

ST PAUL'S

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Bulletin Highlights

Third Sunday of Advent ~ Year A

11 Dec 2016

Christmas Mass Times 2016



After a discussion among members of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) last Wednesday evening, a recommendation was reached to celebrate Christmas Mass times in 2016 according to the the same schedule as in 2015. Please be mindful that Christmas Day is on a Sunday, meaning that the various Vigil Masses will be celebrate on the Saturday evening, and the Sunday Mass schedule is different.

So on Saturday 24th December, **Vigil Masses will be celebrated at 5:00 PM, 7:00 PM and 9:00 PM.** **Midnight Mass** will include Christmas carols beginning from 11:30 PM. On **Christmas Morning, Mass will be celebrated at 9:00 AM only.** It was noted at the PPC meeting that the outdoor Vigil which was celebrated from 2008 until 2014 had been quite successful but required enormous work in transporting a heavy altar, and the setting up of a useful sound system which required specialised support. Essentially, the previous 7:00 PM outdoor vigil has now been replaced by two indoor Vigils. And the new screens in the chapel, accompanied by an upgraded PA system, will allow another 100 people to experience Mass in the Church from the chapel.

2nd Rite of Reconciliation ~ Tuesday 20th December

The Sacrament of Penance can be administered in various ways. For about five decades, the 2nd Rite has been very popular in many parishes because of its strong communal dimension. In our own parish the 2nd Rite normally appeals to about 70-80 people who come together for a little prayer and a reflection from the parish priest. Individual confession then follows among penitents with one of the five priests who will be present. During this ceremony and in this Season of Advent, we are reminded of "Our Lord's coming to each one of us at the hour of our death".



On Saturday morning a large group of readers, extraordinary ministers and acolytes from the parish gathered for reflection and discussion on liturgy and their roles within the Mass. Fr Sean Cullen, parish priest of Mittagong and Bowral, was the guest presenter for the morning. He shared some insights into liturgy helping those gathered to reflect on what it is and what it means. He shared some misconceptions about what liturgy is not e.g. not entertainment. He emphasised that liturgy strengthens the intimacy we have with God and the unity we have with each other through faith in Jesus Christ

Liturgy can at times be challenging and may not always make us comfortable. Over time our attention to the actions of the liturgy can help to shape our lives as we learn to listen, to reflect on our lives and to join with others in giving thanks and praise to God, and being nourished by the Word and the Body of Christ. Fr Sean led us through the parts of the Mass

Interestingly, Fr Sean contrasted our gathering in the church to catching a train. On a train we enter to sit by ourselves or with our friends for the journey. When we come to Mass we sit together to be connected with each other as the assembled people of God ready for worship. Also as we gather, one of the first rituals is the entrance procession, where our main focus should be on the cross which is raised above our heads for all to see.

Liturgy is also about common sense and being practical. The way readers, extraordinary ministers and acolytes perform their roles was discussed with a view to perhaps making some practical changes in the future. The intention was to have all our ministers following a similar ritual in carrying out their role. The need for discernment and pastoral consideration is particularly evident in the way extraordinary ministers respond to non-communicants during communion. While not always practical, receiving from the chalice is not viewed as an extra but is what Jesus wanted us to do