



The Voice

29 November 2015

First Sunday of Advent, Year C

Psalter Week I

Advent

OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY
FOR THE SOULS OF

- **Anniversaries:**
Thomas and Annie Peachey.
- **And the sick:**
Loretta Holt,
Frances Sara, Neil Cameron,
June Ferry, Kate Tinson,
Beryl Allen, Lola Proctor,
Jack Moulds, Alan Harland,
Maryanne Diorio, Arnold Diorio,
Grace Williams, Mark Taylor,
Carol Cross, Fr. Bill Meacham,
Fr. Brian Rowland,
Vince Zappavigns,
Audrey Barsenbach,
Bruce Spence, Tony O'Neill,
Nathalie Rankin, Ted Meyer,
Ibrahim Selim.

Toward the end of 1999 people were gearing up to welcome in the new millennium. Some Christians who take the scriptures literally joined in the fun and declared that the end of the world was nigh and that Christ would return on his two-thousandth birthday.

They seem to subscribe to the old adage that, 'one should never let the facts get in the way of a good story'!

Christianity took over the Roman calendar in what we now call the 4th Century of the Christian era. At Rome in 526, a scholarly monk named Dionysius Exiguus compiled a list of the dates of Jesus' birth, death and resurrection. He assigned dates in the new Christian calendar for each of these events. Given the tools at his disposal, he did an extraordinary job. We know, however, from other historical sources and from the New Testament, where it mentions who the various Jewish and Roman rulers were in Palestine, that Dionysius was four years out with his dating. The church became aware of this mistake in 1582, but to correct it the world would have lost four years! So we have all lived with it ever since.

We can, however, safely assume that Jesus knows the year in which he was born and that if our fundamentalist Christian friends are right in believing he was going to return on his 2000th birthday, he would have done so in 1996!

The facts are that in every generation we have had people tell us that the sun, moon, stars, wars, famine, tidal waves and earthquakes, mentioned in today's Gospel, all demonstrate that Jesus is about to return. Clearly, we are still waiting. If only the Christians who give out these dire predictions, every so often, would take as seriously Jesus' words, 'You will know not the time, nor the place when the Son of

Man will return in glory'.

Luke's community thought that Jesus would return quickly and spectacularly. They were surprised that the first generation of Christian believers was dying without seeing it all happen. Given the terrible suffering they were enduring for Jesus, the early Christians no doubt hoped that the end of the world would be soon and would demonstrate to everyone that they were not foolish to cling to Christ in the face of all opposition and persecution. The early Christians knew that there was no point professing faith in Jesus Christ unless our daily behaviour reflects his kingdom. It has been a telling point ever since. If every Christian lived out the Gospel in his or her daily life, the world would be transformed and Christ would come in spectacular fashion.

I haven't got a clue when the world will cease to exist, but on this, the first day of the Church's Year, I know that the Lord returns to us every time we love, forgive, share, are compassionate, are generous and sacrificial toward one another. It may not be as grand as dancing suns and tidal waves, but the heroic love of a parent for a child, a spouse for their sick partner and the first world sharing with the third world are spectacular enough for me to believe that Jesus' kingdom comes every day, in every hour, at every moment. May this first Eucharist of the Church's year be a taste for us of the Kingdom of God that is both present amongst us and still to come. And may the Advent season sustain us in our waiting and give us courage in our living.

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Psalms Response

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Gospel Acclamation

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

Around the Parish

Advent has a twofold character—as a season to prepare for Christ-mas 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 C, weekday cycle 2.

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

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

'El Shaddai' Prayer Group meetings for December are 12th and 19th. Meetings will be held in the Walter Baker Hall.

Volunteer Church Cleaning Roster 4/12/15: Jo Salter, Rano Spiteri.

Bus Trip—Mangrove Mountain: Wednesday 2nd December—sausage sizzle lunch. Cost \$20. Enquiries: Susie 0403 417 639 or 4344 1742.

Bus Fund Christmas Raffle:

First Prize: Zugler and Brown Twin Grill and B.B.Q. and Trolley cover. Twin Grill mobile Cart. Value approx. \$700 plus prizes on display. Tickets on sale at all Masses 28-29 November and 12-13 December. *Please note two weekends only.*

Raffle will be drawn 14th December. Winner will be notified.

Enquiries: Mary Scarf 4344 2288.

Coffee and Chat: The group that gathers on the 3rd Monday of each month for sandwiches, cakes, tea and coffee will meet on the 2nd Monday 14th December. This gathering will have an advent Christmas tone. All welcome! Let us know if you need transport. Phone Bernard 4341 6343.

Mary Mac's needs your support by donating your odds and ends and to attend its festival on Saturday, 5th December, We are having lots of Christmas Gift Stalls, bargains on the white elephant stall, BBQ, Toy Run and lots more. Donations can be dropped off Friday 4th to the Walter Baker Hall.

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

Mary MacKillop International incorporates the mission work of the Sister 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. 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.

Christmas Hampers and single items will be collected 5/6 December. If you know of anyone needing a hamper please contact Susie Casey on 0403 417 639 or 4344 1742.

Immaculate Conception: Start the Year of Mercy with Personal Prayer. Hour of Grace. Tuesday 8 December, 12 noon-1pm. Woy Woy Church.

Christmas Cards available now in the Piety Stall.

The Just Word

Justice Matters Catholic Social Justice Commission:

We usually think of paid work as primarily a means to an end. It gives us the capacity to meet our own and our family's material needs.

The Catholic Church goes beyond this. It sees work as valuable in its own right. Among other things, work enhances individual dignity and enables us to join in the continuing creation of God's world. Seen in this light, work is good for our emotional and spiritual and

material welfare.

Obviously not all aspects of work add to people's welfare. Work can be dangerous, poorly paid, a source of exploitation or otherwise harmful to society.

Sometimes we can be absorbed in our work to the point of becoming obsessed. We start to live for work rather than work for a living. We can neglect our family, our friends and the community in the excessive pursuit of material gain or social status or because our dedication to the job goes beyond reasonable bounds. Finding the

right balance in our lives is not an easy task.

Public authorities have a major role to play in ensuring a 'fair go' for less powerful groups of workers—whether they are employees or self-employed. Trade unions, employer associations and benevolent organizations also have a place in defending the rights of vulnerable workers.

We often hear it said that 'work is the best form of welfare'. More often than not, what is really meant is that working is better than relying on social security.

From the Diocese and beyond

Calling all old boys—St. Edward's Old Boys' Function Friday 4th December, 4.30pm-7pm (and later). Crowne Plaza Forecourt, Terrigal.

Holy Cross Catholic Lawn Cemetery is located in Humphreys Road, Kincumber Sth. In-ground Burial and Cremated Remains (Ashes) Memorial Beam sites are both available now in the new Lawn Section of the Cemetery.

On-site inspections (by appointment) are most welcome—contact Peter Hurley (Secretary) Ph: 4363 1228 or mobile 0418 440 224 for all enquiries or to have a personal inspection appointment time.

Handel's Messiah: A massed combined choir performance will be performing in Hornsby's Cathedral Church, Our Lady of the Rosary, 23 Yardley Ave. Waitara. Thursday 10th December, 8pm

The performance is in aid of Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter.

Pilgrimage to Greece, Malta and Rome: Fr. Wim Hoekstra will be leading a pilgrimage leaving 24th September, 2016 and returning October 14th to Greece, in the foot steps of St. Paul. Full details available from Fr. Wim, P.O. Box 1501, Baulkham Hills. 1755 or email wkh367@gmail.com

Counselling: CatholicCare Family Relationships provides counselling to adults, young people, couples, and their children at all stages of the relationship cycle including pre-marriage, marriage (including de fact relationships), separation and remarriage. Counselling supports the establishment and maintenance of strong positive family relationships as well as counseling about the care, welfare and development of children of the relationship. Contact Central Coast family centre for more information phone 4356 23600.

Scripture Readings

Bruce Janiga

29 November 2015

1st Sunday of Advent, November 29

Jer 33:14-16
Ps 24:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14
1 Thes 3:12-4:2
Lk 21:25-28, 34-36

Someone gave me a button once that said, "Jesus is Coming — Look Busy." That is the message of the early liturgies of Advent, a season that first looks ahead to the parousia and then, during the final days before Christmas, focuses on Christ's first coming more than 2,000 years ago.

In Jeremiah we are told, "The days are coming" (v 14). These days are the time of fulfilment of "the promise I made to the house of Israel and Judah." They are a time when a just ruler will come from God to establish justice and righteousness. Writing during a tumultuous time in Israel's history, when Babylon was on the ascendancy and had defeated his people, the prophet envisions a time when God will make things right. He gives the people cause to hope for a "shoot" to "raise up for David" (v 15) that will restore the nation.

In Paul's oldest existing letter, the apostle prays that the church in Thessalonika will grow "in love for one another and for all" (v 12), so that when the Lord comes in glory they might be "blameless in holiness before our God" (v 13). At this point in his life, Paul had a sense that the Day of the Lord was to occur soon, so he conveys a sense of urgency in his message. In some of his later writings, he gives the sense that he no longer expects an imminent parousia but rather that Christ's second coming is delayed, so there is much work for the church to do on earth.

For Reflection: Instead of celebrating Christmas early, how can I make this Advent more a time of anticipation? Is my busyness about things that ultimately don't matter, or do I make myself busy about the things of God?

2nd Sunday of Advent, December 6

Bar 5:1-9
Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6
Phil 1:4-6, 8-11
Lk 3:1-6

The Book of Baruch, attributed to an assistant of the prophet Jeremiah, is thought

to date to the last two centuries before Christ in its final form. Today's text comes from what is known as the Poem of Consolation. In it the prophet commands, "Jerusalem, take off your robe of mourning and misery; / put on the Splendor of glory from God forever" (v 1). His vision includes an image of the children of Israel returning from exile, "gathered from the east and the west" (v 5).

The church in Philippi, established by Paul around AD 49-50, was the first Christian community in Europe. Paul writes to the Philippians while he is in prison. Typical of a letter in Paul's day, he includes a "thanksgiving" in which he commends them for their faithfulness to the gospel, encouraging them to remain steadfast. He tells them he prays for "all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel" (vv 4-5). Knowing that everyone will be called to give an account on the day of judgment, he prays that they will be "filled with the fruit of righteousness" (v 11).

Today's Gospel reading is unusual in that it does not include Jesus. The text, which is the beginning of Luke's Gospel proper (following his infancy narratives), introduces us to the career of John the Baptist. Our evangelist locates John's ministry in the context of world history — "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar" (v 1) — and Jewish history — "during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas" (v 2). John's ministry is about "proclaiming a baptism of repentance" (v 3), and he exercised it in the "whole region of the Jordan." His message was understood by the early church as a fulfilment of a text from Isaiah originally addressed to the exiles in Babylon, a call to "prepare the way of the Lord" (v 4). Isaiah had called the exiles to prepare for the coming of their God, who was going to make things right for them.

For Reflection: Are there people in my life who need to be encouraged in their faith? What am I doing to prepare for the coming of the Lord?

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's Church in Upper Montclair, N.J. From Ministry & Liturgy, copyright © Resource Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission under licence number 115216.



'Be on guard,' Jesus warns in today's Gospel, 'lest your spirits become bloated with indulgence.' Let us heed His warning and follow the advice of St. Paul, conducting ourselves in a way pleasing to God, overflowing with love for one another.

See Luke 21:34



Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula

Woy Woy, 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 and Phegan's Bay.

St John the Baptist Church, corner of Blackwall and Victoria Roads, Woy Woy

Parish Office Ethel Cox Parish Centre
P.O. Box 264 Walter Baker Hall
54 Victoria Road 100 Blackwall 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'

Fr. Jack Robson. *Parish Priest*.

Fr. Timothy Raj. M.S.F.S. Fr. Philip Thottam. M.S.F.S.

Assistant Priests.

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

Office Hours: 9.30 a.m.—4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday

Deadline for The Voice: 3.30 p.m. Wednesday

Reflection by Fr Michael Tate

Sometimes our own lives, the life of the Church, the life of societies and nations cry out for Our Lord Jesus Christ to come again right now and rescue us right now.

In some instances we can become conscious of Jesus' saving, transforming power in a particular situation. But, for the whole of humanity across the millennia, we do not know the day or the hour when death and all its warriors such as disease and violence, will be absolutely vanquished by Christ in glory.

This can lead to a type of pain which finds solace in all those things which dull the spirit. Our Lord gives examples: debauchery, drunkenness. Today he might have added 'living in the virtual world'. Rather, Our Lord wants us to live in the real world on high alert.

In the meantime each one of us can be a signal of what is to come. Each time we exhaust ourselves heroically loving someone whom others might abandon, each time we take a risk because we cry out against injustice, and in a myriad other ways, we signal that the Kingdom is already being established on earth. We could pause for a moment to pray for the strength to be on high alert for the opportunities to translate the legacy of Jesus into our own time and place, thus giving reasons to each other for our faith and hope that Christ *has* come, Christ *is* risen, Christ *will* come again.

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 7.15 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).

HOLY HOUR—EXPOSITION & BENEDICTION

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

CATHOLIC CARE Counselling and Family Relationships. Ph: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 and McMasters Rd. Games start at 7.30pm and finish approx 10.20 p.m. Cash prizes. Ticket sales from 6.00 p.m. Proceeds benefit Parish. Enquiries Rob 0427 990 818.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST YOUTH MINISTRY— for information and events contact Parish Office 4341 1073.

PARISH CHOIR— Practice Wednesday nights in the church, 7 p.m. Enquiries: 4341 3367.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, 21a Dulkara Rd South Woy Woy 2256. Ph.4341 0884 Fax: 02 43 44 5049.

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



Diocese of Broken Bay