

# ST PIUS X, RAIWAQA, PARISH NEWSLETTER

TO RESTORE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST

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## FEAST OF MARY MOTHER OF GOD: NEW YEAR'S DAY 01/01/17

### Sunday and Weekday Mass Schedule

**Sundays:** 7:00 am & 8:30 am

**Weekday** 6:30 pm - [Monday to Friday]

**Saturday & Public Holidays:** - 8.30am.

**Wednesday** Fijian Mass [Misa Vakaviti]

**Thurs Holy Hour,** Adoration & Benediction: 5.00pm – 6pm

**Holy days** 7:00 am. & 7:00 pm. except Christmas & New Year.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confessions:** - Friday & Saturdays after Mass.

**Baptisms:** The 8.30am Mass on the first Sunday of the month is reserved for Baptisms. Arrangements to be made by parents seeking the sacrament of Baptism from the Parish Priest before commencing session with Baptism Helpers.

**Matrimony:** Those preparing for marriage must contact a priest at least 3 months before and are required to undertake preparation sessions. Guidelines available at the Parish Office. **RCIA:** Session every Sunday after the 7am mass.

### Reflection on today's Feast – Solemnity of Mary Mother of God: What she treasured!

Ever since the 4th century, our Church, after celebrating the birth of the Saviour, has asked a blessing on the New Year under the maternal protection of Mary, Mother of the Saviour and our Mother. At the Council of Ephesus (451), Mary, the mother of Jesus was proclaimed as *Mother of God*. Under this noble title she is still honoured by most Christians around the world, and today's feast invites us to lay our hopes and plans for the 'new-starting year' in her motherly care. We entrust to her our personal concerns and those of our era, with all its conflicts and glaring injustices, the unequal wealth and opportunity, the war in Syria and Iraq; in short, all that troubles peace and fairness in our world at this time. Today on the feast of the Holy Mother of God we see Mary *marvelling* at what has happened, *treasuring* the events of Christmas in her memory, and *pondering* them in her heart. The image is that of the contemplative woman who ponders the marvels the Almighty has done for her and for all people. She ponders in response to what the shepherds said to her. Those simple, humble shepherds had preached the gospel to her, repeating what had been told to them by the angels. "Today in the town of David, a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." It is this good news, this gospel that she treasured and pondered over. The same gospel has been handed on to us, and we are invited to treasure it, to ponder on it and to respond to it, as Mary did. Today, New Year's Day, is a day when many feel drawn to make good resolutions. What better New Year's resolution could we make today than that of adopting Mary's stance before the grace of God? Today's feast invites us to share in Mary's sense of awe and wonder before God's merciful love, made known to us in Christ, her son. As we look towards the New Year, which begins today, we ask Mary to help us to treasure the gospel as she did, so that Christ might come to others through us as he came to us through Mary.

**In Loving Memory: Antonio (Tony) Raisele**, (81) Nairai Rd Raiwaqa died on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> Dec. His funeral took place on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> Dec. to Nasinu Cemetery after Requiem Mass in St Pius X Church. **Nikotemo Limoni** (47) 6 Howell Road, after a tragic road accident on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec. burial to Nasinu Cemetery on 30<sup>th</sup> Dec after Requiem Mass in Holy Eucharist Parish Laucala Bay. **Emele Vakacegu Buludrau**, (65) Aunt of Pauliasi, Good Lane, buried on 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2016 in Nasinu Cemetery after funeral service in the Parish Hall. May they rest in Peace

**Congratulations on their Wedding:** Lucia Maria Angeline Richmond (Ba) and Ezral Zeeion Zeeard (Nausori) who were married here in St Pius X, Church, yesterday 31<sup>st</sup> Dec. 2016. They are wished a long and happy married life together.

**Summary of the Sacraments Administered in the Parish During 2016:** We also say a big 'Thank You' to all those who prepared our youth and young adults for the sacraments during the year; to our Sunday School teachers of the First Holy Communion and Confirmation Classes; to our Baptism and Marriage instructors and those who accompanied and conducted the RCIA programme in the parish. We publish here today the numbers who received the Sacraments in the parish in 2016: **Thirty Five (35) children were baptised** during the year in comparison to 46 last year. **Twenty Nine (29) Children received their 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion**, in the month of November. There were no Confirmations last year. There were **eleven (11) Church Weddings** in comparison to 9 last year. There were **Twenty two (22) Deaths** this year in comparison to 19 last year. While three (3) were received into full communion with the Church at the Easter Ceremonies this year. That is the Sacramental Summary of events in St Pius's X Parish, Raiwaqa in 2016. Let God be praised.

**The Catholic Times: Community Leaders are requested to be Responsible for the Collection of the Catholic Times from the Parish Office and sell it for \$1.00 per copy in their respective communities. Distribution as follows:**

St Cecilia (1b) – 25 copies; St Joseph the Worker (2) – 15 copies; St Joan of Arc (3) – 10 copies;

St Peter Chanel (4a) – 30 copies; St Patrick's (4b) – 20 copies; St John the Baptist (4c) – 15 copies; St Michael's (5a) – 20 copies;

St Columban's (5b) – 30 copies; St Paul's (6) – 15 copies; St Jacob's (7a) – 10 copies; St Theresa of Child Jesus (7b) – 10 copies.

**Analysis of the Christmas Celebrations:** The two visiting priests, Fr David Arms and Fr Frank Hoare were impressed with our celebrations on Christmas Eve. However there were areas that could have been done better. The following is for the Liturgy Commission, the Parish Choir and indeed for all of us to consider for future major celebrations:

- There was no effort made to create a reflective and prayerful atmosphere before the Celebrations started. The putting out of the lights helped a bit, but no one planned it.
- The half hour of carols before Mass was disjointed and staggered – Time lapse between carols seemed too long. The tuning of guitars between each carol would seem to be more important than singing the praises of God.
- It would have been helpful to have someone introduce the liturgy for the night and welcome the congregation. Perhaps too many symbols used at the beginning of the Mass – Blessing of the Crib – Symbol for Jesse Tree & white Candle for Wreath. Perhaps a few more overhead slides would have been helpful here in this case.
- During the Mass the Choir were excellent. But they only sang one hymn at the time of Communion – and so many people present for Communion on the night. At the Offertory a Carol was sung – which may not have been appropriate then.
- The Ushers (whose ministry is one of Welcoming and inviting people in and showing visitors to their places) were in short supply on the night. They must be more active and their presence must be noticed. Perhaps we need many more Ushers in the parish. So new volunteers will be welcomed. Thanks to the few that turned up on the night and for service rendered.
- The entire celebration should aim at lifting people's spirits and creating an atmosphere of joy, peace and good to be present.

Thanks again to all who made our Christmas Celebration a spiritual success. So many people put in so many hours of preparations so the Parish could worthily celebrate the Birth of Christ 2016. We were probably as good as and better than most parishes in Fiji.

#### **Working Towards our forthcoming 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Parish in 2018.**

1. After the recent heavy rain our parish halls were badly flooded due to the many missing louver blades in the windows and the many broken louver frames in both halls - in consultation with the Financial Council – it was decided to change all broken frames and frames not working in the both Halls and indeed all around the entire parish centre, meeting rooms and parish office. A contract to do this work was signed with Narend Lal for **\$8,800.00** – (already budgeted for maintenance). The work is well on the way and should be completed by next Friday.
2. The Plans for the renewal of the Boundary Fence around the Church Compound has been submitted to Suva City Council by the 'Men of the Parish Club' for their approval or alterations. It will be then be submitted to the Archbishop and Copas for their approval. Hopefully work can start on this project by Feb 2017.
3. Parish Contributions to FNPF and 15% Archdiocesan Tax are all up to date and paid in – thanks to members of the Financial Council (unlike last year when we were trying to figure out how much arrears we had to pay in both cases).
4. Our fixed Deposits with ANZ Bank at 1.7% interest has been broken and reinvested with Unit Trust of Fiji @5.9%
5. Perhaps the Parish will be seeking to employ a full time Handyman and a New Night Watchman in 2017.
6. The 2017 Parish Budget has gone through all preparatory stages and is ready for endorsement by Parish AGM on a date to be decided on in Feb. **A lot of money will be needed during the next 18 months – to continue with the long overdue parish maintenance. There is always a fear that we won't have enough to carry out all the maintenance needed.**

**Parish Disaster Management Team:** The Archbishop is adamant that these are formed in each Parish and of course he is right. We have not formed one in Raiwaqa yet. We are seeking Volunteers for this. There will be a meeting and discussion on this in the Parish Hall on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> Jan 2017. Please help us to Form our Parish Disaster Team. During the recent heavy rain – some families of the Parish had to move to Evacuation Centres – Did anyone from the Parish Care – 'NO'. A week ago a young man from the Parish was killed in a tragic motor crash – Did anyone from the Parish Care – 'NO'. So the need is great and will be always ongoing for all kinds of unexpected tragic events in life. Thanks.

**Overseas Donor of Reading Glasses (Specs)** Is prepared and can provide these glasses for anyone knowing their prescription for their eyes. If interested leave your name in the Parish Office or with Priest immediately.

**Christmas Collections - Thanks and Appreciation:** For your most generous Christmas Collections. Christmas Eve Collection amounted to \$1,427.40; Christmas Morning Collection amounted to \$502.60 Once again we thank members of Community 4c, St John the Baptist for animating the liturgy & church cleaning throughout that difficult Christmas week. We also recognise and thank Community 5a, St Michael's for their liturgy animation of last week – the week of New Year's. The parish can be proud of all the good singing and good liturgies over this holiday season. Vinaka Vakalevu all.

**Fr. McEvoy**, would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those for their Christmas cards, gifts of food & fruit and not forgetting to mention the gifts of shirts for Christmas. You are all so generous – Thanks a million.

**Reading coming week:** Sun [1/1/17] Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God: Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2: 16-21; Mon [2/1/17] *Sts Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen:* 1 John 2:22-28; John 1:19-28; Tue [3/1/17] 1 John 2:29-36; John 1: 29-34; Wed [4/1/17] 1 John 3:7-10; John 1:35-42; Thurs [5/1/17] 1 John 3:11-21; John 1: 43-51; Fri [6/1/17] 1 John 5:14-21; John 3:1-11; **Sun [8/1/17] The Epiphany of the Lord:** Isaiah 60: 1-6; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Matt 2: 1-12.

**Let us start this New Year by recalling the ancient blessing from the Book of Numbers:** *"The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace"*. May these words of strength, courage and hope accompany our journey through the year opening up before us. This is not an illusory hope based on human, frail promises, nor a naïve hope, which presumes that the future will be better simply because it is the future. Rather, it is a hope based on God's blessing, containing the greatest message of good wishes there can be, and this is the message which the Church brings to each of us today – the First Day of 2017.