

THE VOICE

5th January 2014

Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

Psalter Week 2



CHRISTMASTIME

OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

- **Recently Deceased:**
Sr. Mary Xavier Compton.
sg.s.
- **Anniversaries:**
Enid Irene McCormack, Fr.
Walter Baker, Fr. Bill O'Connor.
- **Remembrances:**
Kevin Garnett, Ellen and
Arthur McGinley, Karen
Lynch.
- **And the sick:**
Helen and David Hopkins,
Mary Scarfe, Anne Unger,
Anne de Graaff, Michael
Cox, Caterina La Creca, Susie
Simmons, Pat Molloy, Baby
Aiden Patrick Betts, Kate
O'Connor.

The Magi and Pilgrimage

The Christian tradition of pilgrimage is strong. The Magi are among the first to go to Jerusalem and Bethlehem, to seek the Christ Child. Since then, over the centuries, Christians have travelled long distances to visit Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Rome, Compostella, Walsingham, Canterbury, Marizell, Altötting, Kevelaer, Skellig Michael, Loreto, Chartres, Mont Saint Michel, Montserrat, Lourdes, Fatima, and the many, many other places associated with Christ, his Mother and his saints. Pilgrimage is in our blood; it symbolises and celebrates our status as those who journey through this life to our place with God for all eternity.

A Christian *is* a pilgrim (see Hebrews 11:13). In Part II of his *Pilgrim's Progress* (1684), John Bunyan inserted his famous hymn, which begins:

Who would true valour see,
Let him come hither;
One here will constant be,
Come wind, come weather.
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent,
To be a pilgrim.

Many Christians (especially if they start out from Australia) have, like the Magi, to travel a long way when they go on pilgrimage, but there are shorter and more frequent ways, and I would like to suggest one such way to you now.

Our church is designed for the pilgrim. The same material is under our feet from the moment we enter the pedestrian gate and (whenever we join it from the parking lot) continues through the main doors and narthex to the doors into the nave. It is under the fixed pews, the altar, the ambo and the presider's chair. It is a path we trace whenever we come to participate in Mass and other sacraments and rites, and whenever we leave to take up again our daily duties. Our coming to church is as it were a stop on the pilgrimage of faith, when we are nourished and motivated to persevere on our journey. Our coming together, our hearing and responding to God's word, our nourishment by Christ's Body and Blood - all these give us the ability and courage to persevere in what we began at Baptism.

In a very poignant way, that is driven home at funerals. These are the only occasions when the doors are opened to the left of the presider. The faithful departed, who has many times entered and left the church by the route I have just described, now, having come to the end of his journey, is taken through these doors directly to the hearse waiting outside.

So when you next come to church, think of yourself as a pilgrim. It is nice to go Jerusalem, but you really have Jerusalem here at Woy Woy.

FR JOHN HILL, P.P.

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Psalm Response

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Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! We have seen his star in the East, and have come to adore the Lord. *Alleluia!*

Around the Parish

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 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.

Baptism: We welcome into our Faith community and pray for Mason James Feverstein who was baptized during our 9.15am Mass last Sunday.

Volunteer Church Cleaning Roster 10/1/14 (School Hols): Christine French, Pam Hickey, Michael French, Gary Martin.

Thank You to our wonderful parishioners for the joy you

gave to so many. We sent out 170 hampers this year which went to 190 adults and 110 children in the community and were so gratefully received as described in one letter "A Magical gift".

Thanks also to the great team of volunteers who worked so hard to prepare and distribute over several days. Susie Casey.

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

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

Special 2nd Collection held last Sunday for **The Christians in the Holy Land and Mary Mac's** raised \$1,148.10 to each cause. Thank you for your generosity.

Cancer Support Group: For those suffering from cancer or those wishing to pray for them meet this Tuesday, 7th January, 2.30pm in the Leo Mahon room.

Thank You to the young people of your church for the lovely hamper we received through Meals on Wheels. It was a lovely surprise. God Bless you all in 2014.

Found in the Church: Just before Christmas, a ladies wrist watch was found in the church with a number of other items. If you believe this to be yours, please contact the office on 4341 1073.

Social Justice

Caritas rushes aid to Philippines: Caritas Australia is working closely with communities affected by Super Typhoon Haiyan, one of the strongest storms to ever make landfall, causing widespread devastation in the Philippines and significant damage in Vietnam and China.

The Caritas network, the second largest humanitarian network in the world, is coordinating relief efforts with the Philippines government, the United Nations and other humanitarian groups.

With network partners Caritas USA and Caritas Philippines, Caritas Australia is on the ground across a number of dioceses in the Philippines, providing emergency shelter, water and sanitation, distributing household relief items, potable water, toilets and cash for work programs to help with the clean-up of debris, as well as delivering much-needed food aid and humanitarian assistance to families in need. Areas of operation include Tacloban, Ormoc and Palo in Leyte, Basey and Guian in Samar and Cebu among other areas.

After the initial response stage,

all money raised from the Caritas emergency appeal will be directed to ongoing rehabilitation programs to help families rebuild their homes, communities and livelihoods. Donations may be used for more disaster preparedness training in this vulnerable region as communities' ability to identify and respond to disasters with speed is proven to save lives, livelihoods and property.

"Our team has located the poorest barangays (villages) along the coast Ormoc that have been left with absolutely nothing," said Caritas Australia's international programs manager, Jamie Davies. "Their need for shelter and basic essentials is urgent."

Tarpaulins, hygiene kits and other household items were delivered by boat from Cebu city and stored in the Catholic school gymnasium in Ormoc for distribution to more than 4000 families, Ms Davies said.

"Caritas has a commitment to build back better and to help these vulnerable communities prepare for future disasters and minimise the risks. We will stand in with the Filipino community before, during and after the

headlines."

In Palo, 15 km south of the badly affected city of Tacloban, Caritas set up an office in a Catholic cathedral building to distribute shelter, water, hygiene and cooking kits and provide a refuge for homeless families.

The Archbishop of Palo, John Du, said, "What you see is like a valley of death, as if a bomb has been dropped. Almost everything is destroyed. In spite of that we are still hopeful, we will rise from this ordeal, because of the support of our neighbouring dioceses, provinces and countries.

"This humanitarian response once again shows the power of the Church's locally mobilised and led response, which is reinforced with support from international Church and Caritas agencies."

To donate to Caritas Australia's Typhoon Haiyan Emergency Response Appeal, go to www.caritas.org.au or freecall 1800 024 413.

From the Diocese and beyond

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 like to include Paris! A deposit is required by February 23, 2014 to secure your place. Itinerary and application available by request from St.

Patrick's Parish on 4325 1042.

Latin Mass will be celebrated on 12th January, 3pm at St. Cecilia's Church, Wyong.



Scripture Readings

Bruce Janiga

Epiphany of the Lord, Sunday, January 5

Is 60:1–6
Ps 72:1–2, 7–8, 10–11, 12–13
Eph 3:2–3, 5–6
Mt 2:1–12

Today's reading from Isaiah is an obvious fit with the Gospel reading. The magi in Matthew (v 2) represent the nations of the world coming to greet the "newborn king of the Jews." It is easy to understand how early Christians could see that visitation as a fulfilment of the text in Isaiah; our prophet envisioned a time when Sion would rejoice, for "the glory of the Lord shines upon you" (v 1). The gifts of "gold and frankincense" carried from Sheba (v 6) are two of the three offerings presented by the magi in the Gospel. For Matthew and his church, God's promises, fulfilled for Jerusalem centuries earlier, are being fulfilled once again in Jesus.

In Ephesians we hear of the mystery, "made known to me by revelation" (v 3), concerning God's gift of salvation offered to the gentiles. Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, encourages his audience to persevere in their faith. God has called them to also share in the promises made to Abraham. They are "coheirs ... / and co-partners in the promise in Christ Jesus" (v 6).

There is a marked contrast between King Herod and the magi in today's Gospel. In order to assist the magi, Herod, king of the Jews, consults "all the chief priests and the scribes" to discover the place "where the Christ was to be born" (v 4). The Hebrew Scriptures point to "Bethlehem of Judea" (v 5). Following this information and the star, the magi arrive at "the place where the child was" (v 9). They respond with joy when they discover the child, and they present him with gifts fit for a king. Herod, on the other hand, who needs no star to lead him to the Messiah, is "greatly troubled" (v 3) by the news of Jesus' birth and seeks to have him eliminated. His response to the birth of Jesus reminds us that even the Prince of Peace is sometimes greeted with violence.

For reflection: Do I strive to walk in God's light? Do I, like the magi, sometimes see God's presence in the world around me?

Baptism of the Lord, Sunday, January 12

Is 42:1–4, 6–7
Ps 29:1–2, 3–4, 3, 9–10
Acts 10:34–38
Mt 3:13–17

The text from Isaiah speaks of God's "servant" and "chosen one with whom I am pleased" (v 1). This servant will faithfully "bring forth justice" (v 3), a term used three times in today's passage. Writing near the end of the Babylonian exile, our prophet envisions a time of renewal for the people. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines justice as "the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbour" (1807); one who acts justly works to bring about God's will. The exiles hoped for one who would come and restore their nation. This hope is eventually incorporated into their expectation for a Messiah, an anointed servant of God who would establish God's rule on earth. For us as Christians, this hope is realised in Jesus, God's chosen one.

For the evangelist Matthew, Jesus is the fulfilment of God's promises made to Israel. This is made clear in his infancy narratives, where he references Old Testament prophecies fulfilled by Jesus five times in two chapters. In today's scene the words spoken by the heavenly voice (v 17) are related to the text from Isaiah 42:1. As God's servant, Jesus comes "to fulfil all righteousness" (v 15). His baptism serves as the first event of his public ministry, and the heavenly voice confirms his identity as God's "beloved Son" (v 17).

The scene in Acts takes place in the house of Cornelius, a Roman centurion. He is the first gentile to be baptised, along with his household. This is a significant turning point for the church in that it illustrates that the gospel is intended for people "in every nation" (v 35), not just the Jews. Peter speaks of Jesus' baptism as an anointing "with the Holy Spirit and power"; as God's anointed one, Jesus "went about doing good / and healing all those oppressed by the devil" (v 38). This is a sign of God's realm unfolding in our world. United with Christ in baptism, we too are called to do God's work.

For reflection: How am I living my baptismal call to do God's will? What can I do to promote justice in my local community?

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.



Today we remember the three wise men from the East who came to pay homage to the infant Jesus, bringing Him rich gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The gifts we bring — our time, service, and some share of what we earn for the work we do — are equally precious in His sight.



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.

Tithing

Paul Turner

Tithing is a sign of your gratitude for what God has done for you. The practice guides the way that many believers contribute to their own places of worship. The word "tithing" means "tenth," and it comes from an Old Testament practice of returning to God one-tenth of what a person receives. For example, Leviticus 27:30 and 32 say that a tenth of all crops and farm animals belongs to the Lord. And not just any tenth — the first tenth, the first fruits. These go back to God.

After all, God made everything. God owns everything. The things we "own" are not really ours. They are God's. God has placed them in our hands, making us stewards of them. We take care of them while we are alive, and we put them to the use that we believe God has in mind.

Some houses of worship recommend a full 10 percent for their support. Others suggest 5 percent, so that you can share another 5 percent with other charities.

Many people struggle to meet these goals.

They have trouble paying their own bills. Others can contribute more than 10 percent, and perhaps they owe it to the community to give back a little more.

Planning your gift is usually a good idea. Those who set a personal goal have a sharper aim. If your parish asks you to make a pledge, this is a good way to set that goal. It will also help the parish to make its plans and to be better stewards of the gifts you make.

Giving a small gift is better than giving no gift. Those who tithe generally report a sense of spiritual satisfaction. They give out of love, and they feel that they are being good stewards of the gifts that God has entrusted to them.

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.

We're on the Web!
www.woywoycatholic.org.au



Diocese of
Broken Bay