



St Anthony's Parish



St Bernard's Parish

67-75 EXFORD ROAD, MELTON SOUTH, 3338.
P.O BOX 2152 MELTON SOUTH 3338
TEL: 9747 9692

61 LERDERBERG STREET, BACCHUS MARSH 3340
TEL: 5367 2069
OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, KOROBET
309 MYRNIONG-KOROBET ROAD 3341

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT –YEAR C

19th December 2021

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Fabian Smith
ASSISTANT PRIESTS: Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint /Father Marcus Goulding

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Lesley Morffew
Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson
Parish Office Hours: Mon 9am-1pm
Tue 9am-4pm Wed 9am-5.30pm Thu-Fri 9am-4pm
Email: meltonsouth@cam.org.au
Website: www.stanthonyofpadua.com.au
St Anthony's School Principal: Damien Schuster
Wilson Road, Melton South 3338
Phone: 8099 7800
Email: principal@sameltonsth.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.sameltonsth.catholic.edu.au

ST BERNARD'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Dolores Turcsan
Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson
Sacramental Coordinator/ Bookkeeper: Naim Chdid
Parish Office Hours:
Tue-Thu 9am-1pm
Email: bacchusmarsh@cam.org.au
Website: www.stbernardsbacchusmarsh.com.au
St Bernard's School Principal: Emilio Scalzo
19a Gisborne Rd, Bacchus Marsh VIC 3340
Phone: (03) 5366 5800
Email: principal@sbbacchusmarsh.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.sbbacchusmarsh.catholic.edu.au

Catholic Regional College - Melton (Years 7-12)
Principal: Marlene Jorgensen **Phone:** 8099 6000
Website: www.crcmelton.com.au

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

Naim Chdid	0437 004 790
Lillian Christian - Vice Chair	0400 441 257
Stephen Fernandes	0439 743 533
Amy Honrade	0457 042 695
Natalie Howard– Chair	0492 947 201
Rose Ma'ae	0460 672 571

EX-OFFICIO:
Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint, Fr Marcus Goulding
and Damien Schuster Council Secretary: Judy Johnson

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

Shane Cook -School Advisory Board	0419 999 052
Peter Farren	0418 594 501
Peter Kennedy	0407 778 119
Maira Ross	0400 675 056
Aaron Russell - Chair	0401 927 502

EX-OFFICIO:
Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint, Fr Marcus Goulding
and Emilio Scalzo

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Coordinator: Godwin Barton (0425 734 449) **Officers:** St Anthony's -Karina Dunne, Lorraine Tellis & Geetha Vincent
St Bernard's –Margaret Love (0437 247 779)



St Anthony's
QR code

Location code E2B Y8D



St Bernard's
QR code

Location code C7N T6M

MASS AND DEVOTIONS

ST ANTHONY'S 20/12-26/12 MELTON SOUTH

MASS TIMES: (no booking required)

Monday 20/12	6.30pm
Tuesday 21/12	9.30am
5.30pm Holy Hour followed by Mass at	6.30pm
Wednesday 22/12	9.30am
Thursday 23/12	9.30am
Friday 24/12	See page 3 for Mass Times
Saturday 25/12	See page 3 for Mass Times
Sunday 26/1	8.30am & 10.30am 5.00pm

Confession available 30 minutes prior to each Mass.
No Confession available on Monday

ST BERNARD'S 20/12-26/12 BACCHUS MARSH

MASS TIMES: (no booking required)

Tuesday 21/12	9.30am
	Holy Hour 7.30pm
Wednesday 22/12	9.30am
Thursday 23/12	9.30am
Friday 24/12	See page 3 for Mass Times
Saturday 25/12	See page 3 for Mass Times
Sunday 26/12	8.30am & 10.30am

Confession available 30 minutes prior to each Mass.

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

KOROBEIT

MASS TIME

See page 3 for Mass Times

If you need a Priest in the case of an emergency please call 0403 435 471

PARISHIONERS FIRST COLLECTION/SECOND COLLECTION

Parishioners who normally give cash each weekend for the collections, if they wish to donate, are now able to go to the link below and make their payments online.

The link to the St Anthony's Parish is: <https://bit.ly/CDFpayMeltonSouth>

The link to the St Bernard's Parish is: <https://bit.ly/CDFpayBacchusMarsh>

Please put your name and thanksgiving number if you know it as a reference.

REFLECTION 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

We all at some time visit others – to help them, if they are ill, to cheer them up, share time and joy and celebrate special events.

Mary quickly visits Elizabeth. I have often wondered why? Did she go to help an older woman during late pregnancy? Did she go to check out what the angel had said? Did she go to give herself space before Joseph found out? The painting below speaks to me of two women rejoicing in the coming of a child, scarcely believing this is true, but each confirming the other.

Elizabeth reassures Mary that God is with her and her child and that she is "blessed among women". I am sure, as first-time mothers, they had many a womanly discussion over the next three months, undisturbed by Zachary who had been struck dumb. All this must have been comforting for young Mary when she returned home, strengthened by her experience and ready to bring a child into the world with Joseph and continuing her "Yes!" to God, willing to face whatever the future brought.

Over Christmas many visits are exchanged between family members and friends.

May these visits help us to welcome Jesus into our lives and homes this

Christmas with the same joy we welcome friends and family.

May we be strengthened in our faith and our friendship with Jesus, ready to face whatever the future brings.

Mary Fermio rsj



ADVENT DINNER AND FORMATION SERIES

&

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

What are you doing to prepare for Christmas? Perhaps you are buying gifts, planning meals, or cleaning the house. These things are important, but after the difficulties of the last couple of years we all need something more. Our parishes are hosting a four-week Advent formation series to help you prepare your heart and mind for the birth of the Lord Jesus.

St Anthony's Church Meeting Room

7.00pm – 8.30pm Mondays of Advent
20/12/21 – Session 4: The Gift

St Bernard's Parish Centre

7.00pm – 8.30pm Thursdays of Advent
23/12/21 – Session 4: The Gift

Each session will begin with dinner at 7.00pm. Please bring a dish to share with the other participants. Please bring a pen for the formation sessions.

Parishioners please note the Christmas Mass timetable has been updated

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Wed 22nd Dec First Rite 7pm-8pm
3 Visiting Priests Available

Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve Friday 24th December

5.30pm Carols / **6.00pm Mass**
7.30pm Carols/ **8.00pm Mass**
11.30pm Carols/ **Midnight Mass**

Christmas Day Saturday 25th December

8.30am Carols/ **9:00am Mass**

Sunday 26th December

Feast of the Holy Family

8:30am Mass
10:30am Mass
5.00pm Mass

ST BERNARD'S PARISH

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Tue 21st Dec First Rite 7pm-8pm
1 Visiting Priests

Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve Friday 24th December

5.30pm Carols/ **6.00pm Mass**
9.30amsCarols/ **10.00pm Mass**
11.30pm Office of Readings with Carols
Midnight Mass

8.00pm-Korobeit

Christmas Day Saturday 25th December

8:30am Mass
10:30am Mass

Sunday 26th December

Feast of the Holy Family

8:30am Mass
10:30am Mass
10.30am Korobeit

Victoria's Covid rules update

Parishioners will no longer need to show vaccination status at Places of Worship

Online bookings for Masses are no longer required

PARISH & EVENTS NOTICES

NEWS FROM THE PARISH OFFICES

NEWSLETTER ITEMS

Parishioners, if you have any items for the newsletter please send them through by 1pm Wednesday 22/12 for next weekend's newsletter. The next newsletter that you will be able to have items in will be dated 16th January 2022.

We will have a January/Summer edition between this period. Email judypaishnews@gmail.com or 0414 007 009. Thank you.

PARISH OFFICE NEWS

Dear Parishioners please note that both St Anthony's and St Bernard's Parish Offices will be closed for Christmas /New Year.

St Anthony's will be closed from Monday 27th December 2021 and reopen on Monday 10th January 2022.

St Bernard's will be closed from Friday 24th December 2021 and reopen on Tuesday 11th January 2022.

If you need a Priest in the case of an **emergency** please call 0403 435 471.

We wish all our Parishioners a happy and blessed Christmas and New Year.

God Bless

Lesley, Dolores, Naim and Judy



ST ANTHONY'S

DONATED CLOTHING AVAILABLE-THIS WEEKEND

St Anthony's Parish has received generous donations of clothing and will be availing this clothing for

parishioners for free. The clothing will be available after Masses on the **18 & 19 of December**. As these materials have been donated, please note the following conditions apply:

1. Items are to support families needing support often as a result of circumstances beyond their control and are therefore strictly not for resale or fundraising purposes
2. Items are to be used as they are designed and not to be repurposed
3. Items cannot be sent overseas or stored.

Our thanks to the volunteers at St Anthony's Parish and to the organisations involved in donating the goods.

We hope that you will find them valuable for members of your family.

Thank you for respecting the donation

guidelines. If you require assistance more urgently, please contact the parish via email: stanthonysparishoutreach@outlook.com

CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE

The Melton South Conference of St Vincent de Paul Society, would like to thank all our generous Parishioners who donated to the Christmas Giving Tree. The response for gifts has been overwhelming, therefore we do not need any more donations at this time. Thank you.

SUPPORT MELTON SOUTH PARISH by giving with CDFpay. Simply scan the QR code with your mobile phone and in a few easy steps you can quickly and securely give to your parish. Laminated QR posters are in the foyer.

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS FOR MASSES ON THE 24th/25th DECEMBER AND READERS AND MINISTERS FOR THE 26th DECEMBER

We are in need of volunteers for the above Masses, please put your name on the clipboard in the Church foyer. Readers and Ministers will be contacted by Lesley this week. Thank you.

ST BERNARD'S

ST VINCENT DE PAUL CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

This year our Conference is providing a hamper of essential pantry items to families we have assisted during the year.

Through the generosity of St Bernard's Primary School families, we will have sufficient items to make up the hampers, although we do require funds to purchase gift cards for the children of the families we are assisting.

Donations towards these can be placed in the poor box in the Church or by contacting President Margot Short 0419 507 438 or Treasurer Peter Kennedy 0407 778 119.

SAVE THE DATE - FATHER GLASHEEN MASS

A Mass to celebrate Father Glasheen's 50th Anniversary of his Ordination will be held on Sunday May 15, 2022 at 10.30am Mass. More details to follow.

FORMED

We now have a parish FORMED subscription

FORMED is a Catholic streaming service. We have purchased a parish subscription that you can access for free at home.

Please limit yourselves to one account per household. To register under our subscription, follow these steps:

1. Visit <https://signup.formed.org/>
2. Input *St Anthony's & St Bernard's Catholic Parishes* in the "Find your Parish" box.
3. Input your name and email address.
4. Visit formed.org on your preferred device to begin watching.

If you enjoy using FORMED, consider making a donation to our parish to help us keep providing this service.

WORSHIP NEWS

ALL VOLUNTEERS IN OUR PARISH MUST HAVE A CURRENT AND VALID WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

ST ANTHONY'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 25th & 26th December
Please present yourself to the Mass Coordinator
15 minutes before the scheduled Mass time or a replacement
will be found. Thank you.

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

5.00pm Vigil:

8.30am:

10.30am: To be advised

5.00pm:

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm Vigil:

8.30am: To be advised

10.30am:

5.00pm

*If you are unavailable for these dates please contact Lesley
at the Parish Office Thank you*

MASS COORDINATORS

5.00pm Vigil:

8.30am: Julie & Lillian

10.30am: Lillian & Godwin

5.00pm: Annonica & Godwin

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased:

Slavica Ziday

We pray for those whose death anniversaries occur at this time:

Noue Taupi Asiata, Consiliya Bonnici, Andrea Butcher
and Eduardo Navato.

Please pray for the Sick: Nickolia & Klara Butkovic,
Maria Caruana, Mary Caruana, Melanie Fue, Bruce Hynes,
Judy Layton, Peter Manicaro, Reg Marslen, Lisa Melia,
Damien Michael, Tony Michael, Veronica Michael, Maiava
Kuno Nickol, Caleb O'Brien, John Osborne,
Catherine Roberts, Peter Roberts, Pat Roberts,
Charlie Spiteri, Janko Stojanovic, Uatoa Tuigamala,
Dolores Turcsan, Clint Abela Wadge & Wai Walsh
and all those who have requested our prayers.

(PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE IS NO LONGER
REQUIRED ON THIS LIST)

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Father we lift up all those who are facing illness.
We ask that You bring healing, comfort and
peace to their bodies. Calm their fears and let
them experience the healing power of your
love. Amen



ST BERNARD'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 25th & 26th December

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

5.00pm:

8.30am: To be advised

10.30am:

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm:

8.30am: To be advised

10.30am:

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

December: Jan Carragher

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased:

Giuseppe Bacchin and Maureen Blood

We pray for those whose death anniversaries occur at this time:

Patrick Green, Walter Ibbs, Michael Kenny, Kevin Long,
Sheila Rice, and Joan Younger.

Please pray for the Sick:

Patricia Allison, Noah Barlow, Chaiel Balcombe,
Michael Barrett, Peter Bennett, Steven Braszel, Tina Bower,
John Canty, Fred Capuano, Gary Ching, Chris,
Josephine Cilia, Robyn Cola, Ted Cooling, Marianne
Cuskelly, Lindsay & Kathleen Dally, Judy Delahey,
Jack DeLuca, Theresa Dockter, Allison Evans, Helen Evans,
Justin Fernandez, Frank, Pasquale Gagliarbi, Mario Galea,
Cynthia Goodyear, Gwen Green, Joe Gristi, Adam Hillier,
Leonie Kervin, Elle Hillman, Kiahni Holamotutama,
Alicia Holborn, Chaiel Jackson, Matthew Jansen,
David Kasprzak, Michael Larkin, Marie Maloney,
Patricia Marechal, Brian Marshall, Debbie Marshall, Jordanis
Mary Pauline McDonald, Ian McKechnie, Marcus Meno,
Paul Mullin, Arthur Pape, Michael Paterson,
Georgia Peacock, Mitchell Prendergast, Peter Roberts,
Ken Shaw, Terry Sims, Marian Smith,
Elizabeth Stehmann, Catherine Time, Susan Trist, Tristan,
Dolores Turcsan, Stephen Van Eede, John Van Orsouw,
Angela Vicum, Louis Vogels, Barry Walsh, Cath Wheelahan,
Jayne Wilkins, Patricia Yazbek, & Betty Young.

(PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE IS NO LONGER
REQUIRED ON THIS LIST)

FAITH FORMATION

ST ANTHONY'S AND ST BERNARD'S

BAPTISM PREPARATION PROGRAM— ST ANTHONY'S AND ST BERNARD'S

Dear Parishioners

Keeping in line with the Archbishop's vision for Mission, the Parishes of St Anthony's and St Bernard's going forward will put together a new Baptism Preparation Program, for any parents who wish to have their child Baptised.



Preparations for Baptisms will take place on Saturdays alternating between both Parishes.

Parents must attend two sessions. Sessions will run from 12.00pm-3.30pm.

Baptisms will be held on Saturday mornings at 10.30am.

The new program will begin in February 2022. Bookings must be made to attend these sessions.

More information will be provided in the coming weeks.

ADULT PREPARATION Adult preparation for the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist or Confirmation are through the R.C.I.A Program. Please see Fr Fabian, Fr Marcus or Fr Lucas .

FATIMA STATUE—ST ANTHONY'S

These families are praying together for the mission of the Parish:



Group 1: Theresa Anderson 0420 820 118

Group 2: Julie & Aotearoq Seufatu 0402 182 458

Group 3: Philip & Cristina Anyayahan 0403 171 918

DIVINE MERCY NOVENA

1st Sunday of the Month-3.00pm

PRAYER TO ST MICHAEL

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil; may God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.



NEO-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

[bow during the next line]

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen

LITURGY OF THE WORD

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

Drop down dew from above, you heavens,
and let the clouds rain down the Just One;
let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour

FIRST READING Micah 5:1-4

The Lord says this:

You, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
the least of the clans of Judah,
out of you will be born for me
the one who is to rule over Israel;
his origin goes back to the distant past,
to the days of old.

The Lord is therefore going to abandon them
till the time when she who is to give birth gives birth.

Then the remnant of his brothers will come back
to the sons of Israel.

He will stand and feed his flock

with the power of the Lord,

with the majesty of the name of his God.

They will live secure, for from then on he will extend his power
to the ends of the land.

He himself will be peace.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 79

Commentator: Lord, make us turn to you;
let us see your face and we shall be saved.

All: Lord, make us turn to you;
let us see your face and we shall be saved.

O shepherd of Israel, hear us,
shine forth from your cherubim throne.

O Lord, rouse up your might,

O Lord, come to our help.

God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from heaven and see.

Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted.

May your hand be on the man you have chosen,
the man you have given your strength.

And we shall never forsake you again:
give us life that we may call upon your name.

Lord, make us turn to you;
let us see your face and we shall be saved.

SECOND READING Hebrews 10:5-10

This is what Christ said, on coming into the world:

You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation,
prepared a body for me.

You took no pleasure in holocausts or sacrifices for sin;
then I said,

just as I was commanded in the scroll of the book,

'God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will.'

Notice that he says first: You did not want what the Law
lays down as the things to be offered, that is: the sacrific-
es, the oblations, the holocausts and the sacrifices for sin,
and you took no pleasure in them; and then he says: Here
I am! I am coming to obey your will. He is abolishing the
first sort to replace it with the second. And this will was for
us to be made holy by the offering of his body made once
and for all by Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the servant of the Lord:

may his will for me be done.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL Luke 1:39-44

Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could
to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zech-
ariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as
Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her
womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She
gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most
blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why
should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my
Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the
child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who
believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be
fulfilled.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son;
and his name will be called Emmanuel.

NEXT WEEK'S READING

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSPEH

—YEAR C

First Reading: 1 Sam 1:20-22, 24-28;

Second Reading: 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24;

Gospel: Lk 2:41-52



Advent IV

Following Mary's Advent footsteps

Each year, on the fourth Sunday of Advent, the Church has us focus on the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Church does this not merely because Mary has an obviously unforgettable role in the birth and life of Jesus. The real reason is because she is the model of how we should be living our Advent.

Mary is, in some sense, Advent personified. God the Father had prepared her from the first moment of her life to be a worthy mother of his Son. Like a faithful daughter of Israel, she had prayed throughout her youth for the coming of the Messiah. When she was a young girl, she discovered that she was part of God's answer to that prayer, but in a way that would far have exceeded any Hebrew maiden's prayers: not only would the Messiah be her son, but her son would also be God.

Each year, on this fourth Sunday of Advent, we explicitly follow the footsteps Mary traced on that first Advent. Thereby we are entering into Mary's response of faith that is a guide for us on our own pilgrimage of faith.

Today we travel with Mary to Ein Karim, the birth place of St John the Baptist. At the Annunciation, after the Archangel Gabriel had told Mary that the power of the Most High would overshadow her and she would conceive in her womb a Son whom she would call Jesus, Gabriel told her as well that her cousin Elizabeth had also conceived a son in her old age. As soon as the Archangel departed, Mary "went with haste" to take care of her elderly kinswoman who was pregnant for the first time. Without question, Elizabeth would have needed some help. But notice that the Angel did not command Mary to go to help her. He did not even suggest that it would be a good thing for her to go. He just stated the fact that Elizabeth was pregnant and that was enough for Mary to spring into action.

Ein Karim is located a few kilometres outside of Jerusalem, which was 140 kilometres from Nazareth. We don't know if Mary travelled alone. There is no record that St Joseph accompanied her, or St Anne or Joachim. But we do know that she travelled with incredible faith. During her journey, there was no way she could know humanly that she was pregnant. Jesus would still have been the tiniest embryo in her womb, probably eight or sixteen cells according to his human nature by the time she left, well before an infant could begin to kick. She could only know she was pregnant by faith in Gabriel's words. Doubtless along the journey, she meditated on his words and how all of the prophecies of the Old Testament were being fulfilled in her.

In going to Ein Karim, Mary became the first missionary, the first bearer of the Good News that would change all of human history, forming Jesus to be the itinerant preacher he would become even before he had developed the tiniest of feet. Mary was able to bring incredible joy to Elizabeth and to the fetal John the Baptist, because she was bringing Christ. And Mary burst out with joy in her Magnificat for the same reason.

Fr Roger Landry, www.catholiceducation.org

This brings us to the first lesson the Church wants us to get on this fourth Sunday of Advent: To bring joy to others this Christmas, we really have to bring them Christ. Jesus is the greatest gift that we can ever bring to someone we love. We can buy kids all types of clothes and toys, but if we are not trying to give them the Lord Jesus, then we are giving counterfeit goods. Unless we try to bring Christ to them, we are giving them nothing truly lasting.

We all know people who need Christ in their lives, who need his forgiveness, who hunger for his love and his presence, perhaps without even knowing it. But many of us keep our relationship with Jesus to ourselves, not wanting to share the Lord with anyone else. Mary's example shows us the way to live Advent well and explicitly challenges and calls us to bring Jesus to our relatives and to those we know who are in need.

As soon as Elizabeth heard the sound of Mary's greeting, very likely "shalom", three things happened: John the Baptist leaped in her womb, Elizabeth herself was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she burst out saying: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

The Holy Spirit inspires Elizabeth to bless Mary among all women for two reasons: because of the blessed fruit of her womb; and because of her faith that the Lord's words to her would be fulfilled. In other words, she was blessed because of Jesus and because of her faith in her embryonic Saviour and Son.

That is the second lesson the Church wants us to grasp on this Advent pilgrimage with Mary, that the greatest blessings in this world are Jesus and our faith in Him. These are the gifts we should be longing for this Christmas, because these are the ones that will truly make us happy. Mary cried out in her hymn of praise later in this scene: "All generations will call me blessed." And that prophecy came true. We still call her blessed today because "the Lord the blessed fruit of her womb", and because of her faith, which is the model for every disciple.

The last lesson that we are called to take from that first Advent is what Mary did at the end of the scene. As soon as Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, blessed her, Mary's contemplative heart exploded in prayer: "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour!" Mary's response to the blessing of God's love coming into this world, into her heart and into her womb, was not just faith but prayer, which is properly called faith-in-action.

The same Jesus whom Mary carried *in utero* to her cousin Elizabeth comes to us today in Holy Communion. Through Mary's intercession, may we do what she did after the Annunciation and bring that Jesus out to others who so need him this Christmas, so that he can make them leap again! Praised be Jesus Christ!