

**Christmas Message 2012 from Fr Thang:**

**For unto us a child is born (Is 9:6)**

Dear friends,

The birth of Jesus is perhaps the greatest story ever told. God became one of us to share our human life. Yet it is totally surprising in the way he entered into our world. He did not choose a rich family to be born in. He was not born in the hospital like most of us where we have lots of medical equipment to care for mums in the case of emergency. When Jesus came on earth, he came clothed, not in the extraordinary, but in the ordinary, perhaps too ordinary: Our Lady wrapped the baby Jesus in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no other place to be born in. This was how God wanted to enter into our life in ordinary ways.

When I reflect on this wonderful story in the light our parish values, that are really Jesus' values of inclusiveness, hospitality, service and mission, I recognise that many parishioners in Ivanhoe have been lived out these values in their ordinary lives. In particular, I would like to thanks the parish staff, volunteers and cleaners, Pastoral Leadership Team (PLT) and PLT Executive, the Finance Committee, the three school communities and their school boards, parish hospitality and support groups, the multiple liturgical groups (including Baptism Preparation team, three sacristan groups, lectors, Communion Ministers, altar servers, choirs and musicians, collectors and counters), Playgroup Coordinator, Communication team, Outreach Group, Maintenance Group and the Korean Catholic Community. All these groups and committees have regular meetings and functions, for instance the PLT Executive meets fortnightly at 7:30 am, the Liturgy Group meets on a weekly basis or our parish website is updated weekly through the Parish Communication Coordinator. Thanks to all members of these groups and committees for your commitment and dedication, and to your families for their support.

My prayer is that 2013 will deepen our parish values of inclusiveness, hospitality, service and mission. In a spirit of ecumenism, I would like to leave you and those who will come to your homes as relations, friends, and guests, a Christmas blessing from Aub Podlich, a former Pastor of Bethany Church:

May the feet of God walk with you and his hand hold you tight.  
May the eyes of God rest on you and his ears hear your cry.  
May the smile of God be for you and his breath give you life.  
May the child of God grow in you and his love bring you home safely.

*(1983. Aub Podlich, a former Pastor of Bethany Church)*