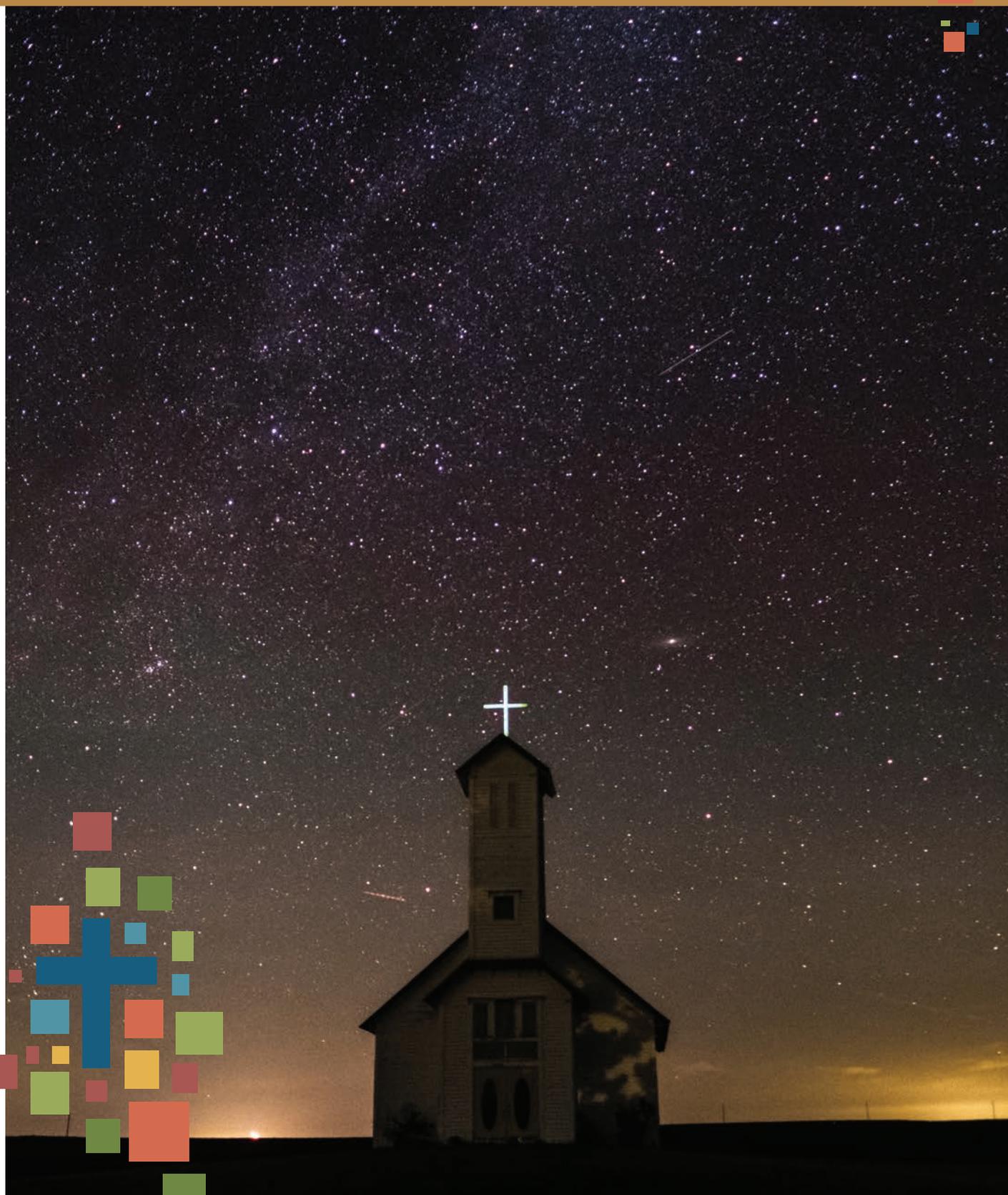
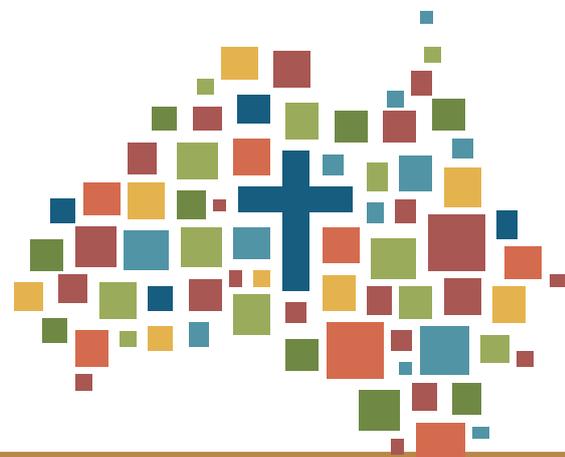


Towards Plenary Council 2020 -2021

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day 2018





From the Readings

Vigil of Christmas December 24

Gospel Matthew 1:22-23 Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us.'

Christmas During The Night

First Reading Isaiah 9:5-7 For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him: Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace. Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end, for his royal power, which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity.

Gospel Luke 2:6-8. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

Christmas At Dawn

Gospel Luke 2:19-20. As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen; it was exactly as they had been told.

Christmas During the Day

Gospel John 1:14. The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Reflections

Christ is born. He is born to us. And, he is born today. For Christmas is not merely a day like every other day. It is a day made holy and special by a sacred mystery. It is not merely another day in the weary round of time. Today, eternity enters into

Towards Plenary Council 2020 -2021

time, and time, sanctified, is caught up into eternity. Today, Christ, the Eternal Word of the Father, who was in the beginning with the Father, in whom all things were made, by which all things consist, enters into the world which he created...

(Thomas Merton, 'Seasons of Creation' in Bridges, Advent and Christmas, 48-49)

If we truly intend to walk among contemporary challenges, the decisive condition is to maintain a fixed gaze on Jesus Christ, to pause in contemplation and in adoration of his Face. If we accept his way of thinking, of living and of relating, we will never tire of translating the Synod work into guidelines and paths for the pastoral care of the person and of the family. Indeed, every time we return to the source of the Christian experience, new paths and undreamed-of possibilities open up. (Pope Francis, during the Meeting on the Family, Rome, 4 Oct 2014).

If only we Christians, charged with the terrible responsibility of bearing the name of Christ, if only we could at least really behave like brothers and sisters... we who are brave and rash enough to bear the name of Christ, what about us who call ourselves Christians? What a responsibility we have!

(Helder Camara, 'Essential Writngs', 136)



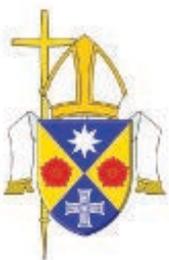
A Christmas Blessing

May the love of the newborn Christ surround you,
and release in you compassion and care for others;
may the joy of the Holy Family enrich you
in your travelling through life, and in your discoveries;
may the hope of the baby of Bethlehem direct you
in your birthing, and in your departing;
may the insight of the Carpenter from Nazareth challenge you
in your struggles, and in your complacency;
and may the Peace of the risen Christ empower you
in your hearts, in your homes, communities, and in all your longings:
And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you, your families
and all in the family of God's creation,
now, throughout this Christmastime, and forevermore. Amen.

(‘A Christmas Blessing’ by Edgar Ruddock, 600 Blessings, p 135).



ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS 1622 - GERARD VAN HONTHORST



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SANDHURST

Prepared for Advent 2018 Year C by: Adult Faith Education Sandhurst, PO Box 201 Bendigo, Vic, 3552. Email: adultfaith@sandhurst.catholic.org.au.

Acknowledgements: Dom Helder Camara in *Dom Helder Camara: Essential Writings*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009; Thomas Merton, 'Seasons of Creation' in *Bridges to contemplative living with Thomas Merton*, Advent and Christmas. Ed J Montaldo & R.G. Toth, Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2010; Edgar Ruddock, 'A Christmas Blessing' in *600 Blessings and Prayers from Around the World*, p137. Compiled by Geoffrey Duncan, Mystic, CT: Twentythird Publications, 2005.