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Full Journal

Urgent Appeal - Pastoral Liturgy needs help

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From the editor

By Angela McCarthy

Once again, we have only Sunday resources as we remain in an uncertain position. We hope that a way forward for Pastoral Liturgy will be made very soon.

You will have seen this banner as you opened the website:



Urgent Appeal

Pastoral Liturgy needs help

The latest issue of Pastoral Liturgy, 55.1, has been brought to you through the generosity of our contributors and the editor. We have not been able to find new funding and therefore this is possibly the final issue of a journal that has been useful to many parishes and others since 1970. If you can help, please email the editor, Dr Angela McCarthy, angela.mccarthy@nd.edu.au

Blessings on you all for a new liturgical year.

Dr Angela McCarthy – Editor

First Sunday of Advent wreath lighting, Year C

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 at the end of time.

For each Sunday of Advent, we take our focus for the 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 comes in glory to judge the living and the dead. This year we will also anticipate and pray for the process and outcomes of the Plenary Council.

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

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

Let us pray:

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 now and for all time.

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, you come among us now as we read the prophet Jeremiah's words who promised that there shall be honesty and integrity in the land.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, that we may love one another and the whole human race as you did.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, we must stay awake as you will come again as the Son of Man.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

Presider (Collect first Sunday of Advent Year C)

Let us pray:

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 his 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,
God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen

Second Sunday of Advent wreath lighting

Presider

The Presider, or an assistant, lights the second candle.

V. Lord Jesus, your coming was proclaimed by the prophet Baruch when he proclaimed that God will show your splendour.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, you will bring us to the perfect goodness for the glory and praise of God.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, you call us to repentance and to prepare the way for you so that all humankind shall see the salvation of God.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

Presider (Collect second Sunday of Advent Year C)

Let us pray:

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,

God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen

Third Sunday of Advent wreath lighting

Presider

The Presider, or an assistant, lights the third candle.

V. Lord Jesus, your coming was proclaimed by the prophet Zephaniah as the who will exult over us and renew us by your love.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, you revealed to Paul that if there is anything we need we just have to ask for it with prayer and thanksgiving.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, as declared by John the Baptist, you will baptise us with the Holy Spirit and fire.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

Presider (Collect third Sunday of Advent Year C)

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,
God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen

Fourth Sunday of Advent wreath lighting

Presider

The Presider, or an assistant, lights the fourth candle.

V. Lord Jesus, your coming was proclaimed by the prophet Micah as coming from the house of David and who will rule over all Israel and be peace.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, you make us holy by the offering of your body made once and for all.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

V. Lord Jesus, you are the blessed fruit of the womb of she who believed that the promise made to her would be fulfilled.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

Presider (Collect fourth Sunday of Advent Year C)

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,
God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen



1 December 2024

First Sunday of Advent

Reflection by Gerard Moore

The Liturgical Season of Advent

The season of Advent signals to the faithful that Christmas is approaching. In doing this it also reveals the deeper liturgical understanding of the celebration of the nativity, providing a theological and spiritual reference point for the many cultural, social and devotional meanings and practices attached to this joyous feast

There are two themes underpinning Advent. The first is the mystery of the incarnation. Christ, the light, has come into our world and dwelt among us as one like us, fully human and yet fully divine: *And the word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory* (Jn 1:14). The second is that Christ will return and complete the renewal of all things in grace. The sense is that our celebration of the incarnation fills us with hope as we await with anticipation his definitive coming when the entire creation is taken up into the full glory of God. The season reflects a wonderful play on words that we find at the close of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, where the translation reads: *Our Lord, come!* (1 Cor 16:22). Yet the text is ambiguous, and either can mean 'the Lord has come' or be an invitation to the Lord to come. This double sense is captured in Advent.

The Advent Devotions

The Advent Wreath is a popular devotion for this season, focusing on the twin themes of the light and the coming near of Christ.

Advent 2024: our context

The anomaly of celebrating Advent in the Australian summer always gives pause for thought. There is something of the original nature of the season that we miss. The northern incoming winter, the house-bound farms, towns and cities, and the danger of snow, ice and freezing are all lost to us. There is a sense of the apocalyptic in the liturgical celebrations calibrated to the northern winter and its dangers. That is why the advent readings and prayers move us to contemplate the coming of the light as a way to hold onto hope.

Our weather and summer holidays do not form a natural encouragement to take up these lines of thought and prayer. We are looking forward to water, beach, holidays, family, sport and Christmas together. Our prayers are for celebration, family, safety and joy, and importantly for those less fortunate, for those who are lonely and those who are alone.

Yet 2024 carries more difficult portents. They have deeply disturbing content which is affecting our lives and in turn infecting our civil discourse. We cannot cocoon ourselves from them.

As I write, major events are unfolding. The impact of two massive hurricanes on the Eastern states of the USA is being counted. There are lives lost, vast numbers of homes and businesses destroyed and lives turned upside down, all in a country of vast wealth and resources. The rebuilding of towns and infrastructure will take a massive effort. The remaking of lives will take longer. There is a chance that more hurricanes will come in the wake of the two monster storms. We are not indifferent to this, yet we are becoming accustomed to the toxic and divisive rhetoric that does not admit climate change, the impoverished state of our environment, and the call for ecological conversion from Pope Francis. This style of rhetoric is bruited at us in its disregard for truth and the continuous stream of violent and vitriolic language we see during the US presidential campaign.

Why does this matter? Liturgically, Advent is a reminder that there is hope and there is light. Conversely it is a reminder for us to be aware of how dark the darkness is. The denial around climate and the racist, nationalistic vitriol of that overseas election affect our own conversations and leave us off guard about the creeping distortion of our discourse. It is a warping of the Catholic imagination that we cannot allow. Australia and its neighbours have their own climate challenges, and we cannot be talked out of facing them. We also have deep misgivings about the crisis between the peoples of Israel, Palestine and Lebanon. It touches our family, friends, neighbours and nation. We cannot allow the distorted language, racial tropes and nationalist dog-whistling to inhibit compassion and empathy, and to speak against violence of all stripes.

Our liturgical celebration of Advent may be against the grain of the initial feast and its wintery envelope, yet it serves as a reminder that there is a dread current of darkness in our airwaves and across our civil and family relationships, and we are called to be aware. We are also called to be generous. What will be our Christmas gift to those far from our shores who are suffering?

Introduction

What does it mean to be alert and to be on watch? Our readings direct us to the unnerving reality of 'darkness' in society and history. In this they are a reminder of Advent as preparation for the feast of the coming of the light.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you will come in glory as the Son of Man. Lord have mercy.

You call us to stay awake. Christ have mercy.

You teach us how to pray with confidence. Lord have mercy.

Collect

*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 his right hand,
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly kingdom.*

Advent opens with a call to run forth to meet the Christ, however it is not the babe in the manger. The Christ to whom we run is the one who is to come, in whom is the fulfillment of all things. Advent, then, begins with a focus on the second coming of Christ, a perspective carried in the first Advent Preface: *when he comes again in glory and majesty.*

Our collect has a sense of energy and purpose. The use of 'run' is quite common in the ancient orations and conjures something of that running to the empty tomb on Easter morning, and even the eagerness of the forgiving father to meet his prodigal son (Lk 1:11-32). We need to be mindful that the prayer is a petition. There is no claim to privilege or worthiness here. Rather we are seeking the eagerness to propel ourselves to the coming One because we have in grace lived as fully as possible within his righteousness. The end point is to be 'gathered' into Christ, conveying warmth and intimacy: disciples are gathered. Further to 'possess' means to fully belong and to be taken up by. With the coming of Christ is our perfection (in his righteous deeds), belonging (gathered) and fulfillment (possession).

Collect commentary by Gerard Moore: The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by me for the Canadian liturgical journal Celebrate! (Novalis Press). My thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Our Advent readings open with the proclamation of the Lord our Justice. It is a statement of hope beyond the environment of despair and disappointment that was the lot of the Jewish people in exile.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 24(25):4-5,8-9,10,14

To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

The psalmist calls us to lift our eyes and hearts to God. As Jeremiah proclaims the justice of God we also know that the coming of the Messiah in Jesus of Nazareth draws us all into hopefulness.

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2

To strengthen the community, Paul prays for an increase in love, enabling the members to conduct themselves within the holiness of God

Gospel Reading

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

In the Gospel we are reminded that The Christ will return, and to live now so that we may stand before God.

Reflection

Our Advent readings open with the proclamation of the Lord **our** Justice. It is a statement of hope beyond the environment of despair and disappointment that was the lot of the Jewish people in exile. This text within the Book of Jeremiah apparently was written later and added to the corpus of poems from the prophet. The reading opens into the period where the exile was coming to a close, and with it, the uncertainty whether it would be better to stay in exile or return to Jerusalem or simply merge into the empire of the Persians. The poet maintains the people's hope. There will be a time when their homeland will be safe for them. There will be a time when God's city will be secure. There will be a time when the people more strongly feel the justice of God. Indeed, they will feel it as 'our' justice, justice brought by God for them. With it are a couple of features. This justice is that already promised by God, so it has begun to take hold. It is for a united 'house', Israel and Judah together, the two parts of the kingdom at peace. It is framed within the legend of the beloved king David. The line of David may be no longer extant, but the spiritual lineage of David's leadership is maintained.

Referring back to our introduction to the theological dynamics of Advent, we can see how this reading introduces us to the central themes of the season: hope, looking forward, the coming of the one, the reign of justice. But our Advent this year offers a more difficult reflection on this reading. The theology of Davidic homeland and the divine justice it embodies remain close to the hearts of the people of today's Israel and drives their response to threat. We all seek that there will be a time when their homeland will be safe for them. We also know that the plight of the Palestinian peoples, the Christian communities in Gaza and the people of Lebanon are also to be understood in light of justice. It is a difficult reading in today's context.

The first Letter to the Thessalonians has two endings. It seems that Paul finished and then got up another burst of energy, and on he went. Our passage is from the first 'ending', and contains a moral exhortation: *Finally, we earnestly ask and exhort you ...* Of course there is also a second letter to the same group. It seems Paul was keen to keep in correspondence with this community.

As with our first reading from Jeremiah, the text puts forward a theology for Advent. It is not quite 'behave yourself' but a richer spiritual exhortation.

Beginning with a prayer that God will increase the love in the midst of the community, it also acts as a reminder to the women and men that love is at the centre of the Christian life and our conduct should take its cue from this.

With this there are some deeper concepts. Our love should reflect the holiness of God. 'Holiness' is an attribute of God alone: for Paul we are called to love as God loves. It is wholehearted and blameless. Here is the sense of what it means to 'please' God. It is far from doing things to win favour. Rather it is to act in such a way that God 'recognises' the divine within us and the transformation it achieves as we take up the fullness of being loved by God. This transformation is the grounds for Jesus recognising us as his own when he returns. In the midst of all the conflictual and malevolent language Paul reminds that the language of the Catholic is love.

Again, we can see the theology of Advent being opened for us. Right behaviour, loving as God loves and living within the 'recognition' of God all are concerned with our conversion. These match one of the ancient origins of Advent as a season in preparation for baptism.

With this is the understanding of the Second Coming of Christ. This becomes a theme of the final two weeks of the season.

Our Gospel reading, made from two passages from the one chapter in Luke, aligns with our first two readings. In this, two Advent themes are brought to the fore. The Christ will return, and consequently live now so that you may stand before God. Yet this is a stark reading, with apocalyptic currents and a degree of despair. In a way, the evangelist has Jesus addressing the Christian community of the future. Just as in Luke's Gospel Jesus soon will face his passion, so will the future church soon enough face a time of trial and passion of its own.

The trigger for this is a set of events that are part of the life of the community Luke is addressing in his narrative. Already the Temple has fallen, already Jerusalem has fallen, what then is left? The answer is that life in Christ does not mean escape from the realities of history, but that there is another outcome, one formed in Christ. In response, the Gospel teller is calling his hearers to live within the actual moment, to be aware of what is around, to avoid escapism, to wait upon the Lord.

The apocalyptic nature of the text can be jarring, and that is the intention of the narrator. We are meant to be confronted, to be called to account, to be roused and surprised. Interestingly there is a degree of apocalyptic thought in our culture at present, but more to the point there is a strong dystopian element to our stories, novels and streaming series at present.

What then is the time of trial we are facing, what is the 'passion' we are undergoing. The apocalyptic note of the readings and the dystopian preference in literature and the arts is pointing us to the crises which engulf us. To close off, we will speak into climate change and the dangerous predicament of our sister earth. In the face of these, we are called to be vigilant and to have the strength. In the coming feast of the nativity, we take the incarnation of Christ as the centrepiece of our lives. We

cannot take the incarnation with full seriousness without taking up our current international situation, our human condition and the condition of creation.

Perhaps it is time to bring in Pope Francis:

This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she 'groans in travail' (Rom 8:22). *Laudato Si!* paragraph 2.

Come Lord Jesus!

Come the church of Jesus the Lord!



Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The psalmist calls us to lift our souls in faithfulness and love so we have the confidence to offer these needs of our Church and our world in the hope that they will be embraced with divine love.

Petitions

We pray for our Church. We pray for Pope Francis and all the leaders of our Church as we move towards the implementation of the Synod of Bishops. May we all be open to the power of the Spirit as we are led on our synodal journey.

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

We pray for world leaders in this very difficult time. May they open their hearts to the needs of all people and know that in the end it will only be love that really matters.

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

We pray for the created world. May we increase in our desire to protect what God has created and wholeheartedly enter into the love of our earth that Pope Francis tells us is 'burdened and laid waste, and is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor'.

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

We pray for all those caught up in war in the Middle East. May all those who seek power and territory be opened to the need for peace and security for all human beings.

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

We pray for ourselves as we gather here at the beginning of Advent. May we remain alert and welcoming, stand erect and hold our heads high to greet our liberation as we heed the gospel.

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

We pray for those who have died that they may be in eternal glory. We pray for those who mourn that they will be comforted by our community in fruitful ways.

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

Conclusion

Eternally loving God, we offer these prayers in the hopefulness of Jeremiah because we know that you will listen to our needs and grant them in Jesus' name through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

First Sunday of Advent, Year C (1 December 2024)

Title	AOV	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
Advent litany					253	279
Christmas is coming (verse 1)			55			
City of God	57				453	498
Come, O long expected Jesus				657	232	
Come to set us free					233	277
O come, O come Emmanuel	174			763	242	285
O Emmanuel			52			
Open the heavens		163			243	
The coming of our Lord				816	248	
To you, O Lord, I lift my soul				850	632	
Wait for the Lord.					251	283
Wake, awake! For night is flying				853		
Wake, O wake, and sleep no longer						282
Wake, O wake! the night is dying!					252	

Title	AOVNG	S&S1	S&S2
City of God		106	
Come, O Lord			287
Come, O Lord, and set us free	31		
Emmanuel			290
Find us ready		109	
I trust in you			291
To you, O God, I lift up my soul		60	
To you, O Lord			251

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 24: *To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.*

	CWB	GA	JOBC	LPC	PM
Psalm 24	168, 592	26	8	5	22

Music selections by Michael Mangan

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

Come, Lord Jesus, come CH & V1 (SYJ/ CWBII) [Advent Wreath]

Help me know your ways (FWS) *based on Ps 24 (25)* [Gifts]

To you, O Lord (LCC) *Ps 24/25 (Chn's Lectionary)* [Psalm, Gifts]

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 - Gifts]



8 December 2024

Second Sunday of Advent

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

Our readings this week continue the broader perspective of Advent, with the promise of a return from exile and the introduction of Jesus by the Baptist. The coming of Christ is set within the political framework of the times, beginning with Tiberius Caesar in Rome and centring in on the desert of Jordan. The intention here is that the justice that is ushered in by Jesus is for all.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you are the Messiah. Lord have mercy.

You call us to prepare the way for you in the world. Christ have mercy.

You are our salvation. Lord have mercy.

Collect

*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.*

The backdrop of this oration is the second coming of the Christ. The sense of 'haste' conveys willingness and desire rather than being caught short and unprepared. Indeed, the prayer is all about our preparation. The oration sets in play earthly undertakings, heavenly wisdoms and admittance to Christ's company. This is not a dull contrast between earth and heaven. Rather, heavenly wisdom is the wisdom of Christ. The term conjures up the sapiential books of the Old Testament, which have much sagacious, practical and earthy advice. In New Testament terms, to be erudite in heavenly wisdom is to know the beatitudes. And to be learned in the ways of Christ is to be steeped in the knowledge that whatever we do for the least we are doing to Christ. When we clothe the poor and feed the hungry, we are in the company of Christ. The 'mundane' and 'earthly' are the things that hold us back from this encounter with Christ on earth.

And so, the prayer unfolds. In the Christian wisdom of care for the poor and the recognition of Christ in all, we are already in his company and experience his mercy. This learning fuels our desire, our haste, to be in his company fully and knowing the power of divine mercy.

Collect commentary by Gerard Moore: The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by me for the Canadian liturgical journal Celebrate! (Novalis Press). My thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Baruch 5:1-9

As God returns Jerusalem from exile, the mercy of God will turn mourning and misery into the peace of justice.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 125(126)

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

The psalmist speaks joyfully of the return from exile, as does Baruch.

Second Reading

Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11

God who has begun such ambitious good work in us will also bring it to fulfillment.

Gospel Reading

Luke 3:1-6

While the coming of Jesus is set within the political and religious reality of his time, we are introduced to him through John the Baptist's call for repentance.

Reflection

The Advent meaning of the first reading is that God will save. There will be restoration and the end of exile. It is a powerful hope that the prophet Baruch keeps alive for the dismayed and disheartened people living under conquest outside of the promised land. The poet is preaching hope.

The text from Philippians is also preaching hope, with an emphasis on the Second Coming of Christ. This is one of the themes of the Advent season, as it 'plays' across the celebration of the incarnation and the fulfillment of all things in the return of Christ.

The Gospel returns us firmly to preparation for the feast of the incarnation, introducing to us the Baptist. Soon enough John will facilitate the advent of the adult Jesus at his baptism and commencing his ministry. The passage begins with setting our protagonists within history. Jesus and John carry out their ministry amongst real historical figures and amidst events real to their own lives. Luke's scope begins broad, and introduces Tiberius, the Emperor of Rome. The focus narrows to Pilate whom we know plays a pivotal role in Jesus death, and lesser figures such as Herod. He also we meet later, and significantly rules Galilee, the homeland of Jesus and a place rife with rebellion. Nothing much good comes from there, and particularly under Herod's rule. The list concludes with the pair of High Priests, again both of whom we know from later in the narrative. The evangelist gathers the Emperor, regional leaders and the religious leaders into an opening historical set piece. For the evangelist, the coming of Jesus will have an effect on the entire 'world'.

Historical accuracy is not quite Luke's intention, rather John emerges, and soon Jesus, to minister in a world led by invasive forces attached to a ruthless empire which has co-opted the religious leadership. Australian scholar Brendan Byrne sees this passage as an example of a 'hospitality' to the realities of culture and an 'at-homeness' in the world that is part of the wider sense of the 'hospitality of God'. By situating Jesus firmly within his time, his historical reality and his religious context, Luke is exploring the meaning of the incarnation. From him, what does it mean for the light to come into the world if it does not mean shedding light on the world as it is, a world that God loves unreservedly.

The Gospel, then, is used in the feast to highlight the *adventus* of Christ. For Luke, Jesus takes up the prior message of the prophet John, whose baptism of repentance sought to bring conversion to his followers and have them live under the forgiveness of God. Luke needs to highlight John and set his message at the service of Jesus. John preaches the poetry of Isaiah as a reminder that his work is only the beginning, and that there is greater hope on the way. Within our passage there is a contrast between the current rulers from amongst the invaders as well as the religious leaders, Rome and Temple as one, and the one who is coming from the desert, from the wilderness, from 'no place' and 'no power'. Yet no obstacle can withstand his leading all humanity straight to God!

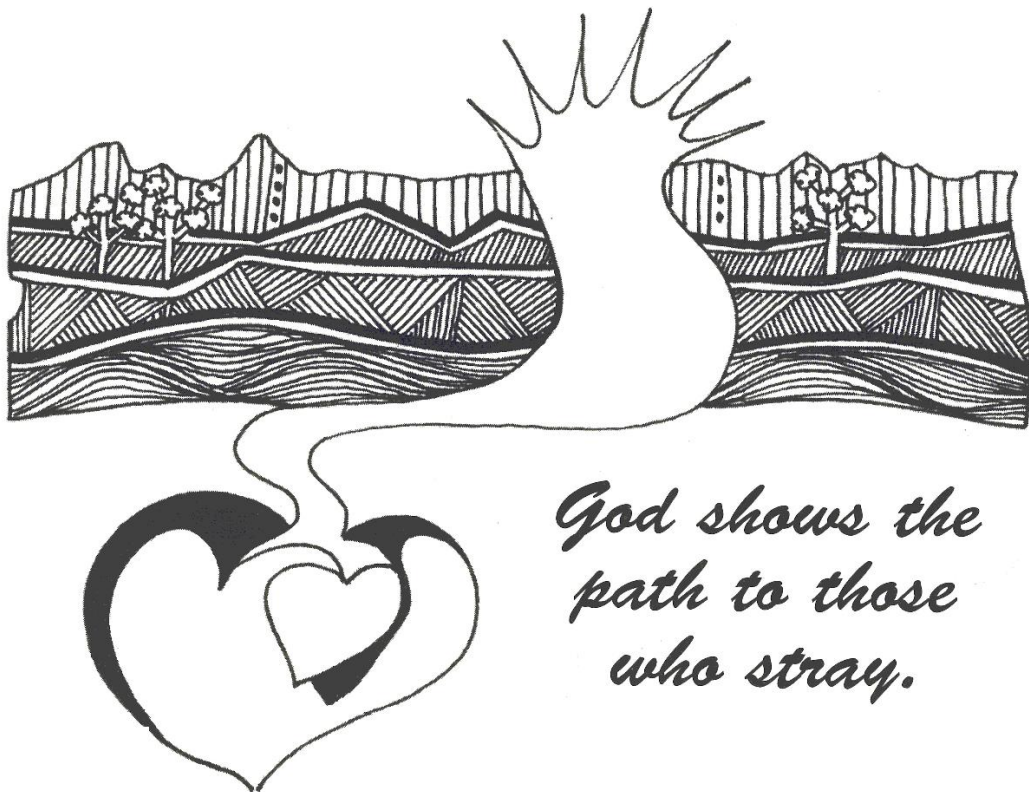
If we take up Brendan's observation about the hospitality of God embracing the real state of the world, from its politics to its environment, our path to Advent must give pause to the wider scope of our current world. This is sharpened by the emphasis in the first reading, where Baruch preaches the restoration of the people of Israel to the promised land.

We can take up the metaphor in Baruch somewhat against the grain. As a people awaiting the coming of the light, we see disinformation and mistrust leveling mountains of truth. We see the complexity of our world and the state of our environment 'made straight' for prejudice and disunity to travel into our communities. As Catholics we have to resist these impulses and exemplify the Baptist and the Lord as bringers of justice to the poor, the marginalised and the exploited.

It is in face of this that Pope Francis calls for dialogue. He invites us to a Gospel response. The Vatican Congregation for Education (2022) offers three approaches to conflict:

- 1) When conflict arises, some people simply look at it and go on their way as if nothing happened; they wash their hands of it and get on with their lives.
- 2) Others embrace it in such a way that they become its prisoners; they lose their bearings and project onto institutions their own confusion and dissatisfaction and this make unity impossible.
- 3) But there is a third way, and it is the best way to deal with conflict. It is the willingness to face conflict head on, to resolve it and to make it a link in a chain of a new process.

Our Gospel is a reminder of the compelling nature of the first option but teaches that the followers of Jesus take up the more complex third way. We would prefer a more peaceful run up to Christmas!



Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

Today our scripture readings are full of joy because of the faith of God's people. So let us, in faith, offer all of our needs to God.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and the leaders of the Church as they find new ways to walk together in hope. May they unlock their hearts and be willing to face conflict in a positive and hopeful way.

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

We pray for world leaders as they seek to find a way through conflict and the destruction of truth. May they hold onto the hope of peaceful outcomes and the restoration of homes and communities.

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

We pray for all those who seek to draw the world into a better understanding of our created world and how we must protect what God has given. May they find support in this community.

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

We pray for prophets in our time. Give them the strength to continue announcing the coming of the light even though disinformation and mistrust has levelled mountains of truth.

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

We pray for ourselves in this busy and tumultuous time as we prepare for Christmas. May we not lose our focus on the truth and the light that comes through the Incarnation.

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

We pray for all those who have died and are suffering from grief, illness, domestic violence and fear. May they find peace and strength.

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

Conclusion

God of all graces, fill us with joy and trustfulness as we offer these needs to you in the sure hope that they will be fulfilled in Jesus' name and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Second Sunday of Advent, Year C (8 December 2024)

Title	AOV	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
Advent litany					253	279
Advent song						281
Christmas is coming			55			
Comfort, comfort now my people					238	
Fill ev'ry valley up			54			
Hark! a herald voice is calling.					239	
Like a shepherd	160				538	467
My soul in stillness waits						280
O come, O come Emmanuel	174			763	242	285
O Emmanuel			52			
On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry				780	244	
Open the heavens		163			243	
Prepare the way				794	250	284
Take comfort, God's people				813		
Wait for the Lord					251	283

Title	AOVNG	S&S1	S&S2
Ready the way			293
We shall prepare			294

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 125: *The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.*

	CWB	GA	JOBC	LPC
Psalm 125	177	74	pg. 9	pg. 8

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Fill every valley (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]

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

Come, Lord Jesus, come CH & V2 (SYJ/ CWBII) [Lighting Advent Wreath]

We come, we come (TWB) [Communion – esp V3]

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



9 December 2024

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Reflection by Pina Ford

Introduction

While the Gospel for this Feast Day is that of the Annunciation, the Immaculate Conception does not refer to the conception of Jesus. The Feast instead celebrates Mary's conception, promulgated as dogma in 1854 by Pius IX to confirm that Mary was born free from original sin.

BACKGROUND: *Mary 'full of grace'*

Mary, the New Woman, stands at the side of Christ, the New Man, within whose mystery the mystery of humanity alone finds true light; she is given to it as a pledge and guarantee that God's plan in Christ for the salvation of the whole person has already achieved realization in a creature: # 57

Pope Paul VI, *Marialis cultus*. The document is an Apostolic Exhortation published on 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

Genesis 3:9-15, 20

Humanity is betrayed and creation's original blessedness is damaged but in a promised time humanity's shame and brokenness will end.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 97(98):1-4

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done wonderful deeds.

The Psalmist sings a song of praise for the salvation of the world. God recalls the house of Israel in truth and love, and the earth is compelled to sing out in joy.

Second Reading

Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12

God's desire for us is revealed: we have been loved and chosen before the foundation of the world to belong to Christ and to live grace filled lives.

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:26-38

Mary's fullness of graces enables openness for Christ to come to birth in her and reveals to humanity the wholeness that God offers to all through the redeeming work of Christ.

Reflection

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception focuses attention on the beginnings of Mary's life on earth. Hence it is celebrated nine months before the September 8th Feast of Mary's birth which places it in Advent, and very conveniently so because Christ's coming naturally turns our gaze towards Mary his mother. Whenever this happens, and we reflect on the mystery of Mary we also encounter anew the God who longs to be with us. Appropriately then the Gospel for this Feast is the Annunciation, where we see Mary's open-hearted acceptance of the sacred invitation to bring Christ into the world.

Since the 4th Century there has been widespread belief amongst the faithful that Mary was full of grace from the first moment of conception. But it was not until 1854 that Pope Pius IX proclaimed the Immaculate Conception as dogma. There is, however, a foundational part of this Church teaching on Mary's grace-filled beginnings that is sometimes overlooked but makes all the difference. It is not so much that Mary was free of 'original sin' - that condition of diminishment suffered by all humanity, but that she was redeemed from sin from the moment of her existence by the gift of God and the saving work of her Son. (Catechism of the Catholic Church #491). Duns Scotus, the Franciscan 'subtle doctor' of the 13th Century supported belief in the Immaculate Conception and Mary's redemption by her son by reminding us that God's saving work is not governed by linear time.

Mary's beginnings then are both utterly unlike our own, and also identical to them. These two seemingly opposite thoughts always need to be kept in full view whenever we reflect on the mystery of Mary. Luke's portrayal carefully balances Mary's complete ordinariness and at the same time her graced capacity to embrace the most extraordinary divine purpose for her life.

In Mary we can see both who we are, and who in Christ we are becoming. The Immaculate Conception draws us into mystery – not as a puzzle to be solved, but an unfathomable truth that we can question and contemplate, allowing it to enrich and transform us.

While there is no scriptural account for the theology of the Immaculate Conception – the words of favour spoken by Gabriel provide a foundation: 'Rejoice so highly

favoured (or full of grace), the Lord is with you... Mary do not be afraid, you have won God's favour'. We might ask with Mary: Why so? What does this mean? What is the reason for this favour? The answer of course, is one that any child understands: Just because! There is no agenda for the love God pours out on Mary and on us. Having been created is its only proof. But humbly accepting this love whilst knowing we have nothing whatever to bargain for it, is a tall order – and literally humanity's downfall. Mary is aware of her human limitations and of the graciousness of God's love which she receives without resistance. She will later rejoice in the God who has seen her lowliness and done 'great things' for her.

When Thomas Aquinas, building on Augustine, reflected on what we have come to describe as the Fall, he was careful to distinguish between what was lost and what is retained. While the inclination towards good in the human heart was diminished, it was not destroyed, otherwise there could be no ability to distinguish between good and evil, to have remorse or even to be open to goodness and to God (Summa Theologica 1a 2ae Question 85 articles 1&2).

So, in a sense, Mary receives and rejoices on our behalf in the 'favour' God wishes for all humanity. We, like Mary, have no merit we can claim in return for God's graciousness; we like Mary have a place within us, we might call an 'immaculate' place, which sin has not destroyed, that can be open to God. The difference is that what exists in us as a possibility (Augustine's capacity for God, *capax dei*) is Mary's full reality. Mary reveals the shape and purpose of the human soul.

Hence Luke's story of Mary's response to God sharply contrasts to the account in the First Reading. Lavished with everything, our symbolic first parents, like ourselves are seemingly unaware of the fullness of God's love. They are readily seduced into trying to be more, and to be other than themselves. Their attempts like those of all other human beings of course backfire. When plans go awry, when disappointment bites, when people and situations cause pain, our need and vulnerability is exposed, and we feel naked (on the inside). God has only one desire, to be with us, and even more so in our need. But the human tendency is to allow fear and shame to set in, to go into hiding and refuse graciousness.

Mary, a vulnerable human being faced with what is unexpected, unknown and overwhelming, at first responds with fear and distress. But she does not back away or shut down and continues to ask her valid questions. These are received and answered with kindness and enable her to enter into the mystery before her. Mary's fears are embraced and alleviated and so she grows in trust. Here at the core of the Incarnation, we find a beautiful cameo of divine accompaniment. In Mary the veil to human vulnerability is lifted, and in a fellow creature who is 'truly our sister' (*Marialis Cultus* 56) there is complete openness to God's desire to be with us.

The graciousness of God towards Mary and her gracious response foreshadow our own journey. The letter to the Ephesians says that we too have been chosen 'in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love'. This is the mystery that lies underneath the tangle of our lives, and it is made visible to us in Mary.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

As we honour Mary who was conceived to be immaculate, let us offer our needs to our Father, who is our Creator.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and all Church leaders as they work within the Synod. May they be guided to be leaders of integrity and to respectfully consider the voices of those they serve as we all walk in synodality.

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

We pray that as a Church we will be open to the ongoing challenges and opportunities that the Synod has opened to the people of God. May the 'God who is, who was and who is to come', live in our hearts throughout this important time of discernment and decision making.

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

We pray for us all, that in the midst of our nakedness and fragility, we do not hide but are open to listening to the voice of God.

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

We pray for all expectant mothers; as Mary was responsive to the calling to be a mother, may they too be receptive to their calling.

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

We pray for women who are struggling to have children as did Elizabeth, that their bodies may conceive and give birth to healthy babies.

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

We pray for those who are suffering ill health in their bodies and minds. May they be strengthened by love, especially when the pain is unbearable, and may their carers show them love and compassion.

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

We pray for ourselves that she, who is full of grace, may pray with us on our pilgrimage.

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

Conclusion

Father in heaven, hear the prayers we lay before you as we pray with the Immaculate Virgin Mary, through the power of the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV1	GA	CWB	CWBII
Hail Mary: gentle woman		544		
Hail Queen of Heaven		546	702	408
Holy light on earth's horizon				442
Holy Virgin, by God's decree			714	410
Immaculate Mary, we praise God in you		549	723	416
Joy to you, O Virgin Mary			729	
Magnificat (Tell out my soul)		550		213
Mary immaculate, star of the morning			744	
Mary, mother of good counsel				411
My soul rejoices		250		212
O holy Mary	141			413
O Mary of graces and Mother of God			769	
O purest of creatures			775	
Sing of Mary, pure and lowly			808	
The angel Gabriel from heaven came			815	247
There is nothing told		548		418

Title	AOVNG	S&S1	S&S2
All the ends of the earth (Fisher)	5	75	
All the ends of the earth (Canedo)			270
Among all	8		
Hail Mary: gentle woman			336

Psalms selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 97: *Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done wonderful deeds.*

	CWB	JOBF	LPSF
Psalm 97	472	pg. 59	pg. 126

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Sing new songs of joy (FWS/CWB II) *based on Ps 97 (98)*

All the ends of the earth (LCC) *Ps 97/98 (Chn's Lectionary [Psalm, Gifts]*

Mary said yes (TT/SYJ) [CHILDREN: Gathering, Recessional]

My spirit sings (FWS/SYJ/CWB II) *Magnificat*

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



15 December 2024

Third Sunday of Advent

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

This third week of the season heralds a turn from an emphasis on the second coming of Christ to the impending feast of Christmas. It is the same in our homes. The children have finished school and are counting the days. The liturgy invites us to reflect on how the Good News touches us and converts us as we prepare for the celebration of the Light of the World.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you baptise us with the Holy Spirit and fire. Lord, have mercy.

You guide us when we are despairing. Christ, have mercy.

You show us the perfect example of love. Lord, have mercy.

Collect

*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.*

The collect describes us as awaiting the feast of the Nativity of the Lord. Interestingly, the sixth-century original was slightly more theological, speaking of our expectation of the 'incarnation' rather than the 'birth'. For contemporary believers three images come to the fore here. The most profound is that of the incarnation: the divine one taking flesh and living as fully human. Following the patristic wisdom of St. Irenaeus, 'what is not taken up of our humanity cannot be saved'. The primary unpacking of the incarnation is that the saviour must be born to be of one flesh with us. From this flows the prayer's understanding of the 'nativity'. The term seeks to focus our attention on the full humanity of Jesus. However, uppermost in our consciousness today, following the piety of the medieval period, is the way we immediately equate the nativity with the actual birth of the child Jesus to Mary his mother in a stable in Bethlehem, angels, magi, animals and stars all included. While the birth of a child is always a cause of joy, and a safe birth under such conditions

well worth celebrating, the joy that underpins our worship and the rejoicing that can only be defined as solemn is because the divine took flesh and we have been offered salvation.

Collect commentary by Gerard Moore: The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by me for the Canadian liturgical journal Celebrate! (Novalis Press). My thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Zephaniah 3: 14-18a

The prophet Zephaniah, with a message of hope, is being applied to our Advent piety.

Responsorial Psalm

Isaiah 12:2-6. R. v.6

Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

The psalm calls us to cry out because God is our salvation, our strength, our song.

Second Reading

Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice the Lord is near!

Gospel Reading

Luke 3:10-18

John the Baptist preaches the good news to the outcasts, encouraging them to see their expectations fulfilled in the one who is coming.

Reflection

This slightly diverse set of readings are being applied to our Advent piety. We start with the little-known prophet Zephaniah. Our passage is the closing section of the short book. It is a hopeful ending. The book itself is more concerned with divine wrath at false worship in Jerusalem. The setting is the tyranny of the great nations jostling for power (Egypt, Assyria, the Sythians) and the people of Israel in their midst making strategic and political alliances but forgetful of what constitutes true worship.

Perhaps a fruitful application for us is around the theme of hope. The prophet ends with hope despite his dire prophecies. In a typical ancient world fashion, the hope is in a leader to come. Here, we have the close application to Advent and the coming of the Lord. We do not live in a 'strong man' society or politic, though strong leadership of a democratic form is prized! Every day our news feeds speak of the dangers of

'strong men' and their violence-based rulership. However, our hope for the present situation may well be to call upon the gifts we already have in our midst as a Church, and to bring these to the fore.

In the scriptures the term 'true worship' has depth and resonance. It is more than appropriate celebration of the Eucharist and the sacraments. It reflects the integrity of the life of the assembly. They must be true to God – true worship with heart and mind and soul – and true to the reign of God – love of neighbour as self.

The short excerpt from the Letter to the Philippians has a lovely balance. The Advent seasonal centrepiece is Paul's declaration that 'the Lord is near'. For young children, Christmas is a countable number of sleeps away. Yet the author does not place all in the future. The present is to be marked by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving and quieted hearts. This is the age of the good news, and the peace of Christ is already guarding the hearts of the faithful. This active faith is the setting for the hope in the imminent coming of Christ. It is our hope, too. Perhaps the sentiment that is most apposite for us comes early in the reading: 'your kindness should be known to all'. The impending coming of Christ as celebrated in Advent, or as understood by Paul to be a coming that was soon to be realised, is aimed to spur us to embody even more the good news here and now. Our communities should be renowned for their kindness.

The Gospel serves the season's theme with a further declaration of the 'adventing' of Christ. As we approach the feast of the inbreaking of the light, the Baptist is described as exhorting those who are listening to him to await Jesus. Still John is allowed something of his own flourish. As a prophet of repentance, he has an apocalyptic streak. The Christ will bring both the Holy Spirit and fire. The Spirit may be disruptive enough but there is a hard cleansing to come, a strong winnowing, a reckoning of sorts. This does not match the eventual preaching of Jesus, but Luke allows that John too preaches the good news.

In this preaching the Baptist is attractive to those on the outside of religious observance and good piety. Tax collectors, soldiers and other extortionists find hope with John, as do the poor. They are to be fed and clothed. There is much here that will be assumed into the preaching of Jesus.

For our liturgical setting, these characteristics mark who is to come. As we prepare to celebrate the coming of the Messiah, we are reminded of the qualities of the life of faith. John gives them an edge, but the Christian community needs to realise that its 'feet are being held to the fire' in our own circumstances. In an echo of the sermon on the plain, in this reading Luke is preparing us for the radical teachings of the beatitudes and the sermon that leads on from those blessings. As we await the celebration of the coming of the Good News, we are challenged by our readings and our immersion in the international environmental and political upheavals to ask whether we are good news to those around us. John reached beyond the usual restrictions to touch those considered beyond the bounds of God's love. As we are stretched, how well are we actually stretching to extend the bounds of God's love?

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The readings today exhort us to have hope and rejoice. Our true reason for rejoicing is that our God is a God who will lift us up and so we offer our needs and the needs of our world.

Petitions

Let us pray for our Church that it is a beacon like John the Baptist bringing hope to the poor and the suffering of our world.

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

Let us pray for the leaders of our world. May their governance in economics, politics and education be directed towards the genuine needs of their people rather than conflict and power.

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

Let us pray for all those who work in the food industry, from farm gate to table. May their efforts be rewarded with economic justice and respect from those they serve.

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

Let us pray for those who work in education in Australia. May their efforts as they bring the academic year to a close be appreciated and acknowledged by those who they teach and their families.

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

Let us pray for all those who are homeless and suffering as we lead into the festivities of Christmas. May they experience the compassion and joy of those who reach out to help.

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

Let us pray for those who are dying in conflicts throughout the world. May the peace of Christ be brought to them through the efforts of agencies that we support.

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

Conclusion

God of Peace, we offer you these petitions with knowledge that you are the great and Holy One who cares for us all. We pray in Jesus' name through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Third Sunday of Advent, Year C (15 December 2024)

Title	AOV	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
A voice cries out					278
Christmas is coming		55			
Fill ev'ry valley up		54			
Hark! a herald voice is calling				239	
In the Lord I'll be ever thankful				522	429
My soul in stillness waits					280
O come, O come Emmanuel	174		763	242	285
O Emmanuel		52			
On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry			780	244	
Prepare the way			794	250	284
Prepare the way, O Zion				245	
Rejoice in the Lord always		75			
Rejoice, the Lord is king!			799	377	
Take comfort, God's people			813		
The Spirit of God				388	185
The voice of God				621	476
Wait for the Lord				251	283

Title	S&S2
Cry out with joy	289

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Isaiah 12: *Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.*

	CWB	JOBC	LPC
Isaiah 12	180	pg. 10	pg. 11

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Fill every valley (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]

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

Come, Lord Jesus, come *CH & V3* (SYJ/ CWBII) [Lighting Advent Wreath]

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 - Gifts]



22 December 2024

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

As the feast of Christmas looms, the readings for the final Sunday of Advent take us closer to the expectations of the one who is to come. There is a shift that allows us greater insight into the sense that Christ comes not from the great but from the more lowly, that God chooses differently to human society. With this is the understanding that Christ, the mighty ruler, brings peace and does not to rule by might.

This is strengthened with the narrative of the Visitation, where the two kinswomen Elizabeth and Mary, meet and exchange greetings and recognitions. Interestingly, this is the story of two strong women, each pivotal to salvation, carrying faith in strength and hope. They will be the teachers of Jesus and John, and they are our teachers.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you came to do your Father's will. Lord, have mercy.

You came as a little one but offered yourself for our salvation. Christ, have mercy.

You will rule with majesty, justice and power for all eternity. Lord, have mercy.

Collect

*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.*

Our opening prayer this Sunday is steeped in theology and piety. Theologically it recounts the salvific deeds of Christ: incarnation, passion and death, resurrection. It seeks that we be brought into the glory of Christ's resurrection through the crucifixion. The Advent focus is on the incarnation, with the reference to the message of the Angel offering an appreciation of the biblical narratives of the birth of the child. The depths of the taking flesh are seen in the passion and cross, while the supremacy of grace over death comes forth in the resurrection.

The prayer, also the concluding collect for the thrice daily Angelus, evokes devotion to Mary. The Angelus reflects God's work of incarnation with a dialogue that rings with Mary's fiat and its outcome in the Word becoming flesh. The private message of Gabriel to Mary opens onto the public pronouncement of the angels to the shepherds, and ultimately made known to us.

The prayer can be difficult to proclaim precisely because it is so well known to many of the faithful. Yet it evinces that potent seasonal mixture of theology, piety, devotion to Mary and the Christ-child, and nativity stories. Most importantly, it closely connects the Cross to the incarnation and sets them within the triumph of the resurrection.

Collect commentary by Gerard Moore: The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by me for the Canadian liturgical journal Celebrate! (Novalis Press). My thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Micah 5:1- 4c

The ruler who is to come is first and foremost a bringer of peace.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19

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

As with the reading from Micah, there is great hope that the Lord will come.

Second Reading

Hebrews 10:5-10

Our passage from Hebrews continues to prepare us for the coming of the divine as fully human.

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:39 - 45

As these two strong kinswomen meet, the salvation of creation is brought before us.

Reflection

The readings for this final Sunday in Advent move us towards an understanding of the Christ who is coming. The reading from the prophet Micah offers some new notes and brings forth themes that will be taken up in the Visitation, our Gospel text. As with the extracts from the prophets over the last few weeks, the underlying theme is the emergence of a new leader, something of a 'strongman', to take up the reins of the nation and to rule under the reign of God. Further features are revealed here. The coming one is from humble leadership stock. The leading clans are not able to bring forth such a true leader. However, though coming from the lowly ranked tribal group, the emergent ruler has a lineage that is ancient, and so has integrity born from the most original faith in God. There is a connection being drawn between the lowly, the humble and the true.

The ultimate result is not national riches, defeat of enemies or empire, but peace. The ruler brings peace.

There is another point that can be made here, and though it is obvious, it is absolutely key to Christian faith. Micah speaks of the ruler born of a woman, a point made forcefully in the Gospel. The feast of Christmas is the feast of the incarnation, of the coming of the divine amidst creation as truly flesh and truly divine. Micah's down to earth statement presages the pivotal point of the revelation of the depth of God's love.

Regarding the second reading, there are three features of this extract from the Letter to the Hebrews that enrich our Advent theology. The passage begins with a modified verse from the Psalm 40. The striking phrase is that God has prepared a 'body' for the Christ. While there are a range of ideas at play in that verse, this is the one that ties the reading to our preparation for the feast of Christmas.

With this comes the reference to the obedience of Christ. There are a pair of themes here. Foremost is the obedience of Christ, who takes flesh for our salvation. This is a strong message in the Letters of Paul and is echoed here as well. But, given the context and the Gospel that will follow, there is too an intimation of the obedience of Mary. It is Mary's *fiat* that enables the Christ child to be born, and her obedience is integral to the incarnation. Mary the Mother of the Saviour and Mary the faithful believer are one.

The third point is a subtle shift in the text itself, testament to the theological view of the author. We have before us the line 'the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ...' I am leaving aside the language of sacrifice and offering what are central to Hebrews and turning our concentration to the appellation, Jesus Christ. Our author rarely joins these two names so closely, yet here places 'Jesus' the earthly one and 'Christ' the divine signification together. The writer is highlighting the integrity and absolute unity of the incarnation. We are quite used to this after 2000 years, but here there is a particular effort to ensure there is no loss of the full sense of the incarnation, an important contribution to our preparation for the feast of the incoming of the light.

Our Gospel passage is the narrative of the visitation of Mary to Elizabeth. Let us not forget as we take up the Advent interpretation of this text that it is a profound

encounter between two strong women. The readings from the prophets across the season have focused on the coming male leader, the ideal king of justice, of peace, of the reign of God. Here the final advent reading features two strong women, both poor, both bearing children of enormous significance, both supportive of each other, both willing and able to read and enact the will of God.

It might be best interpreting both as prophets, as tellers of the will of God. Mary has conceived by the Spirit, Elizabeth too is filled with the Holy Spirit. As the elder cousin reveals Mary's pregnancy, she does so in the language of the beatitudes, the language of Jesus most famous preaching. She also allows that her child will give way to Mary's child, not just in respect but in full joy.

With all this there is a theological profundity as the meaning of the incarnation is explored. The coming of the divine to take flesh is a cooperative venture, and Elizabeth praises her younger kin for her faith. The faith of the young woman is inseparable from the salvation of all creation in Christ. She is the 'mother' of 'my Lord'.

The divine inbreaking is a cooperative event. The Spirit is present, but so too is the will and willingness of these two individual women, kinswomen who ring in the reign of God. Perhaps there is something systemic that the church could learn from these two prophets.

On the ground in Bethlehem this Christmas

Over these weeks of Advent, I have brought into the discussion the violence in the Middle East. We can consider that there will be little or no Christmas celebration in Bethlehem this year. The Christian Palestinian population is exhausted by war and terror. This year, as was for last year, there will be little to celebrate by a distressed and weary people, Christian and Muslim alike.



***Mary was found to be
with child through the
Holy Spirit.***

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

God has loved humankind from the dawn of creation and so we know that our needs will be met through divine grace. Let us offer our petitions in humility and faith.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and all the leaders of the Church. May they fearlessly lift up their voices as prophets of peace.

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

We pray for those who are leaders in war-torn parts of the world, particularly in the Middle East. May the Spirit break their hearts of stone and enable them to find peaceful ways of living together.

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

We pray for people who cannot be with family and loved ones in the Christmas season. May our prayers support them in their need for love and security.

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

We pray for all those who will be travelling on the roads in the coming days and weeks. May they be vigilant, respectful and careful.

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

We pray for all those who work in emergency services during the holiday season. May they be treated with respect as they offer professional help where it is needed.

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

We pray for our community. For those who mourn and for those who are ill, that we will help generously where needed to bring the light of Christ to them.

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

Conclusion

God of justice and peace, we offer you these needs and those that are still quietly in our hearts in the faith that they will be answered in Jesus' name and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year C (22 December 2024)

Title	AOV	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
Christmas is coming			55			
Come to set us free					233	
Gentle Virgin Mother					407	
Hail Mary: gentle woman						544
Holy Virgin, by God's decree				714	410	
Immaculate Mary, we praise God in you				723	416	549
Let all mortal flesh keep silence					533	190
Lift up your hearts					539	416
Like Mary			53			
My soul in stillness waits						280
Now sing my soul, 'How great the Lord'				754		
O come, O come Emmanuel	174			763	242	285
O Emmanuel			52			
O holy Mary	141					
Open the heavens		163			243	
Saviour of the nations, come					246	
The angel Gabriel from Heaven came				815	247	
The coming of our Lord				816	248	
You heavens, sprinkle dew from above/ <i>Rorate caeli</i>					254	

Title	AOVNG	S&S2
Among all	8	
Hail Mary: gentle woman		336

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.*

	CWB	GA	JOBC	LPC
Psalm 79	173	47	pg. 13	pg. 14

Music selections by Michael Mangan

O Emmanuel (TT/SYJ/CWB II) [Gathering, Communion, Recessional]
 Come, Lord Jesus, come *CH & V4* (SYJ/ CWBII) [Lighting Advent Wreath]
 Mary Said Yes (TT) [CHILDREN: Gathering, Recessional]
 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 - Gifts]



24 December 2024

The Nativity of the Lord Christmas Vigil

Reflection by Andrew Doohan

Introduction

We begin our celebration of the Christmas season not by hearing the traditional account of the Christmas story but rather by hearing how this event, the Incarnation of Jesus, represents the fulfilment of God's promise to God's people. The readings situate the historical event of Jesus' birth in the broader context of salvation history.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, by your birth you brought hope to the world. Lord, have mercy.

You came so that all people may be saved. Christ, have mercy.

You are the Prince of Peace. Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 62:1–5

The prophet Isaiah expresses a passionate declaration of hope and restoration for Jerusalem, highlighting the deep love God has for God's people.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 88(89):4–5, 16–17, 27, 29

For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

This psalm represents a plea that God will remain faithful to the covenant God had established with God's people through King David.

Second Reading

Acts 13:16–17, 22–25

In one of his first missionary actions, Paul stands up in the synagogue and eloquently proclaims that Jesus is the Saviour promised by God, in fulfilment of all that God had promised.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 1:1–25 or Matthew 1:18–25

In its longer form, the Gospel reading contains both the genealogy of Jesus that begins Matthew's Gospel and Matthew's relatively short account of the conception and birth of Jesus. The shorter form contains only the latter.

Reflection

Every year, the *Ordo* reminds those preparing the liturgy for the Christmas Vigil Mass that for pastoral reasons, the texts of the Vigil can be supplanted by the texts set down for the Midnight Mass. Given many families with younger children tend to attend the Vigil Mass, including the more popular 'Christmas Story', with its mention of angels and shepherds, manger and swaddling clothes, is easily understood.

Yet there is something wonderfully powerful about hearing the proclamation of the 'genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham' that begins the longer form of the Gospel text for the Christmas Vigil Mass—and indeed the whole of the Gospel of Matthew!

Granted, the genealogy is difficult to proclaim well, with complicated names to get one's tongue around and a particular cadence to both recognise and honour, but the larger recounting of the history of faith from Abraham down to Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom 'was born Jesus who is called Christ', contextualises the Incarnation in God's great promise of salvation for God's people.

The birth of Jesus that we celebrate this night is not some random event, not some mere accident. This is the deliberate and intentional act of God fulfilling the promise made to God's people. The Incarnation, God taking on human flesh in the person of Jesus, as a newborn child in a house in Bethlehem, begins the fulfilment of the promise that God had communicated through the prophets from of old.

This is the promise we hear communicated by the prophet Isaiah in our First Reading and to which the Psalmist raises their voice. Indeed, this is the promise to which Paul bears witness in our Second Reading as he addresses the gathered people in Antioch, telling them that Jesus, a descendant of David, has been chosen by God as the Saviour of God's people.

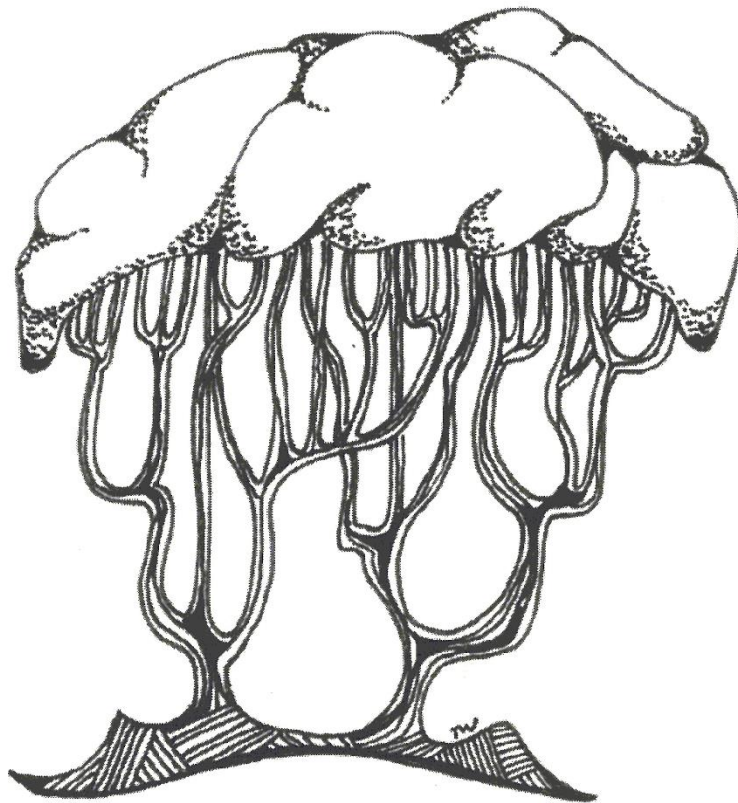
Even the second part of the Gospel reading, the shorter version, highlights how what we celebrate today is all part of God fulfilling God's promise. This alternative version of the Annunciation, interestingly directed more to Joseph than Mary, contains a reference to the prophet Isaiah, wherein we encounter the name 'Emmanuel', a name which we hear means 'God-with-us'.

And the fulfilment of that promise from God, a promise made from of old, has now come to fruition, not just once, long ago in Bethlehem, but always as Jesus himself promised. God now dwells with us, as one like us 'in all things but sin', in order that we might live as faithful disciples of the One who is 'God-with-us'.

This reality is at the very heart of what we celebrate on this great Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord. This feast is not just about shepherds and angels, mangers and stables; in fact, it is hardly about that at all.

This night, we sing of God's goodness, not in the giving of the Law or the sending of prophets, but in deigning to take human flesh and dwell among us. God has given God's very Self to us, God's people, so that we might have the opportunity to be saved.

And that is a very good reason, the very best of reasons perhaps, to raise our voices along with the Psalmist and sing 'For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord'.



**Let all the forests
cry out for joy.**

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

As we gather here tonight, full of joy to celebrate God's extraordinary goodness to us, let us offer our needs through these petitions.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and all the leaders of our Church, that the promises of God throughout time will be revealed through their witness and leadership.

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

We pray for the leaders of our economic, political and corporate entities that they may come to realise the need to welcome the Prince of Peace.

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

We pray for those who work in the hospitality industry that they may find time to be peaceful in this busy period and to be gracious and welcoming to all those whom they serve.

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

We pray for all those who are in hospital, care or prison during this Christmas feast. May they feel treasured and nurtured in a blest way by those who care for them and visit them.

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

We pray for families in our community as they celebrate the Incarnation together. May God's gifts be constantly brought to mind to lessen a possible consumerist focus.

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

We pray for those who have died that they may be welcomed into eternity. We also pray for those who mourn particularly during the Christmas season.

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

Conclusion

God of love, we offer these petitions in hope and joy through the name of your Son Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) Vigil (24 December 2024)

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
A child is born in Bethlehem				612		
Angels we have heard on high		140		622	255	286
Away in a manger					256	289
Baby lying in a manger			63		257	
Good Christians all, rejoice				697	261	
Hark! The herald angels sing	171			704	262	294
Joy to the world	170			728	265	295
O come, all ye faithful (Verses 1-2)	167			760	267	287
O little town of Bethlehem				772	266	296
Of the Father's love begotten				779	268	
Once in royal David's city				782	269	297
Sing we, sing we Nowell		124			271	
The first Nowell	169			822	280	298
Unto us a boy is born				849	273	
What child is this? (Verses 1-2)	165				275	

Title	AOVNG	S&S2
Born this day		296
Emmanuel	40	
Let the season shine	87	

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

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

	CWB	GA	JOBB	LPSF
Psalm 88	385	50	pg. 14	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 - Gifts]



25 December 2024

The Nativity of the Lord Christmas Midnight Mass

Reflection by Andrew Doohan

Introduction

In our readings for this Mass, we hear both the prophetic promise of a new king who will bring deliverance to God's people, and the birth of Jesus, fulfilling that promise. The traditional Christmas story is rehearsed, but for people of faith, it is not just a story, but God's promise brought to fruition.

These texts may also be used at the Vigil Mass for pastoral reasons.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, by your birth you brought hope to the world. Lord, have mercy.

You came so that all people may be saved. Christ, have mercy.

You are the Prince of Peace. Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 9:1–7

The prophet Isaiah praises God for the expected new King who will bring deliverance to God's people. The text ends with those mighty names to be given to the new King; names that Handel used so well!

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 95(96):1–3, 11–13

Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord (Lk 2:11)

The psalm used tonight highlights God's sovereignty, to which the whole world, the heavens and the earth, are invited to sing praise. The refrain, taken from Luke's Gospel, is the refrain of the angels as they announce the arrival of Jesus the Lord.

Second Reading

Titus 2:11–14

In writing to Titus, Paul reminds him—and us—of the reason we are called to live a life in right relationship with God: God has already brought deliverance to God's people in Jesus Christ, and now we await his coming again.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:1–14

Luke recounts the events surrounding the birth of Jesus, from the required travel of Joseph and Mary to the arrival of the Christ Child in a stable and the appearance of an angelic choir to shepherds. This recounting of events reminds us of the beginning of our salvation as God had promised from of old.

Reflection

After being absent since the beginning of Advent, our voices pierce the darkness of this night as they join the song of the angels: ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to all who enjoy God’s favour!’ It is right that such a song of praise should be on our lips tonight as we gather to celebrate God’s gracious self-gift in the Incarnation.

Tonight, we are reminded of the events of that first Christmas night, when Jesus was born of Mary in the meagre setting of a stable in Bethlehem. Tonight, we are reminded that the first proclamation of this ‘Good News’ was not to the high and mighty of society but to shepherds at work in the fields. Tonight, we are reminded that our Saviour, Christ the Lord, has been born.

And this last reminder, the one proclaimed by angels as heard in the Gospel proclaimed tonight and the Psalm we have sung, should give us pause.

What we celebrate tonight cannot be limited to the nice, safe, sometimes overly sanitised ‘Christmas Story’ that marketing agencies might seek to make it. If we profess ourselves to be people of faith, this event, which echoes down across the years to this very night, has consequences that make a claim on us and the way we live.

Because God has chosen to deliver humanity from itself by taking on human flesh and living among us. God has chosen to live among us to save us not as a mighty warrior but as a helpless child. God’s work of salvation has begun as a child; a child who became a man, a man who became a prophetic voice, a man who would suffer and die and be raised again so that God’s promise of salvation might become a reality.

On this holy night, we hear the beginning of a journey that will ultimately take the child whose birth we witness to the mountain of Calvary. In greater or lesser detail, we know those things that take place between those two events. And, because we are people of faith, we hold all these things together and seek to live out our lives in response day-to-day.

It cannot be as simple as staying in Bethlehem. It cannot be as simple as raising our voices alongside the angels, as wonderful as that is on a night like this. It cannot be as simple as staying nice or safe.

On this holy night, we hear the beginning of a journey that will unfold beyond Bethlehem, beyond shepherds, and beyond angelic choirs. On this holy night, we join ourselves to that journey; the journey that will demand something of us.

And all because God loves us and is faithful to the promise made to God's People.



*Glory to
God in the
highest.*

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The timeless manner of salvation from God calls us to offer all our needs in prayer.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and all the leaders of our Church. May they, through their lives, witness to the glory of God who became human in Jesus.

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

We pray for world leaders. May they be inspired to resolve differences through diplomacy and not violent conflict.

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

We pray for all those who suffer from violence and fear. May this special feast of the Prince of Peace become open to their minds and hearts so that they can live in safety.

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

We pray for Christians throughout the world who are persecuted, especially those in Bethlehem. May God's peace become evident to them so they remain strong in faith.

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

We pray for our community gathered here. May our celebrations of the birth of Jesus be truly focused on peace, love and joy.

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

We pray for all those who grieve during this special family time. May they know in their hearts that God draws us all into eternal divine perfection and therefore find peace and strength.

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

Conclusion

God of tender love, hear these prayers that we offer and all those still silent in our hearts and grant them according to your will. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) Midnight Mass (25 December 2024)

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
A child is born in Bethlehem				612		
Angels we have heard on high		140		622	255	286
Away in a manger					256	289
Baby lying in a manger			63		257	
Good Christians all, rejoice				697	261	
Hark! The herald angels sing	171			704	262	294
Joy to the world	170			728	265	295
O come, all ye faithful (Verses 1-2)	167			760	267	287
O little town of Bethlehem				772	266	296
Of the Father's love begotten				779	268	
Once in royal David's city				782	269	297
Silent night	168			803	270	290
Sing we, sing we Nowell		124			271	
The first Nowell	169			822	280	298
The people who in darkness walked					272	
Unto us a boy is born				849	273	
What child is this? (Verses 1-2)	165				275	

Title	AOVNG	S&S1	S&S2
Born this day			296
Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light			286
Emmanuel	40		
Go, tell it on the mountain		114	
Let the season shine	87		

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 95: *Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.*

	CWB	GA	JOBB	LPSF
Psalm 85	189	56	pg. 16	pg. 9

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Glory to God (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]
 Glory, gloria (STAR) [CHILDREN, Gathering, Recessional]
 Sing new songs of joy (FWS/CWB II) *based on Ps 97 (98)*
 There is a child (TT/SYJ) *based on Is 9:1-7*
 This little boy (TT/SYJ) [Non-Scriptural Reflection - Gifts]



25 December 2024

The Nativity of the Lord Christmas Mass in the day

Reflection by Errol Lobo

Introduction

It would seem that, at least as far as the scriptures are concerned, the Church has saved the best for last. The readings, which are the most theologically dense of all the Christmas Masses, draw us into the mystery of the Incarnation; the Son of God taking on our humanity at great cost, revealing to us both the love of God and the dignity of creation. Now in the full splendour of daylight, we bask in the true Light who has come into the world and brought us the salvation of God.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you came so that we could have life. Lord, have mercy.

You gave us your word that brings light into the darkness. Christ, have mercy.

You came so we could become children of the light. Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 52.7–10

To a people dejected and wounded come the joyful tidings of salvation. God is active in the world, redeeming the people of God in the sight of all nations.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 97(98).1–6

All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

God's people respond with shouts of joy for the justice, truth, and love that God has shown them in restoring the house of Israel.

Second Reading

Hebrews 1.1–6

In the Son, the radiant light of God's glory and God's perfect likeness, we see and hear all that God wishes to communicate to us. In these 'last days', he reveals the deepest truth about God and the destiny of humanity.

Gospel Reading

John 1.1–18 or John 1.1–5, 9–14

In the Christ-child whose birth we celebrate this day, God's very Word has pitched a tent among us, the true light has entered the world, and the One who is nearest the Father's heart has revealed God's sacred face.

Reflection

'How terrible is the darkness!' muses Salomé in Oscar Wilde's tragedy, as she peers into the pit imprisoning John of the Baptist; fascinated, but also afraid. How terrible indeed must have been the darkness, both outer and inner, enveloping John, whom the Fourth Gospel calls a witness to the light. The ancient world in which John lived and spoke longed for light, perhaps especially out of their fear of darkness. Human beings, in fact, have long associated the dark with uncertainty and danger; the fear of darkness is primal, an evolutionary trait we developed from being more vulnerable to predators at nighttime. It is why the scriptures can so often associate sin and death with darkness. We feel our strength weakened in the face of temptation; sin reminds us of our vulnerability and frailty. The Phantom of the Opera might overly romanticise the night, but we nod in agreement as he sings about the senses silently abandoning their defences in the 'darkness which you know you cannot fight'. Death, on the other hand, is the greatest uncertainty for us. It is the tragic and terrifying realm of impossibility; the ultimate darkness that we face as human beings. All of us feel powerless before it.

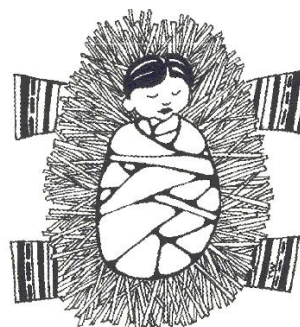
Significantly, it is in conjunction with the themes of darkness and death that the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel, proclaimed at the Mass of Christmas Day, asserts the gifts that Christ brings, or rather, the gift that Christ himself is; light and life. Its proclamation, in fact, begins a note that continues to sound throughout the Christmas Octave; that it is only against this backdrop of darkness and death that we can fully appreciate the gifts of light and life. Those who continue to participate in the liturgical celebrations of the Octave, after all, notice how quickly Christmas turns 'red' in the liturgy. On just the second day of Christmas, we commemorate the first martyr of the early Church, Stephen. On the fourth day, we honour all the innocent children who were slaughtered at the orders of Herod. The day after, the fifth day of Christmas, is also the commemoration of the bishop Thomas Becket, martyred while he was celebrating Mass in his Cathedral in Canterbury. We might wonder what

happened to the glad tidings announced to the shepherds; why such focus on suffering and death instead.

The Gospel Reading of Christmas Day prepares us well for this turn. Lest we get trapped in the merriment and sentimentality we see all around, or dwell only on the more cheerful parts of the Christmas story, it reminds us that when the Son of God entered our world that first Christmas, he entered a world trapped in its sin and self-destructiveness, a world that needed to be redeemed. The Christmas story is not simply a pious fable about a cute baby in the crib; it is the story of the Son of God who took on our humanity at a great cost. It is not just a story of shepherds hastening to see a newborn child, or the Magi bringing him gifts, but also of murderous tyrants desperate to hold on to their power at any cost, and a chosen people found asleep and disinterested. It is a story of a world animated by love and beauty, but also disfigured and haunted by sin and death. It is a story where the shadow of the Cross already falls over the crib; a story where the newborn child of the tender Mother of God will also be the Crucified One. It is the story of the Light that shines in the darkness and the Lord of Life who pitched his tent in the shadow of death.

Too often, celebrations of Christmas can feel saccharine. They offer an easy escape from reality, however brief, for those looking for it. No one wants to be a killjoy. When Christians gather to celebrate the Incarnation, though, we are called to enter more fully into the brokenness and suffering of the world, and there, in that place of sharing the world's pain and sorrow, to claim our prophetic vocation and witness to the light that cannot be overcome. Our liturgical celebrations of Christmas ought not to be disconnected from the realities of the world in which we live. We must face and name the frightening darkness that surrounds and so often threatens to envelop us—the darkness of war and conflict, the darkness of prejudice and hatred, the darkness of poverty and injustice, the darkness of the ecological disaster to which we seem bent on pushing ourselves, the darkness of isolation and despair and hopelessness felt by so many today, and even the darkness of our own hearts. Christians do not stand apart from all of this. And yet, we must also, like John, continue to announce the Gospel of Life and Light; the Good News that God loves our world, and us, so much that God became flesh, like us, in Jesus. Our world, still stalked by darkness and death, needs heralds of the dawn of redeeming grace and witnesses to love's pure light; messengers who say even—and especially—from the pits of darkness. Christ the Saviour is born.

**You will find a baby
wrapped in swaddling
clothes lying
in a manger.**



Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The Son of God who has taken his place in heaven is also our brother who knows our humanity. Through him, let us offer our prayers to the Father for the salvation of the world.

Petitions

That the Church, renewed by the light of Christ, may become more fully an instrument of justice, truth, and love in the world.

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

That the celebration of Christ's birth will lead us all to discover the profound dignity of human life.

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

That the Lord will turn the hearts of nations away from the madness of war and violence.

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

That those forced to leave their homelands might find welcome, shelter, and healing in the nations in which they seek refuge.

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

That those lonely and isolated, those vulnerable and forgotten, and those on the margins of society may experience the love of their sisters and brothers in the Christian community.

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

That our families may experience the healing grace of Christ and be witnesses to his light and life this Christmas.

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

Conclusion

God of inexhaustible mercy, we stand before you, asking that your light shine anew on the darkness of our world and that our needs be answered. Restore all that sin has destroyed, heal what human folly has wounded, and make us witnesses of your salvation to the world. We ask this in the name of Christ our Lord and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
A Child is born in Bethlehem				612		
Angels we have heard on high		140		622	255	286
Away in a manger					256	289
Baby lying in a manger			63		257	
Good Christians all, rejoice				697	261	
Hark! The herald angels sing	171			704	262	294
Joy to the world	170			728	265	295
O come, all ye faithful (Verses 1-2)	167			760	267	287
O little town of Bethlehem				772	266	296
Of the Father's love begotten				779	268	
Once in royal David's city				782	269	297
Sing we, sing we nowell		124			271	
The first nowell	169			822	280	298
Unto us a Boy is born				849	273	
What Child is this? (Verses 1-2)	165				275	

Title	AOVNG	S&S1	S&S2
All the ends of the earth (Fisher)	5	75	
All the ends of the earth (Canedo)			270
All the ends of the earth (Hurd)			271
Born this day			296
Emmanuel	40		
Let the season shine	87		
Sing to the Lord a new song			272

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

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

	CWB	GA	JOBC	LPSF	PM 1
Psalm 97	185, 598	57	pg. 12	pg. 14	pg. 72

Music selections by Michael Mangan

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

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

Sing new songs of joy (FWS/CWB II) *based on Ps 97 (98)*

All the ends of the earth (LCC) *Ps 97/98 (Chn's Lectionary)* [Psalm, Gifts]

There is a child (TT/SYJ) *based on Is 9:1-7*

This little boy (TT/SYJ) [Non-Scriptural Reflection - Gifts]



29 December 2024

The Holy Family

Reflection by Andrew Doohan

Introduction

Today's solemnity of the Holy Family reminds us of the complexities that can arise when human relationships encounter the mission of Christians to proclaim the reign of God to the world.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you humbly came into the world as a child. Lord, have mercy.

You showed us how to love through our own lives. Christ, have mercy.

You came so we could become children of the light. Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

1 Samuel 1:20–22, 24–28

Hannah's long-prayed-for son, whom she named Samuel for that reason, is 'made over to the Lord' in recognition of God's answering of Hannah's prayers. This act, on Hannah's part, gives back to God what God gave her.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 83:2–3. 5–6. 9–10. R v5

How happy they who dwell in your house, O Lord.

The Psalmist sings of the desire to live within God's Temple, and there participate in the worship of God.

Second Reading

1 John 3:1–2, 21–24

John's first letter reminds those who hear it that those who believe in Jesus Christ and keep his command—especially the command to love one another—are already the children of God alongside Christ.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:41–52

In Jerusalem, to fulfil their religious duty at Passover, the child-man Jesus goes missing from the presence of Mary and Joseph. Concerned for his safety, they search for him for three days and then find him in the Temple.

Reflection

It was three days.

Three long, excruciating days. Filled no doubt with fear and apprehension in a way that any parent has experienced or can potentially imagine.

Three days during which Mary and Joseph could not find Jesus. Three days during which their fears would only grow. Three days when Jesus was missing, absent from the presence of those who loved him.

The obvious overtones of the three days Jesus would spend in a tomb at the end of his earthly existence, separated from those who had come to love him, are hard to miss. As is the eventual place where Jesus is found: the Temple, his Father's house, just as he would return to the Father's heavenly abode at the Ascension.

In recounting this event, Luke's Gospel provides a rare scriptural glimpse into the young years of Jesus, a time between his birth and the beginning of his public ministry to which we do not often refer. And in so doing, we see that even as a young adolescent he is about his Father's work.

Just before the excerpt from Luke's Gospel we hear today, we are told how Mary and Joseph had taken the newborn Jesus to the Temple and presented him to the Lord as the Law of Moses commanded. There in the Temple, Simeon and Anna foretold that this child—their child—was to be the means by which the People of God would be redeemed.

The command that each firstborn male was to be dedicated to the Lord was honoured by Mary and Joseph, and the echoes of Hannah's actions heard in today's first reading are hard to miss.

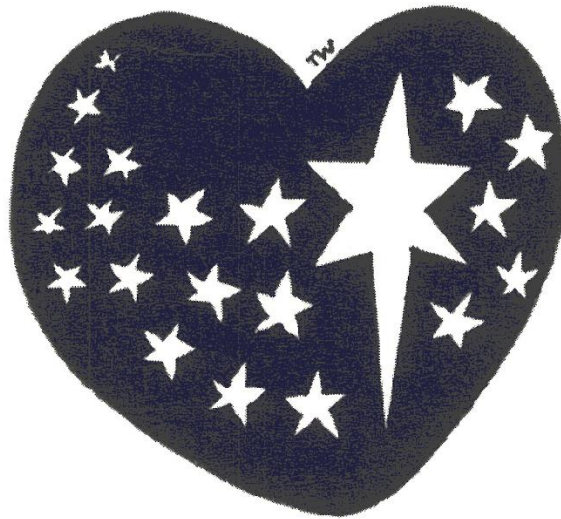
So perhaps it should have been no surprise to Mary and Joseph that twelve years later, Jesus, on the very cusp of becoming a man according to the Law, was discovered in the Temple listening to the teachers of the Law, asking questions, and amazing all those who heard him. Perhaps it should have been no surprise that Jesus would respond to the apparent concern of Mary and Joseph in a way that parents of teenagers might recognise all too well.

'Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?'

This single-minded focus on what he needed to be about is a foretaste of what we will see during his public ministry: a driving passion to proclaim the coming of God's kingdom just as he was sent by the Father to do. This single-mindedness to be about

the task entrusted to him would eventually take Jesus to the cross and the resurrection, despite pleas from others for Jesus to take a different path.

The seemingly dismissive response to the concerns of Mary and Joseph that we hear in today's Gospel is one more foretaste from the early chapters of Luke that reminds us that this child would have a singular place in the history of God's People.



Open our hearts
to receive
Christ's light.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

As we gather here today as your people to honour the Holy Family of Nazareth, we turn to you with confidence that our needs will be heard.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and all our Church leaders that through your strength they will guide their flock in peace and integrity.

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

We pray for all the leaders of our world. May they be very conscious of the needs of all families, especially those in developing countries.

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

We pray for those who are sick and suffering in this world, particularly those suffering from homelessness and family violence. May they see God's compassion and mercy through those who care for them.

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

We pray for all families who are victims of violence and abuse. May they find safety, peace and a place to heal their bodies, minds and souls and may those who are violent find a way towards loving relationships.

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

We pray for all families travelling during this holiday period. May they find courtesy and generosity on the roads and hospitality wherever they go.

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

We pray for those who grieve for loved ones. May they find gentleness and compassion in those who care for them.

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

We pray for elderly people in care facilities who no longer receive visits from family and friends. May those whom they long for find the strength and compassion to visit them and patiently hold on to the person they knew and the person they see now.

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

Conclusion

Loving Father, you welcomed the children that came to you through the love of your Son and so we have confidence that you listen to our prayer, which we make through the guiding presence of the Spirit in the name of Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

The Holy Family, Year C (29 December 2024)

Title	AOV	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
Angels we have heard on high		140		622	255	286
At last, all-pow'rful Master					225	
Away in a manger					256	289
Baby lying in a manger			63			
Canticle of Simeon				636		301
For the beauty of the earth	123			678	487	427
Hail Mary: gentle woman						544
In the temple now behold him					427	
Joy to the world	170			728	265	295
Lord God, you now have set your servant free					226	
My master, see, the time has come				636	227	
Once in royal David's city				782	269	297
Sing of Mary, pure and lowly				808		
There is nothing told					418	548
What child is this?	165				275	

Title	AOVNG	S&S2
Among all	8	
Hail Mary: gentle woman		336

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 83: *How happy they who dwell in your house, O Lord.*

	CWB	GA	JOBC	LPC
Psalm 83	194	48	pg. 20	pg. 18

Music selections by Michael Mangan

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

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

Sing new songs of joy (FWS/CWB II) *based on Ps 97 (98)*

This little boy (TT/SYJ) [Non-Scriptural Reflection - Gifts]



1 January 2025

Mary, the Holy Mother of God

Reflection by Andrew Doohan

Introduction

On the octave day of Christmas, we acknowledge and celebrate the singular role of Mary as the Mother of God, a role essential to human salvation. We celebrate the fruit of Mary's 'Yes' at the Annunciation as our celebration of the day of the Lord's Nativity comes to a close, and a new calendar year begins.

Today is also acknowledged as the World Day of Peace, and this can be reflected in the petitions of the Universal Prayer.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you came and we are redeemed. Lord, have mercy.

You came so that we can become your heirs. Christ, have mercy.

You came to fill us with your joy and peace. Lord, have mercy.

Collect

*O God, who through the fruitful virginity of Blessed Mary
bestowed on the human race
the grace of eternal salvation,
grant, we pray,
that we may experience the intercession of her,
through whom we were found worthy
to receive the author of life,
our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son.*

Our prayer highlights the role of Mary in the divine plan of salvation, and in this continues the liturgical sense of the Christmas season and the theology of the incarnation it embodies. As well, the collect brings out the way in which God's plans do not reflect human wisdom. After all, it is the virgin who is fruitful, and later in the petition we hear that the humble bearer of a life is carrying the author of all life. God has truly entered human history and become vulnerable to the conditions of human and material life. As the new year begins the faithful petition that they may feel under Mary's intercession, a sentiment that resonates with the care of this mother for her newborn infant. And so, the year is commenced in prayer with the mystery of

redemption, the unfathomable ways of God, the agency of the young woman, and a sense of the ongoing care of the mother.

Collect commentary by Gerard Moore: The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by me for the Canadian liturgical journal Celebrate! (Novalis Press). My thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Numbers 6:22–27

Moses receives from the Lord the words to be prayed over the people of God; words that still echo within the Christian Church today.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 66(67):2–3, 5–6, 8

May God bless us in his mercy.

The Psalmist gives thanks for God's blessing on God's people, for which the people are called to render praise to God in a constant refrain.

Second Reading

Galatians 4:4–7

St Paul reminds the Church in Galatia—and us—that because God has sent his Son to live in human flesh, we have received adoption as children of God and become co-heirs with Christ. In that spirit, we cry out 'Abba! Father!' along with Jesus.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:16–21

Having listened to the angelic choir announce his birth, the shepherds hasten to encounter the promised salvation of the Lord, telling Mary and Joseph all that they had heard. Mary treasured all these things in her heart, while she and Joseph prepare to give the child his name, Jesus.

Reflection

As we gather at the beginning of a new calendar year, we celebrate Mary's unique role in God's plan of salvation.

Our Gospel reveals Mary in the humble scene we first encounter on the day of the Nativity. Surrounded by animals and a manger, Mary welcomes the shepherds who, having heard the Good News from the angelic choir, have come to see for themselves what they have been told: God has fulfilled God's promise.

We are told that Mary 'treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart', a journey that began not with the birth of her child but months before when Mary's 'yes' at the Annunciation and set God's eternal plan into motion.

It is a wonderfully powerful image. Mary quietly contemplates the mystery of her child, through which we gain a glimpse of her deep faith and trust in God. Mary has received the Word of God not only in her womb but also in her heart and has thus become the first disciple of Christ.

In celebrating Mary's title of 'Mother of God', which comes from the Greek *Theotokos*, literally 'God-bearer', we recognise not only Mary's singular role but also make a statement of faith about the identity of Jesus. In affirming Mary's title, we are making a declaration about the mystery of the Incarnation: that Jesus, the eternal Son of God, has entered into our human history, has taken on human flesh, and has become one of us.

Through Mary, God has entered the world in a concrete, human way in the person of Jesus, fully God and fully human.

And, as St Paul reminds the Church of Galatia, it is through this event, this Incarnation, that we have become children of God by adoption, and thus co-heirs with Christ to the kingdom that Christ came to proclaim.

The mystery of the Incarnation, the day of which comes to a close today, is at the heart of our Christian faith. And it is so because Mary first said 'yes'.

Despite all the uncertainties and sufferings it might bring, Mary accepted her role in God's plan with total humility and trust. Thus, it provides a model of true discipleship: faith in action, trust in God's will, and a life of humble service.

Mary's example teaches us to listen to God, to treasure God's words, and to follow God's will. Mary shows us that faith is not simply about knowledge of doctrine but about trusting God with our lives, of 'treasuring all these things' and pondering them in our hearts.

On this first day of the new year, we can look to Mary as a guide and intercessor. We enter 2025 with hope, but also perhaps with uncertainties, fears, or burdens. We do not know what this year will bring, but we can, like Mary, treasure and ponder in our hearts the mystery of God's love for us made manifest in Christ Jesus, whose mother shows us how we can 'yes' to all that God asks of us.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

Like Mary our mother who always put her hope in God, we now present our needs to God with humble confidence.

Petitions

We pray for Francis our Pope, our Bishops, the clergy and other leaders of the Church. With Mary, the Mother of the Church, may they find inspiration in her discipleship and willingness to be guided by the Spirit.

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

We pray for the leaders of all nations, that they may be guided by the Holy Spirit to govern with integrity and justice and to support all those who are suffering from the effects of violent conflict. On this World Day of Peace, we pray that their efforts will be just and right.

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

We pray for all parents, that following the example of Mary and Joseph, they may lovingly raise their children to know and love God.

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

We pray for couples experiencing infertility or the loss of a child, that God will give them comfort, strength and hope in their time of grief.

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

We pray for the needs of the community gathered here today, that strengthened by God's grace and the intercession of Mary, we will continually conform our lives to God's will and work towards peace in every aspect of our lives.

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

We pray for those suffering ill health in mind, body and spirit. May they be restored through the care of those who love them.

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

Conclusion

We offer these needs to our loving God with complete confidence that they will be answered. We make these prayers through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, Year C (1 January 2025)

Title	AOV1	AOV2	CWB	CWBII	GA
Angels we have heard on high		140	622	255	286
Canticle of Mary			606		
Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come			654	382	376
Good Christians all, rejoice			697	261	
Hail Mary: gentle woman					544
Hail Queen of Heaven, the Ocean Star			702		
Hark! The herald angels sing	171		704	262	294
Holy Virgin, by God's decree			714	410	
Immaculate Mary, we praise God in you			723	416	549
Joy to you, O Virgin Mary			729		
May God bless and keep you	177				441
Mary, crowned with living light			742		
My soul rejoices				212	250
O holy Mary	141			413	
O Mary of Graces and Mother of God			769		
O purest of creatures			775		
Salve, Regina			801	406	
Sing of Mary, pure and lowly			808		
The Angel Gabriel from heaven came			815	247	
Tell out my soul				213	550
There is nothing told				418	548
What child is this? (Verses 1-2)	165			275	

Title	AOVNG	S&S1	S&S2
Among all	8		
Hail Mary: gentle woman			336

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 66: *May God bless us in his mercy.*

	CWB	PM 3	LPSF
Psalm 66	195	42	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* [Gifts]

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

My Spirit Sings (FWS/SYJ/CWB II) *Magnificat* [Gathering, Recessional]



5 January 2025

The Epiphany

Reflection by Errol Lobo

Introduction

Throughout the Christmas season, we are invited to deepen our understanding of the One whose birth we celebrate with great joy. This child is one of us, and yet more than us. He is born of Mary at Bethlehem but is also God's Son from all eternity. And today, on the Solemnity of the Epiphany, we marvel that the long-awaited Messiah of Israel is the world's Redeemer and that he has revealed his sacred face—the face of the Father's mercy—to all the nations. Christ the babe is indeed Lord of all.

Penitential Act

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

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

You guide us to the Father. Christ, have mercy.

You are God-among-us. Lord, have mercy.

Collect

*O God, who on this day
revealed your Only Begotten Son to the nations
by the guidance of a star,
grant in your mercy
that we, who know you already by faith,
may be brought to behold the beauty of your sublime glory.*

The collect celebrating the revelation of the divine child to the magi is embossed with the great themes of the Christmas season. The infant is the Only Begotten Son, the Word made flesh. The scope of the revelation is boundless. Christ as revealed to the 'nations' further impresses upon us that God brings about the salvation of all humanity and all creation. This breadth is enhanced in the image of 'guidance by a star', which reminds us that all creation is open towards God. Yet the prayer itself concentrates less on the sense of guidance than on the star as a source of light. This image evokes Christ as the light of the world and calls to mind the relationship between the power of light to reveal and the event of coming to faith as an act of 'seeing'. Further the star is a light that shines in the darkness. The petition of the

prayer seeks the fulfilment of what the star has illuminated: the gift of seeing the beauty of God and experiencing the splendour of the divine glory.

Collect commentary by Gerard Moore: The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by me for the Canadian liturgical journal Celebrate! (Novalis Press). My thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Isaiah 60:1–6

Amid the darkness all around, Isaiah speaks of the dawn of new hope. Israel's restoration is underway as the 'glory of the Lord' shines upon her. Drawn by the light, all nations of the earth will stream towards her and join in worship of Israel's saving God.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 71(72):1–2, 7–8, 10–11, 12–13

Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

The prayer for Israel's anointed king is notably inclusive in its vision. He will unite all nations under his rule of justice and peace, with a special concern for the poor and needy.

Second Reading

Ephesians 3:2–3, 5–6

The soteriological significance of the Paschal Mystery is expressed as the creation of a new People of God in Christ, comprising both Jews and Gentiles who now share the same inheritance offered through faith in the Lord Jesus.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 2:1–12

Magi from the East seek out the newborn King of Israel, whose birth, they believe, has been heralded by a star. Their journey is marked by danger and deception, but guided by the scriptures and the star, they are led to Jesus. Despite the lack of signs to indicate royalty and earthly glory, they recognise the true King before them, offering Jesus their gifts and doing him homage.

Reflection

Those of us in Australia are probably well accustomed to the ethnic and cultural diversity that marks parish life here. Far from being a reality to which we must resign ourselves, it is a precious gift and profound blessing—not without its challenges for community life, but nonetheless a gift and blessing. Few other local churches could claim to have the privilege of gathering, day after day and week after week, in communities made up of brothers and sisters of so many a tribe and tongue and

people and nation. That said, if we did look around us on a Sunday morning, we might also notice that despite our great diversity, few, if any, of the other parishioners are Jewish. Perhaps it is a great tragedy that as we come together each day or each week in our largely 'Gentile' churches, this seems completely unremarkable to us.

The first Christians, who were predominantly Jewish, however, wrestled tremendously with this issue. The letter to the Ephesians makes a startling claim; one heard every year on the Solemnity of the Epiphany, but often lost on us. A 'mystery', it says, has finally been revealed in Christ; that Jews and Gentiles share the same inheritance, that they are members of the one body, and that they receive the same promise in Jesus Christ. All well and good for the Gentiles perhaps, but any good and upright Israelite listening to it would have been well within their rights to ask: really? Israel had indeed suffered tremendously at the hands of foreign nations, but the issue ran much deeper. What about God's covenantal promises to Israel? Wasn't Israel, as the people of God, meant to remain distinct from the nations? There are, after all, passages in the scriptures that clearly instruct the Jewish people to do so. There is even a time when, under the priest Ezra, Israel is commanded to banish all foreign spouses from the land. There are stories in which those who intermingled with foreigners are put to violent deaths; the biblical authors portraying the murderers as heroes worthy of commendation for their zeal. Did not fellowship with Gentiles, then, threaten Israel's identity and election?

Yet, through all the vicissitudes of Israel's history and the biblical texts, there is also a voice—the voice of God's Spirit—that never ceases to remind God's people that their covenant-partner is, at the very same time, Creator of all people; a Creator who passionately loves all of creation and whose ultimate purposes are life and salvation, not doom and destruction. It is a voice, we might say borrowing some words from Pope Francis, that never ceases to say, *Todos! Todos! Todos!* [Meaning all, or everyone in Spanish]. Indeed, Israel's prophets will eventually announce that God's salvation will go forth to all nations, to all peoples. That 'wideness' of divine mercy is what we hear Isaiah announce in the first reading. Even as the prophet, following a series of national calamities, foretells the restoration of Israel, he speaks of all nations being gathered under the praise of Israel's God, all peoples of the world being blessed through God's redemption of Israel. Confounding as it may have seemed, Isaiah affirms that Israel's Redeemer is saviour of the entire world—even those nations that waged war against Israel, that destroyed its Temple, that brutally killed members of its royal family, that forced Israel into exile in a foreign land. God's purposes will not be fulfilled until salvation goes forth from Zion to all creation, and all nations are drawn together by the love of God within a single fold, a single worldwide family.

Isaiah's prophecy is filled up with new meaning as the Magi, who are non-Jews, are led by the star to the child of Bethlehem. In their journey, we already catch a glimpse of his vision being realised: the nations streaming to offer their gifts to the God of Israel. As Christians, certainly, we profess that the 'new-born King' to whom the Magi pay their homage is the embodiment of Israel's God, the face of the Father's love for all nations, for all people. He is the Son around whom God creates a new human family of both Jews and Gentiles. He is the Christ in whose Body and Blood we have

communion. He himself is the 'mystery' whose epiphany we celebrate; God revealed to us in the humanity of the Son. And our celebration invites us to journey in the footsteps of those Magi, offering our own fragile lives before the Christ-child, filled with wonder and gratitude at the immensity and wideness of God's love for all people; for us who have come to share in Israel's blessings. But even more, we are called to share that love with others, especially those who need to be assured of that love, those who long to hear the Good News of salvation, those who have so often been excluded and forgotten. We are called to listen afresh to the Spirit's voice which cries '*Todos! Todos! Todos!*', and in doing so, to become the stars that shine before the men and women of our own day, leading them to that perfect light, the true and kindly light that enlightens all people, who is Christ Jesus, our Lord.



*The glory of God
shines upon you.*

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

Formed by the Lord as a priestly people and called to offer supplications on behalf of the world, let us now bring our prayers and petitions to the God of boundless grace revealed to us in Christ Jesus.

Petitions

For God's holy people: that attentive to the signs of the times in the light of faith, we may become credible witnesses to the Lord Jesus in our own day.

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

For peace in the world, especially in the Holy Land: that the Lord will change the hearts of those whose decisions and actions unleash so much suffering and misery in our world today.

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

For those who seek the truth in sincerity of heart: that they too may recognise in the Christ-child the fulfilment of all human longing and desire.

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

For those who face exclusion and prejudice: that they will find welcome and acceptance within the community of Christ's disciples.

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

For pilgrims and travellers: that the Lord will protect them in their journeys and bring them to their destinations in peace and tranquillity.

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

For all the faithful departed: that they may find eternal rest and comfort within God's own life and love.

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

Conclusion

Listen graciously to the supplications of your people, O God, and in your mercy draw all peoples to the knowledge and love of your Son, who is Lord for ever and ever through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

The Epiphany, Year C (5 January 2025)

Title	AOV1	CWB	CWBII	GA
A Child is born in Bethlehem		612		
All the Earth proclaim the Lord		611		
Christ, be our light			540	404
City of God			453	498
Earth has many a noble city		669	276	
Good Christians all, rejoice		697	261	
Joy to the world	170	728	265	295
O come, all ye faithful	167	760	267	287
Of the Father's love begotten		779	268	
Song for Epiphany			278	300
The first Nowell	169	822	280	298
We three kings of Orient are			281	299
What child is this?	165		275	

Title	S&S1	S&S2
Christ, be our light	105	
City of God	106	
Lord, every nation (Blakesley)		262
Lord, every nation (Manibusan)	70	
Your light will come, Jerusalem		295

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 71: *Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.*

	CWB	JOBB	LPB	PM 1
Psalm 71	196	pg. 22	pg. 25	pg. 56

Music selections by Michael Mangan

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

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

We come to worship him (STAR)

Sing new songs of joy (FWS/CWB II) *based on Ps 97 (98)* [Gathering, Recessional]



12 January 2025

The Baptism of the Lord First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Andrew Doohan

Introduction

As we begin Ordinary Time, we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, just as we begin our journey of faith through Baptism.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you were baptised by John in the Jordan to show us the way to repentance. Lord, have mercy.

You are God's chosen one. Christ, have mercy.

You are the source of life. Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Through Isaiah, God provides comfort and hope to God's people, promising care and deliverance. For Christians, this is a prophecy of God's salvation, which is fulfilled upon the arrival of Christ.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 24-25, 27-30. R v.1

O, bless the Lord, my soul!

The psalmist praises God's divine wisdom for creating the universe beautiful and life-giving.

Second Reading

Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7

In Christ, we have been saved, receiving God's grace and mercy. This gracious act of God calls us to righteousness in living, while we wait in hope for the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Gospel Reading

Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Faced with the ministry of John the Baptist, people wondered if he was the Promised One, which John strenuously denied. John continues his ministry and baptises Jesus, the Holy Spirit descends, and a voice speaks from heaven.

Reflection

Today, we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, which marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry and reveals Jesus as the beloved Son of God. This feast is not only about the baptism of Jesus but also about the meaning of baptism for all of us, the new life it offers, and how it calls us to share in the mission of Christ.

Our first reading from the prophet Isaiah opens with words of comfort, hope, and renewal for a people longing for deliverance. Isaiah speaks of a voice crying out in the wilderness, preparing the way of the Lord. The valleys will be lifted up, the mountains made low, and the glory of the Lord will be revealed.

This prophecy finds its fulfilment in John the Baptist, who prepares the way for Jesus. John's call for repentance is a call for levelling the obstacles in our lives that keep us from fully experiencing God's presence. Just as the ancient Israelites waited for liberation, we, too, await a deeper freedom—the freedom from sin and separation from God.

The imagery of valleys and mountains being transformed reminds us that God is actively working to make a path for grace in our lives, and baptism is the sacrament through which this grace is powerfully at work.

In our second reading from the letter to Titus, we hear, 'God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race'. Embodied in Jesus, this grace teaches us to live upright and godly lives. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we are redeemed from all lawlessness making us a people eager to do good works.

But the letter goes even further: it tells us that God's mercy, not our works, saves us through 'the cleansing water of rebirth and by renewing us with the Holy Spirit.' Here, the connection to baptism is made explicit. Baptism is not just a ritual—it is a transformative encounter with God's mercy, through which we are cleansed from sin and given a share in the divine life.

The baptism we receive is not just a singular event; it is an ongoing call to live in the grace of God, renouncing sin and striving for holiness. In this way, our lives reflect the dignity and mission given to us in baptism.

In the Gospel of Luke, we see the beautiful moment when John baptises Jesus in the Jordan. Luke describes how the heavens were opened, the Holy Spirit descended

upon Jesus like a dove, and a voice from heaven declared: 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'

Jesus' baptism is unique because there was no sin for which he had to repent. Yet Jesus entered the waters of baptism to identify with sinners and show us the path of obedience and humility. Jesus' baptism is a revelation of his identity as the beloved Son, an affirmation that Jesus is the one anointed by God to bring salvation to the world.

For us, this moment reveals not only who Jesus is but also the significance of our own baptism. In baptism, we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection, and we, too, are declared beloved sons and daughters of God. The Holy Spirit, who descended upon Jesus, is also given to us, empowering us to live out our calling as children of God.

What does it mean for us to live as baptised Christians? First, it means we are called to continually turn away from sin and seek the grace of God in our lives. Just as Jesus was affirmed in his identity at his baptism, so too are we given a new identity in baptism. We are no longer defined by our past sins or failures but by the love and mercy of God.

Second, we are called to live out our baptismal mission. This involves not only personal holiness but also a commitment to love and serve others. As the reading from Titus reminds us, we are saved not for our own sake alone but to be a people 'with no ambition except to do good.' Our baptism commissions us to actively participate in God's work of salvation in the world.

As we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, let us remember the great gift of our baptism. In baptism, God has claimed us, filled us with the Holy Spirit, and called us to share in Christ's mission. Like Jesus, we are God's beloved.

May we live each day in the grace of our baptism, striving to grow in holiness, serving others with love, and proclaiming the good news of salvation to the world.



**The Spirit, the water and
the blood give witness.**

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The psalmist cries out 'Bless the Lord, my soul' because we celebrate a wonderful Baptism that inspires us, through the Spirit, to offer our needs to God.

Petitions

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church that they will base their ministry always on the ministry of Jesus and recognise the priesthood of all the faithful who have been baptised.

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

We pray for the leaders of the nations that surround the Jordan River where Jesus was baptised. May they learn to lead their people in peace and bring an end to violence and conflict.

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

We pray for those who are suffering from oppression and injustice. May the ministry of Jesus become evident through the loving hands of those who reach out to help, particularly those who work for international service groups helping those who are still struggling to survive.

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

We pray for our own community that we will, through the way we live, show to those around us that Jesus matters.

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

We pray for all those who are currently on holidays celebrating the return to safe travel during these difficult times. May they return home safe and well.

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

We pray for those who build churches and places of baptism that they will, through their art, lift us in the Spirit to live our beliefs.

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

Conclusion

Loving Father, we know that you sent your Son to be our guide to eternal life and so in his name and in the power of the Spirit we confidently offer you our needs.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

The Baptism of the Lord, Year C (12 January 2025)

Title	AOV	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
Baptised in water					99	179
Come to the feast	151					400
Come to the water (Andersen)					473	
Come to the water (Foley)	74					403
Joy to the world	170			728	265	295
Like a shepherd	160				538	467
Love divine, all loves excelling						463
O Christ the great foundation						483
Praise to you, O Christ our saviour	28					407
Prepare the way						284
Seek, O seek the Lord.				802	595	
Send down the fire		164				475
Song over the waters						435
There is one Lord (Alstott)		148				
There is one Lord (Taizé)						346
The Spirit of God						185
The voice of God						475
We are children of the living God			15			
When Jesus comes to be baptised				858	282	
When John baptised by Jordan's river					284	

Title	S&S2
Cry out with joy	289

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 103: *O bless the Lord, my soul!*

	CWB	JOBC	LPC
Psalm 103	199	pg. 24	pg. 27

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Fill every valley (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]
 Holy Spirit, come (TCS) [Gifts, Reflection]
 Holy Spirit of fire (SHOF) [Gifts, Reflection]
 Hearts on fire (SHOF/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]



19 January 2025

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Pina Ford

Introduction

In the Church's liturgical calendar, the readings for this Sunday follow smoothly from the baptism of the Lord and the adoration of the Magi because the miracle or sign that Jesus performs at Cana offers an epiphany or manifestation of his divine identity.

We now spread these moments out over three weeks but originally, they formed one great feast. As the Liturgy of the Hours for the Epiphany says: 'Three mysteries mark this holy day: today the star leads the Magi to the infant Christ; today water is changed into wine for the wedding feast; today Christ wills to be baptised by John in the river Jordan to bring us salvation.'

For the ancient Christians the miracle of Cana was seen as a foretelling of the heavenly wedding banquet, when in the place of water, representing our humanity, we would receive the wine that represents a share in God's own life and nature.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you show us the power of your love so that we can trust you. Lord, have mercy.

You came to show us your love and supply all our needs. Christ, have mercy.

You have shown us your glory so that we can believe. Lord, have mercy.

Collect

*Almighty ever-living God,
who govern all things,
both in heaven and on earth,
mercifully hear the pleading of your people
and bestow your peace on our times.*

The community invokes God in light of its faith that everything in heaven, and at the same time everything on earth, falls under the divine. The sense of 'govern' includes the harmony that comes from God ruling all things within their own rhythm and

measure. It also carries the understanding that God's rulership is grounded in the love and fidelity that the creator has towards creation itself. It resonates with the conviction that through Christ all things were made, named as good, restored and are continually guarded. This pairing of 'heaven' and 'earth' also connotes God's use of the celestial and the earthly for the sake of salvation. From all this emerges the community's confidence that we will hear and respond with that self-same mercy.

The second petition is for peace in the present. The invocation of divine mercy sets this peace within the context of the peace that Christ has wrought. More particularly, on earth the prayer tradition links this with inner peace, freedom from sin, righteous living, and the absence of civil strife. It is a foretaste of eternal life, which itself is marked by light, truth and communion with the saints. This is a great prayer with which to begin the new year.

Collect commentary by Gerard Moore: The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by me for the Canadian liturgical journal Celebrate! (Novalis Press). My thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Isaiah 62:1–5

God's desire for the restoration and salvation of the people is urgent and will not cease until God's joy and delight in them comes to fulfillment.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 95:1–3, 7–10

Proclaim his marvellous deeds to all the nations.

The psalmist calls us to a great and joyful worship of God, and to obedience.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 12:4–11

The Spirit of God lavishes the Christian community with many gifts. These are unique for each one but their source is the one Spirit, and they must be used for the common good.

Gospel Reading

John 2:1–11

The Wedding at Cana

The miracle at the wedding feast of Cana is a sign of the abundance of life and joy Jesus has come to pour out on all who are open to receive him.

Reflection

This wonderful, familiar story of the wedding feast at Cana occurs early in the Gospel of John and has no parallel in the Synoptics. It introduces us to Jesus' ministry, laying the foundations for what Jesus came on earth to do.

The scene unfolds with an engaging concreteness. What could be more down to earth and colourful than the real dramas that go on behind the scenes at wedding celebrations? But there is much more. The wedding is 'on the third day' and weddings are about the transformation that happens when two people come together to live a radically new life. This wedding celebration is the context for the profound multi-layered symbolism so typical of the fourth evangelist.

John's Gospel refers to Jesus' miracles as 'signs' because we are invited to look beyond the deed that Jesus performs to what these deeds point to or signify, especially about Jesus' identity. According to the summary statement at John 20, 30-1 the response being sought is belief in Jesus so as to receive God's own life:

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

This story certainly bears some relationship in its structure and meaning with the 'feeding' stories, and so with the Eucharist. It has at its core not the bread of life, but the wine of life, and both flow from the same divine desire and infinite generosity to meet humanity's need beyond expectations. Whenever there is 'no wine', in our lives, our institutions, or our world – life is dry, empty, tasteless and sour. Essential to living a truly human life is the wine of love, intimacy and friendship; the wine of meaning, purpose and direction, the wine of belief, trust and enthusiasm; the wine of justice, mercy and forgiveness; the wine of hospitality, welcome and inclusion.

The deeply human miracle at Cana is capable of encompassing all these needs. We have all in some way echoed Mary's words: 'They have no wine' – for ourselves, for those we love, for the world. Every prayer of petition is a cry to God for the wine that has run out. Mary is the one who cared enough to name this reality and bring it to Jesus' attention. Her action opens the door to new possibility, new life and hope. We might even say that this is John's 'birth narrative': Mary's compassion and her complete trust in her son, gives birth to his public ministry. We will encounter Mary only once again in this Gospel, at the foot of the cross on Calvary where what is begun here is completed. Her unnamed but powerful presence 'bookends' Jesus' ministry, initiating it and furthering it as the mother of all who have life in his name.

Jesus' initial response to his mother's pointing out that there is no wine 'what concern is that to you and to me?' (2.4) is a question the narrative readily answers: it is of great concern to both. They care and they reveal that God cares – and does so with extravagant generosity. The six stone jars filled with water will now overflow with up to 700 litres of choice wine. As in the feeding stories there is likely to be plenty left over! We notice that Jesus does not actually do anything that causes the water to change to wine. He speaks as does God at the beginning of time. The transformation

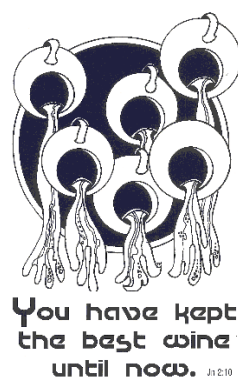
happens when the words are acted upon by those who follow Mary's directions 'Do whatever he tells you' (2.6).

Precisely when the transformation of the water occurred is a mystery. But while the lowlier servants (who in the Gospels have the characteristic 'insider knowledge' of the marginalised) know the source of the wine is Jesus, the chief steward assumes it must have come from the bridegroom. They are both right: for John, Jesus is the real Bridegroom (see 3:29). His coming into the world, reveals God's tender relationship with humanity. This relationship gives rise to the timeless love song of the first reading. Attributed to Third Isaiah and written when the people return from exile, it is filled with God's urgent desire for their restoration. God rejoices and delights in them with the exhilaration of a nuptial love that John signifies throughout his gospel to be fulfilled in Christ.

In John's layered meanings, the water in the stone jars used for the ritual purification to become acceptable to God is no longer needed. It is transformed into the wine of the New Covenant - the 'grace upon grace' (1:16) freely given so that all may believe. The old way of purification is to be replaced with the faith to receive the loving gift of Christ and be born of the Spirit. In the second reading perhaps the community at Corinth was still stuck in the old ways of trying to be holy through personal merit and hoarding their gifts as markers of their own importance. Paul's letter to them makes clear their unique gifts come from the abundance of the Spirit and are for the benefit of all.

The Wedding Feast of Cana is one of the iconic stories of the Gospel but we can trivialise its meaning if we remain on the surface: that Jesus wants the newlyweds to have a good party and not be embarrassed. This is unlikely to be enough to 'reveal his glory' so that his newly called disciples begin to believe in him as John writes at the end. Certainly, it would seem to be of lesser importance than healing the sick, feeding the hungry or raising the dead. But Jesus' first sign is foundational to and encompasses all that will follow. When those water jars are 'filled to the brim' and flow with wine, John signifies the 'fullness we have all received' (1:16) in Christ.

As we move through this year's lectionary with its predominantly Lukean readings revealing God's mercy towards the lost, the last and the least, we may continue to recall that whenever the wine has run out for humanity, we have the fullness of God's life and the gifts of the Spirit to generously respond to every manner of human suffering and need.



Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

Isaiah tells us that God takes delight in Zion, and we know that God takes delight in us so we offer to God our needs.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church, particularly Pope Francis, that they will remain strong in faith and spirit as they lead us in a synodal way to be a delight to God.

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

We pray for leaders of the world that they will allow all people of religious belief to proclaim in freedom the marvellous deeds of God. May they lead their people in justice and compassion.

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

We pray for people of all gifts that they will use their gifts in the service of the community as described by St Paul. May we recognise the gifts of those in our community who are differently abled and share their delight in God.

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

We pray for all those who are married or about to be married that they will have both Mary and Jesus spiritually present at their wedding as in Cana.

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

We pray for all those who are suffering in our community that we can in generosity reach out to help them and bring them to the knowledge of God's marvellous deeds.

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

We pray for all those suffering due to violent conflicts. We pray that the frontline workers will be kept safe and well and continue to have the strength to help all in need. We pray also for those who grieve for family members who have died in isolation and war, that they will find peace.

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

Conclusion

Father, we know that you listen to our petitions and that we will be transformed by your love and so we bring these prayers to you through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, the Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C (19 January 2025)

Title	AOV	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
All you nations, sing out your joy				616	347	353
Baptised in water					99	179
Bridegroom and bride		42				220
Filled with the Spirit's power, with one accord				676	385	
Gift of finest wheat				685	651	191
Gifts of the Spirit (Bell and Maule)					113	
Gifts of the Spirit (Willcock)					383	183
God in the planning						220
Jesus, come! for we invite you					527	
Lord, you give the great commission					308	313
O Christ the great foundation					565	483
Praise to the Lord, the almighty		132		792	586	421
Shepherd me, O God	33				597	24
Songs of thankfulness and praise					279	
The Church's one foundation					614	484
The gift of the Holy Spirit					112	
There is one Lord (Berthier)						346
There is one Lord (Alstott)		148				
This day God gives me					625	536
We are many parts	86					523
We live and love your word			118			

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 95: *Proclaim his marvellous deeds to all the nations.*

	CWB	JOBC	LPC
Psalm 95	354	pg. 56	pg. 84

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Sing out with joy (FWS) *based on Ps 65(66)* [Gathering]

Sing new songs of joy (FWS/CWB II) *based on Ps 97 (98)* [Gathering, Recessional]

Holy Spirit, come (TCS) [Gifts, Reflection]

Come, O come, Holy Spirit (TWB)

Hearts on fire (SHOF/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]



26 January 2025

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Australia Day

Reflection by Angela McCarthy

Introduction

As we begin the reading of Luke's gospel for this Year C in Ordinary Time, we have a moment to reflect on the nature of this Gospel. Luke declares that he is giving an ordered account of eye witnesses to the life and ministry of Jesus. Ordinary time is different to the big feasts as it gives us the gospel in semi-continuous way, an ordered way. In this ordered way we find the message of the gospel being unfolded for us. Today we also celebrate Australia Day.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you came to bring good news to the poor. Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you came to proclaim liberty to captives. Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you came to proclaim the Lord's year of favour. Lord, have mercy.

Collect

*Almighty ever-living God,
direct our actions according to your good pleasure,
that in the name of your beloved Son
we may abound in good works.*

It is no accident that this oration is prayed in the first month of the year. Its seventh century origins lay in sets of Mass prayers for the days after Christmas, and especially those around the incoming of the new year. The Christmas context heightened the sense of God's 'good pleasure' in the incarnation as a central act in the mystery of the divine saving will. Further, the new year conjured up associations with the pagan god Janus and the influence of old divinities and spirits. It was these, in particular, that the collect unequivocally placed under the power of the 'name' of the beloved Son. The petition that the faithful abound in good works was the church's response to the licentious cavorting that marked the Janus festivities.

Yet the prayer has another layer of meaning. The Latin text corresponds in structure, content and vocabulary to the Vulgate Latin translation of Ephesians 1:3-2:10. It speaks of the free and bounteous grace of God. It denotes the fullness of blessings that come in Christ, and the continuing power of Christ's name over every situation

and evil. In this it calls the faithful to abound in good works, works which correspond to the blessings of God, are worthy of the name of the beloved Son, and so pleasing to God. On reflection this prayer provides a good test of those easily forgotten new year resolutions!

Collect commentary by Gerard Moore: The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by me for the Canadian liturgical journal Celebrate! (Novalis Press). My thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10

Following the return from exile in Babylon, the people have settled in their towns and they call on Ezra to bring the book of the Law of Moses to them. He proclaims the word of God to both men and women and all who could understand and explains it to them.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 18:8-10. 15. R Jn 6:63

Your words, Lord, are spirit and life.

The psalmist proclaims the perfection of God's law and prays that our lives might win favour by following the law.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 12:12-30

Paul tells us that in Christ's body we all have different functions but we are all of one Spirit and in that we are all equal; there is no Jew or Greek, no slaves or citizens, we have been given one Spirit for all to drink.

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21

Jesus chose to read a particular part of the Prophet Isaiah.

Reflection

Today we hear the beginning of Luke's gospel where he explains his ordered account taken from the evidence of eyewitnesses. We have already heard the infancy accounts of Jesus and John the Baptist followed by Jesus' baptism so this Sunday we skip over to the second part of Chapter 4 where we hear about Jesus returning to his hometown.

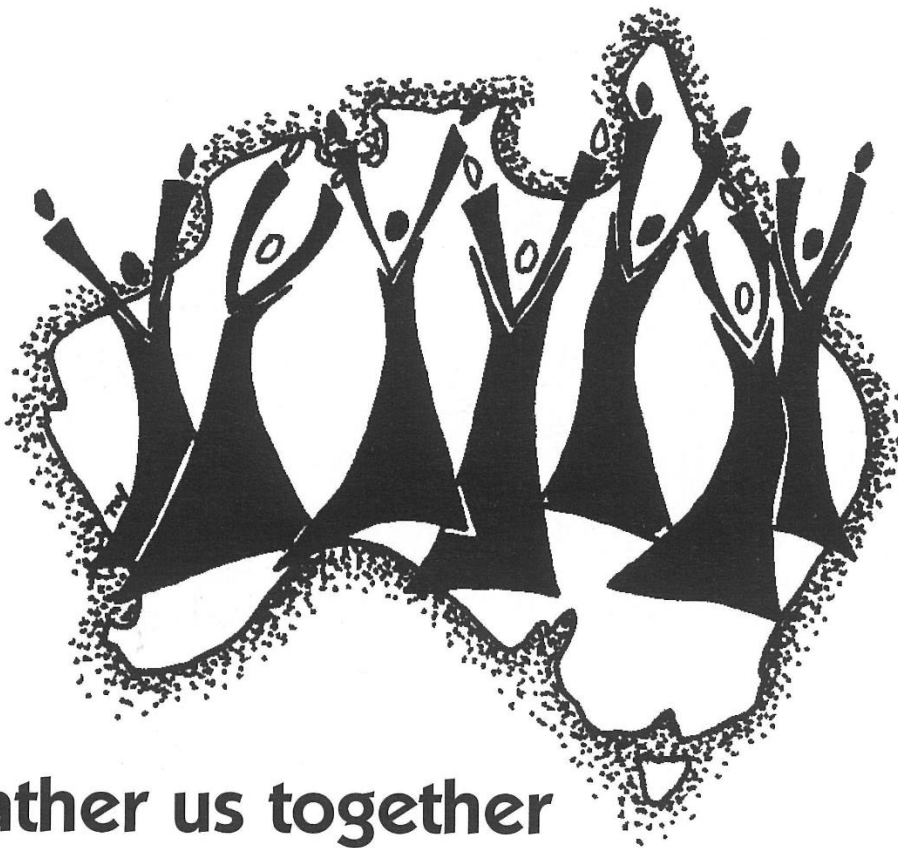
Have you ever had an experience where suddenly your eyes are opened to an experience in a very particular way, an astounding way? Many parents might tell you the birth of a child is one such experience. In this account, Jesus went to Nazara (Nazareth), the town where he had been brought up by Mary and Joseph and in the synagogue he unfurled the scroll from Isaiah which he had been given to proclaim. The text also tells us that 'he found the place where it is written' and that 'the eyes of all the synagogue were fixed on him'. Has that been our experience too? Have we heard the scriptures proclaimed in such a way that our heart is opened and ready to receive the Word? Why did Jesus choose that particular part of Isaiah? Was he exploring his own hometown's reaction to what he had chosen to be his own ministry? Is this what he understood as his Father's will? He had transfixed them all with what he proclaimed.

Likewise, in the first reading from the book of Nehemiah, Ezra the priest proclaims the word of God in the Law of Moses. This reading is used for the consecration of churches and when that happened in our parish in 1993 this reading opened my eyes and my heart. All the people, raising their hands and blessing God calling out 'Amen! Amen! Amen!' and then weeping because the whole experience was so overwhelming and beautiful. Their governor, Nehemiah, and Ezra, having read throughout the morning, and having instructed them along with the Levites, sent them off to eat the fat and drink the sweet wine and share with those who have not prepared anything. In other words, everyone is welcome at the feast. Pope Francis emphasises this for us too. In Portugal at World Youth Day in 2023 he called out 'Todos! Todos! Todos!' – everyone is welcome.

The reading from the book of Nehemiah, the psalm and the gospel all point to what we do in the Liturgy of the Word, the first half of the Mass. We listen to the story of who we are as the People of God. The Nehemiah reading is the first biblical account of a Liturgy of the Word and it was written five centuries before Jesus was born. This helps us to understand the ancient nature of how we celebrate the word of God. We still do today what our forebears did 2,500 years ago. This speaks to us of truth. What we do is true and the psalm extols how we feel about the Word. It is right. It is good. It is perfect. It is to be trusted. It is spirit and life. The early Christians continued this Jewish tradition on the sabbath and then broke the bread and shared the wine on Sunday, the day of resurrection. In time, once the Jews and Christians separated from each other, the celebration of the Word, the breaking of the bread and sharing of wine were merged into what we now celebrate as the Mass.

Jesus concludes his proclamation of Isaiah by saying that 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen'. Did Jesus only mean that he would do those things? Bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind and set the downtrodden free? This year is a jubilee year. That is the biblical time to cancel debt, to set prisoners free, to uplift the downtrodden. How is this going to be fulfilled today even as we listen? It is up to us to go out as we are missioned at the end of Mass and do all of those things. There is a crisis of truth in our world today but the decrees of the Lord that we have heard today are all true and just. The command of the Lord is clear; we must go out and be Christ to the world.

Today is also Australia Day. For many of our indigenous people this is a day of distress so it is in our hands to carry the truth that we have heard here and now and to go out and be Christ to all we meet. To do that we must first acknowledge the bad news about all of our failings and those of the world around us and then open our hearts and minds to the good news that Jesus has brought to us that we MUST share.



**Gather us together
that we may proclaim
your holy name.**

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

As we gather in joyful hope, singing a new song to all the earth, let us offer our petitions to God, who restores and revives all faithful hearts who seek grace and blessing.

Petitions

We pray for the Pope, all Bishops, and other leaders in the Church. May they always be true to their calling, fruitful in the work of leading the faithful and draw all they meet to embrace the Gospel message.

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

We pray for the leaders of nations and other influential bodies in this world. May they have their eyes opened to the gift of revelation.

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

We pray for each one of us as we all form part of Christ's body. May we care for one another, sharing our joys and sorrows and uplifting each other

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

We pray for growth toward Christian unity, that the Spirit of God will help us recognise all that we hold in common as members of the Body of Christ and help us cooperate in confronting the issues of poverty, violence and neglect.

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

We pray that we may all grow in the gifts and talents the Lord has entrusted to each one of us.

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

We pray for all those suffering in the world, that Christians will proclaim liberty to captives, give blind people new sight, set the downtrodden free and proclaim the Lord's year of favour.

(Pause) Lord hear us

Conclusion

God of all mercy, you hear the prayers of your people and grant us the strength and courage to be faithful to the mission you have called us to live. Therefore, we make these and all our prayers through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ, your son, Our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
Always on this first of days						532
As grains of wheat		153				
As the grains of wheat						194
Christ is made the sure foundation				640		482
For the journey			128			
Forth in the peace of Christ we go				681	489	495
Gather us together	111					
Gather your people, O Lord	71				490	530
Go now, you are sent forth				690	494	
God has chosen me					495	497
I am the bread of life	49			718	509	204
Lord, you give the great commission					308	313
O Christ the great foundation					565	483
One bread, one body	129				579	193
Praise to you, O Christ our saviour	28				587	407
See us, Lord, about your altar					593	
Sing a new song to the Lord		76				
Take and eat			114			
Take the word of God with you					607	494
There is one Lord						346
The Spirit of God				832	388	185
The table of God			8			
The voice of God				835	621	476
We are children of the living God			15			
We are many parts	86					523

Title	S&S2
God has chosen me	345
Isaiah 61	348
Your words, Lord, are spirit and life	248

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 18: *Your words, Lord, are spirit and life.*

	CWB	JOBC	LPC	PM1(2 nd ed)
Psalm 18	329	pg. 58	pg. 88	pg. 10

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Sing new songs of joy (FWS/CWB II) *based on Ps 97 (98)* [Gathering, Recessional]

Your words (FWS) *based on Ps 18(19)* [Gifts]

One body in Christ (TWB) [Communion]

Live in the light (TWB) [Gifts, Communion]

The light of my life (TCS) [Gifts, Reflection]

Australia Day (26 January 2025)

Title	AOV2	CWB	CWBII	GA
A blessing hymn for Australia			655	
Advance Australia Fair			656	
Christ, our Lord, the Prince of Ages		644	399	
Come, Holy Ghost, Creator ,come		654	382	376
For Australia			545	
God of peace	138		546	553
Help of Christians, guard this land		711	429	
Lord of earth and all creation			545	554
Make me a channel of your peace	126	793	555	490
The Beatitudes (Kearney)		817	456	489
The Beatitudes (Russian Orthodox Chant)			563	
Veni, Creator Spiritus		851	390	373

Title	AOVNG	S&S2
Gift of grace	49	
Lord, show us your mercy and love		265



2 February 2025

Presentation of the Lord

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

Sunday of the Word of God

Introduction

The Catholic Church in Australia celebrates the Word of God Sunday on the first Sunday in February. It is an opportunity to focus on an important part of our lives as Christians as encouraged by Pope Francis in an Apostolic Letter in September 2019.

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 bring salvation to all sinners. Christ have mercy.

You fill us with your wisdom and love. Lord have mercy.

First Reading

Malachi 3:1-4

Malachi speaks of a messenger who will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. The suddenness of God's coming indicates that many will miss the forerunner's call to prepare their hearts.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 23(24):7-10

Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord!

This psalm is one of the psalms that are said when going into the Temple of Jerusalem. It is fitting that we continue to try to understand God through the scriptures.

Second Reading

Hebrews 2:14-18

Christ enters into our reality in every sense and is, therefore, able to help us as an understanding friend, a companion on the journey of life.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:22-40

The reading from Luke marks a transition from the revelation of God found in the Law of Moses to its fulfilment that will come through the child Jesus presented today. Two faithful characters are introduced in Anna and Simeon who break out in joy at the recognition of God found in their midst. It is also relevant as Word of God Sunday in the way in which the Hebraic and Christian texts are strongly connected.

Reflection

The presentation of the Lord in the temple captured in Luke is traditionally held forty days after Christmas. The forty days after birth is based on what is mentioned in the Gospel itself as the time of purification 'according to the Law of Moses' (v. 22). According to such a rite, the mother would have to abstain from entering the Temple or even touching any holy object for forty days after giving birth (see Lev 12:1-5). Such an opening to our scene underscores the devoutness of Jesus' family. Previous to this scene Jesus was circumcised and named according to the Jewish law (Lk 2:21) and, in addition to the adhering to the time of purification, Jesus as the firstborn is being presented to the temple also according to the Jewish law. All this paints a picture of Jesus being steeped deeply in the Hebraic tradition, with his family honouring their traditions and showing devotion to God that was the revealed way at the time of Jesus' birth.

Two other characters are introduced in the gospel scene in the form of Anna and Simeon. They are described as righteous and devout (in the case of Simeon) and a person devoted to Temple worship, fasting and prayer (in the case of Anna when the longer Gospel reading is used). Luke is clearly making a point that devotion to the Law of Moses, the central most important place of revelation of God as it had existed to that point, was integral part of the Christ event. As if to underscore the point, the closing line of the reading states 'When they had done everything the law of the Lord required, they went back to Galilee ...' (Lk 2:39). Many commentators and theologians have reflected on the pains that Luke goes to indicate a link between Jesus Christ and the Hebrew tradition into which he was born. However, the broader theological implications aside, there is something worth reflecting on about the devoted piety (in the best sense of the word) displayed by the characters.

The first reading provides an insight to unpacking the Gospel. It speaks of a messenger 'preparing a way' (Mal 3:1). The Christian tradition interprets this as a prophetic image of John the Baptist. It then follows this with the line 'the Lord who you seek will suddenly enter his temple.' The word 'suddenly' is key here. The original Hebrew *pit'ōm* can be rendered as suddenly meaning abruptly or quickly. As such, it is often understood in relation to the appearance of John the Baptist who, according to Luke, is born six months before Jesus. However, the term *pit'ōm* equally holds the notion of surprisingly or startling; as in an event one does not see coming (e.g. Josh 10:9; 11:7).

When Jesus is brought to the temple in the Gospel narrative, this too is a surprising event in many respects. Jesus would have been one of many hundreds of first born males that would have been brought to the temple in any given year as was customary in the day. The 'surprise' is that the babe presented in this case is Jesus the Christ, the salvation for all people, 'light to enlighten the Pagans' and the 'glory of your people Israel'. Obviously for Simeon who utters these words it is indeed a pleasant surprise. But what was it that allowed him to see what could otherwise be easily missed, an event that one could easily not see coming as the first reading implies? Why was it that Simeon and Anna were able to perceive what Jesus was while others might not? There are two parts to answering these questions. The first is already highlighted. They were devoted to their faith in God, devoted to expressing that faith in worship and diligent in their practice. That devotion to the law of the Lord, a tradition that has its roots at the time of Abraham many thousands of years before Christ, allowed Simeon and Anna to see, in some sense at least, the newness of God's saving revelation in Christ in their contemporary experience.

The second reason is found particularly in reference to Simeon. The Gospel notes that the Holy Spirit rested on Simeon. Not only that, but it was the Holy Spirit which revealed to Simeon that he would see the Messiah of the Lord in his lifetime. The Spirit is mentioned a third time in quick succession as that which leads Simeon to the temple at the time of Jesus' presentation. Previous to the scene in today's gospel reading, throughout Luke's infancy narrative, Elizabeth, Zechariah and, of course, Mary were able to recognise and play their part in God's novel unfolding plan by drawing on the Spirit in different ways. Similarly, here Simeon is able to recognise and find joy in the encounter with Jesus because of his openness to the Spirit.

When we struggle to recognise what God is doing in our time, how the ongoing revelation of Christ is to be found in our day and in our midst, perhaps we can look to the characters of today's Gospel reading and attempt to emulate their two-part approach. We need to remain faithful to the way God has revealed God's self in our religious tradition. On the other hand, we need to be filled with the Spirit and open to the ever-new ways that God's saving presence is being manifest. To simply dismiss our Christian heritage is to drift out of touch with the ongoing story of God's revelation. On the other hand, to simply focus on religious practice that has gone before without sensitivity to the dynamic calling of the Spirit is to lose touch with how Christ is revealed in the reality of the here and now. Both extremes risk us missing the blessing of Christ in our midst. We pray we can be emulators of Simeon and Anna – faithful to the best of the old while open to the blessing of the new.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The psalmist tells us that the king of glory is the Lord! Therefore, let us lift our hearts and needs to God with confidence.

Petitions

We pray that the leaders of our Church remember that God alone is the King of Glory. May we who purport to love in his name know that without him we can do nothing.

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

We pray that leaders of every nation are aware that from God alone springs all good, and that they may govern for the benefit of all.

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

We pray for all people who are suffering. May we have the courage and sensitivity to be as Christ to them in the joy of Christ's love for us.

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

We pray that on this Presentation Day we will make a full and unreserved gift of ourselves to the Lord, to this worshipping community, and to those we serve.

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

We pray for those who have departed this life, thankful for their example to us. May they rest in your peace and may those who mourn in this difficult time will be comforted.

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

Conclusion

God of all time, we give thanks and rejoice that you have gifted us with your Son, and that you hear our petitions as we pray through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, the Christ.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

The Presentation of the Lord, Year C (Word of God Sunday) (2 February 2025)

Title	AOV	AOV2	CWB	CWBII	GA
At last, all pow'ful master				225	
Blessed Jesus, at your word*			626	457	531
Canticle of Simeon			636		301
Christ, be our light		3			404
Church of God			652		652
Hail Mary, gentle woman					544
Joy to the world	170		728		728
Let all mortal flesh keep silence					190
Lord God, you now have set your servant free				226	
Lord, you give the great commission*				308	313
My master, see, the time has come			636	227	
Of the Father's love begotten			779		
Praise to you, O Christ our saviour*	28			587	407
Priestly people			796		
Sing of Mary, pure and lowly			808		
Song of Simeon					301
Take the word of God with you*				607	494
The light of Christ	186		826		406
There is nothing told				418	548
In the temple now behold him				427	

* Selections for Word of God Sunday.

Title	AOVNG	S&S1	S&S2
Among all	8		
Hail Mary, gentle woman			336

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 23: Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord.

	CWB	JOBF	LPSF	PM2
Psalm 23	453	pg. 32	pg. 70	pg. 19



9 February 2025

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

Introduction

In today's readings we hear different experiences of hearing and responding to the call of God. God calls all of us uniquely to be a blessing to our world and bring people into the loving presence of God. We are able to respond to such a call despite our weaknesses and limitations through the grace of God.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you forgive us and bring us a new life. Lord, have mercy.

You came to give salvation to all humankind. Christ, have mercy.

You are the new Temple of God. Lord, have mercy.

Collect

*Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care,
that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace,
they may be defended always by your protection.*

The heart of this Sunday's collect is the petition that God, in devoted loving kindness, continually guard, protect and strengthen the community. The request is made out of the belief that the faithful are members of God's family. In this we belong to the divine household both as adopted children and as servants, implying a deep intimacy with God and a willingness to serve. The divine guardianship is an expression of God's intimate devotion to us as the head of the household and, as such, carries the expectation that God will protect us.

The ancient manuscripts show the prayer was used early in the year, either in proximity to Lent or as a Lenten collect. This association highlights the helplessness the prayer expresses in face of sin. The only sure hope is reliance on heavenly grace.

The combination of God's 'care', custodianship and protection point to the intimacy with which God relates to the faithful. Further, these are associated in the prayer tradition with God's guarding, protecting, cherishing, ruling, defending and strengthening. The collect is insistent that the family of God needs these gifts continually.

Collect commentary by Gerard Moore: The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by me for the Canadian liturgical journal Celebrate! (Novalis Press). My thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Isaiah 6:1-8

'*Holy holy holy* is the Lord!' – a wonderful declaration of the perfection and glory of the Lord. But God does not simply rest in this holiness but extends it to Isaiah despite the great prophet's misgivings.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 137:1-5. 7-8. R̥ v. 1

In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.

The psalm celebrates the dependability of the Lord who always responds to our calls for salvation.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

This reading recounts one of the earliest proclamations of the good news of Jesus' death and Resurrection. Paul states that he has passed on what has been handed on to him – not because he is perfectly worthy but, rather, through the grace of God.

Gospel Reading

Luke 5:1-11

Jesus encounters Simon Peter and his fellow fishermen on a particularly fruitless night of fishing. Jesus is calling them to follow him. A miraculous catch acts as a sign of what is possible in responding positively to Jesus. Trusting in Jesus, Simon Peter and the other disciples will find their true calling – a life of flourishing abundance.

Reflection

I have a teenage nephew who is currently going through a process of deciding what subjects he will do in his later years of high school. He has a goal in mind involving a relatively tough university level course in specialised astrophysics. My nephew has always loved this particular field of science. His calling seems to be pondering the majesty of the universe through such studies. Naturally, such a course has very specific entry requirements. All of his current grades and studies indicate that he is quite capable of such studies except for one subject. As crunch time in deciding subjects and needing to have a certain level of pre-requisites becomes more real, I've found a certain despondence coming into my nephew's disposition; 'maybe I can't study astrophysics, maybe I should just do something else ... I think I'm simply not good enough'.

Likely the details will be different, but such an experience would not be uncommonly found either in oneself or in those around us. We feel a call, an excitement to do something or to be someone but, for whatever reason, we also become aware of obstacles that might be in our way – more specifically of obstacles found in ourselves. Our feelings of excitement can easily turn to a fear of ‘not being good enough’. It is as if the light of the perceived goal or calling in life turns from a form of motivation to one of fear. Something of this very human phenomenon is captured in our readings this week.

The first reading recounts the call of Isaiah, one of the great prophets of the People of God and a significant influence on the later ministry of Jesus and the Christian faith. Today’s reading presents wonderful metaphorical imagery of God’s will and presence being made known to Isaiah. It features a call for a prophet which Isaiah feels compelled to answer, but he senses that there is no way he is up to the task. How can Isaiah proclaim God’s holy saving word to Isaiah’s kinfolk, he doesn’t feel even remotely worthy to be in God’s presence let alone proclaim the Lord’s words. ‘Woe is me!’ Isaiah states, ‘I am a man of unclean lips, and live among a people of unclean lips’.

The notion of lips here is symbolic imagery. It is drawing on the scriptural concept where the lips reveal the true moral character of a person (see Matt 12:34; 15:18-19 or Prov 16:30). However, the focus on Isaiah’s lips is also noteworthy because it is proclamation with these very lips that is to be Isaiah’s calling. They represent both moral (goodness or lack thereof) and functional (referring to a required tool of trade for any prophet) framing of the person. The very thing that is going to be needed is the thing that is not good enough as far as Isaiah is concerned.

As such, Isaiah is not only afraid of God’s presence in the mode common to First Testament theology (captured in Exodus 33:20, for example, where no one can see the entire majesty of God and live), Isaiah is also afraid of himself. He is afraid of what he is or, more accurately, what he feels he is not. He is afraid of what he feels he doesn’t have or cannot do and how he is generally ‘not good enough’.

Fortunately, our loving God never leaves us to our own devices but always offers God’s transformative spirit and a way forward. In the theophanic imagery of the first reading, God offers healing, touching Isaiah’s lips and making him ‘clean’. It is thus empowered that when the question is asked ‘whom shall I send?’, Isaiah has moved from one of cowering fear to one who boldly responds, ‘Here am I; send me!’

Turning to the Gospel reading, it is relatively early in Jesus’ public ministry when Luke recounts Jesus’ encounter with some of his first followers. Here too we have a calling of people to God’s mission. The fishermen have worked hard through the night and it has been rather fruitless. Jesus encourages them to ‘go one more time’ and the miraculous catch ensues. Peter recognising what is going on and in anticipation of the calling he is about to respond to, falls to his knees and despairingly cries out that Jesus should go away ‘for I am a sinful man’.

Again, there is this sense of unworthiness. What Peter is ultimately called to is coming into focus and because what one is called to is from God, it has the

illumination of God with it, and it brings into focus our limitations. But the miraculous catch is a metaphor, a sign of the disciple's potential despite their limitations. Fruitlessness of their own efforts will be transformed by the call of Christ. Further, as Jesus is the one calling, there is no need to fear. In following Jesus, Peter and the other disciples will realise their true calling and will be 'catchers of people'.

Paul too, especially when the full version of the second reading is read, recognises that he is the 'least of the apostles', unworthy of the very title. But Paul provides a beautiful line in response; 'but by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain' (1 Cor 15:10).

Isaiah, Peter and Paul; in all their cases they have a sense of what they are in the face of their calling and they feel unworthy. They see a problem in who they are or what they do not have or what they cannot do. Their declaration is effectively 'I am not good enough'. But God sees them through God's eyes and the power of grace, and through such grace they ultimately can say 'I am what I am' and what 'I am' is precisely good enough because of God's presence and God's love.

As for my nephew, we don't know the extent of where his young life will lead. However, he can rest assured that if the Lord is calling him to do astrophysics or anything else for that matter, that the Lord will gently tell him to not be afraid of what he cannot do, but trust God who will lead him to an abundant grace filled life, one where the 'catch will be bursting at the seams'.



Isa 6:8

**Here am I;
send me.**

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

We have heard in the Scriptures that God transforms all things according to need. Let us then lift our needs to God with faith filled hearts.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and the leaders of our Church. May they have the courage to faithfully follow their calling in witnessing to the gospel.

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

We pray for the leaders of our world and of Australia. May they come to know that truth and power only come from God and that peace must be a prime objective.

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

We pray for all prophets who challenge us in our faith. May they be strengthened in their will to follow what God has called them to do.

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

We pray for all of us gathered here as people of faith. May we accept our weaknesses and failings but also open ourselves to the confidence and grace that will help each of us in our vocation.

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

We pray for those who are suffering throughout the world. May many voices continue to be raised in the world to help bring justice and peace.

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

We pray for those who have died that they will enjoy eternal joy. We pray for those who grieve that their confidence in what God has promised will ease their pain.

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

Conclusion

God of all prophets, we bring all these needs to you in faith that they will be heard in Jesus' name and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C (9 February 2025)

Title	AOV	AOV2	CWB	CWBII	GA
Be not afraid	114			653	449
Christ is made the sure foundation			640		482
Come down, O love divine	118		653	381	375
Do not be afraid		73		481	28
Forth in the peace of Christ we go			681	489	495
Go, make of all disciples				493	
Go now, you are sent forth			690	494	
Go to the world!				496	
God has chosen me				495	497
Here I am, Lord	90			518	496
Holy God, we praise your name		129	710	504	411
I have loved you	126			511	402
Let all mortal flesh keep silence				533	190
Lord, you give the great commission					313
O come and sing to God, the Lord				175	
Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven	78		789	588	392
Praise to the Lord, the almighty		132	792	586	421
Take the word of God with you				607	494
The Spirit of God			832		185
The summons				645	502
You walk along our shoreline				653	

Title	AOVNG	S&S1	S&S2
Fish with me			342
God has chosen me			345
Here I am, Lord		152	
Will you come and follow me/The summons	149	137	

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 137: *In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.*

	CWB	JOBC	LPC
Psalm 137	363	pg. 62	pg. 94

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Heaven shall be yours (TCS) *Beatitudes* [Communion]



16 February 2025

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

Introduction

The temptation to find satisfaction in human accomplishment and material wealth is ever present. Today's readings remind us how blessed is the one who places their trust in the Lord.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you came to draw us into the life of God. Lord, have mercy.

You came so that we can all be truly happy. Christ, have mercy.

You bring us to new life. Lord, have mercy.

Collect

*O God, who teach us that you abide
in hearts that are just and true,
grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace
as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.*

It is not too surprising to find that our prayer first served as a collect for the feast of the Ascension. This original setting brings to the fore the deep biblical resonances that are at the core of the oration. The use of 'abide' is a clear reference back to the Gospel of John (Jn 6:57, Jn 15:5-7), and expresses God's promise to remain in the heart of believers. Abiding in God's love involves keeping the commandments, inclusive of sharing with the poor: 'but if anyone has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need, how does God's love abide in that person' (1 Jn 3:17). The language of God's indwelling is taken from St Paul. It designates Christ's presence by faith (Eph 3:17), the presence of the Spirit (Rom 8:8-9), the presence of Christ's word (Col 3:11) and power (2 Cor 12:9). By contrast, without Christ, sin dwells in the inner depths of the human person (Rom 7:17-19). Rather, the people in whom God abides are characterised by hearts that are just and true. Yet their right deeds are only in harmony with God's will on account of the fashioning of divine grace. The prayer exemplifies the community's faith in the power of God's word, which teaches that God will abide and brings this about.

Collect commentary by Gerard Moore: The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by me for the Canadian liturgical journal Celebrate! (Novalis Press). My thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Jeremiah 17:5-8

Trusting in the Lord is like a tree planted near a flowing stream; always close to the source of life. Relying on ‘things of the flesh’ is like a shrub planted in the wasteland – it is destined for futility.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 1:1-4 R Ps 39:5

Happy are they who hope in the Lord.

The opening of the Book of Psalms proclaims the goodness of living in the way of the Lord.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20

Paul reminds us of the importance of Christ’s resurrection. The Resurrection is not only Christ’s glory but is also the forerunner and guarantee of our own resurrection.

Gospel Reading

Luke 6:17, 20-26

The Beatitudes are an invitation to put our own situations in the perspective of the kingdom. True blessedness does not rest in wealth, excess and notoriety. Rather, it is those who struggle now who will receive lasting reward.

Reflection

Luke’s version of the Beatitudes, particularly when compared to Matthew’s, is often noted for illustrating the particular blessedness of the materially poor and the deprived. It is a peculiar position for the original hearers of Jesus’ teaching because being poor and disadvantaged was generally seen as being in a position outside of God’s graces – of being notably ‘not blessed’ as it were.

Then there are the corresponding ‘woes’ (the Lectionary translation uses the word ‘alas’). Contrasting the blessedness of the poor, the hungry and the mourners, those who are rich, filled and laughing are destined for ‘the great reversal’ as it is often called.

So why is this so? Why are the poor blessed and the rich woeful? Perhaps part of the answer is found in simply reflecting on where we sit in the scheme that Jesus puts forward. For me and many around me who live in relatively affluent suburban

Australian cities, it is the latter group that is our setting. We are not poor, not hungry and generally not living in despondency. So perhaps there is a certain caution to which we should pay attention.

It brings to mind a recent discussion with a fellow theologian. The topic centred around the increasing irreligiosity of our contemporary world – in particular in our context of a typical Australian capital city. Obviously, there are many people of many faiths including in our Catholic tradition who, though they may not actively engage in their faith, still feel at least an affinity and some connection to the faith tradition and, in some way, to God too. It is not as if people who are not regular attenders at church are entirely atheists in the strict definition of the term. Nevertheless, despite many having Catholic or other religious backgrounds, the sense is there is an increasing ambivalence toward God and matters of religion, especially among the young. It generally is not antipathy or some sort of conscious rejection, more like apathy.

It struck us that this might be so in part because we generally have it so good. This might be especially so as my friend and I are often in contact with relatively successful university students. They are relatively well educated and have most of their needs met through their own efforts and those of their parents. Further, our lives are surrounded by wealth and opportunity. Through the internet, the world and its wares are at our fingertips. We can be endlessly entertained, tempted and made to feel important. And all this is near instantaneously available as we carry the required devices with us every day and everywhere we go. It should be noted that not everyone living in affluent and stable places like Australia are 'living the good life'. There is poverty and injustice in our midst no doubt. That much is acknowledged. However, for most of us, we live with a seemingly endless supply of products, entertainment and amusement.

The upshot of our discussion is that this apathy is, at least in part, due to this affluence. The many students who cross my path, many of my friends and family, they simply do not feel the pinch of recognising how precious life is. In short, they can rely on themselves and their immediate surroundings to satisfy their apparent needs. This 'satisfaction' then masks the real and deeper needs that we all have. Needs of the soul, of meaning and of hope only found in God.

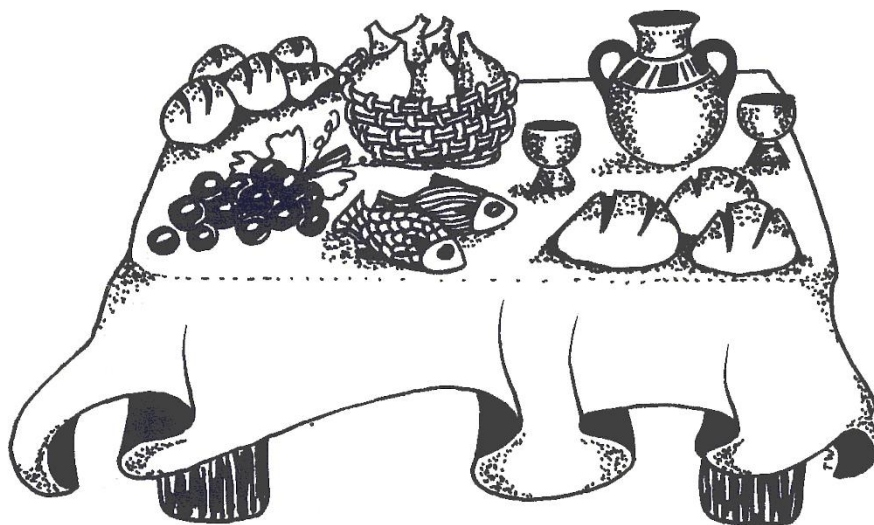
And this seems to be the crux of where the 'woes' and 'blessings' lie. Wealth and comfort are good things in a sense, but they are two-edged. They can create a false sense of comfort and distraction. They can numb us from the inner need, the hunger of the soul and a type of joy only found in God. Further, we can chase such comforts thinking they are the only ends we need.

The first reading spells it out fairly clearly; 'cursed are those who trust in mere mortals, who makes flesh their strength' (Jer 17:5). Such a person who places their trust and strength in human things alone is planting themselves in 'wastelands' – in places that cannot sustain them. They cannot recognise their plight and have 'no eyes' for any true good that can come their way.

In this sense the Beatitudes are a reminder of where blessedness really lies. It cannot come from wealth and power. More likely, those things are going to be impedances rather than doorways to a sacred encounter, distractions creating false points of focus on what truly matters in life. Of course, they need not be. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that today's Gospel reminds those of us living with means and in places of relative wealth and stability that such things can so easily pull us away from the fuller life of blessedness that God would have for us.

It also offers us a reminder of the responsibility we have to take on the mind of Christ and partake in God's special concern for the poor that is so evidenced in such a Gospel reading. Note that such a reading as we have today can lead to a theology of glorifying poverty, as if God somehow wills it. However, that is a misreading. What is expressed in these words sits in a context of a gospel message of liberation and hope that is offered to the poor in the words and actions of Christ.

This, then, gives those of us with means and not in a place of mourning a way to avoid the woes of which Jesus speaks. It lies in shifting our focus to the first set of people in the sermon; the poor, the hungry and the oppressed. More than simply 'giving to the poor', the gospel message is calling us to serve, identify, live and act in solidarity with those who mourn, the poor and the hungry. Noting that sadness, poverty and hunger come in many forms. Jesus is clearly interested in blessing them, and we should be too.



They ate and were filled.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The psalmist declares that those who hope in the Lord are happy. Let us be happy and place all our needs before God.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and the leaders of the Church that they will always put God's will before the things of this world.

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

We pray for the leaders of Australia that they will recognise that the poor will always be with us and accept the responsibility of providing what is necessary for people to live.

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

We pray for all those who have begun their academic year. May their efforts and vision bring both students and teachers to a valuable way of living.

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

We pray for the poor, the hungry and those who weep. May they find hope through the love and care of others who help them.

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

We pray for this community gathered here that we will always be willing to reach out generously to help others in need and be a place of welcome to all.

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

We pray for those who weep and mourn. May they be consoled with the knowledge that their loved ones are with God and that their pain will be eased.

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

Conclusion

God of all goodness, you know our needs and hear our call and we have confidence in your goodness as we make this prayer in Jesus' name and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C (16 February 2025)

Title	AOV	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
A child's prayer		111			
Amazing grace	29			450	437
Be thou my vision	9			455	
Eye has not seen	146				466
Firmly I believe and truly			677	486	382
Forth in the peace of Christ we go			681	489	495
O breathe on me, O breath of God			758	564	432
O God, our help in ages past	175		767	568	459
Seed, scattered and sown				592	195
Seek, O seek the Lord			802	595	211
The Beatitudes			817	456	489
We are children of the living God		15			
We know that Christ is raised				343	
You walk along our shoreline				653	

Title	S&S1
Lead me, Lord	107
We are the light of the world	143

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 1: *Happy are they who hope in the Lord.*

	CWB	JOBC	LPC
Psalm 1	366	pg. 64	pg. 98

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Heaven shall be yours (TCS) *Beatitudes* [Communion]



23 February 2025

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Anthony Doran

Introduction

One of the great themes of Luke's Gospel is reversal: the mighty are cast down, the little ones lifted up. Jesus takes us a little further this Sunday: modelling ourselves on our compassionate Father, we must love our enemies and do good to those who hate us.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you show us the mercy of the Father. Lord, have mercy.

You teach us to love our enemies. Christ, have mercy.

You are compassionate as your Father is compassionate. Lord, have mercy.

Collect

*Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that, always pondering spiritual things,
we may carry out in both word and deed
that which is pleasing to you.*

The collect for the 7th Sunday has been long cherished and utilised in a variety of contexts across a wide range of missals. The first appearance of the oration is for when there is dissention and dispute in a monastery. The text is also closely related to the prayer for the 4th Sunday, and perhaps reaches back to the contentious situations addressed in the Mass prayers composed by Pope Gelasius (d.496). The content of the prayer has remarkable simplicity and richness. The oration petitions God for the grace to meditate always on spiritual things. The collect for the 4th Sunday expresses this same thought when it refers to love that is 'true of heart'. These opening lines reflect a dynamic of continuous, unceasing prayer and reflection upon the divine mandates, a practice extolled in the psalms. From this point the prayer moves to the qualities of our speech and our deeds.

The meaning of the prayer is that the whole life of the community, built on contemplative reflection and prayer first, but communication and action as well, be taken up in what is pleasing to God. It is concerned with the integrity of the faith, deeds and worship of the Christian community before God. The context of dissention

in a monastic community highlights that the presence of disharmony serves notice to the community that they have acted and spoken in ways that are not pleasing to God and consequently have undermined the integrity of their faith, worship and love of neighbour.

Collect commentary by Gerard Moore: The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by me for the Canadian liturgical journal Celebrate! (Novalis Press). My thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

1 Samuel 26: 2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23

David shows mercy to his one-time-friend-turned-adversary, Saul. Presented with the opportunity, instead of killing him while he slept, David shows mercy to the Lord's anointed.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13

The Lord is kind and merciful

This psalm is a vibrant hymn, calling the faithful to praise the Lord for his forgiveness, for his love and compassion, for the richness of his mercy.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 15:45-49

This reading is a meditation contrasting Adam and Christ: on earth, we are earthly like Adam. But in heaven, we will be like Christ, for we are modelled on him.

Gospel Reading

Luke 6:27-38

Following Luke's version of the Beatitudes which we read last Sunday, today we read Jesus' exhortation to his listeners on the Plain: we must love our enemies and bless those who curse us. Our model for this is no less than the Father who is compassionate to the fullest of measures, overflowing and poured into our lap.

Reflection

Vengeance is a fairly typical human emotion. When someone does the dirty on us, a lot of the time, we want to get back at them. Most of us, from time-to-time, tend to think like this.

But it is not just our present generation who are victims of these emotions. Strangely, we often find in the pages of Sacred Scripture these sorts of emotions expressed.

It got to such a stage that it became institutionalised in the Law of Moses. In the regulations of the Pentateuch, there are rules about *how much* vengeance was allowed for certain crimes and transgressions. So that vengeance did not get out of hand, the rights of asylum were also instituted. Places of refuge to which a person escaping from punishment could flee. But still, these rights of asylum were only instituted to counter the vengeance.

The widespread resort to vengeance in the pages of Scripture is what makes today's first reading so remarkable. Because David decides *not* to take vengeance on Saul. David and Abishai find Saul asleep. But despite the urging of Abishai, David refuses to kill Saul as he slept. David had become an outlaw. He was in fear of his life from Saul who had become jealous of David's growing popularity. This, at the expense of his own waning reputation. Saul had made several attempts on David's life to this point. And twice, David spares the life of Saul. The story we read today is the second time when Saul's life is spared by David. David had the chance to exact his vengeance on Saul, but instead, he spares the life of Saul.

Today, we continue our reading of Luke's Gospel. And we are still hearing from the *Sermon on the Plain*. Last week, we heard the series of contrasts in Luke's version of the Beatitudes. How those who are poor, or hungry, or who weep, or who are hated are happy or blessed in the Kingdom of God. And how those who are rich, or satisfied, or who laugh now or who are liked in this world will not come out on top in the coming Kingdom of God.

Jesus takes us a little further in today's Gospel Reading. For not only are we asked, like David, not to take vengeance on our enemies. Now, Jesus is asking his followers to *love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly*. We are asked to respond to injury or unjust demand with nothing more than generosity. To respond by abandoning any claim we might have to retribution.

But, of course, this makes no sense, does it? How can we love our enemies? Come on Jesus, really? This makes no sense.

Of course, these are the answers we make we when hear these words of Jesus with the ears of the world. The words of Jesus which we hear this week – like the Beatitudes of last week – are highly provocative. For they ask us to go against all that makes sense. All that seems so right. And this is what is *highly dangerous* about the words of Jesus. When we hear them well, they are truly revolutionary. Far more seductive than the words of Karl Marx, Adolf Hitler, Mao Zedong or Osama Bin Laden.

The words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Plain ask us to have a new vision, quite different from this world. And in the coming Kingdom of God, the vision of Jesus Christ *is indeed very* different to the vision of this world. And when we run counter to the wisdom of this world, when we give and forgive and love, we find much given back to us. *This* is where we find full measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

As the psalmist declares, the Lord is kind and merciful. And so, in hope we offer our needs and the needs of the world.

Petitions

We pray for all the leaders of our Church that their witness to the gospel may lead us in our synodal journey through this year of jubilee.

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

We pray for leaders in politics, corporations, education and all powerful entities. May they see that compassion is necessary in leading people to true peace.

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

We pray for those whose hearts are full of vengeance. May they come to know that only love will bring them peace and comfort.

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

We pray for all of us gathered here that we may let go of vengeance, judgemental ways and hate. May we all be formed in the gospel and open to Jesus' call to love our enemies.

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

We pray for the elderly and house bound people in our community. May they not be forgotten and be nurtured with compassion.

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

We pray for all those who have died, particularly in violent conflict. May they be at peace at last.

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

Conclusion

God of compassion, you hear the prayers of all your people and so we pray in Jesus' name and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C (23 February 2025)

Title	AOV	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
A child's prayer			111			
A new commandment				615	443	318
A trusting psalm	115				293	455
Christians, let us love one another				648	469	206
Forgive our sins as we forgive				680	120	
Jesus, in your heart we find				724	397	464
Lord of all nations, grant me grace					542	
Love is his word				743		462
No greater love						460
Praise, my soul, the king of heaven	78			789	588	392
Return to God					298	304
Strong and constant	110			812	515	487
The servant song		169				487
There's a wideness in God's mercy				838	624	
This is my will my one command				842	626	465
We are children of the living God						15
What does the Lord require					642	
Where there is charity and love				863	638	323

Title	S&S2
Break my heart	380

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 102: *The Lord is kind and merciful.*

	GA	JOBC	LPC	PM1
Psalm 102	61	pg. 30	pg. 101	pg. 78

Music selections by Michael Mangan

A life of love (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Gifts]



Our Contributors

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

Andrew Doohan

Andrew Doohan is a presbyter of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. Following ordination in 2007, Andrew has served in several parishes and is currently pastor to the Parishes of Dungog & Gresford. Andrew has previously served as Rector of Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newcastle, and as Vicar General. He has filled the role of Master of Ceremonies for the diocese since 2012, and is a member, and currently Chair, of the Diocesan Liturgy Council. Andrew holds a Master of Theology and a Master of Arts (Liturgy) and is a member of the Australian Academy of Liturgy, *Societas Liturgica*, Australian Pastoral Musicians Network, and the Guild of Church Musicians.

Anthony Doran

Anthony Doran is priest of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, currently Parish Priest of Strathmore. 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. He has undertaken the Foundations of Directorship Course of the Australian Institute of Company Directors is an Affiliate Member of the AICD.

Pina Ford

For over 20 years Pina has been a senior leader in Catholic Education WA where she coordinates religious education in parishes. She contributes to organisational initiatives which include the formation of system leaders; and relishes the privilege of offering adult faith formation, retreats and personal accompaniment both within the system and externally. A passion for literature, philosophy, theology and spirituality has led to completing several degrees (BA Hons, MPhil and PhD), and also studies in Spiritual Direction. Pina's large family of young adults and small grandchildren bring everyday realism and joy to her life. She indulges her love for nature, family and friends through gardening, as well as hospitality, food and feasting!

Errol Lobo

Errol Xavier Lobo is a priest of the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth. Ordained in April 2024, he currently serves as an Assistant Priest at the Kalgoorlie-Boulder parish, while also providing pastoral care to its Catholic schools and acting as a Visiting Chaplain at Curtin University's WA School of Mines. He completed his Master of Philosophy by research in the area of

Pauline Studies at the University of Notre Dame Australia, after a Bachelor of Theology with High Distinction, and a Bachelor of Engineering (Computer Science), First Class with Distinction. He enjoys reading, listening to music, and long walks, and is particularly interested in New Testament Studies.

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 an adjunct 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. After time spent rearing a family, Angela resumed secondary teaching and further studies in theology and education in 1993 at Notre Dame and 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 the former editor of the Australian Journal of Liturgy, a member of 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 the editor of Pastoral Liturgy.

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.

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.



*Let all the
nations praise God.*

Ps 67:5

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.

Musicians' Appendix

Abbreviations and Explanations

- PM1 Psalms for All Time. Second edition 2016 Paul Mason © 2007 Paul Mason.
Published by Willow Publishing Pty Ltd.
Sales: info@willowconnection.com.au
Paul Mason's website www.liturgicalsong.com
- PM2 Vol 2 Psalms for All Time: Lectionary psalms for Sundays and Feasts. Paul Mason © 2017 Paul Mason. Published by Liturgical Song.
- PM3 Vol 3 Psalms for All Time: Lectionary psalms for Sundays and Feasts. Paul Mason © 2023 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.
- AOVNG As One Voice The Next Generation.
© 2009 Willow Publishing Pty Ltd.
Email info@willowpublishing.com.au
- S&S1 Spirit & Song 1
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 (<i>Ps 100</i>)	LCC
SING NEW SONGS OF JOY	FWS
WE REJOICE (<i>PS 122</i>)	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
THE BREAD OF LIFE	SHOF
IN MEMORY OF ME*	LCC
ONE BODY IN CHRIST	TWB
WE COME, WE COME	TWB
IN THE BODY OF CHRIST	LCC
QWE 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
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	Let the Children Come
DOM	Doors of Mercy
GLM	1,2,3, God Love Me
TWB	This We Believe
MJC	Mass Jubilee/Celebration
TWML	That We Might Live
STAR	The Star
TCS	True Colours Shine
TT	This is the Time
FWS	Forever I Will Sing
SHOF	Setting Hearts On Fire
SYJ	Sing Your Joy