

# THE VOICE

29th December 2013

Feast of the Holy Family, Year A

Psalter Week 1



## CHRISTMASTIME

### OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

- **Recently deceased:**  
Colin Reeves, Adrienne Wentzel, Bon Andersen, Thelma Dawson, Graham Robert Field.
- **Anniversaries:**  
Catherine Corrigan, Augute Meyer, Beverley McMahon, Barrie David McKeowen.
- **Remembrances:**  
Arthur and Muriel Brown and the Brown family.
- **And the sick:**  
Helen & David Hopkins, Mary Scarfe, Anne Unger, Anne de Graaff, Pat Cashin, Michael Cox, Caterina La Creca, Susie Simmons, John Osborne, Pat Molloy, Tom Hunter, Baby Aiden Patrick Betts.

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## Octave and Christmastide

Isn't it good, when the Feast of Christmas has passed, to sit down and relax after all the hassle?

We are at present in the Octave of Christmas (which ends on New Year's day) and, after that, there is what is called *Christmastide*. So we have a chance to "take in" the mystery of the Incarnation at greater leisure.

An "octave" is attached to a particularly important feast, in order to spell out its celebration at greater length.

Before the reform of the calendar after Vatican II, there were many octaves. All the major feasts, including those of the apostles, had octaves. The reform reduced the number of octaves to two: those for Christmas and Easter.

Easter is the more important feast, so its octave is entirely devoted to the paschal mystery, with no other feasts occurring. In the Christmas Octave, however, there are a number of feasts, some of which have a long association with the octave, even if they seem to have no immediate connection with the celebration of our Lord's birth.

The Feast of St Stephen, the first martyr, is celebrated on 26th December; that of St John the Apostle and Evangelist on 27th; that of the Holy Innocents on 28th; and the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

(which also incorporates remembrance of the Circumcision of our Lord) on the Octave Day, 1st January. All of them are old feasts, and the connection between the Feast of the Holy Innocents and Christmas Day is obvious enough (even if it took place about two years later and after the Epiphany). There does not seem to be a strong reason why the Feasts of St Stephen and St John should be celebrated at this time, although various "arguments of fittingness" have been proposed from time to time. The Octave Day allows us to associate the Incarnation with the beginning of the New Year.

Today's feast is much more recent. It was instituted by Pope Leo XIII in 1893, and assigned to the Sunday within the then Octave of the Epiphany. In 1969, when the new calendar came into effect, it was moved to the Sunday within the Octave of Christmas. The motive of Leo XIII - of strengthening the Christian family against the constant attacks of secularism - is still valid.

Christmastide runs until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (this year, 12th January), which also acts as the beginning of Ordinary Time. It includes the Solemnity of the Epiphany - the old "twelfth day" of Christmas.

FR JOHN HILL, P.P.

### Psalm Response

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### Gospel Acclamation

*Alleluia, alleluia!* May the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, and the fullness of his message live within you. *Alleluia!*

# Around the Parish

**New Year 2014:** Fr. Hill and Fr. Stephen wish everyone God's Blessing for a happy and peaceful New Year.

Fr. Stephen will be on holidays at home in Kenya. He carries your greeting and well wishes from our Woy Woy community and Australia. Father looks forward to returning in the New Year. We wish Father a safe holiday and a happy reunion with his family.

**New Year Vigil :** There will be no Mass and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament as in previous years. Usual morning Mass for Wednesday, public holiday will be 9am.

**Parish Office** will be closed New Year's Day. Re-opening Thursday, 2nd January at 9.30 am.

**Anointing of the Sick** will be administered during 4pm Mass this Friday 3rd January.

**'El Shaddai' Prayer Group** meetings for January are 4th, 11th and 25th. Enquiries: Grace Lloyd 4343 1504.

**Mail Scam in Parishes:** The St. Vincent de Paul Society has notified us of a serious mail scam that has been sent to an elderly parishioner at Chatswood under the guise of St. Vincent de Paul Society. The letter is signed on behalf of St. Vincent de Paul Society State President and is asking for an immediate donation of \$5,000. Several follow-up letters have been sent intimating that payment should be made by 31 December. The letter is accompanied by a return-address envelope and it all looks legitimate. The St. Vincent de Paul Society has said this has not been authorized by anyone within the organisation and they will be following it up

with the police. Please make others aware of this as you see fit.

**Volunteer Church Cleaning 3/1/14:** Brian Jordan, Elena Egan, Mary McCumstie, Veronica Jordan.

**Feast of the Holy Family** 30th December. We remember and pray for Terri Hall who passed away on this feast last year.

**A message from an Anonymous Volunteer:**

I have been a volunteer meal deliverer for Meals on Wheels, Woy Woy for 3 years, and the deliveries at Christmas have become special for me due to the wonderful Christmas hampers that you donate to us. I would like to thank you, the congregation of St. John the Baptist Church for your kindness and generosity in this donation to our depot. Many of our clients have very few friends or relatives that visit and do not have the ability, either financially or physically to treat themselves to something special at this time. To receive such a lovely gift is something special for them. As a volunteer, to see the look of joy on their faces and the happiness that they feel in knowing that someone is actually thinking of them at this time, is a magical gift. So on behalf of all the volunteers, thank you all once again. It is wonderful to see the Christian Spirit happening in our community. Have a healthy and happy Christmas!

**Cash Bingo:** Well it has been 10 months now since we moved out of Ettalong into our new premises at Peninsula Community Centre, 93 McMasters Rd. Woy Woy. The new venue offers a comfortable environment, plenty of room, is air conditioned, modern kitchen for the free Tea and Coffee and fitted out

with a new audio visual system. We play 50 games, all prizes are \$100 and \$150 then \$1,000 jackpot at the end (\$2,000 if won in limited calls). Games start 7.30pm and run through until 10.20pm with 2 short breaks, selling tickets from 6.30pm. Dinner can be ordered at the venue and we have a kiosk selling drinks and snacks. This is one of the oldest continuously running sessions in the state and is run completely by parish volunteers and benefits community projects. Enq: Rob 0427 990 818.

**Your 'Used postage stamps' help the Sisters of St. Joseph:**

Mary MacKillop International incorporates the mission work of the Sisters in East Timor and Peru. The Sisters of St. Joseph began their work in Peru more than 30 years ago, focusing on empowering local women to develop skills and earn income to support their families. Projects there include health, education, community mental health, community aged care, support for people with a disability and their carers, support of children through play and learning centres, dental hygiene and care of children. Used postage stamps are sold to provide much-needed funds for the Sisters in their work, so please continue your past support by dropping off your used stamps to the parish office.

**Christmas Card sent to our Priests and the Parish reads:**

Thank you for the great lot of stamps sent during the year. Merry Christmas. Happy New Year 2014, John Althan. Mary MacKillop Missionaries, Peru.

## Social Justice

**Young People in Australia:** The rights of young people are not conceded rights that come to them derived from family or from state: human rights are personal and inalienable.

Good health, affordable housing and equitable, high quality and accessible education and basic to the well-

being of young people, and provide a foundation for stability at all stages of their lives.

**Widening Gap:** The growing inequalities in Australia are especially evident in the particular economic, political and social difficulties faced by young people at this time.

Educational access, vocational training, employment, housing, health (and especially mental health), are particular issues of young people.

**Net Act: A coalition of Catholic Social Justice, Welfare and Education.**



# Scripture Readings

Bruce Janiga

## Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Sunday, December 29

Sir 3:2–6, 12–14  
Ps 128:1–2, 3, 4–5  
Col 3:12–21  
Mt 2:13–15, 19–23

The feast of the Holy Family, relatively new to the church calendar, reminds us that our early relationships in life are formative. Sirach speaks of how God “sets a father in honour over his children” while confirming “a mother’s authority” (v 2). Most of us first experience from our parents what it means to be loved. Eventually our sphere of influence expands, and we develop the ability to give love as well. Today’s feast reminds us that Jesus started out as a member of the family of Joseph and Mary, with all that entails.

Paul’s letter to the Colossians, written from prison, reminds us that in baptism Christ redeems us from our sins. This means that our lives should be lived by following God’s commands. “Seek what is above” (v 1), he writes in the verses before our reading today, which concerns relationships within the community and family. Paul counsels putting on “heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience” (v 12). But most of all, he says, “put on love” (v 14). In the somewhat controversial verse 18, we have Paul speaking as a man of his day, encouraging expected behaviour for his time. Today we are mindful of equality between the sexes, so many would call for a more reciprocal relationship between husband and wife.

In our Gospel, Joseph is presented as the caring father who provides for his wife and son. Obedient to the command of an angel, he takes them to Egypt to avoid Herod’s plan “to destroy” (v 13) the child. For Matthew this episode is a fulfilment of Scripture, as several times in our brief passage things happen “so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled” (v 23). For Matthew, Jesus’ life is the fulfilment of God’s plan.

**For reflection:** How did my early experience of being loved affect the way I understand God’s love for me? How can I, in this coming new year, “put on love” more effectively?

Bruce Janiga, a priest of the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J., teaches Scripture studies at Seton Hall Prep in West Orange, N.J. He is the Sunday assistant at St. Cassian Church in Upper Montclair, N.J. From *Ministry & Liturgy*, copyright © Resource Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission under licence number 115216.

## Mary, Holy Mother of God, Wednesday, January 1, 2014

Nm 6:22–27  
Ps 67:2–3, 5, 6, 8  
Gal 4:4–7  
Lk 2:16–21

In today’s feast honouring Mary as the Mother of God, we acknowledge that her son, Jesus, is also Son of God. Today’s celebration is about mother and child. The Priestly, or Aaronic, Blessing is a traditional blessing prayed over the people of Israel by its priests. Descended from Aaron (Moses’ brother), priests were responsible not only for offering sacrifice on behalf of the people but also for serving as mediators between the Lord and the people. This blessing that was imparted on the people was a reminder of God’s unending care for them.

In the incarnation, humanity is joined with divinity; it is the ultimate act of divine self-revelation. Paul writes that because of this union, Jesus, “born of a woman” (v 4), ransomed us from sin and death. We are no longer slaves, owing God a debt. We have become God’s children by adoption. He tells us in verses preceding our reading that as children we are “heirs according to the promise” God made to Abraham (3:29). As God’s adopted children, we have been given a share in God’s blessings, having “the Spirit of his Son” (v 6) dwelling within us, uniting us with each other and with God.

The shepherds who visit the Christ Child find “the infant lying in the manger” (v 16) as the angels foretold. The logic behind this text says that since the angels were correct about this, they were also correct in identifying the infant as “Christ and Lord,” which we heard them tell the shepherds on Christmas night (Lk 2:1–14). This is truly “good news of great joy / ... for all the people” (v 10). Luke’s infancy narrative highlights Mary’s role, while Matthew’s text focuses more on Joseph. Mary, Luke tells us, “kept all these things, / reflecting on them in her heart” (v 19). As the years move on, she will have other opportunities as the Mother of God to experience God’s grace firsthand, discovering the fuller meaning of the incarnation.

**For reflection:** Do I consider blessings as a gift from God, or do I just take them for granted? How does reflecting on the Gospel stories help me better understand the message they are intended to relay? **ML**




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Joseph’s obedience to God was not a one-time thing. His attention to the angel’s warning kept Jesus from being murdered by Herod and led to the fulfilment of the prophecy that the Messiah would be a Nazorean. Fidelity to God’s will assures the best use of my talents, too!

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# 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 P.O. Box 264  
54 Victoria Road  
WOY WOY N.S.W. 2256

Ethel Cox Parish Centre  
100 Blackwall Road.

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 Dulcara 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.

## Pious Exercises

Paul Turner

Pious exercises are ways that many Christians express their faith either in public or in private. These exercises are not part of the official liturgy of the church, but they harmonize with it. When prayed well, popular devotions stimulate people's faith and help them worship God even better in the liturgy.

These devotions cover a broad range of interests — the sacred heart of Jesus, the immaculate conception of Mary, the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and the rosary, to name but a few. They become "popular" as they spread among people who find them helpful to develop their piety as individuals or in groups. Many pious exercises are shared by a large number of people, and their practice has been passed on from one generation to the next. These developments show the value of such devotions.

Before the Second Vatican Council, pious exercises profoundly formed the spiritual lives of Catholics, partly because they could be prayed in vernacular languages. Although Catholics prayed at Mass when

it was always in Latin, they have participated more fully, consciously, and actively ever since the Mass became available to them in their own tongue. The liturgical renewal appropriately drew Catholics more deeply into the liturgy, which is the most important form of common prayer. Some pious exercises have become less available and less practiced because devotion to the Mass has increased. However, Catholics are still encouraged to develop pious exercises to balance healthy spiritual lives. The Vatican deals with this matter in its *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines*, which indicates that these devotions are at their best when they lead people back to the Mass and other forms of liturgical prayer.

This bulletin insert originally appeared in *Ministry & Liturgy* magazine, a pastoral planning resource used by the worship leaders in your community as an aid for better liturgy. Copyright © 2013 Resource Publications, Inc., 5369 Camden Ave., #260, San Jose, CA 95124, (408) 286-8505. Paul Turner is pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Kansas City, Missouri. A priest of the diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, he holds a doctorate in sacred theology from Sant' Anselmo in Rome.

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[www.woywoycatholic.org.au](http://www.woywoycatholic.org.au)



Diocese of  
Broken Bay