



The Voice

27th November 2016

First Sunday of Advent, Year A

Psalter Week I

ADVENT

OF YOUR CHARITY
PRAY FOR
THE SOULS OF

• **Recently deceased:**

Philomena Walker.

• **Anniversaries:**

Beverley McMahon, Charles Gatt,
Thomas and Anne Peachey,
Eli and Nora Houghton,
Paul Houghton.

• **And the sick**

Maryanne Diorio, Alan Harland,
John Allen, Audrey Barsendich,
Keith Oakes, Margaret Thoms,
Margaret Jackson,
Lorna Russom, Nicola (Nick) Bubici,
Jason Wellin, Maureen Cowsls,
Sr. Margaret Wall, R.S.J.
Tracie Passlow, Beryl Allen,
Olive O'Brien and grandchild Sharon,
Maureen Carlon, Keith Carlon,
Kevin and Sheila Houghton,
Eizabeth Anne Kenney, Irudaya Mary,
Les Spiteri, Ian Wilks, Steve Paino,
Ralph Weate, Celeste Boonaerts,
Kath Hardy, Helen McKeon.

Night and day is the dominant image presented to us in today's readings. The season of Advent is for the Church the time just before the dawn of Christmas, when the fullness of God's love took human flesh in Jesus.

The moments before dawn are often special: cities are still, the air is damp, noise is at a minimum and, at least on clear days, there is an anticipation of the sun bursting forth into daylight. No wonder Paul and Matthew found it such a rich metaphor for the coming of Christ.

American lyricist and composer, Marty Haugen has found the image of light and darkness inspirational in his text, *God of Day and God of Darkness* (©1984, 1995, published by GIA Inc.) He writes:

God of day and God of darkness, now we stand before the night;

As the shadows stretch and deepen, come and make our darkness bright.

All creation still is groaning for the dawning of your might,

When the Son of peace and justice fills the earth with radiant light.

Still the nations curse the darkness, still the rich oppress the poor;

Still the earth is bruised and broken by the ones who still want more.

Come and wake us from our sleeping so our hearts cannot ignore

All your people lost and broken, all your children at our door.

Show us Christ in one another, make us servants strong and true;

Give us all your love of justice, so we do what you would do.

Let us call all people holy, let us pledge our lives anew,

Make us one with all the lowly, let us all be one in you.

Marty Haugen's take on the light and dark in the world is entirely consistent with the way Catholic mystics have applied these metaphors. Being in the light is not just about what we see, it is about what we do. St Ignatius Loyola often spoke about the things we keep buried in the dark. For Ignatius the experience we won't speak about, the sins we won't confess and the memories we suppress are the signs of the bad spirit. They gain an inordinate power over us and we displace a lot of energy keeping them buried in the dark. Ignatius always saw the hand of the good spirit when these things came into the light. Every time someone says to me, 'Father, I've never told anyone this before, but I want to talk about it now ... I thank God that the good spirit is alive and active. St Ignatius encourages us to be alert to all the ways we con ourselves that keeping secrets hidden in the dark is a necessary or acceptable way to live.

May this Advent be the season in which we bring to consciousness all the things that stop us from being fully alive and basking in the light. May our preparation for Christmas confirm us in the truth of Haugen's words about Jesus Christ and humanity.

You shall be the path that guides us, you the light that in us burns;

Shining deep within all people, yours the love that we must learn,

For our hearts shall wander restless, 'til they safe to you return;

Finding you in one another, we shall all your face discern.

© Richard Leonard SJ

Inside this issue:

Notices and News	2
We all belong: preaching to our family of believers	3
Directory	4
Reflection	4

Psalms Response

© Colin D. Smith cfc

Let us go re - joi - cing to the house of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation. *Alleluia!*

Around the Parish

We, the Parish community express sincere gratitude for all the pastoral care done for the past 2 yrs by Fr. Jack as he retires from active ministry. We wish him all the very best, good health & God's blessing. We look forward to his continued support & prayers.

A morning tea will be held following today's (Sunday) 9.15 am Mass. Please bring a plate to share.

A farewell night will be arranged for Fr Jack following his rehabilitation & recuperation - details will be advised closer to the time.

Advent has a twofold character—as a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ's first coming to us is remembered: as a season when remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ's second coming at the end of time.

Advent is thus a period for devout and joyful expectation. New liturgical year begins: Sunday cycle A weekday cycle 1

Blessing of the Jesse Tree after 9.15am Mass in the Leo Mahon room this Sunday.

Baptisms: We welcome into our Faith community and pray for Riley Heintz, Harper Hodgins, Hugh Hodgins and Jude Hodgins who were baptised last Sunday.

Christmas Card Packs containing 2 designs. \$5 a packs available in the Piety Stall.

Live, Pray, Love Project St. John the Baptist Parish and School Picnic next Sunday 4th December, 11am-4.30pm. St. John the Baptist Primary School, 21a Dulkara Rd. Woy Woy South. BYO food and drinks. NO ALCOHOL. Enquiries: Phone Gladys 0421 312 362.

Volunteer Church Cleaning Roster 2/12/16: Linda Potestas, Jo Salter, Michael French, Kevin Glacken.

Christmas Hampers: All hampers need to be returned by 11/12 December. Single items may be left in the gathering area. No cigarettes, alcohol or perishables. If you know of anyone in need of a hamper, please phone Susie Casey on 0403 417 639.

Anointing of the Sick will be conferred during the 4pm Mass this Friday, 2nd December.

St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Cash Appeal will be held next weekend 3rd/4th December. Envelopes are in the church. Your generosity would be appreciated. The need is great and support is sought in giving what we are able to give. All monies are used to support local families on the Peninsula.

El Shaddai' Prayer Group meetings for the month of December are 3rd, 10th, 17th.

National Life Survey 2016 in gathering area. Surveys to be returned by 28 November. Our Church Code TA229101.

Faith, Hope, Love and Mercy Prayer Cards: Available now are attractive prayer cards covering the themes of Faith, Hope, Love and Mercy for use this Advent and Christmas with quotes from Scripture as well as Pope Francis. These free cards are provided by the Office of Evangelisation are an easy means of communicating our love and concern to family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues. They provide a simple, practical means to reach out to others in the spirit of the Gospel, to the 'churched' and 'un-churched' alike, by way of a simple hand-written message. Space is provided on the reverse of the card for these heartfelt expressions, Please consider who might be in need of your prayers leading up to Christmas and pick up your prayer cards today!

Of Grace and Faith Study Group Thursday, 1st December, 11am, Leo Mahon room.

Immaculate Conception Personal prayer, Hour of Grace. Thursday, 8th December, 12 noon-1pm, Woy Woy Church.

Thank You; to our priests and parish family for all your prayers, cards and well wishes before and after my recent surgery. All went smoothly and I will be back on track shortly.
Phoebe Glacken.

Social Justice

Keep Working on Love:

An African proverb says, "The death of an old person is like the loss of a library". The Australian Bishops concur that the wisdom and lived experience of older people are priceless treasures. Have you noticed that we seem to want a long life but don't want to become old?

- Be grateful.
- Don't just visit this life.
- Develop interests now.
- Become a holy old fool.
- Be present in the present.
- Humbly accept diminishment.
- Smile.
- Let go.
- Be married to amazement.

- God's grace is all I need.

And the one lesson that sums up all of this—the core of Jesus' whole life and teaching: keep working on love. Keep working on love.
Address: Sr. Patty Fawkner SGS, 6 September 2016. Launch of Social Justice Statement—A Place at the Table.

From the Diocese and beyond

St. Patrick's Business Courses Ltd: Enrolments are now open for our 2017 Diplomas in Business Administration. These 40 week courses are ideal for Year 10, 11 or 12 school leavers and provide a viable alternative pathway to career or university. We also assist the majority (well over 90%) of our graduates to find a well-paid and enjoyable roles. Contact our Director of Education, Anne Fairhall, to arrange a 1:1 interview to discuss your study options on 0407 278 164.

"Keeping a 'cupped-ear' for the lovely voice of God in the Advent lectionary". Tuesday, 6th December, 10am-2.30pm with breaks for morning tea and lunch. Morning tea and a sandwich lunch will be provided. Cost \$25 or donation. St. Joseph's Education and Spirituality Centre, 8 Humphreys Rd. Kincumber Sth. Bookings phone 4368 2805.

Seasons for Growth's Loss and Grief Workshop to be held at Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney, 5th December. Interested parishioners are most

welcome to register with mmpevent.bookings@sosj.org.au

Advent Retreat: Mt. Carmel Retreat Centre, 247 St. Andrews Rd., Varroville. 9th December, 6.10pm-11th December, 1.30pm. Presenters: The Carmelite Team. Cost: \$230 per person. 10% discount for shared accommodation for pensioners / unemployed and students. Phone 8795 3400. retreats@carmelite.com.au carmeliteretreats.com.au Pick ups Minto train station 9.45 am & 10 am. BYO lunch.



We all belong: preaching to our family of believers

Ron Raab

Several years ago I was setting up the chapel for the celebration of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. I was quietly reflecting on my homily and the fact that in our urban parish community there are few families that fit a traditional model. I noticed the three people who had already arrived in the chapel to pray quietly before Mass.

A young man rolled his wheelchair near the tabernacle to pray. He was surviving many forms of mental illness, and he had told me he had cancer. He was in his mid-twenties and already living in a health care facility. He was delusional and thought he might become the pastor of the parish one day. He was also extremely alone. His family had not been a part of his life since he was a teenager.

Another man stood in the lobby of our building waiting for his son to arrive. The father was an engineer and near retirement. He attended our parish because his only son was homeless. His son usually appeared in our lobby when he thought his father was attending Mass. The father suffered from heart disease and had already survived several heart attacks. The father usually gave his son a few dollars for extra food to get him through the week. The son rarely stayed for Mass.

The third gentleman knelt in the last pew. He was there trying to make sense out of his life after his recent divorce. I knew that the previous months had been very difficult for his adult children. This was his first Christmas alone, and he was just getting settled in a neighbourhood apartment. He was a businessman and struggled not only with his divorce but also with the consequences for his family and family business.

These three men were members of our parish because they all felt comfortable within a worshipping community that was not perfect. They helped define "family" within a parish that still serves people who live outside and those who volunteer among the weary and lost. Even though most people are considered marginalized in our community, we are still a worshipping family together.

These three people become my source of inspiration all these years later as I reflect on the Gospels from Advent to Epiphany. During the Advent season we are all trying to stay awake for God to break into our lives. As preachers of the season, we experience a particular sensitivity to people's lives and experiences. Advent is not a cardboard cut-out of preparations for the arrival of the Messiah. Rather, Advent evokes the messy nature of our human relationships and an even more profound awareness that our lives and dreams have not turned out the way we

expected. Advent evokes severe loneliness, extenuates loss and poverty, and reminds people of their hardships as we long to celebrate the miracle of God-made-flesh.

On Christmas day we hear the Gospel of the word-among-us. Jesus was born in a cave on the margins of a village. The word from God is still struggling to become flesh in our awkward relationships, our recent divorces, our miscarriages, our ongoing struggles with church authority, and our teens who detest being told what to do in life. This is the holy ground for preachers. The issues of our unsettled people in the pews become the place in which God is born. For those of us who preach, Christmas becomes a workshop to discover the grace that will set people free.

Preaching among any family of believers is a delicate matter during the entire Christmas season. Liturgical preaching can get lost among the multitudes of poinsettias in the sanctuary and the worry among parents about whether they will survive Santa Claus. The real meaning of the word-made-flesh is often dulled when dealing with guest preachers and priests or mothers trying to convince the family to go to church. Preaching should not be whimsical nor pious nor too theoretical. Stories within homilies should not be overly sentimental nor irrelevant nor only about the past. Preachers need to understand the real issues of peoples' lives at Christmas and why people are at Mass in the first place.

People long to make sense out of their misfortunes in the past year and their separations from loved ones by miles and grudges. We want to live in God's peace within the chaos of life. Many mothers who have lost children have difficulty even viewing the baby in the manger. Single people are reminded during this season of family that they do not have one of their own. People who have lost jobs or simply do not have money to spend are reminded of their inadequacies during this season of plenty. No matter the community or parish, suffering and unfortunate circumstances come out of hiding during the season that our culture says is merry and bright.

The family of God sits in the pews waiting to relate to the beauty of Christ's birth among us. We are all related through our baptism, and we want to discover the way through our restless lives to the place where hope is born. Preaching uncovers for us the fact that we all belong in God's love.

ML



The Son of Man will come
at an hour you do not
expect. Good stewards
know that
they are accountable to



Rev. Ronald Patrick Raab, CSC, serves as associate pastor at St. Andre Besette Church in Old Town, Portland, Ore. He broadcasts *On the Margins*, a weekly Scripture commentary on radio KBVM.fm. Learn more at www.ronaldraab.com. Reprinted with permission under licence number 115216.

Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula



Diocese of
Broken Bay

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

St John the Baptist Church,

(Corner) Blackwall & Victoria Rds, Woy Woy

Parish Office *Ethel Cox Parish Centre*
PO Box 264 *Walter Baker Hall*
54 Victoria Road *100 Blackwall Rd*
WOY WOY NSW 2256 *Woy Woy*

Phone: (02) 4341 1073 **Fax:** (02) 4341 0214

Email: parish@woywoycatholic.org.au

Website: www.woywoycatholic.org.au

“He must increase, I must decrease”

Parish Priest: Fr. Jack Robson.

Assistant Priests: Fr. Timothy Raj. MSFS.
Fr. Philip Thottam. MSFS.

Office Staff: Helen Cameron,
Raelene Spithill and Margaret Cooper.

Office Hours:
9.30am—4pm, Monday to Friday.

Deadline for The Voice:
3.30pm Wednesday.

We may be accustomed to think of Advent as the time when we prepare for the coming of God, but the readings also train our attention on our own journey to God. We see this most clearly in this first Sunday with readings that tell us the identity of the pilgrims, the destination toward which they travel, and the way of life that is required of them on their journey. As the Vatican Council has proclaimed: We are a pilgrim people.

Both the reading from Isaiah and

the psalm response speak of the pilgrimage to the mountain of the Lord, the place where God can be found. Although the psalm speaks about Jerusalem and refers to the temple there, the broader theological significance of the mountain, the city and the temple is one and the same. They represent the presence of God in our midst, and this presence is the goal of our striving. There are clear directions about how we are to live while we are on this pilgrimage to God. In Isaiah we learn that we must put away our instruments of

violence and hatred, our swords and our spears. Lest we pick them up again, we are told to convert them into life-producing implements, into ploughs and pruning hooks. Paul exhorts us to put away our deeds of darkness and self-indulgence and to clothe ourselves instead in the deeds of Jesus Christ. Matthew points out the need for alertness, attentiveness, a disposition that is open to a change of heart.

© Dianne Bergant CSS

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, 3.30pm;
Saturday 11.30am & 4.30pm; Sunday 7am.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

1st & 3rd Sundays, 11am; 5th Sunday, during 9.15am 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 9.30am.

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

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

HOLY HOUR –EXPOSITION & BENEDICTION

Every Thursday, 7.30pm-8.30pm for the needs of the Parish.

PARISH CHOIR — Practice Wednesday nights in the church, 7pm.

Enquiries: 4341 3367.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

21a Dulkara Rd South Woy Woy 2256. ph: 4341 0884 fax: 4344 5049.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST YOUTH GROUP

For information and events contact Parish office 4341 1073.

CENTACARE Marriage & Family Relationships. 20 Watt St, Gosford.
Phone: 4324 6403.

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.

ST VINCENT de PAUL SOCIETY on the Peninsula assist and give a hand up to people in need. We have two Conferences with Volunteers sharing the visiting or office work. We always welcome new Volunteers to our Conference.

Please ring Ken 0400 335 351 or Joan 0422 272 339

CASH HOUSIE every Saturday night at Peninsula Community Centre, Cnr Ocean Beach Rd & McMasters Rd, Woy Woy. Games start at 7.30pm and finish approx 10.20pm. Cash prizes. Ticket sales from 6pm. Proceeds benefit Parish. Enquiries: Rob 0427 990 818.

REFLECTION