



## HOLY SAVIOUR PARISH GLEN WAVERLEY NORTH

Church: 765 Highbury Road, Vermont South 3133  
Presbytery: 5 Sherwood Rise, Vermont South, 3133  
Telephone: 9401 6340

Website: <https://holysaviourparishvs.com.au/> Email: [glenwaverleynorth@cam.org.au](mailto:glenwaverleynorth@cam.org.au)

**WEEKEND MASS TIMES**  
Saturday 6.00pm, Sunday 10.00am

**WEEKDAY MASS TIMES:**  
Wednesday & Friday: 9.15am  
**Reconciliation: By Appointment or after 9.15am mass on Wednesday & Friday**

### OUR VISION

Our Parish leads and supports all members on their journey of faith.

### OUR MISSION

We welcome and engage everyone in our faith community at Holy Saviour so that all may feel at home.  
We provide opportunities for people to encounter God through liturgy and community.  
We actively live God's message of love and justice in a way that is relevant for today.

### PARISH PRIEST

Fr Ralph Besterwitch SAC  
[fralph1@gmail.com](mailto:fralph1@gmail.com)

### SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Mr. Steve Evans  
[principal@hsvs.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@hsvs.catholic.edu.au)

### PARISH PRAYER

God of all creation, may your Spirit inspire us to do your will. Bless us in your service, strengthen us in our support of each other. Unite us as we grow in faith and love, to be a welcoming, caring community, enabling all to flourish, especially our children and the most vulnerable. This we pray in the name of our Holy Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Lord. Amen.

## SUNDAY 7TH JANUARY 2024—THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD-YEAR B

**ANNIVERSARIES:** Garry O'Connor, Anthony Grebert, Brian Quinn, Antonio Scarcella, Rebecca Baird

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:** Christine Mendis, Helen Styring, Leonie Gallagher, Serge Nayna, Connor Hodge, John Baird, Aidan Carroll, Graeme Potter

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

*Fr Ralph*

(4 January)

### MINISTRY TO THE SICK AND ELDERLY

Are you unable to attend Mass or feeling isolated?  
Holy Saviour Parish has a visiting team of parishioners to support you.

If you would like to receive Holy Communion, or just a friendly home visit,  
**Or** if you know someone in that situation.

Please ring the team coordinator,  
Rosemarie Lawrenson 0411 706 016

Kindly please note: Fr Jacob will be having well earned holiday, Fr Jacob will be away from 14th January for a month. Have a lovely holiday & safe travels.

### WELCOME

*WE'D LOVE TO MEET YOU*

If you are new to Holy Saviour, or if you haven't yet had a chance to get to know any fellow parishioners, please get in touch and let us know you're here.

Let us know you're here via one of the following methods:

1. Email [holysaviourPPC@gmail.com](mailto:holysaviourPPC@gmail.com)
2. Call Helen Forer, Welcoming Committee Leader, on 0417 428 004
3. Write your details on the new parishioners sheet located in the church foyer and include contact details which will allow us to reach out to you.

*We look forward to meeting you.*

### CONSUMERISM

#### A Comment by David Wood

Between Christmas and New Year, I went to the supermarket and found:

*Lots to buy these holidays,*

*And with Christmas wiped, removed,  
Bouncing bunny buns approved,*

*Why stood the soul, still, unmoved,  
Was it lost and long removed,*

*From God's calm, consuming ways?*

### 1ST COLLECTION (PRESBYTERY OFFERING)

to be taken up after the **Homily** is for the Presbytery Account, which supports not only Fr Ralph, but also supports the other priests in our Parish.

### 2ND COLLECTION (THANKSGIVING OFFERING)

will be taken up immediately after the **Prayers of the Faithful**. All monies from this collection go towards meeting the running costs of the Parish and paying off debt.



### ST VINCENT DE PAUL—CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2023

*Thank You for generous support of the SVDP 2023 Christmas Appeal. The parish donations to the Christmas Appeal is currently at \$3700.00.*

*Many Thanks again, all the best wishes to all for the New Year.*

*Best Regards, Kevin*

### REFLECTION

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.

The Christmas season reaches an apex with the Epiphany. In some liturgical traditions, it is the central celebration of Christmas. It commemorates not only the birth of Christ and the visit of the Magi, but also his baptism in the Jordan and the manifestation of his glory at the wedding feast of Cana. In the Roman Catholic tradition, the focus is on the visit of the Magi and the implications of that visit for the glorious manifestation of God to all the peoples of the world.

There is a wonderful summons to alertness and presence of mind and heart, a call for all the nations to witness the marvellous works of God that shine as light in the midst of the surrounding darkness. The light of God is known in the ways in which the most vulnerable in the city are cared for and acknowledged. In just action and righteousness, the city becomes the beacon of God, and all the nations are attracted by this light. The quality of the light leads the way through the darkness and sustains the world in goodness and peace.

The manifestation of God among us changes the ways in which we perceive each other. Christ's birth provides us with the light by which we see a new criterion for relating. The Magi represent the multi-ethnic and cultural diversity in civic and parish situations, as well as the many religions of the world. All people, regardless of race or ethnic origin, can be co-heirs with Christ.

### ROSTERS FOR 13/14 JANUARY 2024

**READINGS: Second Sunday in Ordinary Time:** 1st Reading: 1 Sam 3.3b-10, 19; Resp Psalm: Ps 40.1+3a.7-8, 9 (*R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.*); 2nd Reading: 1 Cor 6.13c-15a, 17-20; Gospel: Jn 1.35-42

	Saturday, 6.00pm	Sunday, 10.00am
<b>EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF THE EUCHARIST:</b>	Marie Tjio	Jill McKernan
<b>LECTORS:</b>	Barry Hay	Ollie Armstrong
<b>MASS CO-ORDINATORS:</b>	Marlene & Trevor Fernandes	Terry Egan
<b>MUSIC:</b>	Henry & Netty	Joe & Bernadette
<b>HALL CLEANING:</b>	Summer Break	
<b>COUNTERS:</b>	Mike Delaney, Percy Mendis	
<b>SACRISTANS:</b>	Carmel Adams, Anne Faul	

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility.

Holy Saviour Parish is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and vulnerable adults.

*We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respect to them and their cultures.*

## UNDERSTANDING "FIDUCIA SUPPLICANS"

When people read a news article headline declaring that "Pope Francis approves the blessing of same-sex couples," it is rather easy to get a false impression about what has actually happened.

The word "blessing" can mean different things. What the document describes as "ascending" blessings are when humans give praise to God. But we certainly do not bless God in the same way that God blesses us. The latter is a "descending" blessing, wherein God gives us his grace. Additionally, there is the colloquial use of the term blessing, which means to give one's approval. This is the sense of blessing used when parents give their blessing for their child to marry. Sometimes sense two and sense three can be combined. In the Rite of Holy Matrimony, for example, the priest or deacon may bless the union of the husband and wife by both giving the Church's approval of their marriage bond and asking God to send forth his grace upon them to help them live out their commitments.

The present confusion stems from people thinking that the third meaning of blessing (approval) is either the primary meaning or is at least concomitantly implied alongside the "descending" meaning of the blessing of same-sex couples. This would amount to Pope Francis approving of romantic same-sex relationships and/or offering a descending blessing because such relationships are now condoned. That would, in fact, be contrary to the Catholic faith.

As already mentioned, the DDF declaration is aware of the possibility of scandal if blessings are given to same-sex couples in an improper way and explicitly says such scandal must be avoided. As one example, it insists, "precisely to avoid any form of confusion or scandal, when the prayer of blessing is requested by a couple in an irregular situation, even though it is expressed outside the rites prescribed by the liturgical books, this blessing should never be imparted in concurrence with the ceremonies of a civil union, and not even in connection with them. Nor can it be performed with any clothing, gestures, or words that are proper to a wedding. The same applies when the blessing is requested by a same-sex couple."

Relatedly, the declaration is clear that the third meaning of blessing mentioned above—blessing of approval—is excluded from consideration. It states that when a "descending" blessing is requested by same-sex couples, the scenario where a blessing could be given is a situation in which those requesting it "do not claim a legitimation of their own status," "recognizing themselves to be destitute and in need of his help." Similarly, it says that such a blessing "does not claim to sanction or legitimize anything." Reiterating this point further on, the document proclaims that "there is no intention to legitimize anything." The document, then, is not approving of romantic same-sex relationships. In fact, the document states early on that "the Church does not have the power to impart blessings on unions of persons of the same sex."

Here, I think, is another reason for the confusion: a distinction between blessing a same-sex couple and blessing their union. What does it mean to bless same-sex couples but not bless their unions? If you are blessing a couple, are you not blessing their union? In this case, no! And this is what is understandably difficult for people to immediately comprehend. It is not intuitively obvious that you can bless a couple without blessing or condoning their union. So what kind of blessing are we even talking about, then? What is the purpose? The document describes the kind of blessing it has in mind: "These forms of blessing express a supplication that God may grant those aids that come from the impulses of his Spirit—what classical theology calls 'actual grace'—so that human relationships may mature and grow in fidelity to the Gospel, that they may be freed from their imperfections and frailties, and that they may express themselves in the ever-increasing dimension of the divine love." The term actual grace is defined in the Catechism: "Actual graces refer to God's interventions, whether at the beginning of conversion or in the course of the work of sanctification".

Actual grace, as distinct from sanctifying grace (which is habitual), is divine assistance given to help one do the right thing. Such a blessing, then, is bestowed upon those who recognize that they are struggling to do the right thing and are asking God for the grace to do the right thing. Thus, the declaration suggests that, "in a brief prayer preceding this spontaneous blessing, the ordained minister could ask that the individuals have God's light and strength to be able to fulfill his will completely." Such a blessing asks for God's "help to live better, and also to invoke the Holy Spirit so that the values of the Gospel may be lived with greater faithfulness."

So what does this all mean, in the end? Essentially, it means that the Church responds to the requests of people who are in objectively sinful and disordered situations (either same-sex relationships or other irregular situations, like those who are divorced and invalidly "remarried") with a prayer that God may help them to overcome sin, to live holier lives, and even "to be guided to a greater understanding of his plan of love and of truth." People in these situations may often know that their relationship is sinful but have a hard time understanding it or struggle to find the strength to rectify the situation. The document repeatedly mentions that the request is for those who approach with humility and who recognize their need for divine assistance in the face of their sinfulness and is not for those who are seeking legitimization of their sinful behavior. Similar blessings are given to those struggling with addiction who are seeking help in overcoming their addiction and not those seeking to justify it. In such cases, the fact that a person has an addiction is not being blessed or celebrated but the disordered circumstance is a relevant factor for the kind of blessing offered and for the purpose of a blessing conferred upon an addict. (Although, there are formal blessings for those struggling with addiction, which this document prohibits for same-sex couples. The blessings dealt with here are in response to spontaneous requests and so ritualized versions are not to be given.)

The legitimate worry that some Catholics have is that these nuanced explanations will not be evident in practice in all instances. There is concern that couples will ask for blessings without the proper dispositions envisioned and outlined in the document and/or that clergy may provide such blessings in a manner contrary to what the document actually says. In other words, the fear is that there will be abuses that give the impression that homosexual activity or irregular (same-sex or otherwise) relationships are themselves being condoned. To avoid this scandal, pastors and other clergy are going to have to ensure that what they are requesting from God is divine assistance to repent and be faithful to the Gospel. Any form of blessing that gives the scandalous impression that same-sex unions are licit is in direct violation of the DDF's declaration. This fact needs to be made clear, otherwise scandal and confusion will abound against the explicit wishes of the Holy See.

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 60.1-6**

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you!  
For darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but the Lord will arise upon you,  
and his glory will appear over you.  
Nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.  
Lift up your eyes and look around;  
they all gather together, they come to you;  
your sons shall come from far away,  
and your daughters shall be carried  
on their nurses' arms.  
Then you shall see and be radiant;  
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,  
because the abundance of the sea  
shall be brought to you,  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.  
A multitude of camels shall cover you,  
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all those from Sheba shall come.  
They shall bring gold and frankincense,  
and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Ps 72.1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13**

**R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

Give the king your justice, O God,  
and your righteousness to a king's son.  
May he judge your people with righteousness,  
and your poor with justice.

In his days may righteousness flourish  
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.  
May he have dominion from sea to sea,  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him  
tribute, may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.  
May all kings fall down before him,  
all nations give him service.

For he delivers the needy when they call,  
the poor and those who have no helper.  
He has pity on the weak and the needy,  
and saves the lives of the needy.

**R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

**SECOND READING: Ephesians 3.2-3a, 5-6**

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

Surely you have already heard  
of the commission of God's grace  
that was given me for you,  
and how the mystery was made known to me  
by revelation.  
In former generations  
this mystery was not made known to humanity  
as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and  
prophets by the Spirit:  
that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs,  
members of the same body,  
and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus  
through the gospel.

The word of the Lord.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

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 pay homage to the king.*

