



From Our Vicar

Rev. Wayne Walters

**'Glory to God in the Highest
and on earth, peace to those on whom his favour rests.'** Luke 2.14

So the angels declared to the shepherds. This was the moment the faithful in Israel earnestly awaited. The visitation of God to his people as long prophesied – 'But you Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.

He will stand and shepherd his flock...his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And he will be their peace.'
Micah 5:2-5

Clearly this has been fulfilled historically in Jesus. His fame has spread over the earth; his impact upon the development of nations has been greater than any other single individual in history. And while we don't see international peace, it remains true that he -Jesus – has brought deep peace to millions and has brought peace through the persistent efforts and prayers of his people in so many circumstances. Martin Luther King Jnr is an example with his non -violent resistance of racist laws; much of the overthrow of communism in Eastern Bloc countries owed its success to persistent preaching and prayers and leadership by priests who refused to be covered by the autocracy. The end of apartheid in South Africa and overthrow of President Marcos in the Philippines are all instances of surprisingly peaceful regime change strongly led by Christian prayer vigils and church-based mediators and spokespeople.

It is rather the rejection of Jesus' ways that lays behind so much turmoil – his teaching to love our neighbours as ourselves, to forgive others and to love our enemies; his call for his followers to be ambassadors of reconciliation and his example of mercy and compassion. God has done his part. Our part is to receive the gift of his Son and the new life available to us through opening our hearts and lives to the One who loves us, who took on human flesh to become one of us, and who gave himself for us.

God bless you and draw you closer to himself this Christmas. *Wayne*

Wayne & Roslyn would like to express our love and appreciation for the loving expressions of kindness, prayers and encouragement, and beautiful and thoughtful cards and gifts we have received. May God richly bless you dear sisters and brothers of St Michael's as you variously celebrate Christmas, in honour of Christ our King!