



ORDINARY TIME

*External Solemnity of
the Nativity of St John
the Baptist
25th June 2017
Psalter Week 4*

OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

- **Recently deceased:**
Eileen Angeletti, Brock Byrant,
Kathryne Rae, Victor Grima.
- **Anniversaries:**
David Kay, Hilda Andrews,
Fr. Paul Campbell. O.F.M.
- **Remembrances:**
Kathleen Kay.
- **And the sick:**
Kevin Houghton, John Allen,
Maryanne Diorio, Audrey Barsenbach,
Kath Hardy, Pat Burgmann,
Mary Scarf, Jorge Villasanti,
Teresita Villasanti, Margarita Gomez,
Anne Singleton, Judy Neal,
June Towson, Therese Corner,
Peter Wellis, Diane Gillett,
Lorraine Von Nida, Rene Glase,
Margaret Davin, Patricia Dwyer,
Edie Trovato, Roy Beverage,
Laura Krauss, Janet Dean,
Brian Finlayson.

Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula

THE VOICE

Named for History

When it came for the first son of (the now) Queen Elizabeth to be named, he was called Charles Philip Arthur George. What a catalogue of family and kingly tradition! One can imagine the consultation within the family and the royal household to get the names right, to link this heir to the throne to a glorious past, hoping for more than a nominal influence on his future.

We can be sure of one thing. 'Oscar' or 'Marmaduke' were not going to be on the list of possibilities talked about. They had no history thought to be relevant. Tradition was foremost.

It was the same in the village where another Elizabeth gave birth to a son. The whole village was quite certain that the child would be called Zechariah after his father. The tyranny of the expectations of 'neighbours and kinsfolk' can be very oppressive when it comes to naming a child, and this was no exception.

But, Elizabeth resisted: 'Not so: he shall be called John.' No doubt, she had received this name from her husband Zechariah who had himself received a divine imperative. He, in turn, had no hesitation in writing on a writing tablet, 'his name is John' - is John. Present tense.

God had already signified the name of *this* child, 'John', come what may.

This caused great consternation in the village, because this was a shocking break with tradition. This could only mean that more shocking breaks with tradition were to come. And that turned out to be the case.

This boychild of Zechariah was destined to enter the priestly service of the temple, just as his father and his father etc had done for generations. Everyone knew his place and role - everyone *should* know his place and role, but this 'John'? 'What, then, will this child be?'

This is the question on the lips of all

parents - hope aroused, a future envisaged. What irreplaceable role in the unfolding history of the universe? What unique role in the unfolding of God's plan for that history?

The villagers were shocked enough by the declaration of the name. In the last verse of today's reading, we get a premonition of a further shock to come. This now young man is not preparing for priestly service at the Temple!

He is out in the wilderness! He has adopted the lifestyle of the most marginal, living outside settled existence (where tradition suffocates). In another gospel we read that he had a rough coat of camel hair to keep out the cold of the desert night, and he ate locusts and wild honey, the subsistence diet of the poorest.

Possibly, he came across the Essenes, (famous for the Dead Sea Scrolls), a sect which also rejected the tradition of temple worship. Instead they focused on water rituals, cleansing themselves in preparation for the coming clash between Light and Darkness.

John certainly shared their practice of immersing people in water as a sign of repentance and preparation. The Greek word for immersing people in this way is to 'baptise' them. He would become John the Baptist, John the Baptist.

But, we are leaping ahead of *today's* gospel!

Let us pray that God will continue to nominate children to play a great role in the history of salvation.

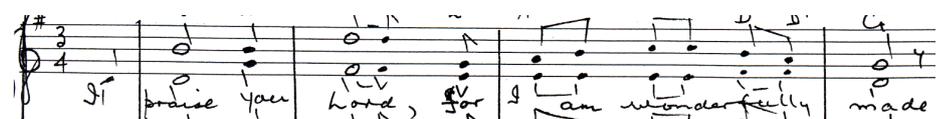
Let us pray that parents will not resist this nomination for fear of what the neighbours and kinsfolk might think.

Let us pray that we are sufficiently open to receive God's messengers, not always from 'the temple', but also those who erupt from the margins, from 'the wilderness'.

© Fr Michael Tate

Psalm Response

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Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! You, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways. *Alleluia!*

Around the Parish

Solemnity of St. John the Baptist, Patron of our Parish falls Saturday, 24th. We will be celebrating Holy Mass both Saturday morning 9am and all Sunday Masses in his honour.

Clergy Conference: Our priests, Fr. Timothy and Fr. Philip will be away for a Clergy Conference 27th, 28th and 29th June. We welcome the priests from Somersby who will be celebrating these daily Masses.

Donations to the Charitable Works Fund (CWF) are 100% tax deductible: At this time of the year, we know that you are being asked to make donation to all sorts of worthy charities. The CWF is the only Diocesan Appeal that directly supports people of need in our Diocese and 100% tax deductibility. Thank you for your consideration and your generous support.

Baptism: We welcome into our Faith community and pray for Jeremy Valenti who was baptised last Sunday.

Parish Pastoral Council Fr Timothy & the Council would like to thank Jennifer Dempsey, Tony O'Neill & Susie Simmons for their valued contribution as members on the committee for the last 3 years. They were farewelled last Monday night during their final meeting.

Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima: Visit of the International Centennial Pilgrim Image.

Theme: "The urgent call for prayer and reparation: The Appeal of Our Lady of Fatima. Divine Retreat Centre, 160 Hensons Rd., Somersby.

This Sunday Day long program commencing 9am until 4.30pm. You may wish to visit all or part of the programme. Holy Mass including Consecration of the families to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, giving out of scapulars at 3.15pm.

More detail of the program available on the tables in the gathering area.

El Shaddai' July monthly meetings will be 1st, 8th and 15th.

St Vincent de Paul The total raised for the 2017 SVdP Appeal was \$6,485. The Peninsula Conferences are very grateful to the parishioners for their very generous response. This money goes to the assistance of the poor and needy here on the Peninsula.

Ministry to the Sick: Please ring the Parish office if you know of a member of your family, a friend or a parishioner who wishes to receive the Sacrament of the Sick, Reconciliation or the Blessed Eucharist at home.

If some one is being admitted to hospital, please notify the Parish office for a priest to visit as due to Hospital Privacy Policy, the clergy are not automatically notified.

Social Justice

International Day in Support of Victims of Torture:

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture has found that various aspects of Australia's asylum seeker policies violate the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The findings from the special Rapporteur, Juan Mendez, was formally submitted to the UN Human Rights Council on 9th March, 2015 in a report prepared by the independent UN expert tasked with investigating breaches of the Convention around the world.

Human Rights Law Centre Director of Legal Advocacy, Daniel Webb, said that the report's findings made it clear that the Australian Government's actions breach international law.

The report finds that Australia's indefinite detention of asylum seekers on Manus Island, the harsh conditions, the frequent unrest and violence inside the centre and the failure to protect certain vulnerable individuals all amount to breaches of the Convention.

The Torture Prevention prohibits subjecting people to cruel, inhuman degrading treatment. The report confirms that by leaving people locked up indefinitely in appalling conditions on a remote island, Australia is failing to meet this basic standard.

The report also finds that the recent amendments to the Maritime Powers Act, which gives the Government unprecedented powers to detain and return asylum seekers intercepted at sea, also violate the Convention.

The report notes that Australia repeatedly breached the obligation to fully cooperate with the UN Special Rapporteur in their investigations and criticises the Australian Government for providing inadequate responses to the complaints made against it.

More broadly, the report confirmed that Australia's asylum seeker policies were of growing concern internationally and were clearly damaging Australia's hard-won reputation as a decent, rights-respecting nation.

Human Rights Law Centre, 'UN finds Australia's treatment of Asylum seekers violates the Convention Against Torture'. 9 March 2015.

From the Diocese and beyond

"Keeping a finger on our pulse"

Across 2017, St. Joseph's will continue to host faith enrichment days. Presentations will be reflective and prayerful on ordinary life, keeping in touch with matters of significance across the seasons and feasts of the Christian year. Next session Wednesday, 28th June: Honouring mid year feasts: the Sacred Heart, John the Baptist, Peter and Paul. Sessions begins at 10am, concludes around 2.45pm, with breaks for morning tea and lunch. Cost: \$15. Morning Tea provided. BYO

lunch. Tea, coffee provided. Booking: Phone 02 4368 2805. bookings@stjosephsretreat.org.au See notice board for more detail.

Spirituality in the Pub: Tuesday, 4th July, 7.30pm-9pm. The Grange Hotel Function Room, Cnr. Renwick St. & Pacific Highway, Wyoming. Bistro opens 5.30pm.

Theme 2017: "My Spirituality: Influences Along the Way". Speakers: Peter Murphy: Teaches multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and religiously-diverse Christian Studies in a local State High

School. John Sheehan, a dedicated practitioner of Christian meditation, music and teacher of Tai Chi & Qi Gong.

SIP Central Coast is an Ecumenical and Interfaith Speakers Forum with Q's & A's.

The focus is on developing understanding & encouraging dialogue about Spirituality through people sharing their life's journey. Meeting 1st Tuesday in the month from March to October and 2nd Tuesday in November. Enquiries: 4328 2596 or 0498 588 261.



Homily by Richard Leonard SJ

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A

A few years ago there was an English film entitled, *Secrets and Lies*. It charted the story of a dysfunctional family who sat on terrible secrets and told many lies for decades.

Like many successful dramatic films, audiences flocked to see it, not only because of its compelling story, but also because it tapped into an important truth about family life as many of us live it.

When I was a boy I was often told that 'What's said and done in the home, stays in the home.' And to a degree, this is a good and loyal principle.

There are, however, family secrets and lies that cause untold damage for generations because no one is allowed to speak about them. Sexual abuse, domestic violence, suicide, incest, drug-taking, alcoholism, theft, adoption and abortion are only some of the secrets and lies that many families sit on.

Jesus, however, tells us in today's Gospel that what you 'say in the dark, tell in the light. What you whisper in darkness, shout from the housetops.'

This doesn't mean that Christians tell everyone their personal business, but it does cut to the heart of what stunts spiritual and personal growth.

To the degree that something shameful remains buried, hidden and unhealed, then its power over us is increased. It remains the thing about which we can never speak. The bad spirit has a field day with this sort of stuff, feeding our fears and lowering our self-esteem.

In this regard some Christians make a false distinction between their spiritual and psychological lives. They hold that the exploration of one's personal history or emotional problems is self-indulgent or unimportant to how we live.

We all know people who, in the pursuit of emotional health, become obsessed by their own story, feelings, reactions and psychology. We also know others who never deal with the heavy hurts they seem to carry through the years, even though the pain of them seem to be as powerfully felt now as they were when they were inflicted upon them. Today's Gospel reminds us that there

is a middle road between denying what should be acknowledged and dealt with, and being absorbed by it.

The Church, rightly, holds that the best psychological tools can bring out into the open memories and experiences that can be seen for what they are and dealt with. We just have to be sure that we don't get conned into believing that psychology and therapy is anything but a pit-stop in life, so that we can attend to the working order of our mental machinery, and, importantly, get back on the road with everyone else, calling in later if needs be.

Long before the therapist's office Christ enabled the Church to develop the Sacrament of Penance where we admit our most destructive behaviour and hear that we are forgiven and healed.

That's why, when I am hearing a confession, I can't tell you how happy I am to hear the penitent say, 'Father I have never told anyone this before.'

At that moment I know the love of God is active in the person, drawing out what Christ wants in the light, spoken of and healed.

This Sunday Jesus invites all of us to find a person we respect and trust, and to end the tyranny of the power of secrets and lies. I promise you when you take this risk with the appropriate person, the presence of God won't be very far away either.



Gospel: "Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny?"

Woy Woy Youth Group

will be starting Term 3 on 16th July 2017.

The youth group is held in the Leo Mahon Room, so if you have friends or family in high school (Years 7-12) who might be interested, please encourage them to come along!

Term 3 dates are: 16th July, 30th July, 13th August and 27th August.

See you there!"

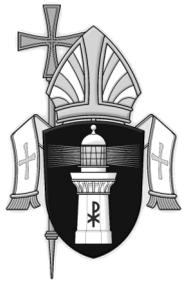
Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula

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,

Cnr 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
Website: www.woywoycatholic.org.au
Out of hours **medical emergency**
0438 631 327.

"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.

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 3.30pm; Saturday 11.30am & 4.30pm; Sunday 7.00am.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

1st & 3rd Sundays, 11am; (5th Sunday during 9.15am Mass by arrangement only).
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). 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. p 024341 0884 www.sjbwoywoy.org.au

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST YOUTH GROUP

Held once a fortnight in the Leo Mahon Room. Term 3 dates: 16th July, 30th July, 13th August and 27th August. High school (Years 7-12). For more information, contact Matthew French on 0411 792 587.

CATECHISTS Teach approved curriculum in 4 Primary State Schools on the Peninsula. Volunteers always needed—to teach and help. Training provided at no cost. Details: Susie 0411 566 622. "Bring the little children unto me."

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.

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 Peter 0425 358 376 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 10.20pm, cash prizes.

Ticket sales from 6pm. Proceeds benefit Parish. Enquiries Rob: 0427 990 818.

Reflection by Dianne Bergant CSS

Like the feast of the nativity of Jesus, this feast falls on one of the solstices, a hinge point in the cosmos. Some of the patristic writings tell us that the birth of Jesus was placed in the calendar when, in the northern hemisphere, the days began to lengthen. So this day was chosen to celebrate the birth of John precisely because the days were getting shorter. 'He must increase while I must decrease' (John 3:30). This is the time of seasonal change, of cosmic reversal. The entire universe has been alerted. Something new is about to happen.

John the Baptist is the hinge between the old age and the new eschatological age of fulfilment. John himself was never a disciple of Jesus; he did not enter the age that he heralded. He was the trumpet that sounded the coming of the king; he was the rooster that announced the dawning of the new day. He brought the people to the threshold of the new age, but he himself never stepped over into it. The idiosyncratic character of his life caught the attention of the crowds, but he did not keep this attention upon himself. Instead, he used it to point to Jesus, who appears to have been so commonplace that he might have been overlooked had not John cried out. It was John's prophetic destiny to be the sharp-edged sword, the polished arrow. He was the voice that cried in the wilderness: Hear me! Listen! Behold, he is coming!



Solemnity : June 24
The NATIVITY of ST JOHN THE BAPTIST