



Advent

Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula

The Voice

13th December 2015

Third Sunday of Advent, Year C

Psalter Proper

OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

• Recently deceased:

Thora Warmoll,
Mary Cashell,
Siobhan O'Connor.

• Anniversaries:

Ann Culmer, Eileen Meyer,
Eugene Ozment, Joyce Ragan,
Beverley McMahon,
Frank Morgan.

• Remembrances:

Bernie Brian, John Robbie.

• And the sick:

Loretta Holt, Frances Sara,
Neil Cameron, June Ferry,
Kate Tinson, Beryl Allen,
Lola Proctor, Jack Moulds,
Alan Harland, Grace Williams,
Maryanne Diorio, Arnold Diorio,
Carol Cross, Fr. Bill Meacham,
Fr. Brian Rowland, Mark Taylor,
Vince Zappavigna, Bruce Spence,
Audrey Barsenbach,
Ibrahim Selim, Natalie Franklin.

During Advent, Daniel went to his mother demanding a new bicycle for Christmas. 'Danny, we can't afford it', she said, 'so write a letter to Jesus and pray for one instead.'

'Dear Jesus, I've been a good boy this year and would appreciate a new bicycle. Your friend, Daniel.'

Now Danny guessed that Jesus really knew he was a brat so he tore it up and tried again.

'Dear Jesus, I've been an OK boy this year and I want a new bicycle. Yours truly, Daniel.'

Danny knew this wasn't true so he tore it up and tried again.

'Dear Jesus, I've thought about being a good boy so may I have a new bicycle? Daniel.'

Finally, Danny thought better of making these false claims and so ran to the Church.

He went inside and stole a small statue of Mary and ran out the door. He went home, hid it under his bed and wrote this letter.

'Jesus, let's face it, I've broken most of the Commandments; tore up my sister's doll and lots more. I'm desperate. I've got your mother Mary, if you ever want to see her again, give me a bike for Christmas. You know who.'

There is something of Danny in all of us. We often think that we can bargain with God to get the best possible deal out of life. The problem with this bargaining image is that it is based on faith that does not believe in Advent. The bargaining image of God is the furthest thing from the mind of the writers of today's readings – Zephaniah, the Canticle from Isaiah, Philippians and Luke. Each of them rejoices in the undeserved gift God gives to the world. We do not deserve God's love given to us in the Babe of Bethlehem. It is God's over-

flowing goodness which pours out in Jesus and through him and the Spirit we have been welcomed into the family of God and bear his name.

These Scriptures remind us that God has not held back one thing in his love for us. By becoming one with us in our flesh, God has done everything he can to assure us of his saving love. He has shown us all what can be shown about how to live lives of sacrifice, justice and love to transform our world.

In today's Gospel John's disciples are full of wanting to know what they can do to earn God's love. The crowds, tax collectors and soldiers ask what they can do to gain God's favour. While there is much to do, Advent reminds us every year that all we do is a response to the initial, undeserved goodness of God.

Still the image of us 'doing a deal' with God is so prevalent in our theology and prayer. 'I will be a better person if I get well.' 'I will return to Sunday Mass if I pass my exams.' All dreadful stuff. And the Church has to take some responsibility for this and correct it.

Advent teaches us that we have to witness to a God who risked everything so that we might know love and life in this world and in the next. We hold and proclaim, in season and out of season, a God who emptied himself of power and might and came to us as a baby.

That's not the profile of a deal-doer. It's the portrait of a lover.

So this Advent let's not ransom ourselves to a benevolent dictator. Let's ask for anything we need with confidence that God has heard our words and so sent love itself in Jesus Christ.

© Richard Leonard SJ.

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Notices and News | 2 |
| Scripture Readings | 3 |
| Directory | 4 |

Psalm Response

© Colin D. Smith cfc



Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring Good News to the poor. *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.

Christmas Masses:

Christmas Eve: Vigil 5pm, 7.30pm, 10pm. Carols at 9.30pm.

Christmas Day: 7.30am, 9.15am. No evening Mass.

Parish Bus Transport for three (3) Christmas Masses: - 24th Dec, for 5pm Mass, 25th Dec for 7.30am & 9.15am Masses only. Please phone the Parish Office to book your seat.

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.

Second Rite of Reconciliation will be administered this Tuesday, 15th December at 7.30pm.

Christmas Offering Envelopes are in the church for those who do

not have weekly envelopes.

Wardens, Readers and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion: Please indicate on rosters available in the Servers Sacristy if you wish to serve at any of the Christmas Masses.

Liturgy Team meeting Thursday, 17th December, 7.30pm in Parish office.

Movie Night raising money for the Jan Vikas Society in Navi Mumbai where Fr. Timothy used to live which was advertised in last week's Newsletter is being held *this* Monday, 14th December. Full details on notice board.

Coffee and Chat: Meeting *this* Monday, 14th December. The group normally gathers on 3rd Monday of the month, 1.30pm-3pm for sandwiches, cakes, tea and coffee. This gathering will have an Advent Ph: Bernard 4341 6343.

Volunteer Church Cleaning Roster 18/12/15: Christine French, Mary McCumstie, Maria Wickens, Warren Sparrow.

Sympathy: St. John the Baptist Parish Family extend its prayerful sympathy to family, relatives and

friends of Mary Cashell who was buried from our church last week.

Baptisms: We welcome into our Faith community and pray for Camilla Clarke, Sullivan Legge and Isla Rogic baptised last Sunday.

Children's Liturgy Roster 20/12/15: Geraldine Baxter, Joanna Baxter, Marina Mondal.

Thank You: On behalf of Mary Mackillop International, I thank you for your generous support in supplying and assisting with used stamps.

During 2015, we raised approximately \$34,500.00. This has surpassed our 2014 effort. Thank you one and all. From 2001 till now our total is almost \$125,000.00. It is through your efforts that the legacy of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop continues in Peru today. Wishing all a most holy and happy Christmas.

Sr. Helen Saunders for the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Christmas Cards and 2016 Calendars available in the Piety Stall.

Christmas tree decorations. Parishioners are invited to adorn the tree with decorations.

The Just Word

Homily of Pope Francis, Manger Square (Bethlehem), Sunday 25 May 2014:

'This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger' (Luke 2:12).

What a great grace it is to celebrate the Eucharist in the place where Jesus was born!

I thank God and I thank all of you who have welcomed me on my pilgrimage: The Child Jesus, born in Bethlehem, is a sign given by God to those who awaited salvation, and he remains forever the sign of God's tenderness and presence in our world. The angel an-

nounces to the shepherds: 'This will be a sign for you: you will find a child...'

Today too, children are a sign. They are a sign of hope, a sign of life, but also a 'diagnostic' sign, a marker indicating the health of families, society and the entire world. Wherever children are accepted, loved, cared for and protected, the family is healthy, society is more healthy and the world is more human. Here we can think of the work carried out by the Ephpheta Paul VI institute for hearing and speech impaired Palestinian children: it is a very real sign of God's goodness. It is a clear

sign that society is healthier.

To us, the men and women of the twenty-first century, God today also says: 'This will be a sign for you', look to the child...

The Child of Bethlehem is frail, like all newborn children. He cannot speak and yet he is the Word made flesh who came to transform the hearts and lives of all men and women. This Child, like every other child, is vulnerable; he needs to be accepted and protected. Today too, children need to be welcomed and defended, from the moment of their conception.

To be continued.

From the Diocese and beyond

The Jubilee Year of Mercy:

Bishop Peter will open the door of Holy Cross Church, 10 Humphreys Rd., Kincumber as a *Holy Door* at a special Mass on Saturday, 19th December at 9.15am. Holy Cross with its historic significance is one of the five churches in the diocese with a Holy Door for the jubilee year, and this is the holy door of our deanery. Passing through the Holy Door is a sign of repentance and a desire for renewal, that we will take up Pope Francis challenge to be "merciful like the Father". For those who are able, we will begin with a procession from the wharf at the bot-

tom of Humphreys Road at 9am, tracing the steps of Saint Mary of the Cross once walked and others can join in the procession at the door of the church. Parishioners from all our local parishes are invited to take part. Holy Cross Church is also open every day throughout the year as a place of quiet prayer to which anyone is welcome to make a pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage to Greece, Malta and Rome: Fr. Wim Hoekstra will be leading a pilgrimage leaving Sept. 24th. 2016 to follow in the footsteps of St. Paul. Full details available from Fr. Wim. P.O. Box

1501, Baulkham Hills. NSW.1755. or email 367wkh367@gmail.com

Staying Home Leaving Violence: CatholicCare Staying Home Leaving Violence program assists women and children on the Central Coast to remain in their homes and be protected from Family Violence The program support ranges from new security measures, personal and financial problems and legal support. If someone you know is experiencing family violence please contact CatholicCare on 4356 2600.



Scripture Readings

Bruce Janiga

13th December 2015

3rd Sunday of Advent, December 13

Zep 3:14-18
Is 12:2-3, 4, 5-6
Phil 4:4-7
Lk 3:10-18

The prophet Zephaniah, one of the "minor prophets" of the Old Testament, is a prophet of judgment. Writing in the late seventh century BC, his words speak of the Day of the Lord, when all the evildoers will face God's punishment. But today's reading is addressed to the faithful as the prophet calls them to "shout for joy! ... / Be glad and exult with all your heart!" (v 14). For when the Lord comes he "will rejoice over you with gladness, / and renew you in his love."

Paul's words to the Philippians echo the words of Zephaniah, "Rejoice in the Lord always" (v 4). He calls us to trust in God's goodness. These words are the inspiration for the popular name of this Sunday, *Gaudete* (Rejoice) Sunday, which may be indicated by rose vestments and a rose candle in the Advent wreath.

The preaching of John the Baptist inspires many to change their lives. "What should we do?" they ask him (v 10). John encourages tax collectors to avoid sin, "Stop collecting more than is prescribed" (v 13). He tells the crowds to do good: "Whoever has two cloaks / should share with the person who has none" (v 11). This is the proper response to the call to conversion: repent and believe. We show our repentance by discontinuing bad behaviour and being sorry for it. But it is not sufficient to cease doing wrong: we show our belief by embracing a new way of life, by doing the good God calls us to do. John's call to conversion is in anticipation of "one mightier" (v 16) who is to come: Jesus, who will come to judge the good and the bad.

For Reflection: Is there something in my life that I need to stop doing in order to conform more fully to God's call? Is there something I should start doing? Do I see my faith as a reason to be glad and rejoice?

4th Sunday of Advent, December 20

Mi 5:1-4
Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19
Heb 10:5-10
Lk 1:39-45

In the final days of Advent, our Scriptures turn their focus to the birth of Jesus. Mary, pregnant with Jesus, visits Elizabeth,

who will give birth to John the Baptist. Elizabeth declares Mary "the mother of my Lord" (v 43), "blessed ... among women" (v 42). In sharing the news of their pregnancies, these two mothers come to share in the joy that the birth of Jesus would bring to the whole world.

The prophet Micah, writing in the late eighth century BC, speaks words of judgment and salvation to the people of the southern kingdom of Judah. He prophesies that the "one who is to be ruler in Israel" will come from Bethlehem, "too small to be among the clans of Judah" (v 1). This one "shall stand firm and shepherd his flock" ("shepherd" was synonymous with "king" in ancient Israel); "his greatness / shall reach to the ends of the earth" (v 3). We can clearly understand why the early Christians viewed this prophecy as an anticipation of Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem and destined to be king of all God's people.

The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews speaks of Jesus as the one who came to take away our sins. Quoting the Septuagint (Greek) version of Psalm 40, he has Jesus say, "A body you prepared for me" (v 5). This text is quite different from the Masoretic or Hebrew text of Psalm 40:7, "Ears open to obedience you gave me." We can clearly understand why the author quotes the Greek text as he refers to Jesus' incarnation as the means by which the daily sacrifice at the temple of Jerusalem was replaced by the one-time sacrifice of Christ on the cross. For Jesus has come "to do your will, O God" (v 7), and in doing this "we have been consecrated / through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (v 10). Even as we end Advent, we are reminded that Christ came to embrace not only our humanity but also the cross.

For Reflection: Does the news of Christ's birth inspire joy in my heart? As a member of the body of Christ, I too am called to do God's will; do I accept the call graciously? **ML**

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.



Today's Gospel provides a blueprint for good stewardship: "Let the man who has two coats give to him who has none. The man who has food should do the same."

SEE LUKE 3:11



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, Pamtonga, 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
P.O. Box 264
54 Victoria Road
WOY WOY N.S.W.

Ethel Cox Parish Centre
Walter Baker Hall
100 Blackwall Road

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

Scripture Commentary

The exaltation in this oracle of salvation is stated clearly at the outset: 'Shout!...Sing!... Be glad and exult!' The people are told to cast aside all cautious reserve and to rejoice wholeheartedly. The reason for this rejoicing is their deliverance by God from their enemies. 'On that day' is an allusion to the Day of the LORD, a time in the future when the justice of God will be executed throughout the world. The concluding verses express God's love. They describe both the tenderness that God has for this restored people, and the joy that their restoration elicits in God. The people are called to rejoice in God, because God rejoices in them.

In the response, God is declared the source of salvation. Bolstered by this assurance, the writer claims to be unafraid and filled with courage knowing that the source of salvation is the LORD rather than a mere human being. Here water is transformative. It is the water of salvation and all who draw from this well will be refreshed by God's salvific power. Jerusalem, the royal capital of the Davidic dynasty and the site where the temple was built, is called upon to rejoice, for God is in its midst. The presence of God in the midst of the people is the source of the writer's confidence of future deliverance.

Twice Paul calls the people to rejoice. This is followed by another, perhaps more forceful, admonition: 'Have no anxiety'. The joy that Paul advocates is not merely the happiness that comes from enjoyment of life. It is a special kind of joy, joy in the

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).

HOLY HOUR—EXPOSITION AND BENEDICTION

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

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. p 024341 0884 f 0243 445049.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST YOUTH GROUP For information and events contact Parish office 4341 1073.

CENTACARE Marriage & Family Counselling, Pregnancy help—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.

CASH HOUSIE every Saturday night at Peninsula Community Centre. Cnr. Ocean Beach Rd and McMasters Rd. Games start 7.30pm and finish approx 10.30pm. Cash prizes. Ticket sales from 6.00 p.m. Proceeds benefit Parish. Enquiries: Rob 0427 990 818.

LORD, the kind that is grounded in faith in Jesus Christ. 'The LORD is near' is an eschatological watchword, acclaiming the future coming of the LORD to set all things right. If the Christians live righteously, God will come as a Saviour. The reward for such commitment to righteousness is peace, which originates from God, transcends everything imaginable, and withstands anxiety that might threaten human equanimity.

Although John himself lives an austere life removed from the ordinary pursuits of people, he does not ask his inquirers to dissociate themselves from their own lives or occupations. Rather, he challenges them to continue where they are, but to carry out their daily responsibilities with concern for others, with honesty and integrity. The expectation that filled the people was eschatological; they were looking for the Christ, the 'anointed one'. John was not this one. His baptism with water was a ritual of repentance and cleansing; Christ's baptism of the Spirit will purge and transform, and his coming will be a time of judgment, when the wicked will be separated like chaff from the wheat and will be thrown into the fire. John's ministry calls for the change of heart required of those who would be saved from this distress.

© Dianne Bergant CSS

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



Diocese of Broken Bay