



The Voice

14th December 2014

Third Sunday of Advent, Year B

Psalter Week 3

ADVENT

OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

- **Recently deceased:**
Tom Jarvis, Bradly Hall,
Fr. Rafaele, S.M.
- **Anniversaries:**
Bon Andersen,
Eugene Ozment,
Dorothy Halpin,
Eunice Gaffney,
Fr. Dom Furlong,
Fr. Neil Collins,
Dorn Schumacher,
Mgr. Tom Wallace,
Frank McLenaghan,
Deacon David Huntley,
Ann Culmer, Maria Baraiwai,
Severo Baraiwai.
- **And the sick:**
Fr. Bill Meacham, Lola Proctor,
Grace Williams, Alan Harland,
Evangeline Cusay, Gada Selim,
Peter Crookes, Ruth Fuller,
Sr. Margaret Wall, R.S.J.
Maureen O'Brien, John Purser,
Clare Wren,
Patrick, Sophia and Elise
Firman (Triplets born 8/11.),
Bruce Spence.

Parish Social Profile

We have just received, from the Australian Catholic Council for Pastoral Research, the parish social profile based on the 2011 Australian Census. I would like to share some of its findings with you.

After all, as Advent begins, and we reflect on the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is timely to reflect on the changing world in which we are committed to preaching the Good News.

Pastoral planning is important. As costs go up and resources are stretched to the limit, we need to think very hard about where our priorities lie.

The total population of this area in 2011 was 39,975, of whom 10,913, or 27.3%, were Catholics (up from 10,235 or 26.2% in 2006).

The median age of Catholics was 44 years; the number of Catholics aged 65 and over rose from 22% to 23%; the number born in a non-English speaking country rose from 7% to 8%; 1,434 were born overseas; 58 did not speak English well; 722 (6.6%, up from 5.5%) needed assistance with "core activities."

There were 4,434 Catholic families (up from 4,078); 1,345 lived alone (up from 1,245); 3,767 had changed address since 2006.

The number of Catholic students attending Catholic schools rose from 31% to 34%.

In many cases, the statistics do not vary dramatically. There are, however, trends that should not surprise us (if we read the papers or watch TV), but for which we must be prepared.

First of all, there is the rise in the number of older parishioners. (The number of those 80 and over went up from 608 to 719.)

Second, the average percentage of Catholics in a *de facto* relationship (whether both Catholic, or one Catholic and the other non-Catholic Christian, or one Catholic and the other non-Christian or not stated) has risen to 18.5%.

Third, 6.6% of Catholics need assistance with core activities, and 13.3% (up from 11.9%) of Catholics aged 15 and over provide unpaid assistance to a person with a disability.

Fourth, unemployment among Catholics declined from 8.1 to 7.9%, but youth unemployment (aged 15-24) rose from 12.5 to 15.7%. (The figure for Australia was 10.2%.)

Fifth, the number of Catholics of indigenous origin rose from 251 to 348.

(Continued on page 4)

Inside this issue:

Notices and News	2
Scripture Readings	3
Directory	4

Psalm Response

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My soul re-joic-es in the Lord and mag-ni-fies his name.

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.

It is good to have you with us. If you have any questions or would like to know more about our Parish, please ask Fr Hill or Fr Stephen, or phone 4341 1073 or visit our parish website at www.woywoycatholic.org.au for information on parish programmes and ministries. We wish you a holy and happy holiday. Please visit us again.

Christmas Masses:

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

Christmas Day: 7.30am and 9.15am. *Note: No evening Mass.*

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.



2nd Rite of Reconciliation this Thursday, 18th Dec. at 7.30pm.

St. Dominic: The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has granted a request of the Bishops of Australia that the liturgical celebration of St. Dominic be transferred to August 3 with the rank of memorial in the liturgical calendar for the Dioceses of Australia. St. Dominic was formerly on 8th August now Solemnity of St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

Christmas Day Lunch at Walter Baker Hall: In recent years, numbers attending this luncheon have been steadily declining, and are now at the point where it is no longer practical to host this meal. Sincere thanks to all those who have previously assisted with this event especially those who donated money, food and time. Rae Busby.

A Cuppa and a Chat: A group of seniors meet in the Leo Mahon room 3rd Monday of each month due 15th December, 1.30pm-2.30pm. If you would like to join us phone Bernard 4341 6343. Transport provided.

Baptisms: We welcome into our Faith community and pray for Malachi Elford, Aaliyah Farmer-Dally and Kalilah Farmer-Dally.

Children's Liturgy Roster 21/12/14: Leif Spicer (L) Alecia Amaral (L) Carol Yates (H).

Volunteer Church Cleaning Roster 19/12/14: Christine French. Maria Wickens. Warren Sparrow.

Children's Liturgy and Church Cleaning Rosters available for collection in the Leo Mahon room.

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

Fr. Stephen's Special Morning Tea after 9.15am Mass Sunday 28/12/14: Father is leaving for overseas on 29th December. Please bring a plate of food to share. A leaving collection will be taken next weekend for those wishing to contribute towards a farewell gift.

The Just Word

Destroying Earth:

Pope Francis sent a message to the International Peace Meeting taking place September 2014 in Antwerp, Belgium organised by the community of Sant'Egidio for prayer and dialogue. He said that "war drags populations into a spiral of violence; it tears down what generations have laboured to build up and it sets the scene for even greater injustices and conflicts." Similarly, violence done to the earth itself is a part of war. It tears down what God has created through eons of evolution on this wondrous blue planet.

Environmental vandalism inflicted by war is exacerbated by modern technology:

Military Operations: The Mesopotamian marshes once stretched over 20,000 sq km and gave images for the Bibles Garden of Eden story. They have been largely drained for military operations. The interconnected lakes, mudflats and reed marshes were once a crucial stop for millions of migratory birds. They were the nursery grounds for the Persian Gulf's fish and shrimp industry.

Scorched Earth Policies: Kuwait's burnt-out oilfields in the First Gulf War made healthy

grazing land useless. Greenery and wildlife is now coated in oil residues that affect water flow, seed germination and microbial life.

Chemical Weapons: The US Military defoliated Vietnam's forests 1962-71, using 72 million litres of chemical spray. It killed coconut trees, left animal offspring deformed and seeds that would not germinate.

Depleted Uranium is used to harden artillery shells but when exploded leaves fine particles which penetrate the lungs of all who breathe the air.

Columban Mission Institute.

From the Diocese and beyond

Pathways of St. Paul: Join parishioners from Holy Innocents' on a 20 day Pilgrimage to Greece and Turkey, departing Monday 20th April. Walk the footsteps of St. Paul, visit places where he lived, worked and was imprisoned. Also visit the island of Patmos, where St. John wrote the book of Revelation, Basilica of St. John built over the tomb of "The Divine" Apostle and the "House of Mary" where it is said

Mary spent the later years of her life. For Itinerary Brochure and Booking Form please contact Fr. Peter Krigovsky, admin@holytic.org.au or download from www.holyinnocentscroydon.org.au/news-and-events/parish-pilgrimage

The St John of God Institute of Counselling Course in personal growth, communication, parenting & general counselling princi-

ples. Starting Tuesday 3 February 2015, 7.30-9.45pm, Holy Cross College, Victoria Rd, Ryde. Cost \$450.00 for the year with early bird offer of \$400.00 if paid in full by end February 2015. For enquires please contact: Michael Hill - 9869 3774 or 0410 774 432; Carol Harding - 9639 0096 or 0408 705 848; Jannelle Carlile - 0431 598 004; Email: couselling1969@gmail.com

Scripture Readings

Bruce Janiga

3rd Sunday of Advent, December 14

Is 61:1-2a, 10-11
Lk 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54
1 Thes 5:16-24
Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

Once again we encounter John the Baptist in today's Gospel. He "came to testify to the light" (v 7), who is the one promised by God long ago through the prophets. John's presence and preaching stir up the hopes of the people. They suspect he might be "the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet" (v 25), individuals expected to be sent by God to the people. But John tells them, and us, that the one coming "after me" (v 27) is more than that. The one who is to come is the Son of God, our redeemer.

Today's text from Third Isaiah is considered a foreshadowing of the mission of Jesus. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me" (v 1). He has been anointed and sent. He comes to bring "glad tidings" (v 1), the gospel, to those in darkness. The time of his visitation marks a new era in world history, a time when those who are in need of God's healing grace will receive it and when justice will "spring up" (v 11) on the earth.

Paul calls the Thessalonians to persevere in their faith. "Pray without ceasing" (v 17), he advises. In his prayer for them he prays that God will "make you perfectly holy / and may you ... / be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v 23). God is faithful, Paul tells us, and "he will also accomplish it" (v 24). Writing with an expectation of an imminent return of the Lord Jesus, Paul exhorts them to live lives of holiness as they wait. Two thousand years later, we still anticipate his return and so are called to live with that same hope, cooperating with the grace of God in our lives.

For reflection: How does my baptismal anointing unite me with Christ's mission to bring good news to the world? God desires to make us holy and blameless; do I regularly seek God's grace to grow in holiness, or am I content to stay as I am?

4th Sunday of Advent, December 21

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29
Rom 16:25-27
Lk 1:26-38

Israel's hope for a Messiah can be traced back to God's promise in the Book of Samuel, when the prophet Nathan tells David: "The Lord ... will establish a house for you" (v 11). The line of David "shall stand firm forever" (v 16). Without a king during the intertestamental period, Israel's hopes turned to the future, when God's promise would be renewed in a son of David, one descended from Israel's great king. This is why the Gospel tradition stresses Joseph's place in the line of the house of David: Jesus, as son of David, fulfills the promise.

Paul tells the Romans that in Jesus, "the mystery kept secret for long ages" (v 25) has been revealed. God's promise of a Messiah, originally found in "the prophetic writings" (v 26), is fulfilled in Jesus, so faith in Jesus leads to salvation. Concluding his letter with a doxology, a prayer of praise to God, Paul tells us that because God has fulfilled the promises in Jesus, we should give glory to God.

In these last days of Advent we turn our focus to preparing to commemorate the birth of Jesus. Today's Gospel is the story of the annunciation. God's angel Gabriel is sent to Mary, who we are told is "betrothed to a man named Joseph, / of the house of David" (v 27). The link to the promise made to David is reinforced by the angel's statement that Mary's child will be given "the throne of David his father" (v 32). But this is no ordinary child; conceived by the Holy Spirit, he "will be called holy, the Son of God" (v 35).

For reflection: How does Jesus's connection to David link him more closely to salvation history? What can I do to make my immediate preparation for Christmas take on a more spiritual dimension?



All of the people in today's readings — the prophet Isaiah, the Virgin Mary, St. Paul, St. John the Baptist — seemed to understand clearly and rejoice in what God was calling them to be and to do. Do I?



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 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"

Dr John Hill, *Parish Priest*

Fr Stephen Wayoyi, A.J. *Assistant Priest*

Office Staff: Helen Cameron, Raelene McLenaghan & 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 Dulkara 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.

CATHOLICCARE 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.

Parish Social Profile

(continued)

(Continued from page 1)

Sixth, the number of one-parent families rose from 590 to 665 (15% of all families).

Seventh, the ethnic composition of the Parish is slowly changing. Catholics born in Australia still counted for 84.3% of the total, and those born in Europe and New Zealand came to 8.8%, but recent arrivals (i.e. in the three years up to and including the census year) included significant numbers from North and South America and South East Asia.

There are other interesting facts about the Parish. For the time being, however, let us start with what I have given you today.

What do you make of it?

Do these statistics indicate a change in pastoral strategy?

How would *you* like to be involved?

For my part, certain things emerge that need our attention:

- The number of people in care and the number of people caring for them without pay;
- The demographic changes: from an Anglo-Celtic time warp to greater numbers of aboriginal people, more people from the Pacific islands, immigrants from the Philippines, India and South America, and so on;
- The increasing percentage of parishioners of retirement age;
- The high level of youth unemployment;
- The high number of one-parent families;
- The high number of *de facto* relationships.

FR JOHN HILL, P.P.

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



Diocese of
Broken Bay