



The Voice

20th December 2015 Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year C Psalter Week 4 Christmas

ADVENT

OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

- **Recently deceased:**
Allan Bailey, Joyce Fardy,
Joan Munday, Johanna Kasius.
- **Anniversaries:**
Richard Quigg, Mary Madden,
Zosima Eñerio Aranas,
Andrew Flanagan, Iris McNeil,
Beryl Conneeley, Bon Job,
James Christoffelsz, Frank Ryan,
Eileen Andersen, Bon Andersen.
- **Remembrances:**
Beryl DeBerg,
Mary and George Hilliard, Hilliard
Brothers, Kevin Mills, Mills Family,
Bernie Hanna, Leslie Denning,
Valerie Price., Alan Flayer,
Mabel Catherine Snell, Shirley Job,
Albert David Snell,
Sr. Patricia Snell, r.s.j.
John Anthony Snell,
Bidly and Erwyn Elliott.
- **And the sick:**
Loretta Holt, Frances Sara,
Neil Cameron, June Ferry,
Kate Tinson, Beryl Allen,
Lola Proctor, Jack Moulds,
Alan Harland, Grace Williams,
Arnold Diorio, Ibrahim Selim,
Mark Taylor, Carol Cross,
Fr. Bill Meacham, Bruce Spence,
Vince Zappavigna, Natalie Rankin,
Audrey Barsenbach,
Susan Field, Mick Dunn.
Bill Hunt

The visitation is one of the moving scenes in the Gospel. On a human level, here are two cousins, unexpectedly pregnant in the most extraordinary circumstances, meeting and offering each other greetings and support. We can see the scene and feel the bond.

In the Gospel of Luke this moment is pivotal. These women meet in the mountains where God has always been manifest to the Israelites. Elizabeth is the Old Covenant made to Israel and she carries John who will be the herald of the Messiah. Mary, literally, embodies the new, and final, covenant in Jesus. Elizabeth recognises what is happening here and she embraces all that God is doing for the world. She has tasted the promise of God and now sees its fulfilment.

On a more mundane level, however, a meeting like this would have occasioned much comment and speculation from those outside the inner circle. We only have to imagine it happening today in any small suburb or country town for us to appreciate the human scale of the unfolding drama.

The Iona Community has explored the unwritten history in their story of Mmes Matthew, Mark and Luke, 'The village gossips'.

Narrator: In any small village, news travels quickly. Therefore it is only to be expected that the strange changes in the lives of Mary and Elizabeth might have been food for other people's thought.

Mrs Matthew: Well, ladies, you know how I'm not one for gossip, but wait until you hear this. You know that old woman Elizabeth, with the man who has not spoken for nine months.

Mrs Mark: Yes, what about them?

Mrs Matthew: They say she's had a little boy.

Mrs Luke: At her age? She's 88 if she's a day!

Mrs Matthew: Well, that's what I heard and it was on very good authority!

Mrs Luke: Are you sure you've got the right woman? You're not mixing her up with her cousin?

Mrs Mark: Who? Mary?

Mrs Luke: That's her! Now, I'm not one for talking about anybody but wait until I tell you this. She's pregnant!

Mrs Mark: Never! How do you know?

Mrs Luke: You can tell. You can just tell.

Mrs Matthew: Oh yes, you can tell all right. I heard her in the store last week asking for a dress eight sizes too big for her.

Mrs Luke: There you are. Draw your own conclusions. Now, I know that this will not go any further, but I hear that she and a certain young man are planning to leave the district.

Mrs Matthew: Who is the young man?

Mrs Luke: The joiner's boy, Joseph.

Mrs Mark: Never!

Mrs Luke: Well, that's what they say and I'm not one for gossip.

Mrs Mark: So, have you heard what they're saying about the so-called census?

Mrs Matthew: No. Tell us.

Mrs Mark: Well, I happened to hear that the reason the Romans want our names is not to send us birthday cards.

Mrs Luke: Well, why are they having a census?

Mrs Mark: To register us for a 'poll tax'.

Mrs Matthew: I heard it was a 'community charge'.

Mrs Mark: 'A rose by any other name.'

Mrs Luke: They wouldn't do that, would they?

Mrs Mark: Well I'm just warning you. Mind, I'm not one for gossip.

Mrs Luke: Nor me.

Mrs Matthew: Nor me.

The story of the visitation keeps the rumour going that just when we think we can figure God out, predict how God will enter our lives and our world, he does something none of us can imagine. And the best thing about this rumour is – it's true.

As we wait for Christmas to come again into our lives, let's make room for Jesus Christ who turns our expectations upside down and always gives the gossips plenty to talk about. © Richard Leonard SJ.

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Psalm Response

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Lord make us turn to you, let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the servant of the Lord: may his will for me be done.
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 phone our office 4341 1073 or visit our website 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 10pm. (Carols at 9.30pm).

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

Parish Bus Transport Christmas Masses: All parishioners to phone parish office to book their seats.

Parish Office will be closed Friday 25th and Monday 28th December and re-open Tuesday 29th December, 9.30am.

Morning Mass Public Holiday Monday 28th December will be at 9.00am followed by Exposition and Benediction.

St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal has raised \$6,450. The Peninsular Conferences wish to thank the parishioners for their very generous response. The amount raised will go to helping the needy and the marginalized. Joan Murphy. Ken Hall.

Prayerful Congratulations to Jasmine Breakwell, James Breakwell and Lisa Ray who received their initiation into our Church last Sunday.

Thank You to all who helped **Children's Liturgy of the Word** this year. God bless you. Children's Liturgy resumes 14/2/2016. Rosters for 2016 are available in the Leo Mahon room.

Thank You to all Church Cleaners for your commitment this year. God bless you. 2016 Rosters are available for collection in the Leo Mahon room.

Christmas Day Rosters for Senior and Junior Servers now available in Servers Sacristy.

Readers and Wardens for Christmas Masses: Please indicate if you will be available. Sheet available in the Servers Sacristy. We particularly need wardens for Christmas Day.

Bus Fund Christmas Raffle: Thank you to Mary Scarfe for organizing the raffle and for all who bought tickets raising \$1836. 1st Prize: M.Kay, 2nd Prize: P.White, 3rd Prize: Dorothea Morrison, 4th Prize: Michael Dixon, 5th Prize: Judy French.

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.

The Just Word

Homily of Pope Francis, Manger Square (Bethlehem), Sunday, 25 May 2014 continued from last week's Newsletter.

Sadly in this world, with all its highly developed technology, great numbers of children continue to live inhuman situations, on the fringes of society, in the peripheries of great cities and in the countryside. All too many children continue to be exploited, maltreated, enslaved, prey to violence and illicit trafficking. Still too many children live in exile, as refugees, at times lost at sea, particularly in the waters of the Mediterranean. Today, in acknowledging this, we feel shame before God, before God who became a child.

And we have to ask ourselves: Who are we, standing as we stand before the Child Jesus? Who are we standing as we stand be-

fore today's children? Are we like Mary and Joseph, who welcomed Jesus and care for him with the love of a father and a mother? Or are we like Herod, who wanted to eliminate him? Are we like the shepherds, who went in haste to kneel before him in worship and offer him their humble gifts? Or are we indifferent? Are we perhaps the people who use fine and pious words, yet exploit pictures of poor children in order to make money? Are we there to ready for children, to 'waste time' with them? Are we ready to listen to them, to care for them, to pray for them and with them? Or do we ignore them because we are too caught up in our own affairs? This will be a sign for us: you will find a child... 'Perhaps that little boy or girl is crying. He is crying because he is hungry, because she

is cold or because or he or she wants to be picked up and held in our arms... Today, too, children are crying, they are crying a lot, and their crying challenges us. In a world which daily discards tons of food and medicine there are children, hungry and suffering from easily curable diseases, who cry out in vain. In an age which insists on the protection of minors, there is a flourishing trade in weapons which end up in these hands of child-soldiers, there is a ready market for goods produced by the slave labor of small children. Their cry is stifled: the cry of these children is stifled! They must fight, they must work, they cannot cry! But their mothers cry for them, as modern day Rachels: they weep for their children, and they refused to be consoled. (cf. Mt. 2:18).

From the Diocese and beyond

The St. John of God Institute of Counselling, established in 1969, offers a course designed to develop skills in personal growth, communication, parenting and general counselling principles. Participants can learn new skills in dealing with daily personal challenges and the issues that arise within families, the school environment, pastoral care and in the

workplace. It is conducted on Tuesday evenings within the school term between 7.30pm-9.45pm at Holy Cross College, Victoria Road, Ryde, commencing on Tuesday 2 February 2016. Enrolments are accepted up to the end March 2016. The cost for the course is \$450.00 for the year with an early bird offer of \$400.00 if paid in full by the end of Febru-

ary 2016. For enquiries please contact: Michael Hill Ph: 9869 3774 or 0410 774 432 (7.00 to 9.00 p.m. Mon to Fri); Carol Harding 0408 705 848 (anytime); Jannelle Carlile 0431 598 004 (5.30 to 8.30pm Mon to Fri); or Email: counselling1969@gmail.com



A Message for the Diocese of Broken Bay for the Jubilee of Mercy

Dear Friends,
“Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy” (MV,1).

With this declaration Pope Francis announces to us all an extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, commenced 8 December 2015 (Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception) and concluding 20 November 2016 (Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe).

To look upon the face of Jesus—that is, to listen to his words, to see his deeds, to recognise his presence—is to experience the love of his Father. It is a love that is shaped entirely by mercy. Jesus displays this mercy through the story of the prodigal son (Lk 15: 11-32), and in his meeting with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:4-26); we share in the mercy of Jesus, himself, as he stands with the woman condemned by others (Jn 8: 1-11) and the man he welcomes into paradise from the Cross (Lk 23:39-43).

God is constantly turning his face towards us, and his face is always one of compassion, forgiveness and kindness. God knows no other way. Mercy brings to our broken, darkened world the gift of a healed enlightened destiny. Mercy is our hope that sin will not overwhelm us because that is not what God wants for those he loves. Mercy is our way to God. As Pope Francis puts it: “Our salvation depends on it.” (MV,2)

It is not unusual, however, to find that our family, friends and neighbours have little sense of this invitation and possibility. Many of our brothers and sisters find it hard to believe that God—made visible in Jesus—might love them with unsurpassing passion and generosity. God, however, never tires of looking to befriend us; God never tires of hearing our worries and concerns, and even the sins of which we are weighed down and overburdened. Yet, the Cross and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ call us to recognise this reality. In this Year of Mercy may we hear once more: “Neither do I condemn you; go, and

from now on sin no more.” (Jn 8:11)

I invite you to join with me as we make the pilgrimage of grace through the coming year, so that we may all become ambassadors of Gospel mercy. Whatever your state in life and whatever the circumstances in which you find yourself, embark with me as a humble pilgrim of mercy this year. Let our words be: compassion, kindness, humility, forgiveness, and simple trust.

May we learn to show real patience to the conflicts and pressures of our family, friends and neighbours, and be bearers of mercy to them, remembering that justice and mercy go together. Justice is attentive to the truth of a situation, and mercy is always attentive to the truth of the persons involved. By showing others mercy, we show them the truth not just of themselves, but of the Lord who loves us.

Our Diocesan family will celebrate the Jubilee of Mercy in a number of ways.

Let us pray for one another as we embark on this beautiful pilgrimage of mercy over the year ahead. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy!” (Matt 5:7)

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli

Bishop of Broken Bay.



The Gospel today tells of the Virgin Mary, pregnant herself, hurrying off to help her cousin Elizabeth. The model of good stewardship, she who had given herself to bear the Saviour gave her time and love to others as well.



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
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. 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

Dear Parishioners,

It's Christmas time again and I don't know about you but with each passing year it seems to come around more quickly! But what does Christmas mean? Who is it about? Who is it for? Many people are asking these and similar questions in an attempt to give meaning to their tired and empty lives.

We must find a way to reclaim the uniqueness of the Christmas season, if we are ever going to manage to celebrate a Nativity Feast that is more than a riot of consumerism followed by Cricket Tests and the One Day Internationals!

The timing may be right. For many, "**The Holidays**" have become a nightmare, a time of spiritual whiplash when what is supposed to be a season of joy often turns into an acid bath of cynicism and failed dreams. A time to hit the "turps" and party for as long as possible. Never mind what Christmas is supposed to be about!

Not all that long ago the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI reminded us that while Christmas has become more popular in recent years, this increased popularity has often been at the expense of its Christian origin, and that its meaning is often forgotten "even among Christians". He also said that the crib's revival is often characterised by

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.

nostalgia and sentimentalism, but it nevertheless helps "to understand the secret of the true Christmas, because it speaks of the humility and of the merciful goodness of Christ, who although he was rich, became poor for us".

Many crave true beauty in a season of tinsel and cheap sentiment. Many seek fellowship during a time of year that pours salt into the wounds of those with broken families and fading dreams. Others may survive the blitz of high-pressure advertising, shallow parties, crazed shopping, long journeys, tense family reunions, and saccharine TV specials and then say, "Didn't Christmas used to mean more than this? Where is the wonder of Christmas?"

We can only find the answers to these questions when we accept and promote that.....

JESUS IS CHRISTMAS!

At this time may I say thanks for all of your support during the year and on behalf of Fr. Timothy, Fr. Philip and myself I extend to you God's blessings and wish you a Holy and Merry Christmas.

Fr. Jack.

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



Diocese of
Broken Bay