

THE VOICE

12th January 2014

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, Year A

Psalter Week 1



CHRISTMASTIME

OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

- **Recently deceased:**
Daniel Furness, Doris Moodey.
- **Anniversaries:**
Michael Hill, Patrick Wedesweiler, Irina Marsic, Nora Houghton, Br. Elgar Murphy, Caterina Esposito.
- **Remembrances:**
Eli and Paul Houghton.
- **And the sick:**
Helen & David Hopkins, Mary Scarfe, Anne Unger, Anne de Graaff, Michael Cox, Caterina La Creca, Susie Simmons, John Osborne, Kate O'Connor.

Good not Bad News

Spike Milligan, in his hilarious *Adolf Hitler: My Part in his Downfall*, tells us about a fellow recruit who was much given to religion: 'Like most fanatics, he didn't enjoy religion, he suffered from it.' We all know what he means.

When I told you recently that our web site had been hacked (and we are still struggling to make it accessible again), I could have added that our efforts to preach the gospel are being hacked. I have already told you about the "chain letter prayer" type who puts out superstitious pamphlets assuring "success" in prayer if certain prayers are said a certain number of times. I can assure you that as soon as I see them, I tear them up.

Another sort of hacker is the one who leaves out tracts giving horrifying details of hell and purgatory. When I find them, they meet a similar fate. Why?

One reason is that their content is entirely speculative. They generally rely on private revelations. As we all know, public revelation is sufficient for salvation, because it is addressed to the whole Church and to all mankind, with God "unveiling" himself so that we are aware of the ordinary means of salvation.

Private revelation, on the other hand, if true at all, binds only the persons to whom it is made. It has no consequences for anyone else. You can believe it if you like, but you don't have to.

A tract called *Cry of a Lost Soul* belongs to this category; it has appeared here before and now it is back. It purports to be the account of a dream which a young German lady had about a friend who (it turns out) has gone to hell after death in a car accident.

The truth is that a great deal of what is confidently asserted about the "four last things" is sheer speculation. On this last day of Christmastide, as we look back on the seasons of Advent and Christmas, we note that the spirit of these seasons is one of hope. Here we have revealed truth, not speculation. Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell - these are realities to inspire hope, not terror. We do not lead good lives because we are terrified, but because we love God and neighbour. We don't suffer from our faith, we derive hope and joy from it.

Jesus came to bring Good News, not Bad News. That is our second reason (see above). Look at the readings of today's Mass. Do they not breathe an atmosphere of hope and peace? God's servant 'does not cry out or shout aloud, ... He does not break the crushed reed, nor quench the wavering flame.' And what does Peter say? 'The truth I have now come to realise is that ... anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him.' And Jesus? 'It is fitting that we should .. do all that righteousness demands.'

FR JOHN HILL, P.P.

Inside this issue:

Notices and News	2
Sing in Exultation: The Appeal of Christmas Carols	3
"To fulfil the prophets"	4
Directory	4

Psalm Response

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The Lord will bless his people with his peace.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! The heavens were opened and the Father's voice was heard: this is my beloved Son, hear him. Alleluia!

Around the Parish

Baptisms: We welcome into our Faith community and pray for Patrick O'Keefe, Torah McGuigan and Ellie McEachern who were baptized last Sunday.

Voluntary Church Cleaning Roster 17/1/14: Warren Sparrow, Maria Wickens, Christina Thorsen, Linda Potestas.

Cash Housie every Saturday night at Peninsula Community Centre, Cnr. Ocean Beach Rd. and McMasters Rd. Woy Woy. Games start 7.30pm and finish 10.20pm. Cash Prizes. Ticket sales from 6pm. Proceeds benefit the Parish.

Upcoming event for your diary—we will be holding another 100 game Bingo Marathon day from 2.30pm-10.30pm, Saturday 19th April. Free catering half time. Enquiries: Rob 0427 990 818.

Mary Mac's Place—Christmas 2013: This year Mary Mac's

Place catered for around 250 people who thoroughly enjoyed a Christmas lunch of turkey, ham and all the trimmings which were kindly donated by members of the community. A highlight of the day for the guests was the arrival of Santa who distributed gifts to those present. Especially appreciated was the gift of a Christmas hamper which was distributed to over 200 guests on the day.

The project co-ordinator, Christine Burge, commented "The gratitude of the people was very moving particularly at this time of the year. Without the generous support of the parishioners of the St. John the Baptist Parish and the wonderful support from members of the community this event could not occur. It also was good to see that the volunteers were acknowledged with gifts from mem-

bers of the community'.

Listing of the Sick in the Parish Newsletter: Permission must be given to publish names of those who are sick and asking for prayers, so as not to contravene the Federal Government's Privacy Act.

Piety Stall now selling 'Living Faith' quarterly booklets. \$2. Josephite Calendars for 2014 and Columban Calendars 2014 also available.

A Cuppa and a Chat: A group of seniors meet in the Leo Mahon room 3rd Monday of each month due next Monday, 20th January, 1.30pm-3pm. If you would like to join us, please phone Bernard 4341 6343. Transport provided.

Thank You to all parishioners who remembered me in their prayers during my recent illness following my fall.
Joan Booth.

Social Justice

Two Great Gifts: The Sisters of St. Joseph have traditionally worked in Australia and New Zealand, but also in New Guinea. We have projects in Peru and Timor-Leste.

The efforts of the Josephites have always been directed to the poor. From St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop's time we have tried to address poverty by practical ways of helping people to help themselves, and one of our main focuses has been education.

Through education people are enabled to grasp their destiny with their own hands

and their own brains. Education accords people the dignity of acknowledging that they have within themselves the resources of intellect and skill to carve a life for themselves which befits their dignity as human beings and children of God.

There is almost universal education in Australia. Those who cannot read or write are the exception which proves the rule.

What is education? It is a gift. Even if we slogged night and day for years to acquire an education, it is still a gift be-

cause the means were at our disposal.

Another gift we have is that of living in a democracy. We have been handed democracy on a plate and we enjoy among the best political and judicial systems in the world, courtesy of Britain. These are gifts, and gifts are for the community, for humanity. They are not for ourselves alone.

Sr. Susan Connelly, r.s.j.
To be continued next week.

From the Diocese and Beyond

Pilgrimages 2014: Fr. Wim Hoekstra, Parish Priest of Glenbrook, is organising two pilgrimages in 2014: from July 7-23 taking in France and Italy (Paris, Lisieux, Lourdes, Rome, Assisi, Siena, Florence) and from September 19th – October 4th. (September school holidays) for Israel and Jordan. Information afternoon: 9 February. For further details, contact Fr. Wim on 4739 8928 or wim@stfinbars.org.au or check website www.stfinbars.org.au. Limited places available.

2014 Pilgrimage to Poland, Italy & Lourdes (France): Fr. Tadeusz Seremet SDS, Parish Priest at St. Patrick's Gosford, will lead a pilgrimage departing Sydney, September 22, 2014 and returning October 11, or perhaps stay on and visit Paris, returning October 14. Only \$7,200 or \$8,180 if you would to include Paris! A deposit is required by February 23, to secure your place. Itinerary and application available by request from St. Patrick's Parish on 4325 1042.

Catholic Care previously Centacare now located in Super Clinic, 3 Mary MacKillop

Drive, Woongarah. 2259. ...just off Sparks Road opposite Mary MacKillop College. Phone: 4356 2600. Counselling, Family Dispute Counselling, Staying Home, Leaving Violence, Parenting and Relationship Education, Ageing and Disability Respite, Men and Family Relationships.

Filipino Mass will be held in honour of The Infant Jesus. Sunday, 19th January, 12 noon. St. Cecilia's Church, Byron Street, Wyong. Please bring a communal dish to share and BYO drinks. Everyone welcome!



Sing in Exultation

Ken Canedo

November 29, 1964. The first English Mass was introduced, and there was much anticipation in the pews. But that lively interest was cooled down somewhat at parishes where the people were asked to sing. "Please stand and open your *People's Mass Book* to hymn number T-1," said a nervous-looking song leader in the sanctuary, "and let us sing our entrance song, 'Praise to the Lord.'" The organ swelled. The cantor waved a hand. And the people just stood there and stared.

Welcome to Catholic liturgy 1964. Progressive parishes may have begun congregational singing weeks before the official change and were better prepared, but most parishes were not. Singing? That was for the choir during high Mass, or for Protestants. Catholics were not supposed to sing during liturgy — or so we thought.

I wrote a feature for the June-July issue (ML 40:5) on the history of pre-Vatican II Catholic singing, which was primarily at devotions and low Mass. Admittedly, our repertoire was thin (though the World War II generation has cherished memories of favourite hymns from that period), and that devotional music was generally not sung at the new English Mass. Considering the lack of music and a centuries-old practice that essentially discouraged singing and active participation, how could liturgists expect Catholics to suddenly burst into song on that landmark First Sunday of Advent?

I believe the assembly's singing was in a quiet Advent wait: Catholics finally found their singing voice four weeks later. As there was no Vigil Mass yet, Christmas Midnight Mass was our first opportunity to let go of our inhibitions. "Please stand," said the cantor, "and open your *People's Mass Book* to hymn number C-2, 'O Come, All Ye Faithful.'" Now *that* was more like it! Everybody knew that song, and we sang it with all our hearts. As that liturgy unfolded, we readily sang such beloved Christmas favourites as "Away in a Manger," "Silent Night," and "Joy to the World."

What did we learn from that experience? Pastoral musicians realized that people will sing if they know the songs. But I also like to think that there was something wonderfully poetic about the way Christmas carols broke through our reluctance to sing.

We know that very little hospitality was extended to the Christ Child and his family. According to Luke's Gospel, Mary endured a tiring, long journey to Bethlehem late in her pregnancy. Joseph looked in vain for a room in a town overcrowded by Caesar Augustus's census decree. The newborn's first bed was a feeding trough for farm animals.

In these meagre circumstances, the miracle of the incarnation broke through. The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us! A choir of angels sang out, "Glory to God in the highest!" — arguably the very first Christmas carol — and how magnificent it must have been! But let's take a close look at that: this divine symphony of the heavenly host was performed not for emperors or kings but for shepherds — smelly sheep caretakers who were considered the lowest of the low. Luke deliberately framed the arrival of the Messiah not in expected royal trappings but in poverty. The shepherds were undoubtedly amazed, and the Gospel speaks of their fear. But after seeing the child in Bethlehem, these lowly ones gladly announced the humble Christ, sharing the song of the angels with all who would hear.

The invitation to join the angelic choir is extended to us at the preface of every eucharistic prayer, but it took a while before "Gloria in Excelsis Deo" would be sung by the people.

In his book *Christmas Customs and Traditions*, Clement Miles writes that the first hymns for Christmas appeared in the fourth century as austere theological statements on the doctrine of the incarnation. The Latin chant *Cored Natus ex Parentis*, rendered in English as

(Continued on page 4)



Our Baptism, like the Lord's, is a consecration to service: "there is a fundamental obligation arising from the Sacrament of Baptism that people place their gifts, their resources — their selves — at God's service in and through the Church."



Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula

Woy Woy, Woy Woy South, Umina, Umina Beach, Ettalong, Ettalong Beach, Koolewong, Blackwall, Booker Bay, St Hubert's Island, Empire Bay, Horsfield Bay, Pearl Beach, Patonga, Woy Woy Bay, Daley's Point, Phegan's Bay and Wondabyne.

St John the Baptist Church, corner of Blackwall and Victoria Roads, Woy Woy

Parish Office Ethel Cox Parish Centre
P.O. Box 264 100 Blackwall Road.
54 Victoria Road
WOY WOY N.S.W. 2256

Phone: (02) 4341 1073
Fax: (02) 4341 0214
Email: parish@woywoycatholic.org.au

"He must increase, I must decrease"

Dr John Hill, *Parish Priest*

Fr Stephen Wayoyi, A.J. *Assistant Priest*

Office Staff: Helen Cameron, Pamela Burton & Margaret Cooper

Parish Nurse: Ellen Bevan

Office Hours: 9.30 a.m.—4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday

Deadline for The Voice: 3.30 p.m. Wednesday

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Vigil Saturday 5pm; Sunday 7.30am, 9.15am, 6pm.

WEEKDAY MASS TIMES

Monday–Friday 7.45am (Monday & Tuesday with Lauds); Saturday and Public Holidays 9am; First Friday 4pm (with Anointing of the Sick).

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Friday after morning Mass; First Friday, 3.30 p.m.; Saturday 11.30am; & 4.30pm; Sunday 7.00 a.m.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

1st & 3rd Sundays, 11am; 5th Sunday, during 9.15 a.m. Mass.

Godparents are examples of faith to the child. They must be confirmed and practising Catholics, at least sixteen years old. If there is at least one godparent, a non-Catholic may act as a Christian witness. Parents and godparents must attend a pre-baptismal instruction, held on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month at 9.30 a.m.

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Every Saturday after 9am Mass until 10am; every Monday until 9am (Public Holidays 10.15am).

PARISH CHOIR—Practice Wednesday nights in the church, 7 p.m.
Enquiries: 4341 3367.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, 21a Dul-kara Rd South Woy Woy 2256. p 024341 0884 f 0243 445049.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST YOUTH GROUP For information and events contact Sam French 042 244 9539.

CATHOLIC CARE Counselling and Family Relationships 4356 2600.

MARY MAC'S PLACE Volunteers provide nutritious, freshly cooked meals and information and referrals to appropriate community services. Open Monday to Friday, 11am-1pm, at the Ethel Cox Parish Centre. For more information, please contact Christine on 4341 0584.

CASH HOUSIE every Saturday night at Peninsula Community Centre, Cnr Ocean Beach Rd & McMasters Rd, Woy Woy. Games start at 7.30 p.m. and finish 10.20 p.m., cash prizes. Ticket sales from 6.00 p.m. Proceeds benefit Parish. Enquiries Rob: 0427 990818.

Sing in Exultation

(continued)

(Continued from page 3)

"Of the Father's Love Begotten," is one of the few hymns of this period still sung today. But it wasn't until the 13th century, under the influence of St. Francis of Assisi, that carols in the vernacular grew in popularity. These carols were generally sung at homes and public events, but not in church. The Protestant Reformation, with its emphasis on worship in the language of the people, welcomed carols into their churches, following the example of Martin Luther, who was himself a prolific hymn composer.

The 19th century saw the emergence of the canon of carols that we sing today, with songs coming from many countries: "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" from England; "Stille Nacht" from Austria; "Adeste Fidelis" with

melody from Portugal; "Cantique de Noel" from France; "Fum, Fum, Fum" from Catalonia in Spain; "O Little Town of Bethlehem" from the United States; and many more. Christmas carols are truly the embodiment of the responsorial psalm for Epiphany: "Lord, every nation on earth will adore you" (Ps 72).

Catholics knew and loved these carols but did not sing them at Mass until 1964. The beautiful music of Christmas melted our frozen self-consciousness and helped us to find our voice. This Christmas, may we join the angels in lifting up the lowly of our world. **ML**

Ken Canedo is a composer and writer who serves as pastoral musician at Holy Trinity Parish in Beaverton, Ore. He is the author of *Keep the Fire Burning: The Folk Mass Revolution* (Pastoral Press). *Ministry & Liturgy*, copyright © Resource Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission under licence number 115216.

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Diocese of
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