eventually, however, they were pictured as representatives of different peoples and races. The Orthodox Church holds that the Magi consisted of twelve Kings, corresponding in number to the twelve tribes of Israel. (The term magoi in Greek refers to a wide variety of people, including fortune-tellers, priestly augurs, magicians and astrologers. Because of their connection with the star in this story, it is safe to conclude that Matthew identified them mostly with the last group. Possibly they came from Babylonia, or Persia, where the word magus originated. There were almost certainly Gentiles, for if they had been Jews, they would have known better than to ask King Herod about a national ruler who would challenge his dynasty! It is not clear from the story why they wanted to pay homage to a Jewish king, or what they learned about him from their observations of "his star" (Matthew 2:2) Dr. M Watson.

The star: Commentary on the Torah by Jewish rabbis suggested that a star appeared in the sky at the births of Abraham, Isaac and Moses. Likewise, in the Book of Numbers, the prophet Balaam speaks of "a star that shall come out of Jacob." Stars were believed to be signs from God, announcing important events. Thus, the brightness of the Light to which kings were drawn was made visible in the star they followed. (In the last 40 years, a number of scientists and astronomers have pointed to particular clusterings of planets or stars around the time of Jesus' birth, which would have created an unusual or dramatic heavenly "portent," suggesting that perhaps Matthew's account is more historical than some exegetes might choose to believe). "But what does all of this matter? Matthew tells us that all we need to know is that, from the time of his coming into the world, the Lord was manifested to people who came from distant lands. God made the good news of this birth know to them by a suitable sign, which guided their journey. But it was necessary for the chief priests and scribes to supply the Scriptures to the strangers, so that they might reach 'the house' where they would find the one for whom they were looking." (Days of the Lord, Vol. 1, pp. 259-60)

<u>The gifts:</u> Gold, frankincense and myrrh may be thought of as prophesying Jesus' future. Gold was a gift for Kings; frankincense (an ancient air purifier and perfume), was offered to God in Temple worship (Ex. 30:37); and myrrh (an oriental remedy for intestinal worms in infants), was used by the High Priest as an anointing oil (Ex. 30:23), and to prepare bodies for burial. These gifts were not only expensive but portable. Perhaps Joseph sold the gifts to finance the Holy Family's trip to Egypt. The gifts might have been God's way of providing for the journey that lay ahead.

<u>The triple reactions:</u> The Epiphany can be looked on as a symbol for our pilgrimage through life to Christ. The feast invites us to see ourselves in the Magi – a people on a journey to Christ. Today's Gospel also tells us the story of the encounter of the Magi with the evil King Herod. This encounter demonstrates three reactions to Jesus' birth: hatred, indifference, and adoration: a) Hatred: A group of people headed by Herod planned to destroy Jesus. b) Indifference: Another group, composed of priests and scribes, ignored Jesus. c) Adoration: The members of a third group -- shepherds and the magi -- adored Jesus and offered themselves to Him.

- A) The destructive group: King Herod considered Jesus a potential threat to his kingship. Herod the Great was a cruel and selfish king who murdered his mother-in-law, wife, two brothers-in-law and three children on suspicion that they had plotted against him. In today's Gospel, Herod asks the chief priests and scribes where the Messiah is to be born. The answer Matthew puts on their lips tells him, and us, much more, combining two strands of Old Testament promise one revealing the Messiah to be from the line of David (see 2 Samuel 2:5), the other predicting "a ruler of Israel" who will "shepherd his flock" and whose "greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth" (see Micah 5:1-3) (Dr. Hann). Later, the scribes and Pharisees plotted to kill Jesus because he had criticized them and tried to reform some of their practices. Today, many oppose Christ and his Church because of their selfish motives, evil ways and unjust lives. Children still have Herods to fear. In the United States alone, one and a half million innocent, unborn children are aborted annually.
- B) The group that ignored Christ: The scribes, the Pharisees, and the Jewish priests knew that there were nearly 500 prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures concerning the promised Messiah. They were able to tell Herod the exact time and place of Jesus' birth. They were in the habit of concluding their reading from the prophets on the Sabbath day by saying, "We shall now pray for the speedy arrival of the Messiah." Unfortunately, they were more interested in their own selfish gains than in discovering the truth. Hence, they refused to go and see the child Jesus -- even though Bethlehem was quite close to Jerusalem. Today, many Christians remind us of this group. They practice their religion from selfish motives, such as to gain political power, prestige and recognition by society. They ignore Jesus' teachings in their private lives.
- C) The group that adored Jesus and offered Him gifts: This group was composed of the shepherds and the Magi. The shepherds offered the only gifts they had: love, tears of joy, and probably woolen clothes and milk from their sheep. The Magi, probably Persian astrologers, were following the star that Balaam had predicted would rise along with the ruler's staff over the house of Jacob (see Numbers 24:17). The Magi offered gold, in recognition of Jesus as the King of the Jews; frankincense, in acknowledgment that He was God, and myrrh as a symbol of His human nature. "Like the Magi, every person has two great 'books' which provide the signs to guide this pilgrimage: the book of creation and the book of sacred Scripture. What is important is that we be attentive, alert, and listen to God Who speaks to us, Who always speaks to us." (Pope Francis)

<u>Life Messages:</u> (1) Let us make sure that we belong to the third group. a) Let us worship Jesus at Mass, every day if we can, with the gold of our love, the myrrh of our humility and the frankincense of our adoration. Let us offer God our very selves, promising Him that we will use His blessings to do good for our fellow men. b) Let us plot a better path for our lives. Just as the Magi chose another route to return to their homes, let us choose a better way of life, abstaining from proud and impure thoughts, evil habits and selfish behavior. c) Let us become the Star, leading others to Jesus, as the star led the Magi to Him. We can remove or lessen the darkness of the evil around us by being, if not like stars, at least like candles, radiating Jesus' love by selfless service, unconditional forgiveness and compassionate care.

(2) Like the Magi, let us offer Jesus our gifts on this feast of Epiphany. (a) The first gift might be friendship with God. After all, the whole point of Christmas is that God's Son became one of us to redeem us and call us friends. God wants our friendship in the form of wholehearted love and devotion. (b) A second gift might be friendship with others. This kind of friendship can be costly. The price it exacts is vulnerability and openness to others. The good news, however, is that, in offering friendship to others, we will receive back many blessings. (c) A third gift might be the gift of reconciliation. This gift repairs damaged relationships. It requires honesty, humility, understanding, forgiveness and patience. (d) The fourth gift of this season is the gift of peace: seeking God's peace in our own lives through prayer, the Sacramental life and daily meditation on the Word of God. It is out of humble gratitude that we give Him from the heart our gifts of worship, prayer, singing, possessions, and time. As we give our insignificant, little gifts to God, the good news is that God accepts them! Like the Magi offering their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, we offer what we have, from the heart, in response to what that Child has given to us - Himself. Let us conclude with a 19th century English carol, Christina Rosetti's A Christmas Carol, which begins, "In the bleak midwinter." The carol sums up, in its last stanza, the nature of "giving to the Christ Child."

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I could give a Lamb.
If I were a wise man, I could do my part.
What I can I give Him? Give Him my heart!
(Fr. Antony Kadavil)

Mass Intentions

Recently Deceased: Peter Harrington, Phil Robinson, Warren Stephens, Christine Moses. Repose of The Soul: Fr Adrian Horgan, Fr Paul Ryan, Fr Mark Baird, Elias & Julia Georges, Alfredo Pjanic, Kevin Bouffler, Br Ray Dowding, Sr Audette Mansour, Francesco & Sarina Campanale, Daniel Lucich, Charlotte O'Brien, Stefano, Francesco & Maria Colagiuri, Filomena Pagano, Giuseppe Pagano, Matteo & Caterina Genova, Caterina Guarnia, Frances Doumit, Frederick McDowell, Dorothy Harris, James Brady, Elizabeth Keating, Anne Cecilia Glass, Reginald & Agnes Glass, Gerald & Frances Gleeson, Elias & Julia Georges, Joseph Tannous, Faado, Alice & Slaiman Herro, Aldo & Fiorella Amarino, Salvatore' Puglisi, Roger O'Reilly, Monica & Patrick Ryan, Elie Sahyoun, Christopher John Stewart, Stephen Maxwell Stewart, Mary & Anne Trefle', Margaret Raeburn, Francesco & Mary Sorbello, Bruce & Estelle Thurn, Gerald Wilson, Lisa Cooke, Michael & Mary Cassar, Giuseppe & Romilda Reginato, Rosalie Quito-an, Sylvia Tagalog, Winne Byrne, Saad Saad, Michael Issa, Gertrude Adelaide Daley, Dorothy & Carl Butler, Harold Bryan Smith, Joseph Sellathamboo, Teresa Moses, Margaret Hetherton, Mabel Doyle, Greg Doyle & Jim Bradbury, John, Pauline & Katherine Murphy. **Anniversaries:** Gerald Gleeson Snr, George Bugeja, James Webb & Wajih Saliba, Toufic & Audette Shalala, Des McNamara, Monica Ryan, Harry Thorpe, Tori Johnson & Katrina Dawson, Beryl Erskine, Norma McMillan. **Sick Intentions:** Giuseppe Mazzaferro, Ann Cincotta-Tangey, John Weitering, Willie Quan, John Hay, Margaret Harrington, Ajith Antony, Rudy Raeburn, Robert Rumore, Carminella Tiberio, Theo McLean, Joseph Akkary, Sylvia Watson, Virgilio Lim, George Jabbour, Dr Maher Ishak Morian, Stephanie Harrington, Phil Harriss, Sophie O'Donnell, Ken South, Siena Fabrie, Joanna Jo, Simon Alam, Rosanne Sukkar, Henry D'Souza, Danielle Fabien. **Special Intentions:** Deceased friends, relatives & Benefactors of the Dominican Order. Kathy, Zoe & Max Stephens.

The New February to August Roster is now available from the side entrance of the Church and on the parish website.

11 th & 12 th January IF YOU CANNOT FULFIL YOUR ROSTER DUTY PLEASE ORGANISE A REPLACEMENT.						
Special Ministers	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM		
	Lisa Dennis	Volunteer Needed	Rachel Suriano	Volunteer Needed		
	Joanne Touma	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed		
	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM		
Readers	Helen Blefari	Greg Glass	Helen Williamson	Melanie John		
	Marianna Soo	Maria Yu	Merlyn D'Souza	Volunteer Needed		
	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM		
Altar Servers	Grace T.	Volunteer Needed	Emilia T.	Volunteer Needed		
	Peter T.	Volunteer Needed	Marcus V.	Volunteer Needed		
	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed	Elijah M.	Volunteer Needed		
	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM		
Wardens	Linda Praum	Georgette Sahyoun	Trudie Rogers	Vince Blefari		

If you are an Acolyte; Reader; Eucharistic minister or in the Music Ministry you are required to <u>sign in</u> – (red folders are kept in the sacristy). The altar servers sign in folder is located in the side corridor.









