



Pastoral Liturgy

Formation and Resources for Lectionary-Based Worship



Advent-Christmastide-Ordinary Time

November 2020 – February 2021

Year B

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Editor – **Angela McCarthy**

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Founding Editor

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Editor

Dr Angela McCarthy

Assistant to the Editor

Liz Roff – 08 9433 0138

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From the Editor

Dr Angela McCarthy



Editor: Dr Angela McCarthy

No one could have possibly imagined the kind of year 2020 would be! The last issue was produced just as we were moving into lockdown and major changes were just beginning to be felt. How could we ever imagine being denied liturgy by our Government? This was inconceivable less than twelve months ago and yet it has been a reality that has been very confronting. As we begin a new liturgical year, it is almost as if we are in a liminal state. Restrictions have not disappeared and indeed in Melbourne there has been the reimposition of all restrictions due to a second wave of the virus and they are now gradually being removed. In Western Australia we have had few restrictions for some months now but still every second pew is still unable to be used and the pews we use are decidedly cleaner than they have been for a long time due to diligent cleaning after every liturgy.

The move to digital platforms for liturgy, live streaming and other kinds of media meant that many people had very steep learning curves in the new technology. Some did it very well, some very basically according to the limit of their resources. All however, entered into this new direction because of our hunger for liturgy. The ability to search the internet for the best homilies in the world became a focus for some!

Research into the effects of these changes will be most welcome and will be of great interest to this journal. Anecdotally we have heard of many different responses. Some people have entered into the online liturgies and have spoken about how they have not been inside a church for a very long time but found themselves able and interested in the online versions. One elderly woman in our parish is delightedly attending Mass everyday in her lounge room where daily Mass is not a possibility in normal circumstances.

Michael Mangan, one of our editorial board members, found himself and his wife with a very different complication in their parish. They had no parish priest from January until May as their beloved parish priest of 34 years had a stroke and his replacement, even though appointed at Easter, was caught overseas and did not arrive until May. The parish community was reeling

with the sense of loss, so Michael and his wife Anne, both deeply involved in liturgy and music on the wider Australian and international arena, worked with other parishioners towards a solution. They livestreamed a Liturgy of the Word from their home every Sunday at 9.00a.m. As Michael said in the Australian Pastoral Musicians Network Newsletter (September 2020):

This helped maintain a focus and sense of connection for our parishioners and many regulars who joined us weekly from well outside our parish boundaries. In this period our weekly “views” were 800-2000 with many regulars, and interestingly, many regulars who were not regular Mass attenders. Each week we remotely shared music, scripture, prayer and excellent, relevant homily/reflections from a lay woman, Anne.

Elderly people in total isolation with no digital means of connection, were probably the hardest hit and so it became a pastoral imperative that where possible, home visitation or phone calls were necessary. Our parish deacon found these to be a wonderful means of developing his ministry. For some it became a domestic Church reality and in our family those who could come into our home during isolation came for a Liturgy of the Word and other family members attended by zoom. This was a very happy way of us all keeping in touch and praying together. The young grandchildren took responsibility for reading some of the prayers, composed for different levels of reading ability, and for decorating the space for Easter.

Sacramental programs and RCIA rites were delayed and at the time of writing most parishes are moving to complete these programs. For the First Communion celebrations the change of mode from Masses with large numbers of candidates, to the exclusion of the parish community, to the experience of first reception of Holy Communion taking place over a number of normal parish Masses has been welcomed. In some ways, the over production of liturgies for First Communion, where every child is given an active part that overshadows the sacrament, might become a thing of the past. It will be interesting to see how things develop from here and

what the response will be in our communities in the future.

Last bushfire season was devastating for Australia and we hope and pray that we will not have the same crushing destruction of homes, workplaces and farms. To have the pandemic and its consequent recession on top of the bushfires and drought has been unimaginably difficult for so many Australians. We will continue to pray for them.

This issue will come to you once again via email or the web in a pdf format. The process of online production continues and it is slowly taking shape. Thank you to all of you who have provided wonderful affirmation for this liturgical resource.

A sadness that we must mention are the revelations of sexual allegations against David Haas. Haas has written many hymns that speak of love and justice and that come from a deep spiritual place and have become favourites in many Catholic communities. The initial reaction of abhorrence and shock has meant that some have abandoned his music, at least for the time being. Forgiveness is central to our faith, but the deep hurts caused by the allegations are causing disturbing responses. Many of Haas' public appearances have been cancelled as have his contracts with publishers. His Facebook prayer page has been removed. This situation can only be resolved over a lengthy period of time as the legal process continues. Meanwhile, we need to be aware of our need to safeguard those who are vulnerable and challenge all behaviours that are abusive.

Recently I read a definition of God's grace that really moved me. Mary Moore, who is Dean of the School of Theology at Boston University, stated: "Grace is God's heartbeat throbbing in the world, and our encounters with finitude force us to still ourselves and attune to that Divine Beat." Over this year we have felt God's heartbeat and we have all worked to experience God's presence in liturgy in very different ways. That throbbing heartbeat has moved people to sing from balconies, to pray with greater fervour and to care for their neighbour in new and unexpected ways. May this new liturgical year see us grow in love for each other as only a deep hunger for Eucharist can! Let us go into Advent and Christmastide with a new found hope in Christ's coming at the end of time and in the feast of his nativity.

Dr Angela McCarthy

Endnotes

¹ Mary Elizabeth Moore, "Parenting Elders: Finitude, Gratitude, and Grace," in *Parenting As Spiritual Practice and Source for Theology: Mothering Matters*, ed. Claire Bischoff, Elizabeth O'Donnell Gandolfo, and Annie Hardison-Moody (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).



The Readings of Advent

By Russell Hardiman

The Readings of Advent

The season of Advent becomes Paul's "acceptable time", when the primary focus of the season is on the consequences of our attitudes to time, the way we consider it and the way we are conscious of celebrating it. For the purposes of this article we shall consider the theology of the Liturgical Year, with particular emphasis on the relationship of the key periods of Advent, Christmas and the Epiphany. Then we shall illustrate the main goals of Vatican II in the proposal for a cycle of readings over several years and how the major principles are illustrated in the Advent-Christmas readings and how, on an ecumenical level, the major churches share the same readings.

Proclaiming the Word in Advent-Christmastide

Since earliest generations Christians have given witness to the continuing tradition, inherited from their Jewish heritage, and publicly acknowledged by Jesus in the synagogue at Capernaum when he proclaimed the Isaiah passage as being fulfilled in their hearing even as they listened (Luke 4:21).

Paul himself encouraged his co workers in the task of proclaiming the Gospel to pay particular attention to the public reading of scriptures: "... devote yourself to the reading of scripture, to preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 4:13).

Vatican II proclaimed "the primary duty of priests is the proclamation of the Gospel of God to all". Proclamation covers a range of activities of the church from personal witness, to sacramental witness, to sacramental ministry, to pastoral care but especially a priority in concern for preaching the Word of God. Advent is a prime occasion to preach of the fulfilment of God's plan as people listen to the Word.

In our generation, the USA Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy published a major document encouraging the ministry of preaching and entitled it "Fulfilled in Your Hearing". Published in 1982 it grew out of a concern for the quality of preaching in the Church and, in so far as that concern is still a priority in the church today, it deserves to be better known and it can still serve as a model for preaching during Advent and Christmastide. This document defines the homily as:

... a scriptural interpretation of human existence which enables a community to recognise God's active presence, to respond to that presence in faith through liturgical word and gesture, and beyond the liturgical word and gesture, and beyond the liturgical assembly through a life lived in conformity with the Gospel. ⁵

This is the vision expressed in the Post Communion Prayer of the Roman Midnight Mass for Christmas, when the commitment beyond the assembly itself is phrased "may we share his life completely by living as

he has taught".

Vatican II credited the liturgical year with an almost sacramental title when it stated: "recalling the mysteries of redemption, she opens to the faithful the riches of the Lord's powers and merits, so that these are in some way present for all time". ⁶

The Council Fathers also stated that the liturgical year sets forth "the whole mystery of Christ from the incarnation and nativity to the ascension, to Pentecost, and the expectation of the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord". ⁷

It is important that we emphasise in our celebration the whole mystery of Christ, not a pageant or crib tableau, nor a passion play, nor a historical celebration, much less just an opportunity for nostalgia trip down the memory lane of childhood.

The focus is on the celebration of the Paschal Mystery, the total incarnated life of Jesus as human, from womb to tomb, to Resurrection and ascension to glory from where he has sent the Holy Spirit upon the Church to raise us up with him.

Whenever texts and Prayers such as Prefaces, Eucharistic Prayers, Orations and Blessing summarise the Paschal Mystery they always mention the Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, almost as if it is a code phrase to summarise his whole life. We avoid anything which does not give the full emphasis in incarnational theology to the mystery of Jesus' total life, and not portray Christmas as if it is all about a baby. Paul teaches us in the Midnight Mass reading that the Christ of Christmas is the Christ of Easter "who sacrificed himself to set us free from all wickedness and to purify his people (Titus 2, 11-14: Midnight Proper 1).

This sense that the scripture is used to interpret life is the motive behind the actual selections used for both the Advent and Christmastide readings. Beyond the understanding of the context of a particular text and beyond any attempts at an exposition of that text, the reader and homilist must interpret life itself by illuminating what God does in the depth of human existence.

Several readings from Paul in the Advent selections (Advent 1A, Advent 2A, Advent 4A and B) give interpretations of the scriptural method of interpreting human existence to see the hand of God in the events of daily life.

When we read the scriptures, we do not read it as an historical text from the past but as the divine revelation for the present age while we look forward to its promised fulfilment. The Opening Prayer for the Vigil Mass for Christmas expresses this well, even if it is a shame that most people never hear it:

God our Father every year we rejoice as we look forward to this feast of our salvation.

May we welcome Christ as our Redeemer,
and meet him with confidence when he comes to
be our judge,
who lives and reigns...⁸

Liturgical Year

Arising from the specific Judaeo Christian concept of celebration, the linkage of past, present and future events are seen as facets of the one continuous presence of God and God's word. Consistent with the Hebrew word *DaBaR*, we celebrate God's presence, an active and ongoing presence of the almighty not just a sequence of isolated events in past history.

This perspective raises questions as to how the liturgical year is different from a Calendar of Feasts. A calendar of events would give a perspective of separate, discreet, unconnected events, but the liturgical year is deeper. The liturgical year is the *Year of Grace*, as Pius Parsch's⁹ famous five-volume study was entitled before Vatican II. God's presence, God's revelation and salvation are eternal, so that when we read of events in the past, or pray for fulfillment for ourselves now, or when we look forward in expectation to the coming glory, these three planes are really one. The three dimensions interact and interweave but our consciousness is of the NOW, how God is revealed to us this day.

Past Present Future

The nuances of the classic Judaeo Christian sense of celebration are well illustrated both in the pattern of prayer in the Eucharistic Prayers as well as in the flow of themes specifying Christ's coming celebrated in Advent.

The chronological flow is obviously past, present and future. However, in Advent the trend is the opposite in starting with remembering the future, in the sense of the focus on the full completion of God's mystery and plan in the Second Coming of the Messiah. There are frequent mentions of the return of the Son of Man in the Gospels – and we hear many of them in the Lectionary selections at this time, both in the last weeks as well as in Christ the King Sunday and the First Sunday of Advent. The opening prayer of the First Sunday of Advent calls us to take Christ's coming seriously, that Christ may find an eager welcome at His coming and call us to His side in the Kingdom.

With the various commemorations for the end of the Second World War in 1995, especially the occasionally magnificent "Australia Remembers" programmes, we have seen highlighted the differences in the understanding of celebration. The secular model of this kind of anniversary focuses on the past to remind the present generation that they too inherit the fruits of the sacrifice of others. The element of future is only vaguely shadowed. In contrast the theological sense of celebration presumes that past, present and future are all on the same plane in the one plan of God.

Vigilance in Waiting

The Advent Season's focus is on a key element of the spirituality of the Liturgical Year which flows from the theological perspective of the mystery of Christ

celebrated in salvation history with its promise of fulfillment and the hope of eternal life.

In Advent, the characteristic quality becomes one of vigilance and wakefulness to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man. In his public ministry Jesus is recorded in the Gospels as saying frequently that the Son of Man will return. However vague this may, be it became prominent in the early Christian community.

In the early Church "Come, Lord Jesus" (*Maranatha* in Aramaic) was the community's prayer, so it is no surprise that several Advent readings are from passages in the Epistles that are dominated by the theme of the imminent return of Jesus: 1 Thessalonians (Advent 1A and 3B), 2 Peter (Advent 2B), James (Advent 3A), Philippians (Advent 2C and 3C). The Epistles are mostly chronologically older than the Gospels but the preoccupation with the second coming is also very much a part of the Gospels.

The Memorial Acclamations at the heart of the eucharistic Prayer all express the same threefold sense of Christ's coming: past, present and future. The text of Acclamation I: *Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again* is formulated differently in Acclamation III by paraphrasing Paul's words in 1 Corinthians: *When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death Lord Jesus until you come in glory*. This same tension between past, present and future which is the characteristic of Christian vigilance shows through in the missioning rites on the First Sunday of Advent. The Post Communion Prayer invites us to see how our Communion teaches us to love heaven and that the promise and hope of heaven guide our way here on earth. The Solemn Blessing that day is even more specific in linking the triple dimensions of Christ's Coming. It would be a useful reinforcement to use this Solemn Blessing on all Advent days, not just on the First Sunday.

On the First Sunday the distinctive theme is set by the Gospel reading; the Lord's Coming at the end of time. In Year A the words of Jesus are stark. Four times his call to *Stay awake, therefore* (Matthew 24:42, 44) is expressed. In Year B we hear Mark's version of the invitation to *Be constant on the watch; be on guard* (Mark 13:33-37). In Year C, Luke's message is *Be on your watch, pray constantly* (Luke 21:36).

Contemporary Preoccupations

Advent serves as the micro example of the macro issue because the distractions of the secular- commercial style of Christmas make it extremely difficult to celebrate Advent in its true spirit. We shudder at the trends of commercialism bringing Christmas themes into advertising from October onwards and swallowing up the Christmas and New Year festive season with the post-Christmas sales campaigns. Meanwhile the traffic blitz against the holiday road toll and drink driving continues relentlessly as if there is only one news item in this holiday season.

John the Baptist was counter cultural in his challenge to stand up and be counted in producing the appropriate fruits (Advent 2A). Twice in the Advent season John holds centre stage in the call to prepare for Christ's Coming, on the Second Sunday the focus is on his

preaching and on the Third Sunday the focus is on this Ministry.

As Jesus looked for fruit that will last, the old joke that “what Jesus looks for is spiritual fruits not religious nuts” calls us to be positive in Christian witness and not merely negative in any carping criticism of the secular trends when trying to emphasise the profound Christian spirit of the Advent season.

There is a difference between preaching **on** the scriptures and to preaching **from** the scriptures and this season is a definite challenge to be conscious of relating the scripture to the present. The art of the homily is to show the bridge that links the reflection of God’s actions in the past to seeing God’s presence in the events and happenings of our world.

General Principles of the Lectionary

As far back as 1963 the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy urged a deepening of awareness of the scriptures:

The treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly, so that richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God’s Word. In this way a more representative portion of Holy Scripture will be read to the people in the course of a prescribed number of years.¹¹

This single paragraph of Vatican II has had the greatest ecumenical impact over the past thirty years or so to the extent that a generation of Christians have been sharing a common heritage in proclaiming and preaching the Word of God.

The 1969 Roman Lectionary¹² was adopted by the Episcopal Church in USA in 1970 and the Presbyterian Church the same year. The Lutherans initially stuck with their one-year lectionary cycle but in 1974 they published a three year lectionary. The growing acceptance of the Roman Lectionary’s principles and format culminated in the production in 1982 of the Common Lectionary. Nearly a decade of worship use and continued consultation resulted in the *Revised Common Lectionary* being published in 1992. The Uniting Church in Australia’s book *Uniting in Worship* (1988) and the revised version of *An Australian Prayer Book* (1995) of the Anglican Church both use the *Revised Common Lectionary* as their cycle of readings. This ecumenical acceptance was called by Raymond Brown “Catholicism’s greatest gift to Protestantism”.¹³

General Themes of Advent Scripture Readings

Because the Gospels dominate in setting the theme or thrust of each set of readings the “spin” of each Sunday is determined by the Gospel. The General Introduction in the 1981 second edition of the *Roman Lectionary* describes each Sunday as having a distinctive theme.

- 1 Advent: The Lord’s Coming at the end of time
- 2 Advent: The preaching of John the Baptist
- 3 Advent: The Ministry of John the Baptist
- 4 Advent: The events that prepared for the Lord’s birth, the Annunciation and Visitation

The Old Testament readings take on a special colouring in Advent. They are prophecies about the promised Messiah and the characteristics that would indicate the Messianic Age. They seem free standing witnesses though they are chosen in a typological relationship with Gospel partners to show the continuity of God’s promise in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. Often the focus is on Jerusalem as the continuing symbol of God’s promise. What is proclaimed of Jerusalem is often code for what is God’s plan. In the Hebrew scriptures this was especially true in the image of being led back from exile to rebuild Jerusalem, but in the Christian scriptures their reflection after the destruction of the city and temple leads to transferring the focus on Zion to a focus on the Church.

Of the twelve Old Testament readings seven of the Advent readings are from Isaiah and in Year C other prophets are selected: Jeremiah, Baruch (Malachi), Zephaniah and Micah. The final selection is from the book of 2 Samuel (Advent 4B) about the promise to David.

The Psalm selections, as always, are chosen as a reflection on the intent of the first reading and to encourage the communitarian sense of God’s presence with us. About six of the Psalms are Songs of Ascent which were sung going up to Jerusalem for worship at the temple. The choice of Psalms is identical in the *Roman Lectionary* and the *Revised Common Lectionary* with the Magnificat text (Luke 1: 46-55) used as the Psalm on five occasions.

The New Testament readings “from an apostle serve as exhortation and as proclamations, in keeping with the different themes of Advent”. St Paul points out in Romans 15:4-9 (Advent 2A) that the scriptures give examples of hope shown by those who trusted in God:

Everything that was written long ago in the scriptures was meant to teach us something about hope from the examples scripture gives of how people who did not give up hope were helped by God (Romans 15:40).

Similar passages from Romans are used on four occasions and once from 1 Corinthians, with one from Hebrews. Beyond the reading of Jewish history Paul also invites us to remember the future and consequently we have readings that are dominated by the expectation of the imminent return of Jesus: twice from 1 Thessalonians (Advent 1A and 3B) and twice from Philippians (Advent 2C and 3C). The same eschatological tension is found in the reading from 2 Peter (Advent 2B) and a single passage from James (Advent 3A). James’ call for patience until the Lord’s Coming is illustrated by the farmer’s patience in waiting for harvest, an image very appropriate in our Southern Hemisphere where Advent falls at the start of summer just as the harvest is beginning.

Principle of the Two Lectionaries

The principal difference in the two Lectionaries is the approach to the Hebrew Scripture, treating them holistically rather than treating them in a typological sense for a specific Gospel passage. This respect for the Hebrew Scriptures is taken to a logical conclusion in the *Revised Common Lectionary* by having

continuous readings from the Old Testament in the Sundays of Ordinary Time (after Epiphany and after Pentecost) where the *Roman Lectionary* has continuous readings from Epistles of Paul and other Epistles.

The remarkable consensus as to selections in the *Roman Lectionary* and the *Revised Common Lectionary* show how the readings confirm the general principles enunciated by Vatican II. Where there are differences they reflect the approach to citing the Hebrew Scriptures where RCL treats the text more holistically. This usually means that the RCL segments are simple excerpts rather than a series of selected verses, which illustrates the practice of reading from the Bible rather than from an edited lectionary.

With selections from the Old Testament the RCL provide an alternative reading when the Roman reading is from a Deuterocanonical book, for example Advent 2C when Baruch is given as an alternative to Malachi.

The major feature of the structure of the Lectionaries is illustrated by how a particular Gospel is assigned to specific cycles. The cycles are read in order beginning with Matthew, followed by Mark, then Luke with John not having a specific cycle but being prominent in Lent and Easter of all cycles. The crunch comes in knowing which cycle is celebrated in which calendar year. The generic rule is that any year that is divisible by three uses cycle C. Thus, calendar year 1998 is divisible by three so we read cycle C. Then we begin again the sequence with Matthew in Year A 1999 and so to the Year of Mark in the jubilee year 2000.

As always, the Gospel determines the major thrust of the set of readings with the Old Testament passage chosen to relate to the Gospel, and the Psalm chosen to extend or deepen the insight of the first reading. The New Testament readings, being reflections of the shared life of the early Christian community, serve as a commentary for the connection of faith and life appropriate for today's community.

The sets of readings for Advent and Christmastide exemplify the principle of the choice of readings for the major seasons or feasts. The principle of thematic reading (*Lectio Selecta*) means that passages are selected from individual books of the Bible to link up with the particular feast and all three readings, with the psalm, are unified around that feast. On the other hand, the principle of continuous readings (*Lectio Continua*) in Ordinary Time incorporates readings from the Gospel of the cycle linked with the Old Testament reading while the second reading is semi-continuous from the letters of St. Paul, with the result that the readings are not designed with a single focus but are in fact parallel tracks leading towards the mystery of God's presence.

In the key seasons, the Sundays are never displaced for another feast, but it can happen in Ordinary Time. The threefold distinction of feasts (Solemnities, Feast, Memorials) allows for the Solemnities of Our Lord in the cycle of feasts to displace Sundays of Ordinary Time. Thus, early in the year, a Sunday of Ordinary Time can give way to the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple.

The RCL readings, where they are different from the

Roman readings, are generally longer and hence more likely to situate a passage in its proper context. In churches where reading from the Bible is the norm, rather than from a printed Lectionary with the edited selections, the longer passages perhaps help to provide a fuller framework for the significant verses. It is imperative that the homilist and the reader look up the context of the passages otherwise pericopes may be left to stand alone.

Living Advent

Just as we can preach on the scriptures rather than preach from the scriptures, it is possible to preach about Advent rather than to live it. It certainly does help to have a sense of the over arching plan of the season and its specific topics. These include the unified vision of God's plan in salvation history, reflected in the concern for Jerusalem in the past and now focused on the role of the Church in the present. The qualities of the Messianic age as outlined by the prophets need to be reinterpreted as the signs of the times in our day so that, like John the Baptist, we are called to be witnesses to speak for the light. We take heart from John's assurance that the messiah will come to baptise with the Holy Spirit and with Fire.

The Hebrew concern for identity, ancestors, bonding and heritage show through in the pattern of genealogies. The purpose of those passages is to relate the connectedness of Jesus to the promise of the Lord. Nowadays the individualism that is so rampant is an obstacle to an acceptable sense of belonging to a group where the benefits accrue for the individual and to the community of which they are a part. The Advent Christmas season is an antidote for this modern malaise. The challenge is to keep the Christmas spirit, and its community focus, alive throughout the year.

Endnotes

² Russell Hardiman, "The Readings of Advent," in *The Years of the Year: The Paschal Mystery Celebrated in Christian Worship*, ed. Russell Hardiman (Fremantle: Pastoral Liturgy Publications, 1997). This article has been edited where necessary. This book is no longer in print but can be sourced second hand. Used with permission.

³ Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, "Life and Ministry of Priests," (1995). http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccclergy/documents/rc_con_ccclergy_doc_24101995_prh_en.html.

⁴ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Fulfilled in Your Hearing: The Homily in the Sunday Assembly* (Washington: USCCB Publishing, 1982).

⁵ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Fulfilled in Your Hearing*, para. 29.

⁶ Second Vatican Council, "Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1963), para. 102.

⁷ Second Vatican Council, "Sacrosanctum Concilium," para. 102.

⁸ This Opening Prayer predates the current translation of the Roman Missal.

⁹ Pius Parsch, *The Church's Year of Grace* (Liturgical Press, 1953).

¹⁰ This memorial acclamation is not used in the current translation of the Roman Missal.

¹¹ Second Vatican Council, "Sacrosanctum Concilium," para. 51.

¹² Congregation for Divine Worship, "Ordo Lectionum Missae: editio typica altera," (1969). http://archive.cwatershed.org/media/pdfs/14/05/05/11-44-20_0.pdf.

¹³ Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, "General Introduction to the Lectionary", 2nd Edition (1981): para. 93. <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/general-introduction-to-the-lectionary-second-edition-2189>.

¹⁴ Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, "General Introduction to the Lectionary."

¹⁵ Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, "General Introduction to the Lectionary," para. 93.

¹⁶ Second Vatican Council, "Sacrosanctum Concilium," para. 51.



The Ministry of Deacon

By Deborah Talbot and Rev Deacon Bruce Talbot

People often ask why do we need deacons? They say priests can do everything a deacon does and more. They say this because they misunderstand the ministry of the diaconate.

St Ignatius of Antioch addresses this question in the second century. As stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1593):⁷

Since the beginning, the ordained ministry has been conferred and exercised in three degrees: that of the bishops, that of the presbyters, and that of the deacons. The ministries conferred by ordination are irreplaceable for the organic structure of the Church: without the bishop, presbyters, and deacons, one cannot speak of the Church (cf St Ignatius of Antioch, Ad Trall. 3,1).

This expresses the belief of the Church Fathers that the three orders of ordained ministry are vital to the life of the church. There have always been deacons in the Church.¹⁸ For the first millennium deacons were the evangelists and messengers for the apostles and bishops. The deacons went to the dispersed. Often these included non-Aramaic speaking Christians who were prevented from attending the temple because they were not Jews so could not hear the Word of God. Deacons were appointed to minister the Word of God to these non-Jewish Christians in their homes or wherever they were. Early deacons included Stephen (Acts 7) who preached outside the temple; and Philip the evangelist, also known as Philip the deacon, (Acts 8) who baptised and taught. Because of this diaconal ministry the Church grew. Throughout the first millennium and well into the second, the ministries of the church were fairly fluid, changing to meet the needs of the church at the time.¹⁹

This first millennium saw such growth in the Church that the presbyters (who originally were unordained elders advising the bishops) develop into a new ministry where they were ordained to preside over the Eucharist in the absence of the bishop. A bishop presides at Mass because **he is** a bishop, whereas presbyters preside at Mass because **there** is a bishop²⁰. Because of the close relationship between the bishop and the deacon, who were his messengers, bishops were only chosen from among the male deacons, never from among the presbyterate. There were both male and female deacons well into the first millennium.²¹

Cursus Honorum

After the Christianisation of the Roman Empire in the middle of the first millennium, the Church took on various Roman social mores, including the step by step increments of gaining social status. *This Cursus Honorum* infiltrated the Church overpowering the direct ordination process and requiring those who sought ordination to go through the minor orders until the ultimate step of presbyteral ordination. Laity

became clerics upon receiving their first tonsure at receipt of the order of Lector. Around the 12th Century the seven steps to priesthood became set in practice, and the penultimate step was that of ordination to the diaconate, at which point their ministry was focused on their final training towards priesthood, like an apprenticeship. The focus on the true ministry of the diaconate became lost for the most part as the focus on the Eucharistic species overshadowed the presence of Christ in the people who are the Church, and in the proclamation of the Word of God. This also resulted in the absorption of the episcopate within the presbyterate who became seen as presbyters with extra juridical powers²³. It was not until *Lumen Gentium* explained the ministry of the Laity that the focus on Christ present in the people of God is restored: “[The activity of the Laity] in ecclesial communities is so necessary that, for the most part, the apostolate of the pastors cannot be fully effective without it.”²⁴

The diaconate should be detached from presbyteral ordination returning to how it was in the first millennium. This would have the advantage of giving the diaconate its proper identity. The minor orders also need to be detached from Holy Orders which would enable the laity to undertake the minor orders as legitimate ministries in their own right, all equal among many ministries. The Bishop, who is the head of the Local Church, strengthens all these ministries.

It was not until Vatican II that the episcopate and the diaconate were restored to their rightful place among the three orders of ordained ministry. However, many still do not understand these ministries and how they are differentiated. History has caused many to still think that presbyteral ordination is the pinnacle of success in Holy Orders. Vatican II has restored the Episcopate, the Diaconate and the Laity to their rightful place within the ministry of the Body of Christ - the Church. Each, together with the presbyterate, have their own ministry and charisms for the whole Church.

Servant Myth

Another reason people misunderstand the ministry of deacons is that the false translation of the *diacon* group of words to mean **servant**, instead of their original meaning of **ministry**. This has become the dominant misunderstanding of the diaconate, starting from the late 19th Century when the Lutheran Church in Germany set up places to train lay members of their community to work in areas of service to the poor, sick and marginalised. They called these institutions *Diaconie*²⁵ or Deacon Houses and those who ran them were called Deacons and Deaconesses. They did not look into the semantics related to the *diacon* group of words, nor the historical context of deacons in the early church. The purpose of these Deacon Houses is similar to that of religious houses in the Catholic Church where nuns and brothers commit

themselves to serving the community especially in areas such as health care and education for the poor and marginalised. They lived and served together in community.

In the 1970s John N Collins researched the *diacon* group of words as part of his PhD thesis on ministry. As a result of this research he identified errors in translation of several biblical texts which are commonly used to refer to the diaconate as an order of service. Going back to the original Greek texts Collins realised that these translations contained errors, eg Acts 6:1-7²⁶ where the phrase 'on tables' is added into the text to change its meaning. These erroneous translations all took root after the 1870s and as such, crept into modern biblical dictionaries erroneously too. Since his papers were published some of these dictionaries have revised their definitions to conform to ministry instead of service. Anni Hentschel whose independent study of the *diacon* word group confirmed John N Collins research stated "*the idea that Diakonie should develop in its practitioners a special kind of humble service and self-denial is far from what the biblical text means.*"²⁷

Collins suggests that the meaning has been distorted from its original meaning of ministry, whereby the early deacons were called to minister to the Greek speaking widows who were unable to understand the Aramaic being spoken by the Apostles in the churches. At this time there was no presbyterate and it was the charism of the deacons to minister and evangelise, to spread the good news of Christ to the dispersed, and to represent the Bishops who remained in their local churches to minister to those who gathered there.

Gooley, in his book *Deacons Today: New Wine in New Wineskins* suggests that the reinstatement of the permanent diaconate following Vatican II has taken on a paradigm of diaconate from the German Lutheran concept similar to our religious organizations. Instead it should have developed a paradigm for the diaconate which recognises the true semantic understanding of the *diacon* group of words from the early Church. He also reminds us that the bishops of the Second Vatican Council left open 'how' that reinstated order would manifest itself, leaving room for the Holy Spirit to continue to develop that ministry. He suggests we are trying to fit new wine into old wineskins resulting in burst wineskins, especially as the ministry of deacon has been restricted to only mean service. He goes on to suggest we need to relook at the wineskins, enabling the Holy Spirit to continue to work in the ministry of the Church.

Statistics presented at deacon's conferences over the past decades are showing a worldwide trend in the growth of the permanent diaconate and still many Catholics have no understanding of what that ministry entails.

Another consideration in the misunderstanding of diaconal ministry occurs because a functionalist understanding of ministers developed throughout the 18th Century in protestant circles and the Catholic Church has viewed ministry as what someone does rather than what someone is. It has been exacerbated in the 20th Century as a greater sense of

self developed through the study of psychology and sociology, and this is when role theory began to be applied to ministry.²⁸

Post Vatican II

Following the flood of documents coming from the second Vatican Council, great changes emerged in the Church. "Religious and laity were moving into pastoral roles";²⁹ liturgies took on the vernacular language; religious chose to put aside their habits and dress more informally; and "a burgeoning lay ministry was developing at the same time as the permanent ministry of the diaconate was flourishing."³⁰ Ministries were becoming confused and what people understood as the role of the priest was becoming blurred. No wonder people could not understand the difference between a priest and a deacon, or a deacon and lay ministry. The changes within the Church took place at an incredibly fast pace after the slow changes pre-Vatican II and the hierarchy often had difficulty communicating those changes, tending to be more prescriptive than necessary in order to keep control over those changes.

Deacons Today

More than 50 years have passed since Vatican II so it is timely to ask "How has the ministry of the permanent diaconate grown with the guidance of the Holy Spirit in that time?"

Today, as it has always been, the deacons' ministry has two aspects: Liturgical and non-liturgical but remains, as always, a ministry to the dispersed, an ambassador of the bishop.

Their liturgical ministry is clearly outlined in various sections of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM). The GIRM assigns various tasks to the deacon in the Liturgy of the Eucharist such as announcing the needs of the Church and world during the liturgy (prayers of intercession) and the rite of dismissal.³²

Despite the fact that the GIRM lays out clearly the various tasks and ministries of the deacon within the Mass, many people are not aware of those instructions regarding liturgical ministry.

GIRM 94: After the priest, the deacon, in virtue of the sacred Ordination he has received, holds first place among those who minister in the Eucharistic celebration. For the sacred Order of the diaconate has been held in high honour in the Church even from the time of the Apostles. At Mass the deacon has his own part in proclaiming the Gospel, in preaching God's word from time to time, in announcing the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful, in ministering to the priest, in preparing the altar and serving the celebration of the Sacrifice, in distributing the Eucharist to the faithful, especially under the species of wine, and sometimes in giving directions regarding the people's gestures and posture.

This ministry of the deacon includes:

- proclaiming the Gospel³³
- having an opportunity to give the Homily occasionally³⁴

- after the priest celebrant directs the prayers of the faithful, the deacon announces the intentions from the ambo ³⁵
- preparation of the Gifts ³⁶
- instructing the faithful to offer the sign of peace ³⁷
- assisting in the Fraction if needed ³⁸
- the deacon receives Communion under both kinds from the priest himself and then assists the priest in distributing Communion to the people ³⁹
- the concluding rites when the dismissal of the people is given by the deacon after which he and the priest kiss the altar then give the altar a profound bow ⁴⁰

Ministry to the dispersed

The priest's primary ministry is to the gathered i.e. their parish or community for those who fulfil teaching roles, or as theologians, canon lawyers etc within the archdiocese/diocese because of their special charisms.

The deacon's primary ministry is to the dispersed. Though they will worship in their parish and minister there liturgically, their focus will be on those who are dispersed from parish life, those who are not regularly ministered to in a gathered sense. These include but are not limited to seafarers, migrants, those disenfranchised from the church. They will also include ministry to married couples, families, those in hospitals and prisons, and those who feel alienated from the church for various reasons.

Gooley gives an example of how deacons can minister as school chaplains and how that ministry can be extrapolated to other areas such as prisons, universities etc where the church can touch people needing the Word of God.

At the Deacons Conference held at the University of Notre Dame, Fremantle campus, in October 2019, a number of deacons gave witness to their ministries and how they had developed over the years through movement of the Holy Spirit in their hearts as they saw needs in their communities. The Director of Stella Maris Mission to Seafarers described the value his ministry has brought to lonely seafarers, alone at sea for months, separated from their families and how the light in each port of the Stella Maris Community gives them a level of stability and support, encouragement and an opportunity to receive Christ in Word and Eucharist.

Another deacon spoke of his ministry to refugees and displaced people, providing a place for them to feel at home, welcomed and introduced to faith filled communities; somewhere to come for advice on the new culture they had entered; someone to listen to their story; someone to provide shelter, food and their daily needs while they settle into a strange environment. Often it is the church, which is the same throughout the world, that they see as something from home, a common denominator in a world that has disrupted their lives.

Two deacons spoke of their ministries to the bereaved. Both have independently found that they are being

called on more and more frequently to provide funeral services for those families who have moved away from the Church. Often parents become separated from their Church communities as they move into aged care. The parish priest changes over time and the elderly feel neglected in not hearing the Word of God. They may participate in monthly Mass but then there is no one to minister to them for the rest of the month. Often they want a Catholic funeral but their children have left the Church, their parish priest no longer knows them and the family do not know where to turn to for a Catholic funeral service. It is the funeral directors that contact these deacons requesting a Catholic service. They have found it a great opportunity to evangelise in a gentle way, and often some family members return to the Church as a result or at least hurts are healed.

Some deacons have found that a ministry to married couples and young families develops. Couples may approach them after Mass asking for a chat or advice on various aspects of married life or parenting. Some deacons involve their wives in such discussions, often visiting the couple for a meal or in the evening encouraging them, and catechizing them on the teaching of the church and various ways to apply that teaching to their daily life. Teaching a family to pray together, to discuss sensitive issues openly and to be a listening ear is all they need. The fact many permanent deacons are married and have experience in such areas is often a reason couples are drawn to seeking out help from deacons.

A similar area is the preparation of young couples for marriage. The deacons mentioned the lengths they go to in preparing couples over several sessions. They discuss family issues, often giving them homework to discuss things like how they will manage their finances, how they will resolve issues, discuss their dreams and aspirations, etc. The deacon will encourage communication between the couple, not wanting to hear their answers to the questions but just knowing the topics have been discussed. Often with the permission of the couple he will include his wife in these preparation sessions.

Other areas of ministry deacons have been effectively undertaking include running RCIA programs in parishes as well as RE programs for children outside the Catholic School system, running youth groups and family activities, visitation to schools and to the sick. They are not restricted to just one of these ministries but involved in many as the need arises, often going from a funeral to meet a couple for marriage preparation or attend an RCIA meeting.

In some dioceses there are deacons in prison and hospital chaplaincies, school and university chaplaincies, deacons as directors of various diocesan agencies, directors of vocations to the permanent diaconate, even running a faith community in the absence of an available priest.

Misunderstood and Under-valued Ministry

Most permanent deacons today also run into questions like “when will you be ordained?” and thus follows discussion on who a deacon is, why their ministry is different to that of a priest and an explanation that they are already ordained. They often have to explain that because of the ordination they have received they are members of the clergy and have a right to wear a clerical collar. The deacon is an ordained minister and sees his vocation as a permanent deacon, not that of bishop or priest.

At the Deacons Conference in October 2019, while speaking with various deacons and their wives, it became evident that there is a level of concern regarding what people believe is the ministry of deacon. This frustration was also expressed through presentations by some deacons on their ministry. This is the same concern and frustration referred to by Pope John Paul II 19 years earlier at the Jubilee for Deacons in Rome. Addressing deacons in 2000, Pope John Paul II said, “Dear Deacons, perhaps some of you are tired because of the burden of your duties, because of frustration due to unsuccessful apostolic projects, because many misunderstand you.”⁴²

There is great need for quality catechesis on the subject of clergy and the permanent diaconate in particular. Often these questions come from priests who have no understanding of the three orders of the church because to them the diaconate is the final step before their presbyteral ordination, still considered by them the peak of ministry.

Gooley asks the question “should the *Cursus Honorum* be reviewed and diaconal ordination deleted as the penultimate step in presbyteral ordination? Should the lower orders of lector and acolyte be more formalised as orders solely for the laity? Why should there be stepping stones to ordination? Should we revert to non-sequential ordination as was the case for the first millennium? These are questions well worth investigation.

The bishops at Vatican II deliberately left the form of the diaconate to be developed organically under the direction of the Holy Spirit. We see in the examples above that dispersed ministries are developing where there are needs in the Church external to parish life.

We have seen an influx of foreign priests whose language and culture often clashes with Australian culture, and parishioners crying out for the Word of God where they are having trouble understanding it. Is this somewhere that deacons, who have a clear understanding of the local culture, can assist these priests as well as new migrants to Australia get a clearer understanding of our culture, our language and the needs of the parish, and to proclaim the Word of God?

Are there opportunities within the diocese for deacons to bring the needs of the diocese to the bishop? Are the deacons being effectively used to communicate those areas of need to the bishop and Curia?

Gooley⁴³ also puts forward a compelling case

for female deacons as was the case for the first millennium giving the example of Phoebe from Romans 16. Gooley looks at the form of diaconate that was practiced in the first millennium: Ephraim the Syrian, a theologian; Lawrence of Rome, administrator of a portion of Rome; Francis of Assisi, a preacher and founder of a religious order, and explains that the restoration by the Vatican Council “did not rely on reviving any of these models” but was “open to the form that the restored ministry might take in order to meet pastoral needs and situations of the present era.” Gooley also looks at the ordination rituals which were identical for men and women with the exception that female saints were mentioned in the litany of saints for female ordination and male saints for male ordination. In today’s world, where equality of women is recognized, it would be fitting to consider the possibility of ordination of women to the permanent diaconate to meet the pastoral needs of our time. The precedent was set in the first millennium.

The upcoming Plenary Council would be an excellent forum to discuss how deacons can fully contribute to the Church. At the preliminary group discussions held in parishes in 2019 the permanent diaconate was one of the topics of discussion along with how to overcome the clericalism that has crept into the church and is rife among some clergy and some parishioners. Perhaps a review of the ministry of the deacon together with a questioning of the sequential ordination process, which would necessitate a revision on the curriculum for preparing for presbyteral and diaconal ordinations, would go a long way to reduce this clericalism. As Gooley states, “Presbyteral and parochial ministry is no longer the only pattern of ordained ministry”.⁴⁵

The laity are crying out for opportunities to express their ministry appropriately too, in fact the deacon calls them to undertake their ministry at the end of each Mass. “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord with your life!” This ministry of the laity would be enriched if they had greater opportunities to be included, due to the dignity of their baptism, into the minor orders of porter (our greeters), lector and acolyte formalising roles they are already undertaking. These minor orders should no longer be steps towards ordination but active lay ministries where the members of each order receive quality training, not one hour one evening in the local parish, but attend a course providing catechesis on the order, and skills necessary to undertake the tasks associated with it, as is currently the case with acolytes.

There are three sacraments that impart an indelible character: Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders.⁴⁶ These sacraments ask the Holy Spirit to come down upon the person receiving that sacrament to enable them to spread the good news of Christ and effectively bring the graces of that sacrament to the Church. The grace of these sacraments is for the whole Church, not just the individual.⁴⁷

Unfortunately, many of those deacons working in full time ordained ministry are not compensated according to their rights in Canon Law⁴⁸. Because much of their ministry is outside the parish and hidden from the wider clergy, they have been considered volunteers rather

than official ordained ministers and so are left without support of the church. An unfortunate consequence of this is a devaluation of their diaconal ministry and neglect of the deacons as well. This in turn leads to further misunderstanding of the diaconal ministry.

Conclusion

The research of Collins and Henschel has shown that the servant myth is no longer the way the diaconal ministry should be understood. Gooley suggests that “when we move away from restrictive notions of the deacon as being primarily defined by service, as the minister of charity, or social justice, which is at present the dominant paradigm, other creative possibilities emerge... Deacons are primarily those who proclaim the Gospel, in the name of the bishop, to the assembled community and those dispersed ... Like the bishop, whom they serve, they have a *diakonia* to build up the community of faith and reach out to dispersed Christians and to those who have yet to hear the Gospel.”⁴⁹ This paradigm shift needs to be accepted for the ministry of deacon to be understood.

He has also shown how the *Cursus Honorum* has led to a sequential ordination that is not useful to our understanding of ministry; that because transitional deacons are not focused on the ministry of the diaconate but on the presbyterate, which is a very different ministry, it is one of the reasons the permanent diaconate is so misunderstood.

Perhaps at this time of preparation for the Plenary Council in Australia, it is appropriate that this great opportunity for the delegates of that Council to look at the three orders of Clergy within the Church and the role of each in ministry should be considered. Perhaps it is time for consideration of whether the *Cursus Honorum* is appropriate as a hierarchy leading to ordination. It would be an opportunity for the lesser orders (porter, lector etc) to be revitalised for the laity with appropriate training and preparation and be an opportunity for women to be included in these minor orders, not as a precursor to priesthood but as a permanent lay ministry in its own right.

As Gooley states:⁵⁰ “[The deacon’s] primary ministry, at least for most deacons in the diocese, should be supra-parochial and diocesan ministries.” The ministry of the deacon is as the right-hand man of the bishop, not the presbyter, and as such, his formation should concentrate on the pastoral needs of the diocese rather than for preparation for ministering in parishes. This is more evident when we look at how deacons, who have been left to develop their own ministries without much guidance from their bishop, have often moved beyond their parish boundaries to minister in areas of great need, such as ministry to the bereaved, nursing homes etc.

Gooley believes the intention of the Vatican Council “envisaged a full time ministry in a diocese and that the deacon in secular employment is intended to be the exception rather than the most common pattern”.⁵¹ Anecdotal evidence shows that the majority of permanent deacons in Australia today are in full time diaconal ministry. Those in paid employment are limited in the most part to teaching in Catholic schools,

directors of church agencies etc.

The role of deacons as evangelists, proclaiming the Word of God, not only at Mass but also in the community, as was the ministry of deacons for the first millennium, has become more evident as the focus of the active ministry of deacons today. They are active in the lives of community members breaking open the Word of God and being the face of the Church where it is missing.

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- ¹⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 1994. Homebush, NSW: St Pauls, para. 1593.
- ¹⁸ Gooley, Anthony. 2019. *Deacons Today: New Wine & New Wineskins*. Bayswater, Vic: Coventry Press.
- ¹⁹ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 36.
- ²⁰ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 62.
- ²¹ Sanchez, Brandon 2019. *Vatican commission members: Women served as deacons for a millennium in America Magazine*, 15 January 2019 accessed 19 August 2020 <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2019/01/15/vatican-commission-members-women-served-deacons-millennium>
- ²² Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 39-40.
- ²³ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 35-36.
- ²⁴ CCC, 900.
- ²⁵ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 19.
- ²⁶ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 90.
- ²⁷ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 83.
- ²⁸ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 104-105.
- ²⁹ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 43.
- ³⁰ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 44.
- ³¹ GIRM, 177.
- ³² GIRM, 171-186.
- ³¹ GIRM, 177.
- ³² GIRM, 171-186.
- ³³ GIRM 59: By tradition, the function of proclaiming the readings is ministerial, not presidential. The readings, therefore, should be proclaimed by a lector, and the Gospel by a deacon or, in his absence, a priest other than the celebrant.
- ³⁴ GIRM 66: The Homily should ordinarily be given by the priest celebrant himself. He may entrust it to a concelebrating priest or occasionally, according to circumstances, to the deacon, but never to a lay person.
- ³⁵ GIRM 71: GIRM 71: It is for the priest celebrant to direct this prayer from the chair. He himself begins it with a brief introduction, by which he invites the faithful to pray, and likewise he concludes it with a prayer. ... The intentions are announced from the ambo or from another suitable place, by the deacon or by a cantor, a lector, or one of the lay faithful
- ³⁶ GIRM 73: ... The offerings are then brought forward... They are then accepted at an appropriate place by the priest or the deacon and carried to the altar and GIRM 75: The bread and wine are placed on the altar ... The priest may incense the gifts placed upon the altar and then incense the cross and the altar itself ... Next, the priest ... may be incensed by the deacon or another minister
- ³⁷ GIRM, 181.
- ³⁸ GIRM 83: The priest breaks the Eucharistic Bread, assisted, if the case calls for it, by the deacon or a concelebrant. ...The Fraction or Breaking of Bread is begun after the sign of peace ... This rite is reserved to the priest and the deacon. ...
- ³⁹ GIRM 182: After the priest's Communion, the deacon receives Communion under both kinds from the priest himself and then assists the priest in distributing Communion to the people.
- ⁴⁰ GIRM 90: The Concluding Rites consist of: 1. Brief announcements 2. the priest's greeting and blessing 3. the dismissal of the people by the deacon or the priest ... 4. the kissing of the altar by the priest and the deacon, followed by a profound bow to the altar by the priest, the deacon, and the other ministers...
- ⁴¹ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 65.
- ⁴² Address of John Paul II to, the Participants at the Jubilee for Permanent Deacons Saturday 19 February 2000 <http://w2.vatican.va/>

content/john-paul-ii/en//speeches/2000/jan-mar/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20000219_jubilee-deacons.html as sited Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 206.

- ⁴³ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 251-299, 330.
- ⁴⁴ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 254.
- ⁴⁵ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 65.
- ⁴⁶ CCC, 1582.
- ⁴⁷ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 57-58.
Canon 281 §1. Since clerics dedicate themselves to ecclesiastical ministry, they deserve remuneration which is consistent with their condition, taking into account the nature of their function and the conditions of places and times, and by which they can provide for the necessities of their life as well as for the equitable payment of those whose services they need.
§2. Provision must also be made so that they possess that social assistance which provides for their needs suitably if they suffer from illness, incapacity, or old age.
§3. Married deacons who devote themselves completely to ecclesiastical ministry deserve remuneration by which they are able to provide for the support of themselves and their families. Those who receive remuneration by reason of a civil profession which they exercise or have exercised, however, are to take care of the needs of themselves and their families from the income derived from it.
- ⁴⁹ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 71-72.
- ⁵⁰ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 246-247.
- ⁵¹ Gooley, *Deacons Today*, 2019, 189.



Music Review

Entrance Antiphons for SATB Choir Volume 1 and 2. Portland, Oregon: OCP, 2020.

Entrance Antiphons for SATB Choirs

Volume 1: Seasons, Solemnities and Feasts

Volume 2: Sundays in Ordinary Time

By Christopher Walker

Published by OCP, 2020

From the sixth to the sixteenth century the entrance song or Introit consisted of a Psalm that began and concluded with a short antiphon. In the Missal of Pius V (1570 to Vatican II) the Introit was reduced to the antiphon, one psalm-verse, the glory be, and the repetition of the antiphon. In the post-Vatican II Roman Missal the text has been further reduced to the antiphon alone.⁵² It is this collection of Entrance Antiphons that Christopher Walker has set to music in the above collection. For those preparing for Sunday Liturgy, these Antiphons can be found in the Roman Missal (and the Sunday Missal).

Composer of the very popular Celtic Alleluia, together with an impressive number of liturgical music collections across various themes, Christopher Walker is well known internationally for his extensive work in liturgy and music. In addition to his previously published collection of the Communion antiphons, this latest collection consists of the Entrance Antiphons for Sundays in Ordinary time (Volume 2) and for Seasons, Solemnities and Feasts (Volume 1).

The music features a variety of styles, including chant and diatonic harmonies, as well as intricate modern arrangements and musical devices like organum, canon, inversion and imitation.⁵³ Walker uses the exact text as printed in the Roman Missal, repeating some words or phrases as the music requires. However it is always the text that is the dominant character in the compositions. This is an important strength of the collection.

Walker provides three different styles of antiphons in the collection – the SATB arrangements, a simpler version of the SATB arrangements and the Chant versions. Not every antiphon has all three versions though. The SATB arrangements are quite complex and would, I suspect, have limited application in the ordinary parish situation, other than perhaps having a pitched instrument intoning the Soprano/melody line, then having the choir or congregation sing it, finishing with the instrumental version. However, for Cathedral choirs or perhaps larger parish choirs who do have SATB choirs, these would be well worth learning, as they provide an excellent thematic introduction to the Liturgy and may be sung prior to the gathering hymn. These antiphons would also provide a beautifully arranged and harmonious beginning to the chosen liturgy in place of the gathering hymn. There are 81 SATB Versions of the Antiphons.

The simpler versions of the SATB arrangements are just that! Across the collection (2 volumes) there are

10 such simple versions.

The Chant versions of the antiphons are somewhat simpler and, sung in unison, could be executed with more confidence. There are 9 Chant or Unison versions of the Antiphons across the Collection. I would expect a far greater application of these antiphons within a regular church choir, or perhaps, for a cantor first with the repeated antiphon being sung by the assembly. The frequent use of a high E and D could still prove challenging for a regular church choir. However, Walker pastorally suggests that we “feel free to transpose the Antiphons into the most comfortable key for your singers.” (Performance Notes on page 1) This is definitely something that I would do with any of the choirs I work with! These performance notes are a helpful strength of the collection. They appear as part of the well thought out introduction page at the beginning of each Song Book Volume. On this introduction page Christopher Walker explains what the Entrance Antiphon is, where or when to sing it, notes on the performance of the Antiphon and also a paragraph outlining the Chant versions of each Antiphon.

These Antiphons may be well applied to personal reflection and meditation for individuals. I could also see a wonderful application for small groups – as an introduction to a weekly Gospel/Bible study – where the theme of the following Sunday is going to be explored. Given the quality of the recording and vocal execution, the collection would provide a truly uplifting moment in this application. They could also be used in the recorded version as the assembly is coming into the church building to celebrate liturgy. Following the ‘hearing’ of the antiphons, the choir or cantor could then lead the assembly to sing the selected Antiphon for that particular celebration.

With careful preparation, this collection could be well applied in the parish situation with competent choirs or cantors. I suspect limited application for smaller choirs and music groups who may not have the luxury of an SATB choir or a cantor. The collection comes in a 2-CD format with two song books. It also includes MP3 albums. It is available on ocp.org. Willow Publishing (willowpublishing.com.au) is the Australian distributor of OCP products. Pleroma Christian Supplies (christiansupplies.co.nz) is the supplier of OCP products in New Zealand.

By Angela Gorman

Endnotes

⁵² *Dictionary of the Liturgy.* Rev Jovian P Lang OFM. Catholic Book Publishing Co. New York 1989. P 178-9

⁵³ *New product Announcement. Entrance Antiphons for SATB Choir.* Christopher Walker OCP. 2020



Music Review

Freeburg DC, Paule, and Christopher Walker. *Advent and Christmas: Prayer for the Journey*. Portland, Oregon: Wade Wisler, 2020.

Due to COVID-19 this small book and accompanying two CD set arrived only just in time for this issue and it is most appropriate for the season. Published by Wade Wisler and OCP it taps into the ancient tradition of our Christian faith, the Liturgy of the Hours. In the early Church, Christians followed the Jewish way of praying throughout the day using the psalms in particular along with readings, canticles, intercessory prayers, the Lord's Prayer and a final blessing. Such prayer sanctifies the day and our efforts to live in the Christian way.

Since the pandemic we have discovered many new ways to pray during isolation and the Second Vatican Council's encouragement to the laity to pray the Hours is being given even further encouragement now. When we gather as family, or as a small group to pray, this form of liturgy is most appropriate and does not need a church setting. This collection means that it can be used while commuting on public transport or in your car, it can be used at home in your comfortable space. Wherever it is used, you enter into the great throng engaged in the Liturgy of the Hours. It takes no more than 15 minutes which is possible even in the busiest schedule and yet it can be extended if required.

Freeburg and Walker, both accomplished and well-known composers offer us a very accessible way to enter into this form of prayer. Traditionally it is sung and the two CD set supports this as we are able to sing along with the antiphons and fully sing the hymns as

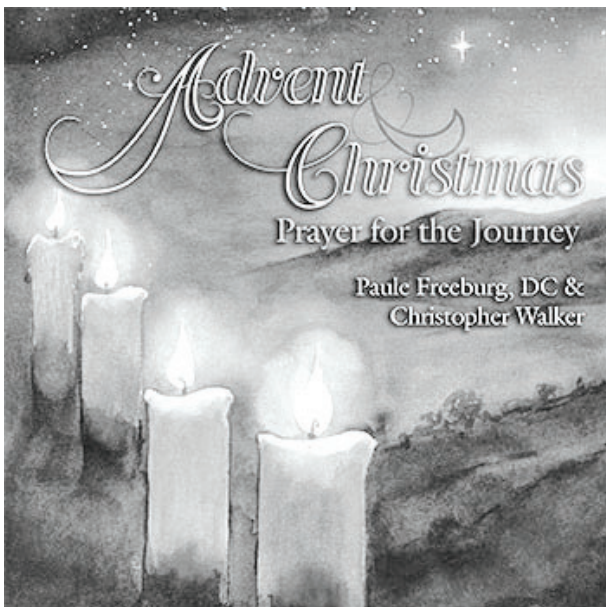
the lead line is provided in the booklet. One can pause the CD and read the short readings then resume the recording for the sung parts.

One aspect of this resource that I noted with interest is the change in the words of the Lord's Prayer. Instead of 'lead us not into temptation' they have used 'and leave us not when in temptation'. There is considerable debate in some theological circles about the translation that we commonly use because God is not one to lead us into temptation so how can this be phrased so that it makes sense? In the NRSV translation of this prayer it says: 'and do not bring us to the time of trial' (Matt 5:9-13). Freeburg and Walker's version could be very welcome to those who would prefer a different approach.

The collection presents us with Morning and Evening Prayer for four weeks and Christmas. There is energy in the music and a sense of delight in the season and yet an opportunity for peace and reflection.

The booklet can be purchased for \$5 (edition 30143362) in Australia from Willow Publishing (willowpublishing.com.au) and the two CD set for \$22.99 (edition 30143363) which makes this material very accessible. There is also an Audio book available for \$19.99 (edition 30145795) and an MP3 album for \$19.99 (edition 30143364).

By Angela McCarthy





The Advent Wreath

Adapted by Angela McCarthy and Sr Kerry Willison

Introduction *(This would usually be read on the first Sunday of Advent)*

Within the four weeks of the Advent season, the Church's liturgy draws attention to different facets of how God's plan **has been** revealed in Christ, **is now revealed** in every Mass we celebrate, and that Christ **will be revealed** in his glory, when he comes again at a time we do not know.

For each Sunday of Advent, we take our focus for the Advent Wreath from our Advent traditions. Like the people of the Old Testament we live in hope for the fullness of the revelation of Christ the Messiah when he will come in glory to judge the living and the dead. This year we will anticipate and pray for the process and outcomes of the Plenary Council when lighting the Advent Wreath.

The Advent Wreath Responsory often replaces the Penitential Act and therefore leads into the Opening Prayer.

First Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Presider:

The Presider blesses the wreath and the assembly with the sprinkling of holy water, using these or similar words:

May the sprinkling of this water
remind all of us gathered here
of our first sharing in the grace of baptism.
During this time of Advent
may we prepare for the Lord's coming
with open hearts and minds.
May this wreath be a symbol to us
of this time of prayerful watching and waiting
for the coming of the Lord, and a symbol of faith
in the power of the Holy Spirit as we anticipate the
fruits of the Plenary Council.

The Presider, or an assistant, lights the first candle, which is often named the Prophets' Candle as the prophets prepared the way for the future coming of the Messiah.

V. Lord Jesus, your coming was proclaimed by the prophets of old. The Prophet Isaiah proclaimed to the people that we are the work of God's hands; we are the clay, and he is the potter (First Reading). Mold us in your image as we walk together the pilgrimage of the Plenary Council.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, we believe you come among us now. St Paul declares that the Spirit will keep us steady until the last day (Second Reading). May our hearts be centered on listening to the Holy Spirit throughout the Plenary Council journey.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, you will come again in glory. You ask us to 'stay awake!' (Gospel). May we be awake and ready to hear the movement of the Spirit in the world around us.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

Presider [Collect: First Sunday of Advent]

Grant your faithful, we pray, Almighty God,
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ
with righteous deeds at his coming,
so that gathered at your right hand,
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly
Kingdom,
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

R. Amen

Second Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Presider:

The Presider, or an assistant, lights the second candle, which can be named the John the Baptist Candle. John the Baptist was the one who prepared the way for the Lord.

V. Lord Jesus, your coming was proclaimed by the prophet Isaiah who described you as a 'shepherd feeding his flock, gathering the lambs in his arms' (First Reading). The Plenary Council invites us to be a Humble, Healing and Merciful community. Like the shepherd may we be people with arms outstretched in love.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, you will come again. St Peter reminds us to live holy and saintly lives while we wait and long for the Day of God to come (Second Reading). Waiting can be filled with anxiety. The unexpected can be frightening. Help us to live in the Spirit always.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, you call us to baptism in the Holy Spirit (Gospel). Be with us as we 'Listen to what the Spirit is saying' throughout the journey of the Plenary Council.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

Presider [Collect: Second Sunday of Advent]

Almighty and merciful God,
may no earthly undertaking hinder those
who set out in haste to meet your Son,
but may our learning of heavenly wisdom
gain us admittance to his company.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen

Third Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Presider:

*The Presider, or an assistant light the third candle,
which can be named the Saints' Candle to call to
mind all the saints who share the life of Christ by being
baptised into his Body the Church.*

V. Lord Jesus, your coming was foretold by the
prophet Isaiah who cried with joy for God clothes
us in the garments of salvation (First Reading). As
a joyful, hope-filled Servant Community may our
hearts be filled with gratitude for the many gifts
God has given us.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, you come among us now as the light of
the world. St Paul urges us to be happy at all times
and to pray constantly (Second Reading). May
the joy of the Lord be in our hearts as we journey
together, listening to what the Spirit is saying to the
Church of Australia.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, you sent John the Baptist
to be a witness for the light (Gospel).
Like John the Baptist may we be
witnesses to the power of Jesus open to
Conversion and Renewal in the
Church of Australia.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

Presider [Collect: Third Sunday of Advent]

O God, who see how your people
Faithfully await the feast of the Lord's nativity,
enable us, we pray,
to attain the joys of so great a salvation
and to celebrate them always
with solemn worship and glad rejoicing.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son,
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen

Fourth Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Presider:

*The Presider, or an assistant, lights the fourth candle,
which is often named the Angel Gabriel Candle for
those messengers who bring God's Word into our
world.*

V. Lord Jesus, you established the house of David
to be secure forever and from which the Saviour
would be born (First Reading). Jesus is the
cornerstone. We are a Christ-centered Church.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, you alone are wisdom and as St Paul
declares, you will give us the strength to live the
Gospel (Second Reading). By living a prayerful life
Centered on the Eucharist may we open ourselves
to your wisdom and the Spirit working in the
community.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, you sent the angel Gabriel to give
the good news to Mary so that she would bring
Jesus into the world through the power of the Spirit
(Gospel). Giving birth is painful. Change can be
frightening. Mary trusted in God and let herself be
led by the Holy Spirit so that we can say:

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

Presider [Collect: Fourth Sunday of Advent]

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord,
your grace into our hearts,
that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ your Son
was made known by the message of an Angel,
may by his Passion and Cross
be brought to the glory of his resurrection.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity
of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen

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29 November 2020

First Sunday of Advent

Reflection by Anthony Doran

Introduction

If there is one word which we all probably never want to hear again, it is unprecedented. But, as this unprecedented year draws to its close, we enter a new liturgical year, preparing ourselves and our Church for the unprecedented event of God coming to dwell with us.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you came so that we could know the Father. Lord have mercy.

You are the mercy of God. Christ have mercy.

You will come again. Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:1, 3-8

Isaiah, our great Advent prophet, laments that the Lord seems to have forgotten to act on Israel's behalf. Isaiah entreats the Lord to tear the heavens open and come down and work wonders for them again. This lament ends with a most beautiful entrustment to and praise of the Lord's power: we are the clay, you the potter.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

This opening chapter of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians is a thanksgiving to God for the graces which they have received: graces which prepare the Christians of Corinth and keep them steady and without blame for the coming day of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a thanksgiving for Advent.

Gospel Reading

Mark 13:33-37

Our beginning of the reading of Mark's Gospel in this new liturgical year finds Jesus as the Prophet in the Temple, using a parable of the master returning home, encouraging, urging, admonishing his disciples to be awake and ready for the Master's imminent, unexpected return.

Reflection

At this time of the year, you can hardly have failed to notice how much more light there is in our southern skies as we come to the end of our year. As the amount of light in our skies increases at this time of the year, we begin our new liturgical year. We begin Advent preparing for the arrival of the Christ child of Bethlehem, the Light to the Nations and only Son of God.

Advent, as we know, is the season which prepares us for the celebration of the coming of Christ at Christmas. In some ways it is like Lent – the period

of preparation before Easter. We do wear purple vestments, and we refrain from singing the Gloria.

But in many ways, Advent is very, very different. We still sing Alleluia during Advent. And Advent never seems nearly as stark and sombre in its preparation for Christmas as Lent is in its preparation for Easter. Perhaps that is because in Australia in Advent time we are winding down for the year and starting to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of Christmas parties, and holidays, and the end of the Year.

We know that the season of Lent largely originated in the preparation of the catechumens for baptism at the Easter Vigil. Advent, on the other hand, began in the very simple desire of people to prepare for the coming of Christ which we celebrate at Christmas.

Advent is also different to Lent largely because there is a two-fold nature to Advent. Yes, Advent is a time of preparation for our celebration of the coming of the Christ-child at Bethlehem at Christmas. But it is also a time of preparation for the Second Coming of Christ at the end of time. A time when we reflect a little more deeply on the words in our new translation of the Mass: 'As we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.' A time for us, as the Gospel says: 'to be on your guard and stay awake, because we do not know when the master of the house is coming: evening, midnight, cockcrow or dawn' (Mark 13:35).

And, how ready are we? Have we fallen asleep, and failed to heed the warning of today's Gospel? Or have we taken heed of Paul's exhortation to the Church of Corinth: do we know that as we wait for Our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed we are not left without any of the gifts of the Spirit? As we prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ, this week, let us join our prayers to the cry of the Psalmist in today's Psalm: Lord, make us turn to you, let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

As we gather here today we are called by the psalmist to turn to God, to see God's face. We see God in the way our prayers are answered so let us pray:

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church, that during this time of Advent they will follow St Paul's example and be grateful for how we have been enriched through the graces we have received through Jesus Christ.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of the world in this time of stress due to COVID-19 and economic recession that they may exercise their office for the work of peace and unity among all peoples.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are burdened with suffering, especially those who have COVID-19 and are unable to have their families with them. May the caring hands that support them show the evidence of God's love.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the front line staff who have become ill due to their care of others during the pandemic. Grant them strength and health.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the people gathered here today that we may be granted the grace to stay awake and to see the love of God in the events of our lives.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray that in this time of Advent, as we anticipate the incarnation of Christ your Son, that all may come to together in unity and joy and look forward to a fruitful Plenary Council.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray in this time of Christmas preparation that all those who have not heard of Jesus Christ will be drawn towards an understanding of him as the light in the world.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who have died and for those who mourn at this time of the year, especially those who have been prevented from attending to sick loved ones and funerals of family members due to the pandemic. May they be filled with love and hope.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Father, as we turn to see you in the love shown in the world, we ask that you to accept these prayers through the name of Jesus your Son, and in the power of the Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA
Advent litany. B. Farrell. 279
Come to set us free. B. Farrell. 277
Eye has not seen. M. Haugen. 466
O come, O come, Emmanuel. Chant. 285
O God, our help in ages past. I. Watts. 459
Wait for the Lord. Taizé. 283
Wake, O wake, and sleep no longer. J. S. Bach. 282

AOV1

Come to set us free. B. Farrell. 39
Eye has not seen. M. Haugen. 146
First Sunday, Advent. C. Smith. 108
O come, O come Emmanuel. Chant. 174
O God, our help in ages past. I. Watts. 175

AOV2

Open the heavens. B. Boniwell. 163

AOV4Kids

Christmas is coming. J. Bell. 55 (Verse 1)
O Emmanuel. M. Mangan. 52

CWB

Come, O long expected Jesus. Charles Wesley. 657
Come, O Jesus, come, O Lord. James Phillip McAuley. 658
Take comfort, God's people. Omer Westendorf. 813
The coming of our Lord. Charles Coffin et al. 816
Wake, awake! for night is flying Philipp Nicolai, tr. Catherine Winkworth. 853

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions

Come, O long expected Jesus. Charles Wesley. 232
Open the heavens, Lord. Brian Boniwell. 243
The coming of our Lord. Charles Coffin et al. 248
Wake, O wake! the night is dying! Philipp Nicolai/Harry Hagan OSB. 252
Advent litany. Bernadette Farrell. 253
To you, O Lord, I lift my soul. The Grail. 632
Additional selections by Chris deSilva
Hark! a herald voice is calling. Tr. Edward Caswall. 239
Wait for the Lord. Taizé Community. 251
A song of the Lord's coming. James McAuley. 479

S&S1

Find us ready. Tom Booth. 109

S&S2

Come, O Lord. Pedro Rubalcava. 287

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 79: Lord, make us turn to you, let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Psalm 79: Kathleen Boschetti MSC. CWB 173

Psalm 80: Lord, make us turn to you: Kathleen Boschetti. GA 47

Psalm 80 (79): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 7

Psalm 80: Lord, make us turn to you. Marty Haugen. LPB pg. 6

Music selections by Michael Mangan

O Emmanuel (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Communion, Recessional]

Come, Lord Jesus, Come CH & V1 (SYJ) [Lighting Advent Wreath]

Help Me Know Your Ways (FWS) based on Ps 24 (25)

Show Us Your Mercy and Love (FWS) based on Ps 84 (85)

To You, O Lord (LCC) Ps 24 (25) Children's Lectionary Translation

Watch Out, Wake Up (TT/SYJ) [CHILDREN: Gathering, Recessional]

We Come, We Come (TWB) [Communion – esp V3]

Waiting for the Child (TT/SYJ) [Non-Scriptural Reflection]



6 December 2020

Second Sunday of Advent

Reflection by Anthony Doran

Introduction

Our readings for today's Mass all pick up and reiterate themes which are common to us over our years of living Advent: be awake, be ready, prepare the way of the Lord. But because we have heard these themes so often before, how fresh is this message to us today? How can we really hear these words with fresh ears and respond with hearts renewed?

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the consolation of God.
Lord have mercy.

You are the shepherd who leads us.
Christ have mercy.

You are the forgiveness of sins.
Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Most commentators see this section of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (Chapters 40-54) as a separate work, coming from the hand of a prophet of the Exile. In today's reading, the prophet consoles Jerusalem with the assurance of her liberation, for the Lord is coming. To prepare for the coming of the Lord, a straight way is made in the desert; valleys are filled in; mountains laid low: one of our most familiar Advent themes.

Second Reading

2 Peter 3:8-14

We read from 2 Peter only once in our three-year Sunday cycle of readings. And this is it! Again, the author urges readers with a familiar Advent theme: to be ready for the coming 'Day of the Lord.' This Day comes without warning; the Day comes with apocalyptic signs; but while we wait, let us live lives without spot, so we will be found at peace.

Gospel Reading

Mark 1:1-8

Commentators have often remarked that Mark's Gospel does not have much varnish on it. This is true. The first word (in Greek) 'beginning' recalls the opening of the Hebrew Bible where the Book of Genesis simply starts 'beginning'. And then, we are straight into it! In our introduction to John the Baptist, readers would have heard echoes of the great prophet Elijah. Just as Elijah was succeeded by another, this prophet will be succeeded by someone following, someone more powerful: Jesus.

Reflection

Our celebration of the season of Advent always has a two-fold character. Yes, we are preparing to celebrate the great feast of the Birth of Christ at Christmas. But the coming of the Christ at Christmas will be the focus of the last two weeks of Advent. These first two weeks of Advent are largely concerned with the coming of Christ at the end of all time. And so, we find ourselves, if you like, caught up in one great Advent. One great time of waiting between the first coming of Christ at Bethlehem and the Second Coming of Christ. The whole history of salvation was changed with the Incarnation: the coming of the Son of God in our own human flesh. And the whole history of salvation will be brought to its culmination when Christ comes again in glory to judge the living and the dead. So we find ourselves in these in-between times.

As our guide for these in-between times, the Church places before us the figure of John the Baptist. John, the great forerunner of the Messiah, truly belongs to these in-between times. He stands as the last of the great prophets of the coming of the Lord. He is dressed as a prophet: wearing a garment of camel-skin. He lives on locusts and wild honey – the food of the prophets. The people who saw and heard the preaching of John the Baptist in the wilderness of Judaea would have seen in him something of the figure of the great prophet Elijah. But as much as he is a figure from the pages of the Old Testament, John the Baptist always points to the dawning of the era of the New Covenant. John always points to the One who follows him; the One whose sandals he is not fit even to undo the strap. John the Baptist always has one foot in the Old Testament and one foot in the New.

The appearance of John the Baptist is somewhat abrupt in Mark's Gospel. In only the fourth verse of Mark's Gospel we are told: and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness... And of course, we know that John the Baptist appeared just before Jesus began his own ministry of preaching and healing. And the message of John the Baptist was fresh and clear and simple: John proclaims a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

The scene described in today's Gospel is, for me, very easy to picture. As a pilgrim to the Holy Land, I visited this same wilderness. And it truly is wilderness. Desolate, scrubby land... not quite desert, but certainly not lush and green. And there appears John. Slightly wild-eyed, looking rough and ready in his cloak of camel hair (I imagine), calling the people of all Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem to repentance. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem means there would have been quite a crowd. And the crowd is attracted to the John the Baptist because his preaching resonates with them. There is a truth with a freshness and a simplicity in John's preaching which these people longed to hear. And John's preaching

always, always points to the One who is to come, the One who is more powerful.

Mark is the shortest of all the Gospels. There is not much varnish on it; it is simple and gets directly to the point. It is also the first of the Gospels to be written: written for Christians in Rome who have suffered persecution from outside their community and division inside their own community. In the face of this persecution and division, there is an urgency to Christ's call to discipleship. And so, an urgent and indeed radical response is called for.

This is why the Baptist is placed before us during Advent. His simple, direct message – first preached to all Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem – is also preached to us. As we follow the Lord during these in-between times, we are called to that same urgent and radical response to which John the Baptist was called. That we repent of our sinfulness and that we make our hearts ready so that we may be ready to welcome the One who follows John the Baptist, the One more powerful than he, the One who baptises us with the Holy Spirit.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

St Peter reminds us that God's time is not our time and that God is not slow to carry out promises. In the hope of this Advent season then let us pray to God for the needs of the world and our community.

Petitions

We pray for all Church leaders, especially Pope Francis, that they, like John the Baptist, will be filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ with unflinching devotion.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of the world that they understand the responsibility that comes with their power and 'be awake' to the needs of their people during this time of pandemic and economic recession.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for our Australian leaders as we face another bushfire season. May careful policy that respects the land and the changes in our climate be fruitful in helping contain the risk of fire that causes suffering to our communities.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray the Australian Catholic Church as we move towards the Plenary Council. May the Spirit inspire all the delegates to carefully listen and discern the needs of the Church in the future.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all people who are imprisoned by addictions of any kind that they will find a deeper purpose to their lives through the love of others around them.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who work as architects and builders that they will understand that the work of their hands can enable communities to flourish when they listen to their needs.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for ourselves that in this time of preparation for Christmas we will focus on our needs rather than our wants and be generous to those who need help, particularly those who are unable to join with their families due to the pandemic.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Father, we gather here as a people baptised by the Spirit and in the sure knowledge that you will answer these petitions. We make our prayer through the Spirit and in the name of Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Advent litany. B. Farrell. 279
Advent song. D. Browne/ J. Wood. 281
Christ, be our light. B. Farrell. 404
Come to set us free. B. Farrell. 277
Like a shepherd. R. Dufford SJ. 467
My soul in stillness waits. M. Haugen. 280
O come, O come, Emmanuel. Chant. 285
Prepare the way. B. Boniwell. 284
Wait for the Lord. Taize. 283

AOV1

Come to set us free. B. Farrell. 39
Like a shepherd. B. Dufford. 160
O come, O come Emmanuel. Chant. 174

AOV2

Christ, be our light. B. Farrell. 3

AOV4Kids

Christmas is coming. J. Bell. 55 (Verse 2)
Fill ev'ry valley up. M. Mangan. 54
O Emmanuel. M. Mangan. 52

CWB

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry. Charles Coffin, tr. John Chandler. 780
O come, O come, Emmanuel. Tr. John Mason Neale. 763
Prepare the way. Brian Boniwell. 794

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions

Comfort, comfort now my people. Johann G. Olearius, tr. Catherine Winkworth. 238
Hark! a herald voice is calling. Tr. Edward Caswall. 239
O come, O come, Emmanuel. Tr. John Mason Neale. 242
On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry. Charles Coffin, tr. John Chandler. 244
Prepare the way, O Zion. Franz Mikael Franzén. 245
Prepare the way. Brian Boniwell. 250
Wait for the Lord. Taizé Community. 251
Advent litany. Bernadette Farrell. 253
Like a shepherd. Robert J. Dufford SJ. 538
Additional selection by Chris deSilva
City of God. Daniel L. Schutte. 453

S&S1

Lord, let us see your kindness. Paul Hillebrand. 71
City of God. Dan Schutte. 106

S&S2

Lord, show us your mercy and love. Janet Sullivan Whitaker. 265
Ready the way. Curtis Stephan. 293
We shall prepare. Janet Vogt. 294

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 84: *Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.*
Psalm 84: Noel Ansell. CWB 176
Psalm 85 (84): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 8
Lord, show us your mercy: Paul Mason. PM pg. 60
Psalm 85: Lord, let us see your kindness. Marty Haugen. LPB pg. 10

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Fill Every Valley (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]
O Emmanuel (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Communion, Recessional]
Come, Lord Jesus, Come CH & V2 (SYJ) [Lighting Advent Wreath]
Show Us Your Mercy and Love (FWS) based on Ps 84 (85)
We Come, We Come (TWB) [Communion – esp V3]
Waiting for the Child (TT/SYJ) [Non-Scriptural Reflection]



8 December 2020

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Monday) Reflection by Anthony Doran

Introduction

As with all the great feasts of Mary, the intention is to highlight the theological foundations of our faith and to allow the example and life of Mary to influence our heart and actions. The feast of the Immaculate Conception has a particular theological bent, placing the conception of Mary herself within the creation-saving grace and bounty of God, as a prelude to the birth of Jesus freed from the effects of sin in the world.

BACKGROUND:

Mary across Advent

3. ... during Advent there are many liturgical references to Mary besides the Solemnity of December 8, which is a joint celebration of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, of the basic preparation (cf. Is. 11:1, 10) for the coming of the Saviour and of the happy beginning of the Church without spot or wrinkle.⁽¹¹⁾ Such liturgical references are found especially on the days from December 17 to 24, and more particularly on the Sunday before Christmas, which recalls the ancient prophecies concerning the Virgin Mother and the Messiah⁽¹²⁾ and includes readings from the Gospel concerning the imminent birth of Christ and His precursor.⁽¹³⁾

4. In this way the faithful, living in the liturgy the spirit of Advent, by thinking about the inexpressible love with which the Virgin Mother awaited her Son,⁽¹⁴⁾ are invited to take her as a model and to prepare themselves to meet the Saviour who is to come. They must be "vigilant in prayer and joyful in...praise."⁽¹⁵⁾ We would also remark that the Advent liturgy, by linking the awaiting of the Messiah and the awaiting of the glorious return of Christ with the admirable commemoration of His Mother, presents a happy balance in worship. This balance can be taken as a norm for preventing any tendency (as has happened at times in certain forms of popular piety) to separate devotion to the Blessed Virgin from its necessary point of reference-Christ. It also ensures that this season, as liturgy experts have noted, should be considered as a time particularly suited to devotion to the Mother of the Lord. This is an orientation that we confirm and which we hope to see accepted and followed everywhere.

Pope Paul VI, *Marialis cultus*. The document is an Apostolic Exhortation published 2 Feb 1974

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the Son of Mary.
Lord have mercy.

You are the glory of God. Christ have mercy.

You show us the Father. Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Gen 3:9-15, 20

In our rich narrative Eve is described as the mother of all the living, allowing us an insight into the life that flows to us in Christ on account of the choice of Mary, our new mother of all the living.

Second Reading

Eph 1:3-6, 11-12

The opening verses of the Letter to the Ephesians are a poem to the love in which God has caused all things to be made and re-made in grace. At the heart of all living is the beneficence and loving purpose of God

Gospel Reading

Lk 1:26-38

The visit to Mary by the angel and her response in faith are central human actions within the loving plan of God.

Reflection

The mother of all the living! This closing line from the Genesis reading offers a guide for the feast and the liturgical texts. As noted above the feast is a consideration of the ways that sin and wrongdoing invade all aspects of life, yet in Christ this 'death' has been brought to heel. As the agent of God's power and grace in the incarnation, Mary is the 'mother of all the living'.

The Genesis reading contains so much about the interrelationship between humans, other creatures and God that we focus too quickly on the story of the source and realization of sin. It, however, details many of the ways of living to which we are closely accustomed and too often promote. Yet the text is bookended by two significant sentences. The opening is a statement of realization about fear and loss: Where are you? The 'adam' figure is caught eating the apple, and now finds himself in the same garden but in a different place. There is a new found awareness of nakedness and an impulse to hide. Our narrative concludes with a statement about humanity. The 'eve' has a place at the origins of human life and culture. The couple may no longer be in the garden, and they may be bare, but the fruitfulness of human life flows to us through them.

The stories within the reading allow for some insights into human behaviour. There is transgression, lying, blaming, shame, trickery and enmity with the other creatures of the earth. There is a sad naivete in the dialogue, as if the significance of the events had not dawned upon the couple. It was manifest to God. The pair, soon to become a family, are the first human community. God keeps them and remains close, but their 'living' is fraught. If there is to be a new community in Christ, then a new living that is not under

the suppression of the lying, shaming, tricking and so on that Adam and Eve have introduced to human relationships is required. For the church to come forth, and for the Christ to be born incarnate, a new 'mother of all the living' is needed. It is in this that the reading is applied so well to Mary.

The Ephesians reading is something of the antithesis of the Genesis text. There is a common thread in the choice of God for humans, for Adam and Eve and for us. Here, however, the emphasis falls to the blessings in Christ, to the fullness of our 'living'. This blessing is from the beginning, even before the foundation of the world, the creation of the primal couple, the encounter with the apple and the snake. There is one purpose in the way of God and that is the unremitting divine good will towards us and all other parts of creation. Our adoption into the love of the Trinity is God's beneficence from the first.

In light of our feast, we have here something of a counter to our first reading. The nakedness and shame of the garden is not the first word, nor will it be the last word. The trickery of the snake and the avoidance of blame are within a greater vision: the will of God that we are able to live in Christ as holy and without blemish.

And so to our feast, in which Mary is the first human after the garden to show forth our destiny as human beings, made and held in Christ. The liturgy here has given us a text that invites us to comprehend the Immaculate Conception as within the mystery of God's love for all creation, and while focused on the woman herself, points through her to the abiding enjoyment of God in all that has come forth in creation.

As an aside, this reading from Ephesians is the biblical text behind the opening prayer for Week 3 in Ordinary Time!

Our Gospel for the solemnity brings the attention to the person of Mary and allows a glimpse into the life of her cousin Elizabeth. Again, we are brought to the motif of the mother of all living things. In the birth of the saviour, soon to be celebrated, is the willingness and obedience of Mary. The reading is more familiar liturgically as a Christmas text, so here for our solemnity the emphasis falls a bit differently. It is the aspects of favour, grace and the presence of the Holy Spirit that connects us to the feast. For Mary, to be free and willing puts her human experience within a sense of joyous obedience. For the evangelist, this is the work of God. Just as from the barren Elizabeth a child will come forth, so also from sinful humanity will come a sinless saviour.

Our celebration today is not always the most straightforward feast to explain. Yet there is a profound theological teaching behind it, perhaps best summed up in Ephesians: even before the foundation of the world, God's loving plans included our happiness in Christ.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

Through Mary, who was made immaculate when she was conceived, God has revealed to us a model of discipleship. With confidence in divine wisdom, let us present the needs of our community and of our world.

Petitions

We pray for bishops and all clergy and lay leaders in the Perth Archdiocese, that through the teaching of the Gospel, they may grow in their devotion to Mary, our Mother.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for our relatives, friends, and neighbours who have suffered during COVID-19. May they be comforted by those who reach out to them.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for an end to violence, cruelty and hatred in the world, through the intercession of Mary Immaculate, Queen of peace.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for a conversion of the hearts of all who promote a culture of death. May they come to know the value of God's creation and the constancy of God's love.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Loving Father, you revealed your goodness through the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of your Son. We offer these prayers knowing that in your goodness they will be answered in the name of Christ our Lord, through the power of the Spirit. **Amen.**

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Hail Mary: gentle woman. C. Landry. 544
Hail Queen of Heaven. H. Hemy. 546
Immaculate Mary. Foley/ Lourdes. 549
Magnificat (Tell out my soul). T. Dudley Smith/ W. Greatorex. 550
My soul rejoices. O. Alstott. 250
There is nothing told. C. Willcock SJ. 548

AOV1

O Holy Mary. O. Alstott. 141

AOVNG

Among all. Chris de Silva. 8
All the ends of the earth. Bobby Fisher. 5

CWB

Holy Virgin, by God's decree. Jean-Paul Lécot, tr. W. R. Lawrence. 714
Immaculate Mary, we praise God in you. Brian Foley. 723
O Mary of Graces and Mother of God. Tr. Douglas Hyde. 769
Sing of Mary, pure and lowly. Roland Ford Palmer SSJE. 808

CWBII

Holy Virgin, by God's decree. Jean-Paul Lécot, tr. W. R. Lawrence. 410
Mary, Mother of Good Counsel. Murray J. Kroetsch. 411
O Holy Mary. Owen Alstott. 413
Immaculate Mary, we praise God in you. Brian Foley. 416
There is nothing told. Didier Rimaud SJ, tr. Christopher Willcock SJ. 418
Holy light on earth's horizon. Edward Caswall. 442

S&S1

All the ends of the earth. Bobby Fisher. 75

S&S2

All the ends of the earth. Ken Canedo. 270
Hail Mary: gentle woman. Carey Landry. 336

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 97: *Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done wonderful deeds.*
Psalm 97: Anthony Briggs. CWB 472
Psalm 98 (97): Jenny O'Brien. JOBF pg. 59
Psalm 98: All the Ends of the Earth: David Haas/Marty Haugen. GA 57
Psalm 98: Sing to the Lord a New Song. Marty Haugen and David Haas. LPSF pg. 126

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Sing New Songs of Joy (FWS) based on Ps 97 (98) [Gathering, Communion, Recessional]
All The Ends of the Earth (LCC) Ps 97 (97) Children's Lectionary Translation
Mary Said Yes (TT/SYJ) [CHILDREN: Gathering, Recessional]
My Spirit Sings (FWS/SYJ) Magnificat
Mary's Song of Praise (DOM) Magnificat
Waiting for the Child (TT/SYJ) [Non-Scriptural Reflection]

*My spirit
rejoices
in God
my
Saviour.*





13 December 2020

Third Sunday of Advent

Reflection by Anthony Doran

Introduction

Today is Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete means rejoice. And we should rejoice for the coming of the Lord – for which we prepare in Advent – is very near, very close. Not only is our earth renewed, but our hearts are renewed, too, for God works marvels for us.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you were sent to bring Good News to the poor. Lord have mercy.

You bind up hearts that are broken. Christ have mercy.

You are the integrity of the Father. Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11

Once again in this Advent, we hear from Isaiah, our great Advent prophet. And once again, he offers words of consolation and promise; the Lord sends his anointed one to bring good news to those who so often long to hear such good news, the poor and broken-hearted. And when this good news is heard, our hearts exult for joy.

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

This reading, from the last part of 1 Thessalonians, is Paul's final exhortation in this earliest of Christian writings. In the midst of their waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul encourages these Christians – and us – to be happy, to pray constantly, and to give thanks for all things. Not bad Advent advice.

Gospel Reading

John 1:6-8, 19-29

This Sunday, we turn to the Fourth Gospel's story of John the Baptist: again and again, John assures his interrogators that he is not the One who is to come: he is the voices that cries in the wilderness, the one who prepares the way, the one who is "a witness to speak for the light."

Reflection

In many songs that we hear, in many pieces of music that are written, towards the end of a song, perhaps for the last verse and chorus of that song, the music will go up one key. This is a device used by musicians to give some greater emphasis to the end of that song or piece of music.

Something like that is happening on this Sunday of Advent. Traditionally, this Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudete Sunday. This name comes from the first Latin word of the Entrance Antiphon – Gaudete. This

word means Rejoice. In our season of Advent – our time of preparation for Christmas – this Sunday is, if you like, a bit of a let-up from our preparation for the coming of Christ at Christmas.

This sense of real joyfulness is picked up by St Paul in today's Second Reading from the First Letter to the Thessalonians: Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus. The First Letter to the Thessalonians is perhaps our earliest Christian writing. It was written well before the Gospels: and probably only about twenty years after the death of Jesus. And Paul's insight in this earliest of Christian writings is a crucial one for us to remember. Our belief in Jesus Christ means that we should be a people of joy, a people of prayer, and a people who give thanks for all things. It is easy to give thanks to God for the good things. It is much more difficult to give thanks for those things which are not so good, those things which we might not exactly welcome with open arms. While we will no doubt be joyful that this year is coming to an end, how easily will we give thanks for 2020? I wonder? But the Christian is one who does give thanks for these things also, and tries to see both the good and the bad as being part, somehow, of God's plan. Gaudete Sunday: Rejoice always!

But even though this Gaudete Sunday is joyful relaxation of our preparation for Christmas, the message to prepare a way for the coming of the Lord is not dulled. During this season of Advent, one of the real constants is the figure of John the Baptist. We heard about him in last week's Reading from the Gospel of Mark. And today we hear more about him – this time from the Gospel of John written at the very end of the First Century. In fact, John the Baptist – and his call to prepare for the Lord's coming – is one of the few things which is included by the writers of all the Gospels. John the Baptist's place in the tradition of our Church is a long and very much honoured one. In the Church, we celebrate his birth as well as his death. We do that for only two others: Jesus and Mary. In the Eastern Church, John is known as John the Forerunner. He is the one who comes before Jesus to prepare the way.

In this season of Advent, the figure of John the Baptist is a bit like a road sign. He points the way. And he always points away from himself; always points towards the one coming after him. And on this point, John is very firm. The religious leaders of that time want to know who he is, for there were great expectations that the Messiah was coming. Indeed, many people thought that John was the Messiah. But again and again, John tells the people that he is not the Messiah. He is not the destination. He is the forerunner who simply points the way. As always in the Gospels, John the Baptist points the way towards the One who comes after him. He is not the light, only a witness to speak for the light.

This, too, is our call. Like John the Baptist, our task as Christians is to always point towards the Light. Our task is to point towards the one who comes as little baby in Bethlehem, to point towards the one who will come in glory at the end of time. And to give witness to him.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

As we joyfully await the birth of Christ, let us place our intentions before the Father whose 'faithful love extends from age to age'.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church in Australia that they may show by their lives that Christ is the light of the world and work towards a fruitful Plenary Council.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who witness to the Gospel in dangerous environments while they care for others suffering COVID-19; may they be strengthened through our prayers and come to know of the birth of the Messiah.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the Australian Church so that we work with faith to make straight the path for the Messiah.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for our leaders in Australia that they will constructively work together to care for our environment and limit bush fire disasters and that they show compassion to those who are unduly affected by the ravages of fire.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those in need; the hungry, the afflicted, the poor, the sick, those in prison, those who mourn; may we serve them in their need.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for our farming communities, particularly those recovering from fire and drought. May their harvest be plentiful and their spirits raised by the support of the Australian community.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all of us gathered here that we will appreciate the value of becoming one in the Body of Christ through the celebration of the Eucharist by remembering how we were denied such gatherings during the pandemic.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the unity of all Christians; as we approach the Birth of Our Lord, may we come together as one community and share the joy of Christ's birth.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Father, you are our help at all times of the day, and all the days of our lives. Hear our prayers and call us to live

in your grace more fully. We know that these requests will be answered through the power of the Spirit and in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

A voice cries out. M. Joncas. 278
Christ, be our light. B. Farrell. 404
Come to set us free. B. Farrell. 277
Now in this banquet. M. Haugen. 280
O come, O come, Emmanuel. Chant. 285
Prepare the way. B. Boniwell. 284
The Spirit of God. L. Deiss. 185
The voice of God. P. Icarus/ W. Greatorex. 476
Wait for the Lord. Taizé. 283.

AOV1

Come to set us free. B. Farrell. 39
O come, O come Emmanuel. Chant. 174

AOV2

Christ, be our light. B. Farrell. 3

AOV4Kids

Christmas is coming. J. Bell. 55 (Verse 3)
Fill ev'ry valley up. M. Mangan. 54
O Emmanuel. M. Mangan. 52
Rejoice in the Lord always. Traditional. 75

AOVNG

Great things. Matt Maher. 58

CWB

Canticle of Mary. J.T. Mueller. 635
Now sing my soul, 'How great the Lord'. 754
O come, O come, Emmanuel. Tr. John Mason Neale. 763
On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry. Charles Coffin, tr. John Chandler. 780
Rejoice, the Lord is King! Charles Wesley. 799

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions
On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry. Charles Coffin, tr. John Chandler. 244
Prepare the way. Brian Boniwell. 250
God has chosen me. Bernadette Farrell. 495
Additional selections by Chris deSilva
My soul rejoices in God, my Saviour. Owen Alstott. 212
Wait for the Lord. Taizé Community. 251
My spirit sings. Michael Mangan. 412
Christ, be our light. Bernadette Farrell. 540

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Luke 1: *My soul rejoices in my God.*
Luke 1: Kathleen Boschetti MSC/A. Gregory Murray OSB. CWB 179
My soul rejoices: Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 10
My soul rejoices in my God. Marty Haugen. LPB pg. 13

Music selection by Michael Mangan

Fill Every Valley (TT) [Gathering, Recessional]
O Emmanuel (TT) [Gathering, Communion, Recessional]
Come, Lord Jesus, Come CH & V3 (SYJ) [Lighting Advent Wreath]

My Spirit Sings (FWS/SYJ) Magnificat based on Luke 1:46-50
Mary's Song of Praise (DOM) Magnificat based on Luke 1:46-50
We Come, We Come (TWB) [Communion – esp V3]
One Body In Christ (TWB) [Communion – esp V2]
Waiting for the Child (TT/SYJ) [Non-Scriptural Reflection]
Chosen and Sent (LCC) based on Luke 4:18-19 [Recessional]



20 December 2020

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Reflection by Anthony Doran

Introduction

Our Advent journey is almost complete: our companions on this journey are John the Baptist and Mary. The Second Preface of Advent so beautifully sums up our two companions: all the oracles of the prophets foretold him, the Virgin Mother longed for him with love beyond all telling, John the Baptist sang of his coming and proclaimed his presence when at last he came. Do we long for him with love beyond all telling? Do we sing of his coming? Do we proclaim his presence when he comes?

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the Son of God and the son of Mary. Lord have mercy.

You are the one who is to come. Christ have mercy.

You are 'God with us'. Lord have mercy.

First Reading

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16

As we recount the story of King David, today's reading marks a new beginning in Israel's relationship with the Lord. David wants to give the Ark of the Covenant – that special place of the Lord's presence – a new home, to become a sign this presence and the Covenant it signifies. Through the prophet Nathan, David is reminded that it is the Lord who will establish David's reign forever.

Second Reading

Romans 16:25-27

Once again, our Second Reading comes from the end of one of Paul's Letters, this time, the Letter to the Romans. This final doxology praises the mystery kept secret for ages, names who the scriptures have predicted and the way the eternal God wants things to be.

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:26-38

On this last Sunday of Advent, the Church turns to the mother of Jesus, and we turn to Luke's Gospel to recount for us the story of Gabriel's annunciation to Mary. It is a story we know well: we have heard it countless times; it has been portrayed in art and poetry for centuries. But, this Advent, can we hear this story anew? Can we welcome the angel's message, and with Mary, respond with faith and with simplicity?

Reflection

In today's First Reading, we find King David finally at peace. After years of struggle and war, David has finally reached a point where the Lord has given him rest from his enemies. And when this happened,

David started to notice the things around him. One of the things he noticed was that while he was living in a wooden house, the ark of God was still living in a tent. The ark was the golden box in which were kept the tablets of the Law which had been given to Moses on Mount Sinai. During their forty years of wandering in the desert, the Israelites had carried the ark with them. But the ark was more than just a box. The Israelites believed that – wherever the ark was – the Lord was present in a special way. And the glory of the Lord would fill this earthly dwelling place of the Lord – symbolised by the cloud that would come down and cover the tent with its shadow.

And so, with Israel at peace, David decided it was high time for the ark to be given a more permanent home. To this end, David seeks the advice of Nathan, the prophet. And Nathan assures King David that the Lord is with him, and that he should build a temple for the Ark of the Covenant. But the Lord had other ideas. Speaking to Nathan in dream, the Lord declared that David is not the one to build the Lord a house. And furthermore, the Lord promises that David's royal house will be established forever. Long after David is gone – and perhaps forgotten – people will remember this promised son of David. This theme is taken up in the Responsorial Psalm: I have sworn to David my servant, I will establish your dynasty forever.

From what we know of biblical history after King David, this promise was not fulfilled in David's immediate offspring. While David's son, Solomon did build a Temple for the ark, he was not the great warrior his father was, and so lost most of the territory David had gained for Israel. And after Solomon, the kingdom was divided, eventually petering out when the Kingdom of Judah was carted off to Babylon into Exile.

So, when and how is this prophecy fulfilled?

It is fulfilled in the most unlikely of ways. And we read about the fulfilment of this prophecy in today's Gospel Reading. The fulfilment does not come in the person of another great warrior king like David. And it does not come straight away. No. It comes much later when God sends his angel Gabriel to Nazareth. To Mary, a young virgin. Gabriel announces to Mary that she will conceive and bear a son. This son will inherit the throne of his father David, and will be called Son of the Most High. Then Mary asks a most logical question, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' (Luke 13:4). Just as the glory of the Lord filled the earthly dwelling place of the Lord in the Ark of the Covenant, so too, Mary is told, will the power of the Most High cover you with its shadow. And this son, Jesus, will be holy and will be the Son of God. Mary, in fact, becomes the Ark of the New Covenant – a new dwelling place for the presence of the Lord. I think we can be certain that Mary was unsure about what all of this might mean. But Mary said YES!

In the Church, we have always honoured Mary for her

simple and uncomplicated acceptance of God's plan for her. Mary makes no conditions when she says YES to God. She is the exemplar of discipleship: one who listens to the Word of God, and makes a place for that Word in her heart. But if we read on in Luke's Gospel, we learn something else. We learn that Mary goes to visit her aging cousin Elizabeth, who herself is expecting a child. Mary does not sit back content in the knowledge that she was to be mother of the Son of God. Mary is the one whose faith in God issues forth in action and service.

In these last days of Advent, perhaps the focus of our prayer could be Mary, whose YES is total, whose YES is full of faith in the Lord and his promises for his people, and whose YES in faith gives rise to real and practical service and help for those around her.

Mary, Ark of the Covenant, Model of Discipleship, pray for us as we prepare for the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

On the eve of the great feast day of the Incarnation, we entrust our prayers to God who listens with abundant generosity. Let us present our prayers to the Lord full of the joyful hope of Advent.

Petitions

We pray for the Church gathered in song and prayer throughout the world on this festive occasion, may the mystery of the Incarnation always shine in the hearts of all the faithful so that they may be a gift to others in selfless service.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for our leaders and those who serve in public office, may they strive to bring about peace and unity in the communities they serve during this time of fear due to pandemic and recession.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the families of our parish and those in the surrounding area; may the joy of Christmas bring hope and communion to everyone this festive season and may those families separated by border closures be sustained by the love of others around them.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are away from their family and friends at this time, may they find consolation in the angel's message to Mary that God is always with them.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are on holiday at this time, that they may find true rest and a safe return and may this rest fill them with the zeal of bringing Christ to others in the New Year.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are stranded overseas due to the pandemic. May every effort be made to bring them home and restore them to their families during this

sacred season.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Almighty God, as we prepare to celebrate the mystery of your Son's Nativity, hear our prayer and through the power of your Spirit and in the name of your Son, Jesus. **Amen.**

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Hail Mary: gentle woman. C. Landry. 544

I say "Yes," my Lord. D. Penna. 445

My soul in stillness waits. M. Haugen. 280

O come, O come, Emmanuel. Chant. 285

AOV1

I say "Yes," my Lord. D. Penna. 155

O come, O come Emmanuel. Chant. 174.

O Holy Mary. O. Alstott. 141

AOV2

Open the heavens. B. Boniwell. 163

AOV4Kids

Christmas is coming. J. Bell. 55 (Verse 4)

Like Mary. G. Holmes. 53

O Emmanuel. M. Mangan. 52

AOVNG

Among all. Chris de Silva. 8

CWB

Holy Virgin, by God's decree. Jean-Paul Lécot, tr. W. R. Lawrence. 714

Immaculate Mary, we praise God in you. Brian Foley. 723

O come, O come, Emmanuel. Tr. John Mason Neale. 763

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions

O come, O come, Emmanuel. Tr. John Mason Neale. 242

Open the heavens, Lord. Brian Boniwell. 243

Saviour of the nations, come. Martin Luther, tr. William Reynolds/Matin L. Seltz. 246

The Angel Gabriel. Basque Carol/Sabine Baring-Gould. 247

You heavens, sprinkle dew from above/Rorate caeli. 254

Holy Virgin, by God's decree. Jean-Paul Lécot, tr. W. R. Lawrence. 410

Servant of the Word. Edward M. Grosz. 414

Immaculate Mary, we praise God in you. Brian Foley. 416

Additional selection by Chris deSilva

My soul in stillness waits. Marty Haugen. 237

S&S2

Emmanuel. Steve Angrisano. 290

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 88: *For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.*

Psalm 88: Roger Heagney. CWB 182

Psalm 89: I will sing for ever: Roger Heagney. GA 50

Psalm 89 (88): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 12

Psalm 89: Forever I will Sing. Tony Alonso. LPB pg. 16

Music selections by Michael Mangan

O Emmanuel (TT) [Gathering, Communion, Recessional]

Come, Lord Jesus, Come CH & V4 (SYJ) [Lighting Advent Wreath]

Mary Said Yes (TT) [CHILDREN: Gathering, Recessional]

We Come, We Come (TWB) [Communion – esp V3]

Waiting for the Child (TT/SYJ) [Non-Scriptural Reflection]



A Pandemic Christmas: Approaching Christmas this year

By Gerard Moore

The Christmas readings and liturgy will speak differently this pandemic year. Well, first up they will be heard and prayed differently. Across the nation and within each community are unimagined and unexpressed levels of pain, sadness, frustration and depression. The contrast with our usual nativity celebrations could not be more bare, yet also more hidden. As preachers and worshippers we cannot walk away from this or turn our backs on it. To do so is to admit that there is little point in the incarnation of the Christ who pitched his tent amongst us.

What is being undone in our midst? I am writing this introduction in August and have something of an antipathy to predictions as they never seem to come out right. But across Australia there are present pastoral difficulties and looming economic effects. For a long while we have not been able to bury our relatives and friends properly. We will think of them at Christmas without having undergone the usual processes of closure. Our parents and grandparents may still be in lockdown in nursing homes and aged care facilities, perhaps without visitors, perhaps only with skype. None of this allays our anxieties about their care and health. All of it contributes to the worries and concerns of health care workers and their families.

All things considered, 2020 has been a pretty rotten year for kids. On the East coast, fires ruined the summer holidays. Their return to school, a bit jaded from not much outdoors, soon saw the first phases of the pandemic, and the move to virtual school. This brought new stresses of schooling within the home, time away from playmates, being closed into the yard or inside the house or flat, no shopping trips, family crowding and the like. Of course, neither was this all that great for parents! For many families, a miserable and isolated Christmas is a real possibility.

With children and parents stretched, there are economic difficulties. Many are unemployed. Many businesses are on the knife edge of closure, following the many that have closed earlier. Many owners and managers are deeply concerned for their livelihoods and for the welfare of staff. Some have embraced working from home without difficulty. Others in front line services are continually at risk of infection. The workplace has changed for all of us.

There has been some remarkable political leadership in the various jurisdictions of our nation, and we have seen some effective governance and community care. While this will fray and may not last even between me writing this and you reading it, we have witnessed leadership that has risen to the challenge.

As we turn to the celebration of the birth of the Lord, we are reminded that for some members of our community, the Christmas season will provide welcome relief and an opportunity for fun. Yet for many the hidden fault lines in their lives will come more open, and new and old conflicts will emerge. The challenge is to base our message of hope, comfort and care within the power and meanings of the scriptures. For the homilist, it is important to enable the depth of the narratives to touch the actual lives and hidden frustrations of our fellow worshippers. Some will be the regular members of the community, and there will be a good sprinkling of irregular members and visitors.

The focus of our reflections for the Christmas masses are set within this context. In the midst of COVID-19 what hope do we derive from the scriptures as we hear them together?



24 December 2020

The Nativity of the Lord, Vigil

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Pastoral Note

The texts for the vigil mass need not be used at an evening Mass on 24 December – the texts for Mass During the Night (Midnight Mass) may be used.

Introduction

The Vigil mass readings bring us to reflect on the continuity of God's action across time. The passages link the faith of Israel with the birth of Christ, and in Paul the fulfillment of all that God has promised. The emphasis is somewhat theological, but ultimately pastoral and practical: in the birth of the child, God is come amongst us.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are Redeemer and Judge.
Lord have mercy.

You are the Christ. Christ have mercy.

You were born of Mary. Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 62:1-5

The prophet offers hope to a desolated people: God remains steadfast and active, and the current predicament will only end in a new way, a deeper understanding, and a way to more fully trust in God.

Second Reading

Acts 13:16-17, 22-25

Knowing the religious faith of the people, Paul witnesses to his fellow believers that the fulfillment of the promises to Israel has begun.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 1:1-25

Our Gospel proclaims that the coming of Christ is the culmination of God's ongoing love for creation expressed most closely through the chosen people of Israel.

Reflection

The first reading from Isaiah offers consolation. It is a wisdom reading trying to bring a new word to a poor situation, a new word that is already part of the people's reality but not yet uncovered. The situation of Israel is one of desolation, and their spirits are defeated. Their sense is that they have been abandoned, and their politics are ineffective (Jerusalem), their land now unyielding, their sense of self as the people of God meaningless. These are hard times. The prophet's response is that the hand of God may be hidden but will not stay covered up for long. This people will be politically revived. This people and their land will be fruitful again. This

people will know the closeness of God.

Chosen for its application to the salvation that Christ brings, the passage fits the joy of Christmas. Despite the look and feel of life, God is revealed as close, intimate and restoring their lives. We apply this to the birth of the fragile child and the revelation of God for us that takes its first breath from there.

The text also provides an opportunity to name the world as it currently is. There is the silent suffering, the hidden despair, the two-speed economy in which some are doing well, the added loneliness that COVID-19 has forced into our lives. As a Christian community we name this in hope. We name what is in our midst as sisters and brothers, we name what is in our midst as a local community, as a national federation, and as international citizens. In a way, this reading brings something of the Advent message into the liturgy. Yet it turns our attention to the loving face of God towards us. It also reminds the church of its role as a 'new city on a mountain' in which God's love and delight is made visible. God does not abandon what God has made!

With the reading from Acts we have to our ears a somewhat unusual Christmas theme. Yet it goes back to the origins of the feast. Since the early middle ages, and particularly under the imagination and pastoral sensitivity of St Francis of Assisi, the celebration of the Nativity has focused on the humanity of Jesus and the details of his birth. In this way the feast brought our experiences and that of Mary and Joseph together in a rich and warm vein.

Yet first up the feast did not have quite this familiar empathy. It sought to work as a celebration of what God has done in and through the incarnation. This theological focus was central, and pastorally allowed for a strong sense that the community and the world now lived in the light and a new way of being was possible. The second reading has this theological bent. The passage from Acts offers us through Paul a theological opportunity to see the incarnation as the continuity of God's plan, and the fullest expression of the 'delight' of God in humanity and particular in the chosen people. In this, the birth of the child is the fulfillment of the exodus journey and the crowning of the kingship of David. This brings out a relationship between the first two readings, though it is not one that is easily adaptable to a gathering full of children and wearying parents!

The Gospel too has a strong theological frame, which needs to be explored. The central focus is of course the incarnation: 'God is with us'. We will come back to that below, but it deserves some theological unpacking. This Gospel is famous for the genealogy of Jesus, and it is often omitted. That is a pastoral decision, made locally by the deacon, presider, preacher. To western ears the recitation of family of origin is not so important. Indeed, often such

declamations of family background have been the prelude to dispute, injustice and violence. As such, it is not a strong feature in broader Australian culture. However, in Australian indigenous culture as well as others, the genealogy is an acknowledgement of belonging and place, and is utterly central to identity and to future relationships. Within this cultural context such lists are important to avoid injustice and violence, and to allow balance and life in culture.

In our reading from Matthew, the list of ancestors is playing an overt theological role. It is a way of providing Jesus with a kinship in the people of Israel. Jesus is not just a human, he is one of 'us', he is an Israelite, a true Israelite. This serves much the same purpose as we saw in the reading from Acts above. The genealogy is a reminder that the incarnation is part of the long and continuous engagement of God with the people and more broadly with creation itself. Jesus is not a 'blow in' on the human community: his coming and presence is related to the first believer Abraham and to the first among the kings, David.

Two features are worth bringing out. Firstly, this is a perfectly balanced listing of ancestors: the total number of generations from Abraham to David is fourteen generations; from David to the Babylonian exile, fourteen generations; from the Babylonian exile to the Christ, fourteen generations. God has been active across history with the perfection and balance that only the divine can bring. The list signifies continuity, trustfulness, presence and fidelity. As the narrative of the birth is heard we see these are the qualities shown by the angel, and which Joseph is challenged to fit in with.

Secondly, the listing offers divine critique and the scope of grace. This is not a list of perfect men. It is also a list that includes significant women. By including the women, we are shown that God is not tied necessarily to the cultural and seemingly religious modes of the people of Israel, nor indeed to ours. Again, by including the women, we are reminded of the situations they were put into by men – think David and Bathsheba, and the murder of her first husband Uriah and the death of her first child. The birth of Jesus will be such that it is inclusive of all humanity, not just the righteous. It will also overturn human norms and force a deeper divine logic into the ways of humans.

Matthew's narrative of the birth highlights the role of Joseph rather than Mary. It is a reading of Jesus' incarnation through the lens of the Davidic kingship. The persuasion of the Angel and the role of the Holy Spirit enable Joseph to see afresh. There is an interesting connection between Joseph, husband of Mary who obeys dreams, and Joseph of Egypt who could read dreams. Jesus is given a title at birth – Emmanuel – God is with us, a name in line with the prophets.

Perhaps it is this theology of presence that is necessary for us today. The fragile environment of Jesus birth, with fraught relationships between Mary and Joseph, dreams, and angels, allows us to reflect that the fragility we are currently enmeshed in does not negate grace but challenges us to be as the child – the presence of divine love in our world.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

On this night Jesus, our Saviour took the form of a baby to bring us salvation and hope. Therefore, we humbly come with our needs, trusting in God's everlasting faithfulness.

Petitions

We pray for the universal Church; may she continue to shine Christ's light in the world as an offering of hope and love and strive to be authentic leaders full of grace.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for peace in the world. Christ's birth binds heaven to earth; may his coming establish harmony among all the nations and that all nations will be generous in this time of pandemic and great need.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the homeless during this special time of Christmas. May they receive shelter, food, comfort and a home that offers love and joy.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for our Parish family. May our faith be renewed tonight aiding us to go forth with joyful hearts giving praise to the goodness of our God.

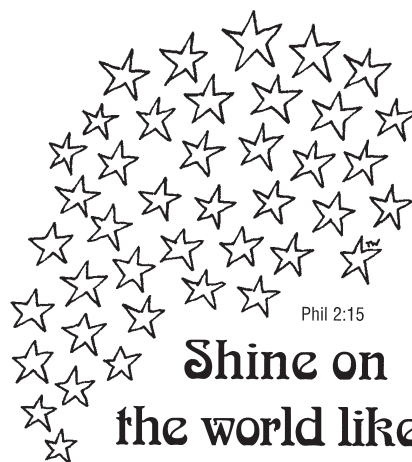
(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are suffering illness and vulnerability during this time of pandemic and recession. May they receive peace in their hearts as communities draw together to protect each other.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Father, we trust that you hear all our prayers as we celebrate the birth of your son Jesus and we know that you answer our needs through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**



**Shine on
the world like
bright stars.**

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Angels we have heard on high. French Carol. 622
Away in a manger. J. McFarland/ W. Kirkpatrick. 289
Hark! the herald angels sing. C. Wesley/ F. Mendelssohn. 294
Joy to the world. I. Watts/ G. F. Handel. 295
O come, all ye faithful. J. Wade. 287 (Verses 1-3)
O little town of Bethlehem. P. Brooks/ L. Redner. 296
Once in royal David's city. H. Gauntlett/ C. F. Alexander. 297
The first Nowell. English text and melody. 298 (Verses 1, 2, 4& 6)

AOV1

Hark! the herald angels sing. C. Wesley/ F. Mendelssohn. 171
Joy to the world. I. Watts/ G. F. Handel. 170
O come, all ye faithful. J. Wade. 167 (Verses 1-2)
The first Nowell. English text and melody. 169 (Verses 1, 2 & 5)
What Child Is this? W. C. Dix/ English melody. 165 (Verses 1-2)

AOV2

Angels we have heard on high. French Carol. 140
Sing we, sing we Noel. K. Poelker. 124

AOV4Kids

And did you see Him little star? C. Gibson/ H. Clyde. 60
Out on the road to Bethlehem. M. Nicol. 61
Baby lying in a manger. P. Combe. 63
Can this really be true? L. Newton/ T. Wittwer. 64

AOVNG

Emmanuel. Raymond Badham. 40
Let the season shine. Judy Bailey. 87

CWB

A child is born in Bethlehem. Tr. Ralph Wright OSB. 612
Unto us a boy is born. Tr. Percy Dearmer. 849

CWBII

Good Christians all, rejoice. John Mason Neale. 261
Unto us a child is born! Tr. Percy Dearmer. 273

S&S2

Born this day. Ken Canedo. 296

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 88: *For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.*
Psalm 88: Stephen Somerville/Christopher Willcock SJ. CWB 385
Psalm 89: I will sing for ever: Roger Heagney. GA 50
Psalm 89 (88): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 14
Psalm 89: For Ever I Will Sing. Tony Alonso. LPSF pg. 6

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Glory to God (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]
Glory, Gloria (STAR) [CHILDREN, Gathering, Recessional]
There Is A Child (TT/SYJ) *based on Is 9:1-7*
This Little Boy (TT/SYJ) [Non-Scriptural Reflection]



25 December 2020

The Nativity of the Lord, Midnight Mass

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

The midnight Mass is celebrated on the cusp of hope in the midst of the darkness. In the reading from the prophet, the new-born child-prince is a symbol of peace set against injustice and violence. The Letter to Titus allows us to reflect on our lives now within the time of waiting and speaks to an eagerness to do good works. The Gospel sees Emperor Augustus trying to gain control over the population at large, but it is the shepherds who attain the real knowledge of salvation.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world.
Lord have mercy.

You are the Prince of Peace. Christ have mercy.
You are Word become flesh. Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 9:1-7

Wisdom is turned towards the relationships within a family, and guides the legacy of the parents that is built on the love that is taught.

Second Reading

Colossians 3:12-21

As we listen, we are invited to share in an understanding of the characteristics of a family marked by the divine: compassion, patience, forgiveness.

Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19

Our text today gives a sense of the family present in our midst as a first step to a greater set of descendants, who are a testimony to our faith.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:22-40

The Gospel brings into focus how the love and piety in which Joseph and Mary raise their child Jesus leads to that most central family unit.

Reflection

What are the points of resonance between the readings on offer and our families in their real-life situation today? There is always something of a stretch in this, given the texts are from entirely other cultural worlds or offer a narrative that is theological in intention. Yet this range of readings and their application to the family give some licence. The current pressures on our families as we work nationally through the pandemic shine a spotlight on some features of the biblical texts.

There is something missing across many of the readings, a factor apparent to the Christians of ancient

and more recent times, but not so clearly visible in current western culture. To put it simply, where are the aunties? Where is the extended family? The ancient world and indeed many cultures today, do not identify so cleanly with the nuclear family structure of a wife, husband and kids quite isolated from relatives. Also, within the readings, and particularly in the options from the Book of Wisdom or Genesis, there is the value of children as carers for their aged parents. Offspring are not just guarantor of the family line, but also seen as future carers of the still young father and mother.

Given the effects of the pandemic, and the lockdowns of nursing homes and aged care facilities, perhaps for 2020 this is where we concentrate. We are now forced to ask how we as a Christian community support the ageing. The question has wide scope, and the communal sense of family prevalent in Old Testament cultures is testimony to this. Today there are loved ones who have experienced being locked away, there are loved ones who have died alone away from family, there are loved ones who were alienated from their kin for extended periods, a trauma shared by children and grandchildren. There are carers, whether nurses, aids, cleaners, cooks and kitchen hands, managers who have been caught in the middle of the grief, the death, the mourning and the anger.

Abram is reassured that he will have many offspring, and soon enough Sarah becomes a mother. The author of the Book of Wisdom is mindful that the onset of old age brings dependence, and while there is a touch of bargaining about the thinking there is some realism here. God will be forgiving to the adult child who cares for a senile parent, but maybe also it will be good example to the next generation. The adult child who shows how to care for an aged parent is teaching his or her own children a skill they will need to use on him or her.

What does this allow us to do in preaching this year. Given the pressure that is just beneath the surface, this is an opportunity to grieve the difficult times and call the community into support and hope. The feast presents an occasion to lay out the underlying difficulties families are facing, move away from blame and shame, and ask what can be done together to help all cope. And perhaps there is something in the Wisdom text that is salutary: our children will be watching and learning how we respond, and it will be lodged in family and community memory for some time. Interestingly many are looking back into the Spanish flu pandemic for a clue to adequate responses and the social effects of the virus: in much the same way our families will carry our responses into the future.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

God so loves us that he sent his only Son to be with us. Gathered here together we have the confidence to turn to our Father with our needs.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church that at this special time they look outwards into the world and draw others into the knowledge of the love of God as we overcome the difficulties faced during the pandemic.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of our world that they will truly respect religious freedom so that Christians everywhere can share in the joy of Christmas.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all families who have recently welcomed a new baby or are still waiting. May they be filled with hope and joy and bring up their children with a deep love of the Gospel.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who mourn loved ones especially at Christmas time, particularly those who have been separated due to the pandemic. May they be comforted by the love that surrounds them.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who have no home: refugees and asylum seekers as well as the homeless in our own community. May they find a safe place to live in peace.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all of us gathered here that the focus for us today will be to share the love of God.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Loving Father, because you sent your Son into the world to live among us, we have confidence to offer you these prayers with joy in our hearts. We make our prayer through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus the Lord. **Amen.**

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Angels we have heard on high. French Carol. 622
Away in a manger. J. McFarland/ W. Kirkpatrick. 289
Hark! the herald angels sing. C. Wesley/ F. Mendelssohn. 294
Joy to the world. I. Watts/ G. F. Handel. 295
O come, all ye faithful. J. Wade. 287 (Verses 1-3)
O little town of Bethlehem. P. Brooks/ L. Redner. 296
Once in royal David's city. H. Gauntlett/ C. F. Alexander. 297
Silent night. J. Mohr/ F. Gruber. 290
The first Nowell. English text and melody. 298 (Verses 1, 2, 4 & 6)

AOV1

Hark! the herald angels sing. C. Wesley/ F. Mendelssohn. 171
Joy to the world. I. Watts/ G. F. Handel. 170
O come, all ye faithful. J. Wade. 167
Silent night. J. Mohr/ F. Gruber. 168
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What child is this? W. C. Dix/ English melody. 165 (Verses 1-2)

AOV2

Angels we have heard on high. French Carol. 140
Sing we, sing we Noel. K. Poelker. 124

AOV4Kids

And did you see him little star? C. Gibson/ H. Clyde. 60
Out on the road to Bethlehem. M. Nicol. 61
Baby lying in a manger. P. Combe. 63
Can this really be true? L. Newton/ T. Wittwer. 64

AOVNG

Emmanuel. Raymond Badham. 40
Let the season shine. Judy Bailey. 87

CWB

A child is born in Bethlehem. Tr. Ralph Wright OSB. 612
Angels we have heard on high. Tr. J. Chadwick. 622
Unto us a boy is born. Tr. Percy Dearmer. 849

CWBII

Angels we have heard on high. Tr. James Chadwick. 255
Good Christians all, rejoice. John Mason Neale. 261
The people who in darkness walked. John Morison. 272
Unto us a child is born! Tr. Percy Dearmer. 273

S&S1

Go, tell it on the mountain. Spiritual. 114

S&S2

Born this day. Ken Canedo. 296
Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light. Timothy R. Smith. 286

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 95: *Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.*
Psalm 95: David C. Isele/A Gregory Murray OSB. CWB 189
Psalm 96: Today is born our saviour: Colin Smith. GA 56
Psalm 96 (95): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 16
Psalm 96: Today is Born Our Saviour. Tony Alonso. pg. 9

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Glory to God (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]

There Is A Child (TT/SYJ) *based on Is 9:1-7*

This Little Boy (TT/SYJ) [Non-Scriptural Reflection]



25 December 2020

The Nativity of the Lord, Mass in the Day

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

Now that the day is bathed in sunlight, and the heat is usually intense, the readings for this mass move us away from narrative and image into the theological imagination behind the feast itself. In this, the opening of the Gospel of John is central. It draws our focus into the wonder of the incarnation itself: we are now in the light. Our contextual question is how are we people of the light as the pandemic runs its course? The creator is enfleshed within the creation, and we are now part of that light.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the Word of God.
Lord have mercy.

You are the true light. Christ have mercy.

You are the Word made flesh. Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 52:7-10

This poem from Isaiah sings with joy, peace and compassion. It opens our hearts to the consolation that God is for all humanity.

Second Reading

Colossians 3:12-21

As we listen, we are invited to share in an understanding of the characteristics of a family marked by the divine: compassion, patience, forgiveness.

Hebrews 1:1-6

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that the Son shares in the glory of God. In this he was co-creator of the universe which is sustained and purified through him. Further, as the incarnate Christ he sits at the right hand of God, bringing our humanity into the centre of divine activity.

Gospel Reading

John 1:1-18

Building on references to the first creation story in Genesis, this reading celebrates the breaking of the light into darkness through the Word taking flesh and entering fully and completely into human experience and human history as one of us.

Reflection

As always, the Gospel for the Mass during the day strikes us as somewhat at odds with the celebration going on around us. Often this is a family Mass (though the Christmas Eve celebration also has the same ambience). We are in the midst now of presents, the crib, new things, meal preparation and relatives visiting. If our COVID-19 Advent preparations

have gone well many of the members of our parish communities will have reflected on the feast of Christmas and set aside time for the poor, lonely and discomforted. There is a lot of greeting, tired kids, worn families and excitement all bundled together. Underneath there are some fault lines of stress and difficulty. This leads us then to the choice of the Gospel of John.

Strikingly it is not about the child, the mother, the angels, shepherds, or Joseph. Yet it comes from the most ancient strands of thinking through the feast. The origins of celebrating the birth of the Lord are around the inbreaking of the light into the darkness. This is the Johannine paradigm: the Word has come to shine into the darkness. Christmas is the feast of the incarnation. It is the eternal that has come to dwell among us as one of us. The gospel has a wonderful play on the first Genesis creation account. The Word, which in the Genesis account 'spoke' creation, first brought forth the light. That same Word now comes forth as the light. The darkness of primordial chaos was pierced by light. The darkness of human life in community is visited by a light that cannot be overcome. While the great lights of the sun and the moon shine on humanity, the greater light of the Word incarnate shines out from humanity.

In the dwelling amongst us of the Word made flesh we find the revelation of the glory of God. There are a range of responses to this good news. There is the recognition that Jesus is the revelation of God. There is the revelation that we are now children of God, something Paul will name as our adoption as daughters and sons of God. There is the understanding that the law of Moses has given way to grace and truth in Christ. There is the pain that this light is not always recognised and worse not accepted.

The place of John the Baptist is theologically significant. Interestingly the focus is not on any family ties between them, a message that resonates particularly well at Christmas. Rather, he is a testimony to the light. We too are invited to take up where John left off: to be witnesses to the light. Our testimony now, in light of the incarnation and the resurrection, is our contemporary witness to the world of the power of the light and our relationship to God. Just as John writes that the darkness remains, though the light prevails, so we are reminded that our witnessing will be within a context of pain, difficulty, rejection and misunderstanding.

Our Gospel for the Christmas Mass during the day leads us away from piety and custom back to the theological foundations of the feast. This is supported by the two earlier readings. Much the same as John, the author of the Letter to the Hebrews begins his missive by reminding us that the Son shares in the glory of God. In this, the text recognizes that he was co-creator of the universe which is sustained and

purified through him. It is the incarnate Christ who sits at the right hand of God, bringing our humanity into the centre of divine activity.

This is complemented by the text from the prophet Isaiah. Here we are warmed with the tidings of good news, struck by the beauty of God's action. The incarnation brings peace, consolation, good news, salvation. Nor is this just for Israel, but for all the ends of the earth. The passage rings with hope and consolation. So should our Christian community in worship and in the world.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

Let us rejoice and pray for strength and courage to respond to God's love this Christmas. With faith, let us offer our needs to our loving Father.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church, especially Pope Francis. May they be inspired to enlighten the world through tireless efforts to live the Gospel.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of our Church in Australia, that they will be filled with faith and courage as we move towards the Plenary Council.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for our government leaders. May they have the courage to do what is morally right and protect all people who wish to follow a religious way of life.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray that we who gather here will be filled with courage to go forth to celebrate the peace of Christmas in our increasingly secular world so that the light of Christ will be evident.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who are separated from family this Christmas due to the pandemic. May they find ways of being loving and supportive wherever they are and find peace in their hearts.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the communities that were ravaged by fire last year. May they find ways in which they can celebrate this Christmas with love and joy.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who mourn in this Christmas period, especially for all those throughout the world who were not able to be with family members who died from COVID-19, that they will be comforted with gentleness and love.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Father, the coming of your Son shines light into our world. Listen to our needs that we present and those unspoken in our hearts. We ask this through the power of the Spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Angels we have heard on high. French Carol. 622
Away in a manger. J. McFarland/ W. Kirkpatrick. 289
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What child is this? W. C. Dix/ English melody. 165 (Verses 1-2)

AOV2

Angels we have heard on high. French Carol. 140
Sing we, sing we Noel. K. Poelker. 124

AOV4Kids

And did you see him little star? C. Gibson/ H. Clyde. 60
Out on the road to Bethlehem. M. Nicol. 61
Baby lying in a manger. P. Combe. 63
Can this really be true? L. Newton/ T. Wittwer. 64

AOVNG

All the ends of the earth. Bobby Fisher. 5
Emmanuel. Raymond Badham. 40
Let the season shine. Judy Bailey. 87

CWB

A child is born in Bethlehem. Tr. Ralph Wright OSB. 612
Of the Father's love begotten. Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, tr. John Mason Neale etc. 779
Unto us a boy is born. Tr. Percy Dearmer. 849

CWBII

Of the Father's love begotten. Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, tr. John Mason Neale et al. 268
Unto us a child is born! Tr. Percy Dearmer. 273

S&S1

All the ends of the earth. Bobby Fisher. 75

S&S2

All the ends of the earth. Ken Canedo. 270
All the ends of the earth. Bob Hurd. 271
Born this day. Ken Canedo. 296
Sing to the Lord a new song. Angus McDonell. 272

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 97: All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Psalm 97: Joseph Roff/Joseph Gelineau SJ. CWB 185

Psalm 98: All the Ends of the Earth: David Haas/Marty Haugen. GA 57

Psalm 97(98): Christopher Willcock SJ. CWB 598

Psalm 98 (97): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 18

All the ends of the earth: Paul Mason. PM p. pg. 72

Psalm 98: All the Ends of the Earth. David Haas/Marty Haugen. LPSF pg. 14

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Glory to God (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]

Glory, Gloria (STAR) [CHILDREN, Gathering, Recessional]

Sing New Songs of Joy (FWS) based on Ps 97 (98) [Gathering, Recessional]

All the Ends of the Earth (LCC) Ps 97 (97) Children's Lectionary Translation

There Is A Child (TT/SYJ) based on Is 9:1-7

This Little Boy (TT/SYJ) [Non-Scriptural Reflection]



27 December 2020

The Holy Family

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

The feast of the Holy Family sits well within the season of the nativity. This year our context calls forth some hidden aspects in the liturgical texts. There are a range of ideas present, but across them there is the question of how our actions now in the time of pandemic leave a legacy for future generations. With this is the enduring importance of the larger family, and how the smaller unit of father, mother and children is nurtured in the wider extended family.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

You are the mercy of the Father. Lord have mercy.

You are the one who is to come. Christ have mercy.

You are the salvation of all people. Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 9:1-7

The prophet Isaiah speaks to the people of a coming time of peace, justice and wisdom established in the new-born child.

Second Reading

Titus 2:11-14

The passage from Titus allows that the birth of Jesus and salvation in Christ is the beginning of the blessed hope that awaits us when God's glory is fully revealed

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:1-14

The birth of the child Jesus takes place in a stable, and the first to hear that this is good news are shepherds accustomed to the night and to being on the outside of society. The birth of Jesus brings together themes of the Davidic king, the faithful couple, the glory of the angels and the obedience and wonder of the shepherds.

Reflection

Our reading from the Isaiah has features that apply well to this Mass. Its nativity appeal is seen in the prophet's hope in a new ruler, recently born, who offers a fresh beginning and a way out of violence and darkness. The play on darkness and light fits well with the midnight setting of this liturgy: in the Western calendar midnight is the transition point to a new day. It is not the darkest part of the night, yet it commences the next day and announces another possibility. Also featured is a hint at what we have come to know as the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah here gives the young prince titles which are expanded shortly after in Is 11: 1-3.

Already my approach has been to set the celebration

of the Christmas masses within the context of the pandemic and its ongoing effects on our lives, family, jobs and society. This reading offers us a direction of hope, placed in the workings of God and the upcoming generation. There is a yoke on the peoples and a pole on our shoulders. The challenge this year perhaps is to take up this prophetic text and ask whether we are responding to the needs and pain around us in justice, peace-making, and wise counsel and judgement

The Letter to Titus offers another opportunity to understand the meaning of the Nativity. It is a text that confirms us in love. We are beloved. We wait in blessed hope. We live in the grace of God. We are eager to do what is good.

There is a clear admonition about how our lives are to be constructed in the present. While Titus signals a future glory and a coming completion of all things, it seeks that we live temperately, justly and devoutly in the present. The question then for Midnight Mass, in a time of darkness, is how do we take up this eagerness to do good? What is required of us today in our communities? How do we give witness to the blessed hope?

The Gospel reading from Luke also is replete with contrasts. The first of its two parts places the young and poor family within the context of a worldwide political event, an imperial census. The will of the powerful Augustus, and the disruption it causes, is felt by the smallest family. The husband and pregnant wife are forced into travel, and the child is born in a stable because there is no accommodation. Yet there is a code in the geography. Far flung Galilee, and its minor village Nazareth, are now linked to Bethlehem, the Davidic town. There is a tension inherent here. Even as the divine emperor at the centre of the empire counts his subjects, a truly royal and truly divine child is born in an unremarkable city in a far-flung place.

The contrast continues in the second section of the passage. The glorious angels particularly single out the uncouth and mistrusted shepherds to convey the message. Yet the shepherds are a reminder of the young David, born in Bethlehem where he was a herder of sheep before becoming a king who shepherded his people. The decree of Caesar Augustus may be heard by governors across the world, while the announcement of the angels is carried only to keepers of flocks. These shepherds hear the announcement that salvation has come, that an heir to the throne of David has been born, and peace is now manifest.

The task for us is to work with the community in the midst of our circumstances of the nature of peace in the midst of the trauma in which we are caught up.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

God so loves us that he sent his only Son to be with us. Gathered here together we have the confidence to turn to our Father with our needs.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church. Pope Francis continues to show great care for those families who are refugees and so may all other leaders in our Church be emboldened to do the same.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of our country that they may remain committed to the values of family life and give support to those who have had difficult beginnings.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those agencies and organisations who support families and family life. May they be given the courage and resources to continue to positively assist families in our community.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all the families gathered here. In all of our imperfections may we be lifted by the love of God shown to us through the Holy Family.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Loving Father, you revealed yourself to us through a humble family, so hear the prayers of these families that gather in love. We make our prayers through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, your Son.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Angels we have heard on high. French Noel. 286
Away in a manger. J. McFarland/ W. Kirkpatrick. 289
For the beauty of the earth. F. Pierpont/ D. Evans. 427
Joy to the world. I. Watts/ G. F. Handel. 295
Once in royal David's city. C. F. Alexander/ H. J. Gauntlett. 297
Ubi Caritas/ Where true love and charity are found. Gregorian Chant. 319
Ubi Caritas. Taize Chant. 324
Where there is charity and love. R. Connolly. 323

AOV1

For the beauty of the earth. F. Pierpont/ C. Krockner. 123
Joy to the world. I. Watts/ G. F. Handel. 170
Let there be peace on earth. S. Miller/ J. Jackson. 190
What child is this? W. Dix. 165 (Verses 1-2)

AOV2

Angels we have heard on high. French Noel. 286

AOV4Kids

Baby lying in a manger. P. Combe. 63

AOVNG

Among all. Chris de Silva. 8

CWB

Canticle of Simeon. Frank Quinn OP. 636
Once in royal David's city. Cecil Frances Alexander. 782
Sing of Mary, pure and lowly. Roland Ford Palmer SSJE. 808

CWBII

At last, all-pow'rful master. The Grail. 225
Lord God, you now have set your servant free. Rae E. Whitney. 226
My master, see, the time has come. Frank Quinn OP.227
Once in royal David's city. Cecil Frances Alexander. 269
There is nothing told. Didier Rimaud SJ, tr. Christopher Willcock SJ. 418
In the temple now behold him. Henry John Pye/William Cooke. 427

S&S2

Hail Mary: gentle woman. Carey Landry. 336

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 104: *The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.*
Psalm 104: Anthony Briggs. CWB 193
Psalm 105 (104): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 20
Psalm 128: Blessed Are Those Who Fear the Lord. Tony Alonso. LPB pg. 19

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Glory to God (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]
Sing New Songs of Joy (FWS) based on Ps 97 (98) [Gathering, Recessional]
Glory, Gloria (STAR) [CHILDREN, Gathering, Recessional]
This Little Boy (TT/SYJ) [Non-Scriptural Reflection]



1 January 2021

Mary, the Holy Mother of God (Friday)

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

Our feast places the role of Mary in salvation at the first moment of our entry into a new year. Over the Christmas period we have celebrated with Mary the young mother and her new family. This feast, while having a personal touch, is also deeply theological. The birth giving of Mary is the foundation for our faith in the incarnation. The emphasis here is that the child Jesus is God. What, then, does this imply for us as we prepare to enter 2021 as a year of the Lord.

BACKGROUND

In the revised ordering of the Christmas period it seems to us that the attention of all should be directed towards the restored Solemnity of Mary the holy Mother of God. This celebration, placed on January 1 in conformity with the ancient indication of the liturgy of the City of Rome, is meant to commemorate the part played by Mary in this mystery of salvation. It is meant also to exalt the singular dignity which this mystery brings to the "holy Mother...through whom we were found worthy to receive the Author of life."⁽¹⁷⁾ It is likewise a fitting occasion for renewing adoration of the newborn Prince of Peace, for listening once more to the glad tidings of the angels (cf. Lk. 2:14), and for imploring from God, through the Queen of Peace, the supreme gift of peace. It is for this reason that, in the happy concurrence of the Octave of Christmas and the first day of the year, we have instituted the World Day of Peace, an occasion that is gaining increasing support and already bringing forth fruits of peace in the hearts of many.

[Pope Paul VI, *Marialis cultus* 6. The document is an Apostolic Exhortation published 2 Feb 1974]

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the Son of Mary.
Lord have mercy.

You came that we might see the blessings of God.
Christ have mercy.

You came that we might always sing of our salvation.
Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Numbers 6:22-27

The divine blessing, beautiful and simple, is a gift from God for the people of Israel and signifies the ongoing divine presence to the community.

Second Reading

Galatians 4:4-7

Paul speaks to our hearts of the intimacy of the relationship we have with God as adopted children through the birth of Jesus and the obedience of Mary..

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:16-21

The visit by the shepherds and the profound amazement in the people leaves Mary to ponder and reflect in her heart on the ways of God.

Reflection

How do we start this new year? How do we take up 2021? The wish is that we do not endure another climate emergency. The hope is we enter the year with a vaccine! And with that a return to life as we knew it. And perhaps we may have time for some reflection on what humanity has learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the liturgical year, the first day of the first month is a solemnity dedicated to Mary, Mother of God. Mary as 'Mother of God' is an ancient title directed not at the woman herself but as a defence of the incarnation of Christ. Jesus the Christ can only be comprehended as fully human (and fully divine) if he is born of a human mother. The human Jesus is divine, and it follows that Mary is the Mother of God. This absolutely central act of faith is brought home to us in the title and offers us an opportunity to glimpse the trust and love God has in humanity.

How do the readings interpret this solemnity? What orientation do they give to us as we move from worship into life in 2021? The opening lection is from the Book of Numbers and teaches us the great blessing of God. The divine blessing is given over to Aaron and the priestly caste through the ministry of Moses. It is not the blessing of Moses, nor of the priests, but of God.

Interestingly it is bound up in the theology of the divine name. At the conclusion of the actual text of the blessing is God's teaching that this is the way to invoke the name of God. This point deserves some reflection. The theology of the 'name' of God is a theology of the nature of the divine presence. When God allows a feature to be a part of the divine naming, we have something of a revelation of how God wishes us to know and meet the divine. It is a revelation of the inner being of God. This heightens the sacredness of the blessing, a blessing already able to be acknowledged

as beautiful, simple and life giving.

So, what are the characteristics of the presence of God. The ancient passage speaks to us of the divine as protection, graciousness, presence, beneficence and peace. We now find ourselves in a new year and seek to bring these features of the divine love into the lives of all around us. The calendar is pushing us forward into a second year of uncertainty, and while there are glimmers of relief around the pandemic, there is less certainty concerning the climate. The community that hears this reading is being offered a sense of hope, but also a challenge. For 2021, from within the feast of the divine nature of Christ and the motherhood of Mary, we are challenged to be a people marked by protection of creation, graciousness, peace and offering the presence of God. We are to be the 'name' of God, a blessing for the world.

The reading from Paul stresses the meaning and impact of the incarnation. First up it addresses the coming of Christ in the flesh, born of a mother, born into a culture and religious tradition. These shape him. However, for Paul the emphasis falls on how he reshapes them. From now, our own birth heralds our adoption by God as children and heirs. We are blessed with the presence of the Spirit enabling us to recognise God as father and know that our belonging is secure in the divine love.

Here for Paul, Mary is the guarantor of the humanity of Christ and so the first element of our understanding of Jesus as fully one of us. And so for our celebration, the reading reminds us of the humanity of Jesus, the pivotal theological and biological role of Mary the Mother, and that we enter all that is ahead secure in the knowledge of the love of God for us and our dignity and worth to God.

A caution needs to be added here. The choice of which translation of Galatians is important. Many do not use inclusive language and leave all the hearers as adopted 'Sons' of God. This falls far too short of the absolute meaning of our adoption: we are the adopted daughters and sons of God: we cannot let our language diminish God's proclaiming we are truly heirs.

The Gospel adds some ways to enter the new year. Shepherds were not quite renowned for their social graces, yet they visit the young family. Nor was honesty attributed to them, yet they tell the story and are believed. Nor were they particularly good at observing the religious traditions and rules, yet they glorify and praise God. This birth of a child then has already brought all sorts of surprises. Mary in particular can only ponder them, reflect on them across her lifetime, and in this instance proceed to name the child as foretold. Under the name Jesus, the child is marked as a modern day 'Joshua', as one who will bring rescue.

It is interesting to pick up two things from this Gospel for our coming year. One is the question of what we will ponder. What mysteries of our lives will we be touched by in the course of the year? How reflective will we be? What wisdom from our lives will we need to call upon? What openness will we have to the unknown things that await us?

The second is that attitude of the shepherds, a group not always known for their spiritual guidance! They return to their flocks offering praise and glory for the hope that has been shown them. How attentive to signs of hope will we be this year? And will we respond with praise and glory?

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The Son of God was born of a woman to enable us to also be sons and daughters and so we turn with our needs to our Abba, Father.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church in Australia, that they may always offer compassionate support to families in their struggles and joys and be mindful of those needs in the deliberations of the Plenary Council.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for our leaders in Australia, that they may be aware of the needs of all families and put those needs before economic prosperity, particularly in the wake of COVID-19.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for all mothers and fathers that they will increase in love of God through the love they show their children and that the children will forever hold them respectfully in their hearts.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for peace in our world, our country, our communities and our families.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for the development of a vaccine for COVID-19 and that it will be shared equally throughout the world without favour.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for our rural communities as they recover from drought and bushfire. May their harvest be rich and their communities strengthened in love.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for mothers and fathers who mourn the loss of their children, and children who mourn the loss of their mothers and fathers; may they all be comforted in their sorrow and loss.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

Conclusion

Abba, Father, we place these needs before you in confidence that they will be granted through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Come Holy Ghost, Creator come. R. Maurus, et al./ Thomas Tallis. 376
Hail Mary: gentle woman. C. Landry. 544
Hark! the herald angels sing. F. Mendelssohn. 704
Magnificat (Tell out my soul). T. Dudley Smith/ W. Greatorex. 550
May God bless and keep you. C. Walker. 441
My soul rejoices. O. Alstott. 250
There is nothing told. C. Willcock SJ. 548

AOV1

Hark! the herald angels sing. F. Mendelssohn. 704
May God bless and keep you. C. Walker. 177
O Holy Mary. O. Alstott. 141
What child is this? W. Dix. 165 (Verses 1 and 2)

AOV4Kids

Annunciation. Marcy Weckler. 7

AOVNG

Among all. Chris de Silva. 8

CWB

Hail Queen of Heaven, the ocean star. John Lingard. 702
Holy Virgin, by God's decree. Jean-Paul Lécot, tr. W. R. Lawrence. 714
Immaculate Mary, we praise God in you. Brian Foley. 723
O Mary of Graces and Mother of God. Tr. Douglas Hyde. 769
Salve, Regina. Hermanus Contractus. 801
Sing of Mary, pure and lowly. Roland Ford Palmer SSJE. 808

CWBII

Salve Regina, Mater misericordiae. Hermanus Contractus. 406
Hail Queen of heav'n, the ocean star. John Lingard. 408
Holy Virgin, by God's decree. Jean-Paul Lécot, tr. W. R. Lawrence. 410
Servant of the Word. Edward M. Grosz. 414
Immaculate Mary, we praise God in you. Brian Foley. 416
There is nothing told. Didier Rimaud SJ, tr. Christopher Willcock SJ. 418

S&S2

Hail Mary: gentle woman. Carey Landry. 336

Psalms selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 66: *May God bless us in his mercy.*
Psalm 66: Robert J. Batastini/Joseph Gelineau SJ. CWB 195
Psalm 67(66): Jenny O'Brien. JOBF pg. 30
Psalm 67: May God Bless Us in His Mercy. Tony Alonso. LPSF pg. 18

Music selections by Michael Mangan

There Is A Child (TT/SYJ) based on Is 9:1-7 [Gathering]

Song of Blessing (SHOF) based on Numbers 6:22-27

Glory to God (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]



3 January 2021

Epiphany

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

Introduction

Inspired by the gifts brought by the Magi to Jesus, the Epiphany was for many years a day of gift giving. This practice is now more commonly associated with Christmas Day. Nevertheless, we celebrate today the gift of Christ to the world. All people of every nation are invited to experience God through Jesus Christ.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the light that shines for all nations.
Lord have mercy.

You are the glory of God.
Christ have mercy.

You show us the Father.
Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 60:1-6

The light of God pushes all darkness away. The reading speaks of a manifestation of this light so radiant and so full of hope that the whole world would be drawn to the Lord in praise and reverence.

Second Reading

Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6

The revelation of God's grace is one destined for all. First coming to a chosen people, through Jesus Christ, now all are invited to share in this God's favour.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 2:1-12

The scene from Matthew depicts the coming of men from foreign lands seeking a new 'king of the Jews'. Their journey takes them to King Herod who, fearing a loss of his earthly kingship, begins to act out against God's very act of salvation.

Reflection

In the 1990s the Balkan region descended into a tragic war as the former Yugoslavia broke up into its more traditional regional states. I had a good friend who was Croatian and while enjoying a meal with his family, out of left field, I was asked a question by my friend's mother; "whose God is right?" It was a most perplexing question that seemed to come out of the blue in the serious but relaxed conversation over the dinner table and, quite frankly, made little theological sense. I thought to myself, how could God be wrong and, further, how does God belong to anybody in particular? I was not even sure to whom the 'who' in the simple question referred to. Confused I asked for clarification. She elaborated, "if we (meaning predominantly Catholic Croats) have God the way we do, and they (meaning the predominantly Eastern

Orthodox Serbians) have God the way they do, and we are at war, which God is right?" The question was not, "which side is God on". As troubling as that question might be, it makes more sense than the question that was put to me; "whose God is right".

I went on to answer as best I could, kindly and with respect, the flaw in the very question. I assured her there is only one God and one Jesus Christ that both traditions worship. Further, this God takes no sides and sees no winners whatsoever in humans of any creed or culture at war with each other.

Though the years have passed, the question and surrounding discussion has stayed with me. The nature of the question implied that God could belong to a particular person or people. Moreover, it expresses a collapse of a tension that is otherwise quite apt. Indeed my God is properly my God – it expresses an intimacy and sacramentality of God who is found in personal relationship and familiar human contexts, but God is never my God alone. The event is a reminder of how we can make claim to God being 'my way and by my reckoning'. Not a God of all, but a God that belongs to me and mine.

Counter to this thinking, what today's feast celebrates is the recognition that, in the coming of Jesus, though God has come to a particular people in a particular place and time, it is a coming that is for all people of all places. All are called to find joy in the visitation of God in Christ – God does not belong exclusively to a particular person or people. What is also expressed in today's readings is how to deal with this potential to reduce God's presence to 'me and mine'.

When we look at Herod in the narrative, though he welcomes the Gentiles from the east (Magi in the Greek), he does so only to serve his own ends; that being to maintain control and to hold onto power. In the process, and despite having access to 'all the chief priests and the scribes of the people', he not only rejects God's visitation but begins to actively thwart it. For Herod, God's actions need to comply with Herod's reckoning.

In contrast, the Magi, foreigners and not raised in the tradition of God's chosen people, come to seek the new 'king of the Jews' and do so with attentiveness and humility. They find 'delight' in the experience, find their goal and gain wisdom along the way. When they come face to face with Jesus, they "bend their knee in homage" (Matt 2:11). Such action, outside of selected rituals, is not at all common in our contemporary society, but it has long been understood as a sign of humility and submission to a higher authority. Matthew's Gospel no doubt includes the scene to help illustrate that Jesus is indeed the chosen one, the Messiah professed in the Hebrew Scriptures. However, it also indicates the sort of approach one should have to God's visitation. Where the Magi bow in worship, Herod gathers his might and power to

attempt to bend God's plan to suit his – to effectively hold on to his claim as 'king of the Jews'.

However, God does not belong to any particular office of power or authority. God does not bend God's knee to human might. Rather, human capacity is called to bend its knee to God. The Magi do so and Herod could have also. Unfortunately, as we cast an eye forward to the scenes that immediately follow this reading (Matt 2:16-23), all that follows Herod's approach is death, destruction and futility.

This brings us to another contrast found in the Gospel reading, this one between Jesus and Herod. As noted, Herod attempts to hold onto his authority by power and violence. By contrast, the invitation that God makes to 'come and worship' is not something done by force. That this new king is found as vulnerable as a babe and, further, if we draw on Luke's Gospel, not even sheltered in human dwellings with only his immediate family and domesticated animals acting as his court, gives us an image of how God's call to be worshiped is made. Not by force, not by power and not by manipulative coercion. More simply by humble invitation to seek what God is doing, to look upon this gift and find deep joy therein.

Our Gospel for the Christmas Mass during the day leads us away from piety and custom back to the theological foundations of the feast. This is supported by the two earlier readings. Much the same as John, the author of the Letter to the Hebrews begins his missive by reminding us that the Son shares in the glory of God. In this, the text recognizes that he was co-creator of the universe which is sustained and purified through him. It is the incarnate Christ who sits at the right hand of God, bringing our humanity into the centre of divine activity.

This is complemented by the text from the prophet Isaiah. Here we are warmed with the tidings of good news, struck by the beauty of God's action. The incarnation brings peace, consolation, good news, salvation. Nor is this just for Israel, but for all the ends of the earth. The passage rings with hope and consolation. So should our Christian community in worship and in the world.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

As the Magi came to place gifts before Jesus in his Bethlehem home, we present our prayers with joyful hope before our loving Father.

Petitions

Let us pray for Pope Francis and all the bishops, that they may be granted the wisdom they need to lead others to Christ as did the Magi.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

Let us pray for our leaders in Australia and those in neighbouring countries, that will be supportive of one another as the pandemic continues and find just ways of serving their people in the recession.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

Let us pray for those who are experiencing a time of darkness through sickness, isolation, suffering or loneliness. May the light of Christ bring salvation to all who seek him and may they be restored to their communities.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

Let us pray for the Christian churches in the Middle East. May the wounds of the past be healed by the celebration of Christ's birth and may peace reign in the land once more.

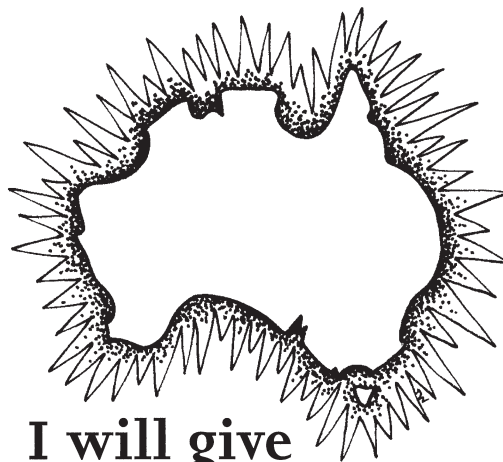
(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

Let us pray for our local community. May we be enlightened by the heavenly splendour in this holiday season and reach out to offer support to those who are most in need of God's light.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

Conclusion

Father, we know that you hear our needs and answer our prayers. Grant them through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, our Lord. **Amen.**



**I will give
you as a light to
the nations.** Isa 49:6

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

All the ends of the earth. B. Dufford SJ. 420
Joy to the world. I. Watts/ G. F. Handel. 295
Song for Epiphany. B. Moore/ C. Willcock SJ. 300
The first Nowell. English carol. 298 (especially verses 3 and 5)
We Three kings of Orient are. J. Hopkins. 299

AOV1

All the ends of the earth. B. Dufford SJ. 420
Joy to the world. I. Watts/ G. F. Handel. 170
The first Nowell. English Carol. 169 (especially verses 3 and 5)
What Child is this? W. Dix. 165

CWB

All the earth proclaim the Lord. Lucien Deiss. 611
Earth has many a noble city. Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, tr.
Edward Caswall. 669
Let all the peoples praise you, O Lord. Christopher Willcock SJ.
599
The first Nowell. Anon. 822

CWBII

Earth has many a noble city. Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, tr.
Edward Caswall. 276
Song for Epiphany. Brian Moore SJ. 278
The first Nowell. English Carol. 280
We three kings of Orient are. John H. Hopkins, Jr. 281
All the earth proclaim the Lord. Lucien Deiss. 447
City of God. Daniel L. Schutte. 453
Let all the peoples. Christopher Willcock SJ. 532
Christ, be our light. Bernadette Farrell. 540

S&S1

Lord, every nation. Jesse Manibusan. 70
Christ, be our light. Bernadette Farrell. 105

S&S2

Lord, every nation. Joshua Blakesley. 262
Your light will come, Jerusalem. Bob Hurd. 295

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalms 71: *Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.*
Psalms 71: Christopher Willcock SJ. CWB 196
Psalms 72: Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 22
Lord, every nation on earth: Paul Mason. PM pg. 56
Psalms 72: Lord, every nation on earth will adore you. Marty
Haugen. LPB. pg. 25

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Follow the Christmas Star (TT/SYJ) [CHILDREN Gathering,
Recessional]

Sing New Songs of Joy (FWS) based on Ps 97 (98) [Gathering,
Recessional]

Song of Light (SYJ) [Non-Scriptural Reflection]

Live in the Light (TWB) [Non-Scriptural Reflection]

We Come to Worship Him (STAR)



10 January 2021

The Baptism of the Lord

Reflection by Anthony Doran

Introduction

Today's Feast of the Baptism of the Lord marks both the end of the Season of Christmas and the beginning of Ordinary Time. For us, it also comes at the beginning of our new civil year. It is a good time for us to reflect on our journey of discipleship. As God's beloved daughters and sons, how do we respond to the grace of our own baptism? Can this new year be for us a new opportunity to live God's grace in our lives?

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you came so that we could be baptised in the Spirit.

Lord have mercy.

You came to bring new life through a new covenant. Christ have mercy.

You came in full obedience to the Father. Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 55:1-11

Today's First Reading opens with the resounding invitation which is almost command-like in its tone, Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty... With an offer of food for the hungry and drink for the thirsty, the prophet invites the exiles to return home to Jerusalem. This food and drink bring life, the source of which is the covenant. (The other time we read this reading and its accompanying canticle is at the Easter Vigil).

Second Reading

1 John 5:1-9

This meditation on God's love outlines a new way of life for those baptised into the new life of Christ. Obeying the commandments is not obedience to a set of objective rules and regulations – rather it is about loving God. In loving God this way, we can be sure that we are God's own beloved children.

Gospel

Mark 1:7-11

Mark's Gospel today re-introduces us to John the Baptist (having met him in Advent). While today's Gospel is short on detail, it is rich in showing God's glory to the world.

Reflection

Today's Feast of the Baptism of the Lord brings our Season of Christmas to a close. This feast commemorates the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. In the Gospels, the baptism of Jesus is an unusual event. Unusual because it is mentioned by all four of the Gospel Writers.

But even though the baptism of Jesus is mentioned in all four of the Gospels, details differ between the accounts. But all four accounts agree that the baptism of Jesus is a theophany. A theophany or manifestation of the glory of God to the world. For when Jesus is baptised, the Spirit descends on him in the form of a dove.

And as it is recorded in Mark's Gospel which we read today, a voice is heard from heaven: You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you. So following the manifestation of God in the new-born Christ in the stable at Bethlehem, following the manifestation of God to the wise visitors who visited from the East, we conclude our celebration of Christmas with this manifestation of God at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan.

We know that, in the early Church, as our Gospels were being formed, the baptism of Jesus caused some embarrassment. For the earliest of Christians asked themselves why did Jesus need to be baptised? Earlier in Mark's Gospel, John the Baptist proclaims a baptism of repentance. And the people who came to John to be baptised by him in the river Jordan confessed their sins.

But, if Jesus is without sin, why then should he be baptised? The fact that this supposedly embarrassing baptism is recorded in all four of the Gospels, seems to indicate that it is a real historical event. Jesus was indeed baptised. But why? Why was Jesus, the manifestation of God-among-us, baptised? And what does it mean for us that he was baptised? Is this something, that like the early Church, we should be embarrassed about, and simply just forget?

Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist might seem like a strange thing to celebrate. But celebrate it we do, for it tells us something about our own baptism. We cannot simply separate the baptism of Jesus from the baptism which Jesus instituted for those who believe in him. Jesus was without sin, so he did not need to be baptised. Jesus Christ undergoes baptism not that he may be sanctified by the waters, but that he may sanctify the waters of our baptism. So that, when we are baptised, we are made clean, we are made holy in the waters made holy by Jesus himself. Just as the baptism of Jesus was a manifestation of God's glory, so too, our own baptism is a manifestation of God's glory. Just as the Father claims Jesus as his son at his baptism, so too, are we claimed as sons and daughters of God when we are baptised. Water is

thicker than blood! As the Father says to Jesus, so the Father says to us: You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you. Just as Jesus begins his public ministry at his baptism, so too, we begin our life as Christians at our baptism.

Like all of our celebrations in this season of Christmas, our celebration of the Baptism of Jesus is not an event of long ago which we merely commemorate today. Rather, it is an event of now, an event of today. The baptism of Jesus did happen once. But it transcends the time to which it belongs. For it is an event which belongs to all time. The power of this event, the grace it brings, is present to us today, now, as we speak. It makes present for us the saving plan of God. And we are saved by becoming God's sons and daughters through baptism. And God always wants to save us. Not just yesterday, but today, and forever.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

Brothers and sisters, since we are baptised into God's family through water and Spirit, let us bring our needs to our Father with thirsty hearts.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis. May the Holy Spirit protect and guide him always as he continues to proclaim Christ's truth and mercy to the world.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for the leaders of our Church in Australia. May they be strengthened by the Spirit so that they can open themselves to the process of discernment during the Plenary Council.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for our catechumens journeying towards baptism at the Easter Vigil. May their lives and hearts be born again through the Baptism of water and Spirit.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

For all those that are sick or suffering from the pandemic, that they may know that they are not alone and may find comfort in their families and friends.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for those who are sick, particularly those who suffer from COVID -19. May healing flow from the care that they are given by our dedicated medical staff who work heroically at this time.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for our parish members gathered here today. May we pause to remember our baptismal vows and be renewed and refreshed in our call to faith in Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

Conclusion

Father, as we receive the living water to quench our hearts, we know that you hear our prayer in Jesus' name through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

All the ends of the earth. B. Dufford SJ. 420
Baptised in water. M. Saward/ Gaelic melody. 179
Come to the Feast. M. Haugen. 400
Come to the water. J. Foley SJ. 403
Joy to the world. I. Watts/ G. F. Handel. 295
Now in this banquet. M. Haugen. 280
O Christ the great foundation. S. S. Wesley. 483
Praise to you, O Christ our Saviour. B. Farrell. 407
Seek, O seek, the Lord. J. McAuley/ R. Connolly. 211
Send down the fire. M. Haugen. 475
Song over the waters. M. Haugen. 435
There is one Lord. Taize. 346
The Spirit of God. L. Deiss. 185
The voice of God. P. Icarus/ W. Greatorex. 476

AOV1

All the ends of the earth. B. Dufford SJ. 76
Come to the feast. M. Haugen. 151
Come to the water. F. Andersen MSC. 74
Joy to the world. I. Watts/ G. F. Handel. 170
Praise to you, O Christ our Saviour. B. Farrell. 28

AOV2

Send down the fire. M. Haugen. 164
There is one Lord. O. Alstott. 148

CWB

Seek, O seek the Lord. James Phillip McAuley. 802
When Jesus comes to be baptised. Stanbrook Abbey. 858

CWBII

When Jesus comes to be baptised. Stanbrook Abbey. 282
When John baptised by Jordan's river. Timothy Dudley-Smith. 284
Come to the water. Frank Andersen MSC. 473
Seek, O seek the Lord. James Phillip McAuley. 595

S&S2

Cry out with joy. Joshua Blakesley. 289

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Isaiah 12: *You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.*

Isaiah 12: Robert J. Batastini/Ernest Rayson SSS. CWB 272

Isaiah 12: Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 24

Isaiah 12: You will draw water joyfully. Marty Haugen. LPB. pg. 31

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Hearts on Fire (SHOF) [Gathering, Recessional]

Holy Spirit, Come (TCS)

Holy Spirit of Fire (SHOF)





17 January 2021

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Anthony Doran

Introduction

The Gospels of the early Sundays of Ordinary Time recount the beginnings of the public ministry of Jesus. Today is no different. The first disciples are invited to come and see. How do we respond to this invitation? How do we hear this call in our own day and age?

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you came so that we could respond to your call.

Lord have mercy.

You came that we might be joined to you through Baptism.

Christ have mercy.

You came so that we could know the Father.

Lord have mercy.

First Reading

1 Samuel 3:3-10. 19

Samuel is perhaps best remembered as the last of the judges of Israel who inaugurates Israel's first two kings, Saul and David. This reading is from very early in Samuel's story. Samuel is called three times by the Lord, but Samuel thinks it is Eli, the priest in whose service he is, calling him. When he finally understands that it is the Lord who is calling him, Samuel responds with simplicity: Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 6:13-15. 17-20

In every year of the three-year Lectionary Cycle, in the first weeks of Ordinary Time, the second reading is always taken from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. Today's reading reminds us that we are temples of the Holy Spirit made for God's glory.

Gospel

John 1:35-42

Today's Gospel describes the 'third day' of the public ministry of Jesus as it is presented in the Fourth Gospel. The two disciples of John the Baptist who decide to follow the Lamb of God ask him where he stays or abides. Enigmatically, Jesus invites them to come and see. We then learn that one of these was Andrew, who later brings his brother Simon to meet Jesus, who then gives Simon a new name: Peter.

Reflection

Our first reading tells a beautiful, simple and moving story. Like many of the stories we have heard during the seasons of Advent and Christmas, Hannah was elderly and without a child. After a long time, she conceives and bears a son. Like many such longed-for children in the pages of Sacred Scripture, this young child is dedicated to the service of the sanctuary.

One night, he is awakened three times by a call. Naturally, he thinks that Eli, the priest in charge of the sanctuary, is calling him. Immediately, the child rises and goes to Eli: Here I am, since you called me. No, I did not call, the priest answers twice. It seems that the child Samuel has had a dream in which he heard a voice – this happens all the time. The third time, Eli understands: this was no ordinary dream, but one in which God speaks: Go and lie down, and if someone calls say, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening." Samuel does as he is told. The Lord – for indeed it was the Lord calling him – then came and stood by, calling as he had done before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answers: Speak, Lord, your servant is listening, Samuel grows up to become one of the most important persons in the History of Salvation.

This simple story contains profound religious meaning for us and teaches us much. Samuel as yet had no knowledge of the Lord... Of course, Samuel knew in whose service he had been enlisted; he knew, too, the name of the God who was worshipped in the sanctuary. Eli the priest had taught him that much. But the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. And that night, God calls Samuel by name. This simple story is an exemplar of what it is to be called.

At the outset, we find that it is God who calls. The initiative always belongs to God, who reveals himself and calls the one he has selected, set apart, with complete freedom. In the pages of Sacred Scripture we see this in the stories of Moses, in the prophets Amos and Jeremiah, in Mary the Mother of Jesus, in Paul the teacher of the Gentiles, and indeed countless others through the ages – known or unknown. This revelation of God is always felt as a mysterious call perceived in the depths of the heart. And in response to this call from the Lord, Eli counsels openness to what the Lord is asking: Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

We also learn once again of the Lord's preference for the little ones and the poor. Samuel is only a child, one of the little ones. And yet the Lord reaches out to him and entrusts him with a task which seems out of all proportion to his strength and ability. All of those called by God seem well aware of their inabilities and deficiencies and their unworthiness for the task. And they place these inabilities before God as an objection. But it seems as if the Lord takes no notice of their protest. Because, of course, the Lord knows differently.

Samuel hears God's call in the sanctuary and in the silence of the night. God's word can resound anywhere and at any time. God never limits his presence, his action, his invitation to sacred places. But it is in silence that we can be more attentive to God's presence. For in silence, there are no distractions to hinder us from hearing God's word. To those who sense something of God's mystery and want to remain open to God's call, nothing is more important than to be still and to listen and to be attentive to God's word. The place for this encounter with God is the sanctuary where one goes to bow before God and pray to him. It might be the sanctuary of the temple. It might also be desert or the sanctuary of the human heart.

It was about the tenth hour... About four o'clock in the afternoon for us. It might have been an afternoon like the ones we have been having lately in these quiet January days... Quiet and relaxed, pretty unremarkable. John the Baptist is standing with two of his disciples. And as the author of the Fourth Gospel puts it: Jesus passed. John stares at him and acclaims him as the Lamb of God. At once, and I suspect, not knowing fully what was going on, two of John's disciples begin to follow Jesus. And then Jesus turns and asks them a question: What do you want? But here, Jesus is not seeking information.

He is calling them; he is arousing their desire: What is it that you truly seek? What is it that your hearts desire? The two disciples reply with their own question: Where do you live? The disciples are not asking Jesus for his address. These disciples want to know more than just where Jesus lives: they want to know the place where he abides; the place of his heart.

Almost enigmatically, Jesus replies: Come and see. And the lives of Andrew and the other, unnamed disciple are forever changed. They do indeed see where Jesus lives and they stay with him not only the rest of the day, but for the next three years and indeed for the rest of their lives as they respond to the call: Come and see.

God calls each one of us to follow. Each one of us is challenged to come and see. All of us are like Samuel: we are young, we know not how to speak. All of us are like Andrew: someone else has pointed the way. And yet, all of us are called, all the same.

God does not wait until we are perfect before he calls us to follow. God knows that we are all fallible human creatures, full of faults and failings. God knows that we do not have all the answers yet, that we do not have all the pieces of the puzzle worked out. God knows that we will get it wrong along the way. And yet, God still calls us. In the quiet of the sanctuary, at the desk at work, at the kitchen sink, in the classroom, in the garden, along the way. God calls us. Calls us to come and see.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

As we return to Ordinary Time, we find God in our ordinariness and the needs of our lives so let us lift our minds and hearts to our Father as we pray:

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church, particularly Pope Francis and his fellow Bishops, as they lead us in the way of the Gospel. We pray particularly for our leaders in Australia that they will engage faithfully with the Plenary Council this year.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for world leaders who have the responsibility of leading their nations out of the pandemic and recession. May they listen deeply so that they hear, as Samuel did, the call to be a servant to all.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for all those who try hard to follow God's call in their lives. May they rely on Jesus, our Teacher, and follow as did the Apostles.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for our community as people return to work following the holiday season. We also pray for those who no longer have sufficient work due to the pandemic and recession. May we be strengthened our resolve to be just and supportive of each other.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for all those who suffer because of addictions, mental ill health and chronic illness and pain. May they be surrounded by love and care so that they can find peace through their suffering knowing that their bodies are loved by God.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for those who mourn for the loss of loved ones as well as livelihoods and homes lost due to bushfire and recession. May they see God's grace in the care of those around them and embrace their future with courage.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

Conclusion

Father, we know that there are great needs throughout the world and that you hear all our petitions. In hope we pray through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, our Lord. **Amen.**

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

All you nations, sing out your joy. L. Deiss. 353
Be not afraid. B. Dufford SJ. 420
Blessed Jesus, at your Word. C. Winkworth. 531
Centre of my life. P. Inwood. 444
Forth in the peace of Christ we go. J. Quinn SJ. 495
God of Abraham. B. Farrell. 306
Here I am, Lord. D. Schutte. 496
I have loved you. M. Joncas. 402
I heard the voice of Jesus say. H. Bonar/ R. V. Williams. 468
Jesus calls us. J. Bell. 529
Let all the earth. M. Haugen. 44
Lord to whom shall we go? M. Herry. 189
One bread, one body. J. Foley SJ. 193
O Christ the great foundation. S. S. Wesley. 483
Sing hey for the carpenter. J. Bell. 508
The summons. J. Bell. 502
This is my will. J. Quinn SJ. 465

AOV1

Because the Lord is my shepherd. C. Walker. 66
Be not afraid. B. Dufford SJ. 114
God of Abraham. B. Farrell. 137
Here I am, Lord. D. Schutte. 90
I have loved you. M. Joncas. 126
I heard the voice of Jesus say. H. Bonar/ R. V. Williams. 54
Lord to whom shall we go? M. Herry. 6
One bread, one body. J. Foley SJ. 129

AOV2

Centre of my life. P. Inwood. 170
Let all the earth. M. Haugen. 152

AOV4Kids

We live and love Your Word. K. Bates SM. 118

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions

All you nations, sing out your joy to the Lord. Lucien Deiss, CSSp. 347
Blessed Jesus, at your word. Tobias Clausnitzer, tr. Catherine Winkworth. 457
Here I am, Lord. Dan Schutte. 518
Jesus calls us here to meet him. John L. Bell and Graham Maule. 524
O God, we hear your story. Kevin Bates SM. 571
Additional selection by Chris deSilva
All the earth proclaim the Lord. Lucien Deiss CSSp. 447

S&S1

Here I am, Lord. Dan Schutte. 152

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 39: *Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.*
Psalm 39: Kathleen Boschetti MSC/A. Gregory Murray OSB. CWB 352
Psalm 40 (39): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 50
Psalm 40: Here Am I. Tony Alonso. LPB. pg. 89

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Sing Out with Joy (FWS) *based on Ps 65 (66)* [Gathering]

Hearts on Fire (SHOF) [Gathering, Recessional]

We Come, We Come (TWB) [Communion – esp V1]



24 January 2021

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

Introduction

The Gospel announces that the 'kingdom of God is at hand'. This is not simply a statement of fact, but an invitation. Our most complete response will come when we, as today's Psalm calls out, "know the ways of the Lord".

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you came to call us to follow you.
Lord have mercy.

You came that we might know the ways of God.
Christ have mercy.

You came to share your spirit with us all.
Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

After a considered attempt to avoid God's call on his life, when offered a second chance, Jonah obediently and immediately responds to his given mission.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Paul expresses concern that the people of Corinth are paying too much attention to 'the world as we know it' rather than the eternal things of the kingdom of God.

Gospel

Mark 1:14-20

Today begins a run of readings from the Gospel of Mark that features in the Year B cycle. Mark is succinct and to the point in its style and such tight narrative flow adds to the sense of urgency in God's saving activity and the responses required.

Reflection

It is difficult to miss the gist in all three readings that make up this Sunday's Liturgy of the Word. All the readings have a sense of urgency; as if the responses demanded and demonstrated require such haste that one barely has time to think.

Starting with the first reading, though Jonah is better known for his long journey attempting to avoid God's call to prophesy to Nineveh (Jonah 1:1-2:11), our reading takes up the tale following this and, contrasting God's first call to Jonah, in this instance, Jonah immediately gets up and complies. That Jonah immediately responds with obedience despite his obvious misgivings found in the wider narrative should be noted. However, perhaps even more striking is the response of the inhabitants of Nineveh to Jonah's prophetic call. When Jonah cries out to the Ninevites, despite a speech relatively devoid of eloquence, their

response is swift to the point of thoughtless. There is no pondering on what Jonah's message might mean, questioning of why such a prophesy might be ensuing or even of what credentials Jonah holds to make such a proclamation. The Book of Jonah overall, with its relatively short four chapters, is more about Jonah than the city Jonah is sent to bring God's word to, but the response of Nineveh's inhabitants is certainly a feature in this part of the text. It may be easily missed by our contemporary ears, but their actions are startling if we take in a bit of context.

Nineveh is not a city of Israel, in fact it is the largest city of what was a troublesome enemy of the Kingdom of Israel and its target of attention in Jonah is highly symbolic. Despite its might and power and it being outside of the lands of God's people, the city's response to Jonah is immediate and complete. The whole city, from 'the greatest to the least' respond with clear signs of repentance.

The sense of urgency only increases in the second reading to the point of the seemingly unreasonable. Paul's call to the Corinthians seems incongruous with wider Christian teaching that places high importance on marital relationships and esteems rejoicing and rightful sorrow. Once again, a bit of context helps add some important understanding. It is well noted that Paul is writing at a time when many believed that Jesus' return and the 'end times' was imminent, and this might help explain the urgency. But this only helps so much. That Paul is singling out activities that seem quite apt seems unusually difficult whether the end times are imminent or not – after all, is it not reasonable for those who grieve to mourn, those who are experiencing joy to rejoice and those who are married to act as if married?

Nevertheless, the words are there and remain austere in their tone. Of course, it should be stated that the text cannot be used to justify abandoning one's most vital relationships. Paul himself states as much in the very same chapter (see 1 Cor 7:27 and 7:1-6). Rather, it would seem that the text is calling out for believers to acquire a certain character trait; being that, in the shadow of the eschaton (which is ever present regardless of the age), all earthly activities should be held loosely. Still, is such an attitude as Paul is stating it at all reasonable? Can I be so bold as to elevate God's call in my life to the pressing extent that Paul seems to be intimating?

Then we have the Gospel reading where Jesus announces the time of the kingdom is at hand and begins his enacting of it by calling disciples. The scene is stark and jaded in its flow. Jesus comes, Jesus calls and two groups of brothers immediately drop all they are doing, everything of their ordinary lives, and start following. Like the Ninevites, there is no reflection, no deliberation or debate. The only verbs used to describe their actions are 'leaving' and 'following' and

the only adverb applied is 'immediately'. Did they not ponder what this would all mean? Did they not pause and think for a moment what they were giving up in the form of their stable and relatively successful lives? If they did, it is not a feature of Mark's text and the pace of response seems to be a point in itself.

These somewhat difficult texts all have the flavour of reckless abandon. What can make sense of all this? Perhaps the only thing that makes sense of this is love. Love is another place where we see such reckless abandon declared and extolled. We speak of being 'madly' in love and desperate with longing. How many songs and sonnets speak of the urgent pressing of time of the one who cannot wait another moment for their beloved? How well-worn is the notion of being 'head over heels' and 'crazy' for the other (see the Song of Songs for a biblical portrayal of this very point).

Certainly, we know that wisdom and intelligent mindfulness are extolled in scripture and clearly we are not called to be foolish in any circumstance. We also know from elsewhere in scripture that times of deliberation and debate, even with God, is quite appropriate. That said, whether it is the people of Nineveh, the believers in Corinth or the disciples that followed Jesus, they experienced something that moved them to the point that seemed 'beyond normal'. Their hearts were touched and their very being turned upside down such that all else paled in comparison. Perhaps, then, this should be our focus; that we can find such 'mad love' for Christ that our responses to God's call would also be automatic and lacking in conflict. That the touch of our loving God be so deeply felt, so vividly known that no rationalising, self-persuasion or debate is required – we simply know.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The psalmist calls on God to teach us the path of truth. As we listen to this call, let us bring all our needs to the Father.

Petitions

We pray for our Pope, bishops and priests, that they may preach the Gospel with wisdom and zeal during this time of great change and challenge in every aspect of life.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for nations and governments of the world, that they may be committed to the protection of the world's resources and respect the need for change of policy in face of extreme weather events.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for encouragement in our struggle for justice, love and peace. Like the people of Corinth, may we be filled with the Holy Spirit to have inner freedom and peace as we embrace the things of God, not of economic power.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for our community, that we unite in our discipleship of the Lord. May we show the world that

following Christ brings peace and joy.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for all those who are returning to work and study after holidays. May they use the renewed energy to contribute with honesty and diligence.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for those who are suffering illness of body, mind and spirit. May they be given the strength to seek the help they need and there encounter care and support.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

Conclusion

Lord, as we are gathered in unifying prayer, listen to our needs as we offer them in hope, knowing you will answer through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, our Lord. **Amen.**

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

CWB

Amazing grace. J. Newton. 437
A new heart for a new world. T. Watts/ M. O'Brien. 438
Be not afraid. B. Dufford SJ. 420
Bring forth the Kingdom. M. Haugen. 478
Come to the Feast. M. Haugen. 400
Glory and praise to our God. D. Schutte. 417
Grant to us, O Lord. L. Deiss. 303
I Say "Yes" Lord. D. Penna. 445
Lord, you give the great commission. J. Rowthorn/ C. Taylor. 313
Sing a new song. D. Schutte. 414
Sing Hey for the Carpenter. J. Bell. 508
Take the Word of God with you. J. Harrison/ C. Walker. 494
The light of Christ. D. Fishel. 405
The Spirit of God. L. Deiss. 185
The summons. J. Bell. 502
The voice of God. P. Icarus/ W. Greatorex. 476
We are many parts. M. Haugen. 523

AOV1

A new heart for a new world. T. Watts/ M. O'Brien
Be not afraid. B. Dufford SJ. 114
Come to the Feast. M. Haugen. 151
Glory and praise to our God. D. Schutte. 16
I Say "Yes" Lord. D. Penna. 155
Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven. J. Goss. 78
Send us as Your blessing Lord. C. Walker. 181
Sing a new song. D. Schutte. 80
The Light of Christ. D. Fishel. 186
We are many parts. M. Haugen. 86

AOV2

Bring forth the Kingdom. M. Haugen. 4
Sing a new song to the Lord. T. Dudley-Smith/ D. Wilson. 76
Table of plenty. D. Schutte. 20

AOV4Kids

The Table of God. F. P. O'Brien. 8
We are children of the Living God. K. Sherman CSJ. 15
When we listen. D. Halloran. 132

CWB

To you, O Lord, I lift my soul. Marty Haugen. 850

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions

A new heart for a new world. Trisha Watts & Monica O'Brien. 477
O God, your people gather. Anthony Nye SJ. 574
The summons. John L. Bell and Graham Maule. 645

Be not afraid. Bob Dufford SJ. 652

Additional selections by Chris deSilva

Sing a new song unto the Lord. Daniel Schutte. 598

Sing a new song to the Lord. Timothy Dudley-Smith. 600

You walk along our shoreline. Sylvia Dunston. 653

S&S1

To you, O God, I lift up my soul. Bob Hurd. 60

The summons. John L. Bell. 137

S&S2

To you, O Lord. Timothy R. Smith. 251

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Psalm 24: *Teach me your ways, O Lord.*

Psalm 24: Kathleen Boschetti MSC. CWB 356

Psalm 25 (24): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 26

Psalm 25: Teach Me Your Ways. Marty Haugen. LPB. pg. 92

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Sing New Songs of Joy (FWS) *based on Ps 97 (98)* [Gathering, Recessional]

Help Me Know Your Ways (FWS) *based on Ps 24 (25)*

To You, O Lord (LCC) *Ps 24 (25)* Children's Lectionary Translation



26 January 2021

Australia Day

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

Introduction

Australia Day is regarded as a Day of Prayer in the Australian liturgical calendar. It is an apt designation. We are encouraged this day to pray for the nation; in wonder and awe at its beauty, gratitude for the opportunities it affords us, for forgiveness for where we have failed and for hope that we may be a nation where peace and justice reign.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you came that we might value all the gifts of creation.

Lord have mercy.

You came to show us how to serve the world. Christ have mercy.

You came to bring the message of peace.

Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 32:15-18

When justice reigns, life abounds – even the barren wilderness becomes a place of life and security.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 or Romans 12:9-13

We are all called in different ways and for different tasks, but our purpose remains the same; to use our gifts for the sake of all and to build up our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Gospel

Matthew 5:2-12

The Beatitudes in Matthew lay down a vision for ultimate happiness. Not for the first time in the Gospels, Jesus speaks of a happiness that is found in ways that are not so straightforward.

Reflection

Like all structures that define a boundary of people, Australia is a country that speaks of and is shaped by various stories and traditions. One mythos often attributed to the Australian context is how fortunate a country it is. How we live in a land of opportunity and riches; to put it succinctly, where happiness can be found. Perhaps it is apt then that the Beatitudes taken from Matthew's Gospel are used in today's liturgy as they have much to say about what happiness consists of and how it can be found.

We can start this reflection with the word 'happy' itself. Though the Lectionary translation uses the word 'happy' for the Greek *makarios* to describe the various beatitudes, many translations seeking to express the

intent of the original text use 'blessed' instead. They do so for various reasons, including that happiness can be understood to mean a mental state and, in that sense, something rather transient or fleeting rather than a state of being which most scholars recognise is what is being described here.

Secondly, the word 'blessed' also captures the source of such 'happiness'. Though an adjective in the original Greek, *makarios* obviously relates to the verb 'to bless'. Being blessed is inherently a transitive verb and suggests someone is doing the blessing to something or someone else. Naturally, when it comes to the Beatitudes it is God who is the one who is blessing and we are seeking to find that blessed state.

These two points give us a taste of the sort of happiness that Jesus is advocating in these texts. It is not something that is simply a feeling, nor is it found by accident – by simply being in the right place at the right time, as if by luck.

So, what does this happiness look like? Well, the text says it all really. It is found in humility, in sorrow, in the powerless and the merciful. In those who seek God's very heart, those who bring peace to their lives and to their world and are so committed to the good and to justice that they will face persecution to realise it.

These are such powerful sentiments that we should take pause on every one. Lifetimes can be filled attempting to grasp the fullness of any one let alone all of them. Returning to the occasion of this liturgy, can we say that this is the happiness our nation possesses? Given the breadth and depth of the Beatitudes, the answer will most likely always be no. The teaching of the Gospel reading then functions on a number of levels.

We are reminded that catch phrases and sayings attributed to relatively stable and wealthy countries like Australia such as a land of opportunity, of prosperity, of being a 'lucky country' or, indeed, a place of happiness, risk being empty in substance. They can be as much a distraction from where true happiness lies as an aspiration to finding it. It cannot be found in wealth and power, nor in a 'good time' or cheerful sentimentalism. Not that these are necessarily ills in themselves, but they are not where the true 'happiness' that the Gospel is describing is found.

There is not enough space here to unpack all the Beatitudes, but even if we take one of them, we find much to help us fill out where this true happiness is to be found.

The second beatitude speaks of mourning. This can be misunderstood to suggest that deep sorrow is inherently a good thing. This is a far too simplistic a conclusion to make. Rather, as with all the Beatitudes, such mourning is based on a certain context. Many scholars note that the Beatitudes in Matthew are based on Isaiah 61 and mourning on vv. 2-3 in

particular. There the prophet Isaiah declares a time of blessing for those who 'mourn in Zion' (Is 61:3). They mourn because God's plan is not being realised and, further, it is not being realised because of human doing.

In this sense, this beatitude speaks of mourning as both a victim and as a perpetrator. That the Lord is with the sufferer and promises comfort to the one in sorrow is well noted. The other side to this beatitude is that there is blessedness when one recognises their own part in causing sorrow and failing to actualise the love of God in our world. To be truly aware of this will induce mourning. When we mourn in this vein, as a step toward truth and repentance, we are on the path to being truly blessed.

This, then, points to another important feature of the Beatitudes, they are not expressing something in an historical sense, as if these blessings only remain in a time and place. Rather, they are eschatological, meaning they draw us to a final hope for all humanity. Those who mourn are blessed not simply because they are sad, but because they see where we are destined to be and how we are not there yet. Thus, the vision of the 'blessed mourner' remains in that future direction and it, ironically as the text implies, turns this sad longing into hope, mourning into happiness.

Returning to today's wider setting, any true happiness to be found is not going to be because all things are perfect – that is evidently not true. Australia has a history dotted with great moments, but also many filled with sorrow and sin. Nevertheless, it is blessed because it has a future to be grasped. For Australia, as for people of every nation, our happiness comes from an opportunity to realise a future more in keeping with God's intent. As the Gospel attests, this is only attainable through humble and honest reliance on God and an attention to God's plan for all creation. Further, this only comes through justice and righteousness.

The eschatological hope the Beatitudes point to is not easily grasped, but the vision is there for all who are willing to embrace it, the opportunity is in front of us. This is so, not only in the words of Christ we have heard in today's Gospel, but also in the presence of Jesus Christ in our Christian communities, in our Sacraments and the other myriad ways Jesus Christ is present in our midst – this is why we are blessed and this is why we can be 'happy'.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

We are encouraged to pray for the things that we need particularly as we celebrate our nation. Let us turn to the Father with our needs.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of the Church in Australia. May they experience the power of the Spirit in the discernment necessary for the process of the Plenary Council.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for the leaders of our land that they will respect all the people who come to these shores and particularly the nations of people who were here before us.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for all those celebrating today that they will do so with respect, moderation, and community spirit.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for those who are alone, afraid, suffering pain and illness. May they find support and peace through the love and care of family and community.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for those who have died for Australia. May they be given the eternal reward of life in God's perfection.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

Conclusion

Loving Father, hear the needs of your people gathered here as we pray for our nation. We have confidence that our petitions will be answered through the power of your Spirit and in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

CWB

Come Holy Ghost, Creator come. R. Maurus, et al./ Thomas Tallis. 376

For the healing of the nations. F. Kaan. 513

God of Peace. A. Kelly CSsR/ C. Willcock SJ. 553

Lord of earth and all Creation. M. R. Thwaites/ H. M. Thwaites. 554

The Beatitudes. P. Kearney. 489

AOV2

God of Peace. A. Kelly CSsR/ C. Willcock SJ. 138

AOVNG

Gift of grace. Gina Ogilvie. 49

CWB

Christ, our Lord, the Prince of ages. Anon. 644

Help of Christians, guard this land. Richard Connolly. 711

CWBII

Christ, our Lord, the Prince of ages. Anon. 399

Help of Christians, guard this land. James Phillip McAuley. 429

For Australia. Michael Raynor Thwaites and Honor Thwaites. 545

God of peace. Anthony Kelly CSsR. 546

S&S1

Lord, let us see your kindness. Paul Hillebrand. 71

S&S2

Lord, show us your mercy and love. Janet Sullivan Walker. 265

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalms 84: *The Lord speaks of peace to his people.*

Psalms 84: Brian Fitzgerald. CWB 483

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Hearts on Fire (SHOF) [Gathering, Recessional]



31 January 2021

Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

Introduction

There were many preachers applying their craft in Jesus' day, but Jesus' teaching stood out. His words had an authority like no other. This teaching also heralded the fulfilment of a promise stretching to the time of Moses, of one who would have the power to liberate as only God can.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you came to fulfil the Law.
Lord have mercy.

You came to show us the way to the Father.
Christ have mercy.

You came to lead us with authority. Lord
Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Deuteronomy 18:15–20

As they prepared to enter the Promised Land, the chosen people of God were instructed to be wary of the ways of divination common amongst its neighbours. Rather, they are to seek prophets in the mould of Moses and in the tradition of God's own people.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 7:32–35

After encouraging those who are married to be so in fullness in the early part of the chapter, Paul here turns his attention to those who are not, suggesting those who are unmarried remain so enabling them to be devoted to Christ in a distinct way.

Gospel

Mark 1:21–28

On hearing Jesus speak in the synagogue, the people were astounded at the exalted nature of this new kind of teaching. It is a teaching of authority and action.

Reflection

Many years ago, as part of the religious studies curriculum, the year group I was in had been looking at the topic of social justice, care for the poor and the like. No doubt it was good teaching but, the truth is, there is little I remember about that program that ran for a number of weeks with the exception of one particular session. In this particular class we were blessed to hear a talk from one who had spent many years working in missions and aid agencies in Burma and India, including a long stint with Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity. I remember next to nothing of the teaching that came before and after, but this day stands out vividly through the years. This woman of service spoke as one who didn't just know

eloquent words about love, justice and mercy, she had lived it – it was part of her very being. She spoke with such authenticity, passion and authority that what started as a 'regular class' full of disinterested high school boys ended with everyone in that room engaged and gobsmacked. At the conclusion of this great woman's presentation, every single person in the room spontaneously joined in a standing ovation. No other class in high school that I remember, before or since, ended with a standing ovation. The setting was quite familiar, but the experience was extraordinary. Like the listeners in our Gospel story, we in that school setting were utterly amazed and the event left a lasting impression.

Turning to the Gospel itself, the scene starts with what would have been a common activity on a Sabbath in Jesus' day. One would gather in a synagogue and the local leader would invite people to read and sometimes preach on the Hebrew Scriptures. It is not significantly unusual that Jesus would be speaking at a synagogue and the texts drawn on were likely well known to the Jewish faithful, most likely scriptures taken from the Prophets. What Mark calls 'the scribes' would have pondered and taught on the same texts in a mode similar to what Jesus would have done. The textual source, the act of teaching on it or the practices in the synagogue are not particularly novel. However, there is something very different going on here. When Jesus begins to preach, people sense something not commonly experienced in this setting.

The listeners in the Gospel narrative seem to be drawn into an experience similar to my own all those years ago in school. The one before them in the Gospel scene does not just say the right words or talk about the right things, there is authenticity and authority. This word 'authority' is key in this text and is worthy of brief reflection. The Greek *exousia* is used frequently in the New Testament and, though typically translated as 'authority', sometimes is translated as 'power'. In truth it is a combination of both. It is a power that rests on an authority. The significance is that this authority is not entirely one's own – it is given. In this case, the power is God's and it belongs to God alone. Jesus speaks and acts with authority because Jesus speaks with God's imprimatur as it were. There is a different Greek word used when this power and skill is innate and part of one's own being (that being *dynamis*). Rather, the use of *exousia* here suggests the teaching is so profound because it is God's very self being experienced in and through Jesus. The amazing teaching comes not from oratory skill (though that may well have existed), not from might and power in itself, but because of Jesus' deep connection as a son. So profound is this connection that believers would come to recognise Jesus as the Son of God.

This, then, gives us a window into who Jesus is but, also, a challenge in how we are to live. There is an implied question put before us; are we like the scribes

who might know the words, know the customs and look the part – relying on a human *'dynamis'* as it were? Or are we like Jesus and the wonderful woman who spoke to my class way back in high school – finding our power and activity in the *'exousia'* of God. If the latter, do we then draw so deeply from it that it integrates into our very being such that it cannot be missed?

Like the figures in our story, how successful we are doing this might be found in how it is received. Do we draw inspiration and conviction from those around us because they see the very authority of God's love made real? Do we draw people to the only authority that matters? In short, do people see the face of Christ in our words and deeds?

There is another important element in the Gospel reading, that being the 'unclean spirit'. Its reaction to Jesus provides an important footnote to our reflection. The authority that Jesus has not only draws amazement, it threatens evil and, in fact, dispels it. The scribes do not have this power, only Jesus with the *'exousia'* of God does this. Again, this gives us a window into the nature of Christ but, also, a model for our journey of discipleship. In God's power and close to God's love, evil should fear us rather than we fear evil. There are too many 'unclean spirits' disrupting our lives and our world, and this is so despite our best efforts. However, in God's authority, in the face of Christ, evil weakens and eventually flees. What blessed people we are to be able to share in this power and authority.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The psalmist calls us not to harden our hearts but to hear God's voice so we turn now in prayer and ask our Father to listen graciously to the needs of our community.

Petitions

We pray for our earthly shepherd, Pope Francis; may he lead us as we seek to grow in Christian charity and love.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for those who shepherd the Church in Australia. May they work faithfully towards the Plenary Council and never be afraid to speak for those who are powerless in our society.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for our leaders in Australia that they will not harden their hearts to the needs of people suffering because of the pandemic and recession.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for all people; let us never harden our hearts when God speaks to us.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for all suffering and persecuted Christians throughout the world; may they be comforted by Christ in their suffering.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for all of those priests and religious who have given themselves to service the Church; may they be strengthened in their vocation and may their example inspire in others a desire to serve the community with dedication.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for all of those who are married; may they seek to love and serve their spouse more fully through selflessly attending to each other's needs until death separates them.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for those who work on the land and in industry that they will feel fulfilled by their contribution to the needs of our community.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

Conclusion

Father, hear our prayers, which we bring before you in faith and hope. May they be answered through the power of your Spirit, and in the name of Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

CWB

A New Commandment. Anon. 615
Forth in the Peace of Christ we go. J. Quinn SJ. 681
Forgive our sins as we forgive. R. Herklots. 680
I am the Bread of Life. S. Toolan RSM. 718
Lord of all hopefulness. J. Struther/ Irish Traditional Melody. 738
Make me a channel of Your Peace. S. Temple. 793
O Breathe on Me, Breath of God. Traditional Irish Melody. 758
O God, Our Help in Ages Past. I. Watts. 767
There's a wideness in God's mercy. F. Faber. 838
Where there is charity and love. R. Connolly. 863

GA

A New Commandment. Anon. 318
As the deer longs. B. Hurd. 38
Eye has not seen. M. Haugen. 466
For the Healing of the Nations. F. Kaan. 513
Forth in the Peace of Christ we go. J. Quinn SJ. 495
I heard the voice of Jesus say. H. Bonar/ R. V. Williams. 468
Make me a channel of Your Peace. S. Temple. 490
O Breathe on Me, Breath of God. Traditional Irish Melody. 432
Praise to You, O Christ our Saviour. B. Farrell. 407
Seek Ye First. K. Lafferty. 456
Ubi Caritas. Gregorian Chant. 319
Ubi Caritas. Taize. 324
We are many parts. M. Haugen. 523
Where there is charity and love. R. Connolly. 323

AOV1

As the deer longs. B. Hurd. 120
Eye has not seen. M. Haugen. 146
I heard the voice of Jesus say. H. Bonar/ R. V. Williams. 54
Praise to You, O Christ our Saviour. B. Farrell. 28
Seek Ye First. K. Lafferty. 48

We are Many Parts. M. Haugen. 86
When we eat this Bread. M. Joncas. 99

AOV2

Make me a channel of Your Peace. S. Temple. 126
We Gather Here, O Lord. O. Alstott/ C. Smith CFC. 99

AOV4Kids

A Family Prayer. K. Bates SM. 16
The Table of God. F. O'Brien. 8

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions

A new commandment. Anon. 443
Where there is charity and love. Richard Connolly. 638
Where true charity is dwelling/*Ubi caritas est vera*. Tr. ICEL. 639
Additional selections by Chris deSilva
Forgive our sins as we forgive. Rosamond E. Herklots. 120

S&S1

If Today. Trevor Thomson. 74

S&S2

If Today You Hear His Voice. Jesse Manibusan. 269

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 94: *If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*
Psalm 94: Robert Carroll/ Joseph Gelineau SJ. CWB 334
Psalm 95 (94): Jenny O'Brien. JOBA pg. 32
If Today You Hear His Voice: Paul Mason. PM pg. 68
If Today You Hear His Voice: Marty Haugen. LPA pg. 33

Music selections by Michael Mangan

(Further general selections are at the back of this issue)

Gather In Jesus' Name (LCC) *Based on Mt 18:20*

Love God, Love Each Other (LCC) {CHILDREN Gathering, Recessional}

If Today You Hear His Voice (LCC) *Ps 94/95 (Children's Lectionary)*



7 February 2021

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

Introduction

This Sunday's readings give us a sense of the mode of life we are called to live; sacrificial, prayerful and life giving.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you came that we might be healed.
Lord have mercy.

You came that we might become slaves to the Gospel and liberate our lives.
Christ have mercy.

You came so that those who suffer will feel the saving hand of God.
Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Job 7:1-4, 6-7

Job expresses deep sorrow at an experience of life that seems repetitive, shallow and devoid of joy.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23

Paul, obligated by his identity found in Christ, speaks of preaching the Good News with a heart of service.

Gospel

Mark 1:29-39

Mark's depiction of Jesus' earliest days of public ministry continues with further acts of healing and casting out of evil spirits.

Reflection

This Sunday's Gospel reading takes up where we left off last week. Immediately following preaching and healing in the synagogue (Mk 1:21-28), Jesus visits the house of two of his disciples, cures their mother, then does similar to many people later in the day. The whole town also seemed focused on Jesus and his activities, this seemingly going well into the evening. A 'day in the life of Jesus' seems to be the depiction here, and it appears very full. According to Mark at least, this is one of Jesus' first days of public ministry, the first of many.

No wonder Jesus wants a bit of time on his own and to silently connect with his God. However, in keeping with the busy feel of the text, he barely gets to this moment of prayer before he is quickly reminded "everyone is looking for you" (Mk 1:37).

Of note, Jesus' response is not justified rejection of his followers. It would not have been entirely out of place for Jesus to put up some boundary to his prayer time and resist his follower's hasty 'hunting of him down' (this being the sense of the original Greek, the Lectionary's use of 'search for him' rather softens this sense).

Nothing like that is present. Instead, the response from Jesus is "Let us go . . ., for this is why I have come" (v. 38). The response here is important. Mark's presentation of the various events, including prayer itself, is such that they are not to be understood as isolated and discrete acts. Jesus moves from teaching, to casting out evil, to healing in intimate situations, to healing in public places, to private prayer then on to wider ministry activity, all in an organic flow. In other words, prayer is in the natural flow of Jesus' nature, calling and activity.

Prayer does not begin and end for Jesus as if he prays then he ministers. What he is here for includes prayer, and his special 'time of prayer' is integrated into Jesus' life and work. Particularly as we take in the literary structure of this first chapter, all these passages from Mark are placed to introduce and illustrate who Jesus was and what he was about – prayer is but one part of the incorporated whole.

This says much about prayer in very few words. Certainly, having distinct places and ways of prayer, quiet reflective time alone with God is important. It helps centre ourselves and provides a shape to an important Christian disciple that then helps guide our lives. However, prayer is not limited to such places alone. What we are about, our daily lives from the mundane to the exciting, from the tired and old to the novel and exhilarating can be, indeed, should be, ways we are connecting to God.

For most of us, even as we acknowledge the value in quiet time with God, the pressing tasks of our days, the things we are called to do and the things we are about, seem to so easily pull us away from dedicated prayer. This can be to such an extent that we might feel inadequate as Christians or even guilty. In this sense, there is something comforting in the Gospel. Certainly, we do need to make some effort. Jesus' marked decision to find a place and time to pray attests to this. However, this does not dominate the other elements in Jesus' activities.

Similarly, very few of us are called to lives that are dominated by contemplative isolated prayer; however, we are all called to be about God's work. Perhaps, then, we can be encouraged to shift our thinking; our daily lives, as with Jesus' daily life, can be an extension of our prayer and our prayer an extension of our daily lives. Rather than, for example, feeling guilty for the lack of prayer, finding our prayer in the ways of our daily life is where our discipleship can take us.

There is one more thing we can reflect on when it comes to prayer. This is found in drawing the first reading into the picture. The excerpt from Job provides an interesting foil for the Gospel reading. It provides something of an image of the human condition; limited, broken and unable to fully free itself from the weight of life. Jesus' healing ministry presents the very cure to such a condition.

However, there is another element linking the two passages – that being the aforementioned prayer.

The text from Job is taken from a lengthy series of discourses where Job laments the position he finds himself in. If the wider narrative is pulled into view, one sees that Job's words are essentially directed toward God. They are an honest cry out to God regarding his plight. As the story in Job unfolds, his friends begin to scold him for such frankness. They suggest that Job acknowledge his sin even if he does not know what it is. Job is in such a horrible way, they figure, because he must have done something wrong (see Job 11 for example). However, Job refuses. Job only offers brutal honesty to God and to his friends. He is simply not interested in platitudes and façade, or even human minded logic.

There is no space here to unpack the finer points of the Book of Job, suffice to say that, in the end, Job's honesty is vindicated. The point being that, when we do find those times of prayer, and for those times to be truly integrated into the whole of our lives as mentioned, then all we need to bring to such moments is brutal honesty. God does not need nor seek a show. We do not pray to impress others or even ourselves. Our honest broken selves, even our most hurtful expressions if that is all we have, is quite adequate. Perhaps the lesson here is, when we approach prayer with simple honesty, we are then able to face what 'we are about' with integrity and authenticity.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The psalmist encourages us with the understanding that God is loving and heals the broken hearted. Therefore, we bring our needs to the Father knowing that goodness will follow.

Petitions

We pray for our bishops and all our clergy; through the Spirit's gifts of wisdom and counsel may they nurture unity and trust within God's family and bring healing in mind and spirit to those suffering from brokenness.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for the leaders of nations suffering the burdens brought about by the pandemic and recession; inspire others to bring the Good News of Christ to aid and restore human dignity through works of charity.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for those who feel like Job with a sense of futility and deep sorrow. May we show the compassion of Jesus by reaching out to them with love and mercy.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for families who experience brokenness through divorce and separation; may they find the support that will enable them to live through this difficulty with peace and strength.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for the sick of our community. Like Peter's mother-in-law who was healed by Jesus, may they find consolation and healing through Jesus and then rise to serve others.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for all those who work and study. May they engage in what they do with diligence and care and gratefully acknowledge the gift of the opportunities they have been given.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

Conclusion

Father, hear these needs of our community as we offer them in the knowledge that you are listening. We make our prayer through the power of the Spirit and in the name of your Son, Jesus. **Amen.**

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva GA

Bring forth the Kingdom. M. Haugen. 478
Christ, be our Light. B. Farrell. 404
Eye has not seen. M. Haugen. 466
Forth in the peace of Christ we go. J. Quinn SJ. 495
Holy Father, God of might. R. Connolly. 424
Lord, You give the great commission. Rowthorn/ C. Taylor. 313
Now in this Banquet. M. Haugen. 197
Praise to You, O Christ our Saviour. B. Farrell. 407
Take Christ to the world. P. Inwood. 369
The Beatitudes. P. Kearney. 489
The servant song. R. Gillard. 487
The cry of the poor. J. Foley SJ. 36
The Spirit of God. L. Deiss. 185
The voice of God. P. Icarus/ W. Greatorex. 476
We remember. M. Haugen. 446

AOV1

Eye has not seen. M. Haugen. 146
Praise to You, O Christ our Saviour. B. Farrell. 28
The Cry of the poor. J. Foley SJ. 83
We remember. M. Haugen. 81

AOV2

Bring forth the Kingdom. M. Haugen. 4
Christ, Be our Light. B. Farrell. 3
The servant song. R. Gillard. 169

AOV4Kids

Many and Great, O God, Are Your Works. Traditional. 123

CWB

O Christ, the healer, we have come. Frederick Pratt Green. 759
The Beatitudes. Peter Kearney. 817

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions
O Christ, the healer, we have come. Fred Pratt Green. 127
Your hands, O Lord, in days of old. Edward Hayes Plumptre. 129
O come and sing to God, the Lord. The Psalter. 175
Servant Song. Richard Gillard. 461
Lord, whose love in humble service. Albert F. Bayly. 551
The Church of Christ, in ev'ry age. Fred Pratt Green. 613
Additional selections by Chris deSilva
The Beatitudes. Peter Kearney. 456

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalms 146: Praise the Lord who heals the broken-hearted.
Psalm 146: Robert J. Batastini/George A. Black. CWB 362
Psalm 147 (146): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 55
Psalm 147: Praise the Lord, Who Heals the Brokenhearted. Marty Haugen. LPB. pg. 98

Music selections by Michael Mangan

If Today You Hear His Voice (LCC) *Ps 94* (95) Children's
Lectionary Translation



14 February 2021

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

Introduction

Jesus continues to demonstrate the nature of his saving mission through healing. This occasion features leprosy, a disease that had special import in the ancient world. Jesus' encounter with a sufferer gives us insight into God's desire to be in solidarity with sufferers of all kinds.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you suffered so that we might be transformed through your grace. Lord have mercy.

You came that we might be filled with the joy of salvation. Christ have mercy.

You came to touch us and heal us. Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Leviticus 13:1–2, 44–46

This excerpt from Leviticus provides a taste of the conditions that people afflicted with skin diseases had to endure under the Mosaic Law.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 10:31–11:1

Paul talks of life modelled on Christ, one that looks out for other's best interest.

Gospel

Mark 1:40–45

Jesus shows a profound sense of compassion and solidarity when confronted with one whose disease left them particularly objectionable and vulnerable.

Reflection

That Jesus cured lepers is an enduring image from the Bible. One who is even vaguely familiar with the life of Christ will often know such a feature. Maybe it's the frequency at which this particular ailment is mentioned in the Gospels. Though this is the only occurrence in Mark, it is mentioned roughly nine other times in the other two Synoptic Gospels. Whatever the reason, this familiarity often stops at knowing that Jesus cured another sort of sickness which, though noteworthy, risks missing some important points.

The Gospel reading is primed by the first taken from Leviticus. There we are given a sense of why Jesus' actions bear such weight. The Lectionary truncates a lengthy discourse in Leviticus 13-14 that catalogues several ailments associated with the skin and the implications therein. The truncated version is necessary, but it also reduces the sense of legislative and social burden that one who was afflicted by such diseases had to bear. To have a skin disease such as leprosy in Jesus' time was not only an ailment

with its own inherent health problems, it meant total ostracisation from one's community. In addition, that one had to declare themselves 'unclean' in such vociferous manner when anybody came near would have forced self-loathing on to what would have already been intolerable situations. The one who suffered from leprosy like ailments was separated from their central expressions of faith, their community and themselves.

Knowing this, that Jesus brings healing to such a situation is important. However, more than the actual fact of the healing, what bears special significance is the way it occurs.

We have already seen in recent weeks how Mark uses a very tight language style with a fast moving economy of text. That Mark makes the point that the man approached Jesus should not be underestimated. He not only does not call out 'unclean' as required, but literally does the opposite of the required law and approaches Jesus. Jesus likewise disregards the law and responds to the man by touching him – this risks making Jesus as unclean as the leprosy man whether he becomes infected or not.

Then there is the poignant dialogue itself starting with, "If you want to, you can cure me" (Mk 1:40). These words point to why the afflicted man was so bold as to approach Jesus. Something about Christ is recognisable to the man – he senses a special presence. Even more impressive is Jesus' response. The Lectionary translation of 'feeling sorry for him' (v. 41) is a rendering of what is a difficult phrase in the original Greek. The sense in the original text is of deep emotion and is peculiar given the relatively sparse display of emotion in the various scenes in Mark to this point. It seems to matter here.

Perhaps the emotional connection matters because Jesus is not just about healing as a matter of course – as if by some mechanistic activity required of God's presence. Rather, Jesus is interested in the person, not just in the ailment. Even the theological implications of the healing seem to fade into the background with those emotive expressions. This seems to underline the point floating around this reading. People have struggles and people have ailments but they are not the sum of those things. We are not to define ourselves by what burdens us and we are not to define others in kind.

The emphasis on emotion also causes us to check our own emotions when we encounter 'the unclean'. What is that unfiltered emotion we have when we face taboos in our midst? What is the feeling in the pit of our stomach when the ugly, tainted and repulsive are encountered?

Of course, there is little one can do with their initial reactions in such settings. There are inherent biological reasons why we might feel certain emotions in such circumstances. Indeed, the social practices pointed to in our readings, particularly given the historical context,

is also understandable. On a simple biological level, such responses exist to protect ourselves and our societies.

Nevertheless, the challenge is there before us to acknowledge such things and to bring order to them. Repulsion in certain circumstances may well be natural, but Jesus is introducing a higher level to our reckoning. Such 'natural' thinking must be touched by the 'supernatural' call of God that seeks to transform and heal, to bring peace and moral justice to any situation.

The healing scene is concluded with a twofold directive; one is to tell no one of the event (a common theme in Mark that we will leave aside in this instance), the other is for the healed man to present himself to the priests as Moses prescribed. This offers a peculiar juxtaposition to the healing and the events leading up to it.

Just moments earlier, when Jesus responded and then touched the man with such obvious skin ailments, he broke purity laws sourced from the same origin he now advocates. Then, with the healing over, Jesus evokes the laws he effectively just flouted. There is much deliberation on the meaning of these passages. The interpretations can be quite varying. Nevertheless, what seems to be occurring here is a certain framing on how the Law sits in relation to God's messianic activity. It anticipates the same sense expressed when Jesus states 'the Sabbath is made for the man, not man for the Sabbath' found later in Mark (2:23-28). The dignity of the human person always remains in view in everything Jesus does and so it should be with us.

When it comes to illnesses, our most recent history has been dominated by COVID-19, but afflictions in many forms are always with us. We are reminded by our gospel message today that any human ailment we encounter must be met with compassion that humanises the sufferer and that includes rather than shuns. Despite any immediate compulsion or revulsion, our response must go to the higher calling that God has set before us. We should not act out of fear but, like Jesus, find it in our heart to be moved to kindness.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The psalmist urges us to turn to God in times of trouble. Let us now turn to God with all the needs of our community.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church, especially Pope Francis, that they will not be afraid to reach out and touch people with the healing power that Jesus has given them.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for the leaders of our Church in Australia that they will follow Jesus' way of healing and loving in the process of preparation for the Plenary Council.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for the leaders of our nation. May they be inspired to reach out in compassion to those among us who are affected by the recession so that the wealth

we enjoy may be shared by all.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for all artists and artisans, that the gift given to them may be used to bring joy and delight to all those who experience their artworks.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for all those who are responsible for the delivery of health care in Australia. May they understand that spiritual healing is also necessary and that chaplaincy can improve the recovery of those in their care.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for those grieve for the loss of loved ones or for the loss of homes and livelihoods. May they find hope and peace through the support and touch of caring people around them.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

Conclusion

Loving Father, your Son healed many as he walked through Galilee and so we ask you to hear the needs of our community that we place before you and grant them through the power of the Spirit and in your Son's name. **Amen.**

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Amazing grace. J. Newton. 437

Eye has not seen. M. Haugen. 466

Lift up your hearts to the Lord. R. O'Connor. 416

Shelter me, O God. B. Hurd. 230

The summons. J. Bell. 502

AOV1

Amazing grace. J. Newton. 29

Eye has not seen. M. Haugen. 146

Shelter me, O God. B. Hurd. 140

AOV2

Behold, I make all things new. J. Bell. 85

Comfort, comfort all my people. R. Mann. 12

Heal me, O God. G. Norbert. 52

AOV4Kids

For the journey. G. Holmes. 128

Turn our sadness upside down. L. Newton. 125

CWB

O Christ, the healer, we have come. Frederick Pratt Green. 759

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions

O Christ, the healer, we have come. Fred Pratt Green. 127

Trust in God, hope in God. Bernard Kirkpatrick. 128

Your hands, O Lord, in days of old. Edward Hayes Plumpton. 129

Lift up your hearts. Robert F. O'Connor SJ. 539

The summons. John L. Bell and Graham Maule. 645

S&S1

Lift up your hearts. Roc O'Connor, SJ. 126

The summons. John L. Bell. 137

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 31: *I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation.*

Psalm 31: Robert J. Batastini/Joseph Gelineau SJ. CWB 365

Psalm 32 (31): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 56

Psalm 32: I Turn to You, Lord. Tony Alonso. LPB. pg. 101



Musicians' Appendix

Abbreviations and Explanations

PM	Psalms for All Time. Paul Mason © 2007 Paul Mason Published by Willow Publishing Pty Ltd. Sales: info@willowconnection.com.au Paul Mason's website www.liturgicalsong.com
PM	Vol 2 Psalms for All Time: Lectionary psalms for Sundays and Feasts. Paul Mason © 2017 Paul Mason. Published by Liturgical Song.
PFS	Psalms for Feasts and Seasons; Revised and Augmented Full Music Edition Christopher Willcock. Published by Collins Dove. All music copyright © Christopher Willcock SJ 1977, 1990
LPSF	The Lyric Psalter: Revised Grail Lectionary Psalms, Solemnities Feasts and Other Occasions. Music by Tony Alonso and Marty Haugen Published by GIA Publications, Inc. © GIA 2012
LPC	The Lyric Psalter: Revised Grail Lectionary Psalms, Year C Music by Tony Alonso and Marty Haugen Published by GIA Publications, Inc. © GIA 2012
CWB	Catholic Worship Book I Published by Collins and E J Dwyer 1985 © Compilation the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne 1985
CWBII	Catholic Worship Book II Published by Morning Star Publishing 2016 © Compilation the Australian Episcopal Conference of the Australian Catholic Church
AOV1	As One Voice Volume 1. Published by Willow Connection Pty Ltd. © Willow Connection Pty Ltd. 1992
AOV2	As One Voice Volume 2. Published by Willow Connection Pty Ltd. © Willow Connection Pty Ltd.
AOV4Kids	As One Voice Volume 2. Published by Willow Connection Pty Ltd. © Willow Connection Pty Ltd.
AOVNG	As One Voice for Kids. © 2009 Willow Publishing Pty Ltd. Email info@willowpublishing.com.au
S&S1	Spirit & Song 1 © Division of OCP
S&S2	Spirit & Song 2 © Division of OCP www.spiritandsong.com/ss
GA	Gather Australia. ©1995 by NLMC Publications and GIA Publications Inc.
JOBC	Psalms for the Sundays of Year C (Jenny O'Brien)
JOBF	Psalms for the Easter Triduum and Other Major Feasts (Jenny O'Brien) Published by Jenny O'Brien 1995, reprinted 1998. Copyright © Jenny O'Brien 1995.10 Noble Street, Brighton, SA 5048

Mass Settings:

Recommended by the Australian Catholics Bishops Conference
www.catholic.org.au/national-liturgical-council/music

Mass of St Francis (Paul Taylor – Archbishop's Office for
Evangelisation. This Mass can be downloaded from
www.cam.org.au; Orders: Central Catholic Bookshop, Melbourne)

Mass of Our Lady, Help of Christians (Richard Connolly –
Publisher: CanticaNova)

Missa Magis (Christopher Willcock – Publisher: Oregon Catholic
Press, www.ocp.org)

Mass of Christ the Redeemer (Bernard Kirkpatrick – Publisher:
Oregon Catholic Press)

Mass of Glory and Praise (Paul Mason – Publisher: Willow

Publishing. Available from www.liturgicalsong.com)

Mass Shalom (C. Smith arr. Mason – Publisher: Willow Publishing.
Available from www.liturgicalsong.com)

Missa Cantata (Chant Mass) (arr. Geoffrey Cox – Publisher
Catholic Truth Society www.stpauls.com.au)

ICEL Chant Mass. www.icelweb.org/musicfolder/openmusic.php

FURTHER MATERIAL FROM MICHAEL MANGAN

General Gathering Songs: (* Masses with Children)

COME, LIVE LIFE	LCC
GATHER IN JESUS' NAME	LCC
HEARTS ON FIRE	SHOF
SHOUT OUT WITH JOY (Ps 100)	LCC
SING NEW SONGS OF JOY	FWS
WE REJOICE (PS 122)	SYJ
COME TOGETHER*	GLM/SYJ
CELEBRATE, LET'S CELEBRATE*	TWB
COME GATHER*	GLM
STAND UP*	SHOF
LET THE CHILDREN COME*	LCC

General Preparation of Gifts Songs

BLESSED BE GOD	LCC
WE BRING THESE GIFTS	LCC

General Communion Songs (* Masses with Children)

GIVEN FOR YOU*	SHOF
IN MEMORY OF ME*	LCC
IN THE BODY OF CHRIST	LCC
ONE BODY IN CHRIST	TWB
ONE BODY, ONE PEOPLE	SHOF
TAKE AND EAT	TT
THE BREAD OF LIFE	SHOF
WE COME, WE COME	TWB
WE REMEMBER YOU	LCC

General Recessionals (* Masses with Children)

CHOSEN AND SENT	LCC
DO WHAT JESUS DID*	GLM
HEARTS ON FIRE	SHOF
LET'S GO*	TWB
LIVE GOD'S DREAM	LCC
LOVE GOD, LOVE EACH OTHER*	LCC
SING NEW SONGS OF JOY	FWS
TAKING IT TO THE STREETS	TWB
TILL THE END OF TIME*	TT
TRUE COLOURS SHINE*	TCS

Collection codes

LCC	<i>Let The Children Come</i>	(2017)
DOM	<i>Doors of Mercy</i>	(2016)
GLM	<i>1,2,3, God Love Me</i>	(2014)
TWB	<i>This We Believe</i>	(2012)
MJC	<i>Mass Jubilee/Celebration</i>	(2011)
TWML	<i>That We Might Live</i>	(2010)
STAR	<i>The Star</i>	(2007)
TCS	<i>True Colours Shine</i>	(2007)
TT	<i>This Is The Time</i>	(2005)
FWS	<i>Forever I Will Sing</i>	(2004)
SHOF	<i>Setting Hearts On Fire</i>	(2001)
SYJ	<i>Sing Your Joy</i>	(1993-97)



Our Contributors

Anthony Doran

Anthony Doran is priest of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, currently Parish Priest of Ringwood. Prior to entering the seminary, Anthony was a secondary school teacher, teaching in country and suburban schools in Victoria. Ordained in 2003, he has held various appointments in suburban and country parishes. He completed further studies in Liturgy, focussing on the Rite of Dedication of a Church. He has written for *Liturgy News*, *The Summit* and *The Australian Journal of Liturgy*. He is the immediate Past President of the Australian Academy of Liturgy, and a member of Societas Liturgica, the international society for liturgical study and renewal. Since 2017, he has been a member of the Board of the Catholic Development Fund for the Archdiocese of Melbourne, and a Commissioner for the Diocesan Pastoral Development Fund. He has undertaken the Foundations of Directorship Course of the Australian Institute of Company Directors is an Affiliate Member of the AICD.

Joe Tedesco

Joe Tedesco has been involved in tutoring and teaching theology for over ten years at The University of Notre Dame Australia and at the Centre for Faith Enrichment in the Archdiocese of Perth. He completed Masters level studies focusing on scripture and Christian anthropology. He recently completed a thesis in the area of Wisdom Literature and its relationship to moral theology.

Gerard Moore

Professor Gerard Moore is the Principal and CEO of Broken Bay Institute – the Australian Institute of Theological Education. His most recent publications are *Earth Unites with Heaven: an introduction to the Liturgical Year* (Melbourne: Morning Star 2014), and *The Disciples at the Lord's Table: Prayers over Bread and Cup across 150 Years of Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2015). He is also a member of the Charles Sturt University Public and Contextual Theology Research Centre.

Glenn Morrison

Glen is associate professor at the University of Notre Dame Australia, Fremantle, lecturing in systematic and pastoral theology. He has a PhD from Australian Catholic University. He is also the author of *A Theology of Alterity: Levinas, von Balthasar and Trinitarian Praxis* (Duquesne University Press, 2013).

Michael Mangan

Michael Mangan is a composer, educator and liturgist who is based in Brisbane. A former specialist music teacher, he has composed over 250 pieces which are widely used in Liturgy and Religious Education programs in schools and parishes throughout Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA. Michael tours extensively each year presenting concerts and workshops for students, teachers and parish musicians and speaks and performs at conferences and events throughout Australasia and North America. His music is published in North America by GIA/WLP. Michael holds a BA (Mus), a Grad Dip Ed (Arts Ed) and an M. Theol (Liturgical Studies). He is a member of the Australian Academy of Liturgy, National Chair of the Australian Pastoral Musicians Network, and Leader of Music Ministry at All Saints Catholic Parish in Brisbane. In addition to his commitments with Litmus Productions, Michael works as Liturgical Education Consultant with Liturgy Brisbane.

Angela McCarthy

Dr Angela McCarthy is a senior lecturer in theology at The University of Notre Dame Australia, Fremantle campus. Her first degree from Sydney University included work in Biblical Studies and Fine Arts and was followed by the beginnings of a teaching career in Catholic secondary education. After time spent rearing a family, Angela resumed secondary teaching and completed further studies in theology and education in 1993 at Notre Dame. Having secured further degrees in education and theology, she was awarded her PhD in 2007. Since then she has completed a further Research Masters in Theology in the field of Scripture, art and theology. Angela has published in the areas of liturgy, icons, art and theology, liturgical music, educational practice and theological aesthetics. She is editor of the Australian Journal of Liturgy, WA convenor for the Australian Academy of Liturgy, Chairperson of the Mandorla Art Award, a member of the Chamber of Arts and Culture WA and the Fellowship of Biblical Studies, and an editor of Pastoral Liturgy.

Chris deSilva

Dr Chris deSilva is a liturgical musician whose activities include singing, composing, choir direction and parish music ministry. He has served the parish of Bedford/Inglewood in Perth for more than thirty years and is currently involved in both the music ministry and the RCIA process there. He has been the Musical Director of the Julian Singers in Perth for more than fifteen years. As Music Consultant to the Perth Archdiocesan Centre for Liturgy, he supports parish musicians and facilitates music workshops for them. His original compositions are available from his web site, www.laudamus.com.au

Alessio Loiacono

Alessio Loiacono is a teacher in the Catholic school system in the Archdiocese of Perth, an organist and is also the Music Field Officer for the Centre for Liturgy- Archdiocese of Perth. He also facilitates workshops for Catholic Education Western Australia. He holds a Bachelor of Music Education (UWA) and a Masters of Religious Education (Notre Dame). Away from music, Alessio enjoys going for walks, coffee and to the movies.

Angela Gorman

(Bendotti). With background studies in Education, Music and Theology, Angela directs her ministry business Shine Creations, currently in its 20th year. This ministry has provided music and liturgical consultancy across Western Australia, including work at a diocesan, parish, school and individual level. Angela brings information, enthusiasm, joy and grounded experience to all she does. A musician, vocalist and composer, Angela's passion is to draw people to Jesus – especially through the promotion of Catholic Liturgy – the summit and source of Catholic life.

Rev Deacon Bruce Talbot

Deacon Bruce is appointed to the parish of St Thomas More, Bateman, WA. He was ordained in 2006 and ministers full time with bereaved; young couples; and families. Currently he is the WA representative for the National Association of Deacons.

Deborah Talbot

B Ap Sci, Grad Cert DM, MIS (KM). Deborah is a retired Knowledge Manager and actively supports her husband's ministry with research and administration as well as working with him in his ministry to families and marriage preparation.

Deacon Bruce and Deborah have been married for over 43 years and have 6 children and 10 grandchildren, the delight of their lives.

Notes to Contributors

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Editorial Correspondence and Subscription Queries:

Dr Angela McCarthy

Phone: 08 9433 0138

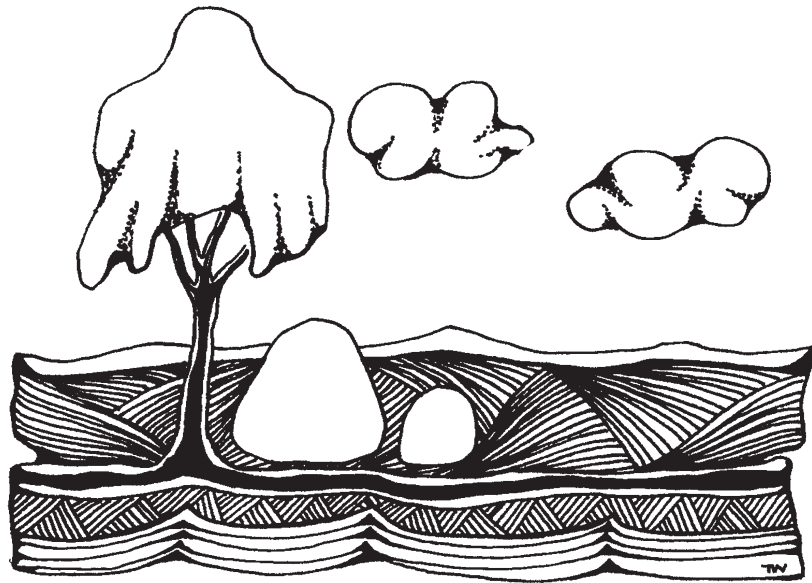
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Fresh and green are the pastures.

Ps 23:2

Artwork

This issue also includes artwork by Tricia Walsh. Her beautiful and clear graphical style is published in two books, *Graphics and Prayers for Feasts and Seasons* and *Graphics and Prayers for Ordinary Time*, both published by John Garratt Publishing. © Used with permission of the publisher.

