



# The Voice

18th December 2016

Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year A

Psalter Week 4

## ADVENT

### OF YOUR CHARITY

### PRAY FOR

### THE SOULS OF

- **Recently deceased:**

Denis Newey, Peter May,  
William James McMorris,  
Kateryna Strykajoo, Keith Henry.

- **Anniversaries:**

Ann Culmer.

- **Remembrances:**

Wesley Christoffels,  
Noel Ranasinghe.

- **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 Cows, Beryl Allen,  
Sr. Margaret Wall, R. S.J.  
Olive O'Brien and grandchild Sharon,  
Maureen Carlon, Irudaya Mary,  
Kevin and Sheila Houghton,  
Elizabeth Anne Kenney,  
Les Spiteri, Ian Wilks, Steve Paino,  
Ralph Weate, Celeste Boonaerts,  
Kath Hardy, Helen McKeon, Chev,  
Fr. Jack Robson, Carren Quinn.

Today's Gospel announces that 'God is with us'. In this final week of Advent the following story reminds us that God comes to us in unpredictable ways often with unsettling messages.

'I hurried into the shop to grab some last minute Christmas gifts. I looked at all the people and grumbled to myself. I would be in here forever. I hurried to the toy department and wondered if the grandkids would even play with my gifts.

'My eye caught a little boy holding a doll. He kept touching her hair and he held her so gently. I watched him turn and ask, "Aunty Jane, are you sure I don't have enough money?" Gently, the woman replied, "Emily doesn't need a doll David." The woman went to another aisle. The boy continued to hold the doll. David looked so sad that I couldn't resist asking who the doll was for. "My sister wanted it so badly for Christmas." I told him that maybe Santa was going to bring it. He said "No, Santa can't go where my sister is...I have to give the doll to Mummy to take to her." I asked him where his sister was. He looked at me with the tear-filled eyes, "She has gone to be with Jesus. Daddy says that Mummy is going to have to go to be with both of them soon too." My heart nearly stopped beating.

'David went on, "I told Daddy to make sure Mummy goes nowhere until I got back from the store. I want Mum to take this doll to Emily."

'While he wasn't looking I reached into my purse and pulled out some cash. "David how about we count that money again?" He grew excited, "I asked Jesus to give me enough money. I just know I have enough." I slipped my money in with his and we began to count it. He

looked up from the count and exclaimed, "Jesus has given me enough money for Emily's doll."

'In a few minutes his aunty came back and I wheeled my cart away. I could not keep from thinking about the little boy as I finished my shopping in a totally different spirit than when I had started.

'On the way home I remembered a story in the newspaper several days earlier about a drunk driver hitting a car and killing a little girl and that the mother was left on life support. Two days before Christmas I read in the paper where the family had turned the machine off. The day before Christmas there was a funeral notice saying that a Requiem Mass would be celebrated on St Stephen's Day for Julia Norris and her daughter Emily. Michael was their husband and father, and their son and brother was David.

'As I gathered with my family in front of an overblown meal which none of us could finish, holding expensive gifts we didn't need and drinking more alcohol than was necessary, I thought "we've lost the plot with Christmas". God-with-us arrives as a simple child in need of love; and in the honour of that day we spend money, eat too much and get drunk.

'I left the table went to my desk and wrote a card for each member of my family. I told them what I'd never been able to say: "I want you to know I love you."

'When they read those cards, my family thought I was losing it, but through David and that doll, God visited me in the last week of Advent and Christmas will never be the same again.'

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### Psalms Response

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### Gospel Acclamation

*Alleluia, alleluia!* A virgin will give birth to a son; his name will be Emmanuel: God with us. *Alleluia!*

## Around the Parish

**Welcome!** A very warm welcome to anyone visiting our Parish this Christmas. We wish you a happy and holy holiday. Please visit us again.

**Fr Jack** is now recuperating at Berkeley Vale Private hospital.

### Christmas Masses:

**Christmas Eve:** 5pm, 7.30pm, 10pm (with carols before 2 Masses 7.00pm and 9.30pm. (No midnight Mass).

**Christmas Day** 7.30am, 9.15am. (No 6pm Mass).

The Parish Office will close Friday 23rd Dec '16, re-opening Tuesday 3rd Jan '17.

**Parish Transport Service:** The Drivers' Co-operative wish to advise that the only parish bus services for Christmas Masses will be 7.30 am and 9.15 am on Christmas Day. There will NOT be a bus service for any of the Vigil Masses on Christmas Eve. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.

**Receiving Holy Communion in our Parish:** We welcome our visitors and ask all to respect the local practice of receiving the Lord's Body and Blood: the Body of Christ is received on the hand or the tongue and the Blood of Christ is received by drinking from the cup. We kindly ask you to refrain from dipping the host if this is your parish's custom.

**Christmas Offering Envelopes** for those who do not have planned giving envelopes are in the church for your convenience.

**Morning Mass Public Holiday** Monday, 26th December will be at 9.00 am followed by Exposition and Benediction

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

Nary 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 their 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 the 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 for forwarding.

**Prayerful Condolences** to family, relatives and friends of Margaret Wahlin and Elizabeth Partridge who were buried from our church the past week.

**Annual Christmas Bus Fund Raffle** tickets on final sale at all Sunday Masses this weekend. 1st Prize: Giant Christmas Hamper plus other prizes on show.

**Thank you** to everyone who supported the Children's Liturgy of the Word this year. Will recommence Sunday 12 Feb '17.

**Thank you** to all our church cleaners for your work this year. Rosters for 2017 are now available for collection in the Leo Mahon room.

**Readers and Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:** Please indicate if you are available for Christmas Masses, Sheets available in the Servers Sacristy.

**Thank You** to all for your prayers assisting my recovery. Louisa Dunn.

**Liturgy Team meeting** cancelled for December (was due 22nd December).

## Social Justice

### A Place at the Table:

The Australian Catholic Bishop's Social Justice Statement for 2016 -17 is titled *A Place at the Table: Social Justice in an ageing society*. It celebrates the value, dignity and significant contributions of older people to the life on the community. In solidarity with all generations, older people have a rightful place in the heart of community life. The Bishops confront the utilitarianism in our society that values people only for what they produce and contribute economically and that, at worst, regards older people as

burdensome or dispensable. The Bishops call for communities of mercy and love-where people reach out and minister to the vulnerable older people, where bonds between generations are built up, and where no one is cast as a burden or as rivals to younger generations.

We should give thanks to God for the grace of a long life and for the prosperous and modern society we live in. We should be grateful for the inheritance we have received from previous generations. Their generosity can be seen, not only in the

fruits of their labour and advances in science and technology, but also in the many institutions and policies promoting the common good and assisting people struggling through difficult times.

We can all give thanks for the gift of a long life, either for ourselves or for the family, friends and loved ones. How will we use this gift for the benefit of our families, communities and our nation?

*Social Justice Statement 2016-2017*

## From the Diocese and beyond

**CatholicCare:** Did you know CatholicCare Central Coast Family Centre has provided outreach support each Wednesday through Mary Mac's. CatholicCare provide a range of essential community assistance programs on the Central Coast with priority

access afforded to Parishioners. CatholicCare works with people in making a positive difference in their lives leading to; improved well-being, sustained support networks and a sense of hope for the future. Services include Disabilities Support, Mediation Family Law,

counseling, Homeless Support, Family Violence Support, Emergency Relief, Family Support and Hospital Chaplaincy. Feel free to visit Mary Mac's any Wednesday or call 4356 2600 to find out more.

# Readings: Today & Christmas

## 4th Sunday of Advent, December 18

Is 7:10–14  
Ps 23:1–6 R. see vv 7.10  
Rom 1:1–7  
Mt 1:18–24

In the days immediately preceding Christmas, our readings and prayers turn their focus to the events leading up to the birth of Jesus. In today's Gospel, Matthew tells us "how the birth of Jesus Christ came about" (v 18). Betrothal was a legal relationship preceding marriage that was only ended by death or divorce. When Joseph discovers that Mary, his betrothed, is pregnant, he decides to divorce her. But God intervenes, sending an angel to him in a dream to explain that "it is through the Holy Spirit / that this child has been conceived" (v 20). Matthew explains that "this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet" Isaiah (v 22), referring to our first reading today. For Matthew and his church, Jesus is truly Emmanuel, God with us.

Isaiah, whose career was in the eighth century BC, speaks God's word to King Ahaz, who was wavering in his faith. For Isaiah it was important that the king realise that God has not abandoned them. He prophesies that the birth of a child is to be a sign to the king that God has not abandoned them. The Hebrew text of Isaiah refers to a "young woman" who will give birth; the Greek text identifies her as a "virgin," and Matthew and his community see in that text the prophecy of the birth of Jesus. In Isaiah we have an example of a prophetic text that finds meaning in its original context as well as in the life of Jesus.

Paul, writing to the Romans, describes Jesus as God's Son, "descended from David" (1:3) but also "established as Son of God in power" (v 4). For Paul, Jesus is the realisation of the gospel, "which [God] promised previously through his prophets" (v 2). The one whose birth we celebrate unites us with God by sharing in our human nature.

**For reflection:** What is your response to Joseph's decision to divorce Mary? How does the incarnation make a difference in your life?

## Nativity of the Lord, Saturday/ Sunday, December 24/25, Mass during the Night

Is 9:1–6  
Ps 96:1–2, 2–3, 11–12, 13  
Ti 2:11–14  
Lk 2:1–14

Isaiah's text announces great news, "The people who walked in darkness / have seen a great light" (v 1). Scholars believe this text refers to the birth of the child whom Isaiah calls Emmanuel, possibly the son of King Ahaz. His birth is a cause for joy for Isaiah and his audience. The titles given to him, "Wonder-Counsellor, God-Hero, / Father-Forever, Prince of Peace" (v 5), indicate that his reign will be a time of blessing for the people. His "forever peaceful" reign (v 6) is a cause for great exultation. Once again we have a prophecy that also finds meaning for Christians in the person of Jesus, who is truly "God with us."

In the letter to Titus we are told that, in Christ, "the grace of God has appeared, saving all" (v 11). Because of this we are called to change our lives, living "temperately, justly, and devoutly" (v 12). Jesus' birth radically changes us and calls us to live in expectation of "the blessed hope" (v 13).

Luke's story of the birth of Jesus places him within the context of world history because his coming has meaning for the whole world. Jesus' birth happens during the reign of Caesar Augustus, "when Quirinius was governor of Syria" (v 2). Joseph, being a good citizen, goes to Bethlehem "to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed" (v 5). Luke simply says "she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger" (v 7). These are humble beginnings for "a saviour ... who is Christ and Lord" (v 11), titles given to him by the angel announcing the birth to the shepherds. Though Caesar Augustus was referred to as "saviour" and "god" by the Romans, Luke tells us the true Saviour was born here in Bethlehem. His birth, announced to lowly shepherds, indicates that Jesus is born to save all people. With the angels we sing, "Glory to God in the highest" (v 14).

**For reflection:** Does my life express the joy that the birth of Christ brings? Our world still hungers for God's presence; how can I bring God into the world?

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




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When he discovered that Mary was with child, Joseph resolved to end their engagement with as little disgrace as possible. But obedient to the voice of God, he changed those plans and became instead the protector of the child Jesus and His mother, Mary. God grant that I may be as open to the leading of the Holy Spirit!

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# 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](mailto:parish@woywoycatholic.org.au)  
**Website:** [www.woywoycatholic.org.au](http://www.woywoycatholic.org.au)

"He must increase, I must decrease"

**Administrator:** Fr. Timothy Raj. M.S.F.S.

**Assistant Priest:** Fr. Philip Thottam. M.S.F.S.

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

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

**Deadline for The Voice:**  
3.30pm 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, 3.30pm;  
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

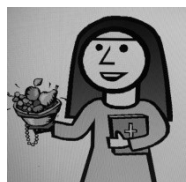
For information and events contact Parish office 4341 1073.

**CATHOLICCARE** Marriage & Family Relationships. Phone: 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.

**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 Administrator 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.



50 Games, \$100, \$150, \$180 Cash Prizes

and a chance of winning \$2,000 jackpot

(reverts to \$1,000 if not won in 53 calls).

\$48 for 6 tickets all 50 games

1.30pm to 4.30pm at Peninsula Community Centre, 93 McMasters Rd Woy Woy.

4 Sessions only - Sat 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> January

Then normal parish evening session from 7.30pm

Free Tea and Coffee all afternoon.

Operated by Woy Woy Catholic Parish Housie, for Mary Mac 's place,

Enquiries: Rob 0427990818

**MARY MAC'S PLACE**

