



The Voice

30th November 2008

First Sunday of Advent, Year B

Psalter Week 1

ADVENT

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

- **Recently deceased:**
Raymond Coakes, Patricia Reynell, Eileen Vincent, Aiden Dempsey, Teresa Esposito-Vitale, Imelda Hartman.
- **Anniversaries:**
Nick Freris, Paul Houghton, Grant Andrews, Thomas & Annie Peachey, Barry Langdon, Eileen Meyer, Rita Cawthorne, Catherine McDade.
- **Remembrances:**
Nora & Eli Houghton.
- **Sick:**
Father John Wakeling, Mgr. John Grannall, Jim Caulfield, Mary Surman, Anne Der Kinderen, Wanda Grima, Alice Stevenson, John Allen, Mary Ryan, Bob Todd, Catherine Hughes, John Robbie, Marie Brown, Maria Cavanagh, Sue Smithers.

Time and Eternity

This is the time when we hear the words, 'Christmas again! Where did the year go?'

Well, where did it go? How did we spend it? What difference has it made to us and to others whose lives we affect?

For many people, there is only "secular" time. "Secular" derives from the Latin word for this world, for the duration of this world, for our own short lives. It has a beginning, a middle and an end. We were born and we shall die—what happens in between is pretty humdrum.

Eternity has no place in such a world view. There is simply secular time, and we fall into it and out of it.

Maybe that is one reason why children (well, children who are not poor or sick or marginalised) look forward to Christmas, while many others dread it or try to ignore it. For them, each Advent or Christmas or Easter is just another milestone along a journey without meaning to a pointless destination.

But it is possible to see and live time in another way. There is sacred time—the time that approximates to eternity and is summed up in it. The seasons of the church year belong in that context.

Let me make clear what I do *not* mean by sacred time: the idea, to be found in the Stoics and others, that events repeat them-

selves, so that what happened some centuries ago will happen again now and will occur again in the future. This is not the Judaeo-Christian vision. It reduces free human beings to mere puppets, or to bubbles on the stream of time. There is more to us than that.

In this Pauline Year, it is good to recall the Apostle's conviction that God's plan works itself out in salvation history and that it came to a climax in the Christ event. Those who turn God into a problem (does he exist? how can there be evil?) delude themselves: God is not the problem—we are; and God has offered a solution, in Jesus Christ. That is what we recall and live in sacred time.

Where does each of us fit into this? Not as insignificant moments in secular time, nor as predetermined elements in an eternal return, but, as it were, in a spiral: we seek to be part of the solution, not of the problem; we relive sacramentally each year the Christ event, and so we grow into the eternal life that was given us in baptism and is nourished by God's word and sacrament. We move forward by reliving the incarnation and passover of our Saviour.

Today we begin again. We wait for his coming. We look forward to being born again with him.

FR JOHN HILL, P.P.

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Psalm Response

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Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation. *Alleluia!*

Around the Parish



St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal: We realize you have many calls on your generosity, but there is an ever growing number of families and singles that we assist, particularly at this time the need is great. Please do your best at the appeal this weekend.



Workshop for Catechists, those involved with children's Liturgy of the Word (9.15am Mass) Senior Servers and other parish volunteers who come in regular contact with children. It will raise awareness on relevant legislation and Bishop's responsibilities. *This Sun, 30th Nov 10.30am-12noon. Ethel Cox Centre.*



Sacrament of First Reconciliation: Please remember in your prayers our children who will be receiving this Sacrament during the coming week.

D.V.D's of the Dedication of our Church, \$15 ea. Great idea as a Christmas gift! Columban calendars, Christmas cribs, etc. available at the Piety stall.



Christmas Raffle: Tickets will be on sale at all Masses 29/11 and 6/12. First Prize: Tapestry. 2nd Prize: remote Car. 3rd Prize: Christmas hamper. 4th Prize: Doll. 5th Prize: Picnic set.



Social Justice

The Global Economy

357. A feature of the contemporary world is the tendency towards globalization, a phenomenon, which, although not exclusively American, is more obvious and has greater repercussions in America. It is a process made inevitable by increasing communication between the different parts of the world, leading in practice to overcoming distances, with evident effects in widely different fields. The ethical implications can be positive or negative. There is an

economic globalization which brings some positive consequences, such as efficiency and increased production and which, with the development of economic links between the different countries, can help to bring greater unity among peoples and make possible a better service to the human family. However, if globalization is ruled merely by the laws of the market applied to suit the powerful, the consequences cannot but be negative. These are, for example, the absolutizing of the

economy, unemployment, the reduction and deterioration of public services, the destruction of the environment and natural resources, the growing distance between rich and poor, unfair competition which puts the poor nations in a situation of ever increasing inferiority. While acknowledging the positive values which come with globalization, the Church considers with concern the negative aspects which follow in its wake.

(Ecclesia in America, n 20)



From the Diocese and beyond

Gloria Te Deum—Vivaldi, Charpentier—A Christmas Concert presented by the Central Coast Chorale & Chamber Orchestra, this Sunday 30th November, 2.30pm at St. Pat-

rick's Church, York St.. East Gosford. Flyers with full details on table in gathering area.

Disciples of Jesus Summer School of Evangelisation for

young Catholics aged 16-35 yrs. Tocal College, Paterson Rd. Patterson. 11-18 January. See notice board. Phone Bruce 0412 885 958 or Sulyn 0408 966 632 dojsse@dojsydneynorth.com



The present: an Adventful time—Part I

Thomas B. Iwanowski

Would you be most interested in knowing what took place more than 2,000 years ago, what might happen 100 or 500 years from now, or what is taking place today?

I think the majority of people would choose to know what is taking place today. Just consider all the means that exist in order to keep us informed about “the now” in our world. We have round-the-clock cable news channels that often bring us news as it happens. For example, we do not just hear a report about a hostage situation or an apartment fire; we often see the event unfold on our television screen. We listen to news reports on the radio and read about current events in the daily paper and on our computers. We have news updates sent to our PDAs and cell phones. Even televised entertainment programs often have a “crawl” on the bottom of the screen giving breaking news, the latest market report, and now, even the price of crude oil. We are constantly aware of what is taking place around us.

Our society does not seem to have such a level of interest in the past. After all, there is only one History Channel. Certainly no reports about the past regularly appear in the news media. The past is of little interest compared to the present. As voters tell their elected officials, “Don’t tell me what you did for me last year; tell me what you can do for me today!”

The future, on the other hand, does have some attraction. As a new year is about to begin, we listen with fascination to predictions about the future. But our logical, pragmatic side knows that these predictions are only educated guesses at best, and predictions about what will occur in 100 years or 1,000 years are relatively worthless. If predictions about the future were accurate, the world would have ended in the year 2,000, Jesus would have come again in glory, and the printed magazine you are now reading would have been replaced by a digital device.

The present is what truly holds our attention, not the past or the future. We live in the present moment. This concentration on the present diminishes our appreciation of Advent, for Advent looks to both the past and the future. As we read in the *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*, “Advent has a

twofold character: as a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ’s first coming to us is remembered; as a season when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ’s Second Coming at the end of the time” (39). Advent thus directs us to the past (“Christ’s first coming to us is remembered”) and to the future (“Christ’s Second Coming at the end of the time”) rather than to the present moment, which most often captures our attention.

Our appreciation and observance of Advent are further diminished by the fact that it comes at the most “now-centred” time of the year. While the church is looking back to the events that preceded the first coming of Christ and looking forward to Christ’s return in glory, society is focused on the present — or, we might say, society is focused on the “presents.” Society is concerned with the purchase and exchange of Christmas presents and with all the other things associated with this season of gift-giving — a season that society ushers in during mid-November, if not earlier, and celebrates with a grand finale on December 25.

Even churches contribute to this diminishment of Advent. They often join the rest of society in centring on Christmas and not on preparing to celebrate the first coming of the Lord or waiting for his return. As examples, parish Christmas concerts and parties are generally scheduled during Advent, and Christmas decorations often make their way into the worship space even before the four candles of the Advent wreath have come into flame.

Rather than trying to change society’s emphasis on the present during Advent, perhaps we can use this season and its assigned Scripture readings to better appreciate what God is presently doing in our world and in our lives.

Consider how the following Advent readings, which are usually associated with the past or the future, can help us to recognise the action of God in our lives today.

- On the Fourth Sunday of Advent in Year A, we hear Matthew tell of God’s annunciation to Joseph. God speaks to Joseph in a dream

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We are the servants of God,
each with his or her own task.
We will be judged good stewards if, at His coming, He finds us ready and conscientiously pursuing the tasks to which we have been called.

Devotions

Hour of Grace Monday 8th Dec. 12 noon-1.10pm. Woy Woy. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, then Psalm 50 (51) recited 3 times, silence for personal prayer until 1pm when Benediction will conclude the time of prayer. *Special Intention:* that the UN does not declare abortion to be a Human Right. 8/12/08 concludes the 150

year celebrations of Lourdes.

Prayer for Conversions Tuesday 2nd Dec. 2pm-3pm Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

‘El Shaddai’ Charismatic Prayer Group meetings for December — 6th, 13th and 20th. Enquiries: Linda Thurlow 4342 9092.



Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula

Woy Woy, Umina, Ettalong, Kooloewong, Tascott, Blackwall, Booker Bay, St Hubert's Island, Empire Bay, Horsfield Bay, Pearl Beach, Patonga, Woy Woy Bay, Daley's Point and Phegan's Bay.

St John the Baptist Church, corner of Blackwall and Victoria Roads, Woy Woy

Parish Office Ethel Cox Parish Centre
P.O. Box 264 Walter Baker Hall
54 Victoria Road 100 Blackwall Road
WOY WOY N.S.W. 2256

Phone: (02) 4341 1073
Fax: (02) 4341 0214
Email: parish@woywoycatholic.org.au

"He must increase, I must decrease"

Dr John Hill, *Parish Priest*

Fr Barry Nobbs, *Assistant Priest*

Parish Staff: Libby McManus, Pamela Burton & Raelene McLenaghan

Parish Office Hours: 9.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m., Monday to Friday

Deadline for The Voice: 4.30 p.m. Wednesday

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Vigil Saturday 5pm; Sunday 7.45am, 9.15am, 6pm.

WEEKDAY MASS TIMES

Monday-Friday 7.45am (Monday & Tuesday with Lauds); Saturday and Public Holidays 9am; First Friday 4pm (with Anointing of the Sick).

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Friday after morning Mass; First Friday, 3.30 p.m.; Saturday 11.30am; & 4.30pm; Sunday 7.15 a.m.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

1st & 3rd Sundays, 11am; 5th Sunday, during 9.15 a.m. Mass. Godparents are examples of faith to the child. They must be confirmed and practising Catholics, at least sixteen years old. If there is at least one godparent, a non-Catholic may act as a Christian witness. Parents and godparents must attend a pre-baptismal instruction, held on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month at 9.30 a.m.

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Every Saturday after 9am Mass until 10am; every Monday until 9am (Public Holidays 10.15am).

CENTACARE Marriage & Family Counselling, Pregnancy help – 20 Watt St, Gosford. Phone: 4324 6403.

MARY MAC'S PLACE Volunteers provide nutritious, freshly cooked meals and information and referrals to appropriate community services. Open Monday to Friday, 11am-1pm, at the Ethel Cox Parish Centre. For more information, please contact Robyn on 4341 0584.

CASH HOUSIE every Saturday night at St Mary's Hall, Ocean View Rd, Ettalong (opposite Palm Beach Ferry Wharf). Games start at 7.30 p.m. and finish approx 10.15 p.m., cash prizes. Ticket sales from 6.00 p.m. Proceeds benefit Parish. Enquiries 43690626.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST YOUTH MINISTRY – for information and events contact Robyn on 0432 619 182.

PARISH CHOIR – Practice Wednesday nights in the church, 7 p.m. Enquiries: 4341 3367.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, 21a Dulakara Rd South Woy Woy 2256. p 024341 0884 f 0243 445049

The present: an Adventful time

(continued)

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and announces that Mary, his betrothed, is with child through the action of God (Mt 1:18-24).

- In Year B, we hear Luke speak of God's annunciation to Mary. The angel comes and tells Mary that she has been chosen to be mother of the "Son of the Most High" (Lk 1:26-38).
- In Year C, we hear Luke speak of the Holy Spirit's annunciation to Elizabeth. Informed and moved by the Spirit of God, Elizabeth proclaims Mary to be "the mother of my Lord" (Lk 1:39-45).

Mary, Joseph, and Elizabeth each experience an annunciation from God. These Advent readings remind us that God's annunciations still continue. God has not stopped speaking. God speaks to us through the Scriptures, through the church, through the inspiration of the Spirit, through the "angels" who come into our life and challenge us to greater fidelity to the Gospel, and through the hopes and dreams we still have for a better world. Advent reminds us

to be attentive to the voice of God in our day, even when the noise of December competes for our attention.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception, one of the great feasts of the Advent season, celebrates God's saving embrace of Mary from the first moment of her conception. God chose Mary to have a special role in the drama of salvation. In the second reading for that feast (Eph 1:3-6,11-12), Paul writes that we too were chosen before the world began to have parts to play in the continuing drama of salvation.

We must faithfully live the part assigned us as God's adopted sons and daughters and not fall into the role that society casts us to play during the month of December, that of an unbridled consumer caught up in the stuff of this world. Advent challenges us to review how we are living the part God has given us.

To be continued next Sunday.

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



Diocese of
Broken Bay