



The Voice

14th December 2008

Third Sunday of Advent, Year B

Psalter Week 3

ADVENT

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

- **Recently deceased:**
Harold Hopley, Fr. Ed Doran, O.S.B., Valerie Smith, Margaret Bonfil.
- **Anniversaries:**
Kathleen Field, Ray Holz, Michael Woodward, Frank Ryan.
- **Sick:**
Father John Wakeling, Mgr. John Grannall, Fr. John McCulloch, 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.

Finances

Now that our new church, car park, presbytery, offices, hall and parish centre have been completed, we have facilities which will serve our parish for many years to come. The Building Committee has done a great job.

Along with this good news, however, the final accounts have been received and reconciled, and it emerges that we have a problem.

You will recall that all our budgets were based on the sale of most of our properties, so that the project would not leave the Parish in debt. The final property to be sold is St Mary's Hall at Ettalong. In 2005 we were told that it would fetch \$1,300,000; the Committee conservatively budgeted for \$1,100,000. A combination of global financial turmoil with a collapse of local land prices has led to a current value of \$600,000. This is quite a blow.

At the same time, there was a cost blow-out of 6.5% on the project. The Parish could handle the drop in property values or the blow-out, but not both. If the Ettalong property is not sold, we shall be left with a debt of \$1.85 million, yet obviously we could sell now only at a great loss.

Obviously, we need a breathing space, and the Diocese has provided this. You are probably aware that Kincumber and Warrnervale parishes have undertaken build-

ing projects for which they will have to repay the principal, but for which the Diocese pays the interest from a special fund. The Catholic Development Fund has been authorised to extend our loan to \$1.78 million; this will be on an interest-only basis until 30th June next year (when it will revert to principal plus interest); for this same period, the special fund will pay the interest. This will allow us, as the market improves, to maximise the sale price of the Ettalong property.

Meanwhile we have to get our act together: to reduce the debt as rapidly as possible, especially though the ways I suggested last week (finding donors for the bells, the organ and the baptistery), but also by increasing our second and envelope collection and encouraging your remembrance of the Parish in your wills.

I recognise how generous you have been in the past, especially in raising funds for the furnishings of the new church. I share your disappointment that events beyond our control have defeated the ambition to self-fund the project. Nonetheless we now have an asset that will be invaluable in our roles of pastoral care and evangelisation. I look forward to receiving your collaboration. Maybe you could join the fundraising committee. In general, please be generous in your support.

FR JOHN HILL, P.P.

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Psalalm Response

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Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring Good News to the poor. *Alleluia!*

Around the Parish



Second Rite of Reconciliation
Friday 19th December, 7.30pm.

Christmas Masses: Christmas Eve: 5pm, 8pm and midnight. **Christmas Day:** 7.45am and 9.15am. *Please note: there will be no evening Mass on Christmas Day.*

St. Stephen's Day (Boxing Day) 26th December Morning Mass at 9.00am.



Advent Carol Service: If you love Christmas Carols you are invited to our Advent Carol Service on Thursday 18th December at 7.00pm *in the Church*. Children from our school will be involved with the singing and the readings.



Baptisms: We welcome into our faith community Tegan Walsh and Amalia Casey who were baptized last weekend.

On the Bus: Drivers for the Masses of the weekend of 21/22 December will be Sat



Social Justice

A Peace Blessing

May God banish from our hearts whatever might endanger peace.

May God transform us into witnesses of truth, justice and love.

May God enlighten the rulers of people so that in addition to their solicitude for the proper welfare of their citizens, they may guarantee and defend the



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

It's Back on Track—Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay Charity Race Day Tuesday 20 January, 2009. Gosford Race Course. There are many people in our community who do not enjoy

5.00pm: Larry Sheil and Sun 7.45am and 9.15am: Bernard Edwards. Enquiries to the Parish office please.

Christmas Offering Envelopes are now in the Church for those who do not have weekly envelopes.

Housie Prizes are \$80, \$120 and \$150 with a chance also of \$1,000 if not won in the predetermined number of calls. You can play the whole night from as little as \$7 through to \$42 depending on how much you want to spend. This is our own and original Parish fundraiser held every Saturday night, 7.30pm ends around 10.10pm at St. Mary's Hall, ocean View Rd. Ettalong. Free tea or coffee and a friendly atmosphere. All welcome. Enq: Rob Graham 0420 712 873.

Need an idea for a Christmas gift? D.V.D's of the Dedication of our Church, \$15 ea. C.D. "Deeper" project of WYD fea-

turing original songs composed and performed by young adults within the Diocese. It includes fully down loadable sheet music, also Special Souvenir Edition of W.Y.D. "This is the Mass" Cardinal George Pell. \$45 ea. plus many other items in your Piety Stall.

Mary Mac's Place: Sincere thanks to all who contributed so generously to the success of our Friends' evening on 24th November. Special thanks to our wonderful volunteers and the catering team, the Event Decorators, and the young people from the Parish Youth Ministry who performed so professionally as waiters. We have been blessed to receive many generous donations for which we are truly grateful. Robyn.

Attention Readers— Would you please collect your new 'Break Open the Word' Manual available in the Roster room.

great gift of peace.

May God enkindle the will of all, so that they may overcome the barriers that divide, cherish the bonds of mutual charity, understand others, and pardon those have done them wrong.

May all peoples of the earth become as one, and may the most longed-for peace blossom forth and reign always among

them.

Pope John XXIII Pacem in Terris

There is an ongoing need for towels and toiletries, including toilet bags, for Coast Shelter, Domestic Violence and Abused Children Refuges. Thank you to the many people who have already contributed.

Mary Wood.

From the Diocese and beyond

the comforts we often take for granted—a loving family environment, stable employment and food on the table. Through the Charitable Works Fund, the Diocese of Broken Bay will use proceeds from the Race Day to continue to provide assistance to those in need.

Race Day Luncheon Tickets \$60—Book for yourself or a table of friends NOW with Adrienne Wentzel at the Caroline Chisholm Centre phone

(02) 9847 0220.

Engaged Encounter—A Marriage Preparation Program held in Pennant Hills. While it is spent with other engaged couples, private time is the focus allowing you to build a closer relationship. Next weekend date is 7th-8th February 2009. To find out more visit <http://www.engagedencounter.org.au> or call (02) 9990 3212 and we will return your call. More info see notice board.

Saving Face

Ronald Raab

I grieve my father's face in Advent. He died one December in the cold Midwestern days. His mother also died, years before, in the same Advent month. I remember his expressions becoming frozen, not from the weather outside but from the numbing effects of Parkinson's disease. I cringe at the memory of his furrowed brow, revealing his disappointments and regrets in his old age. His old-man face haunts my memory because his disease creased his spirit and shrunk his perspective on a life of hard work and dedication to his family.

My Advent heirloom cannot escape my father's long years of blank stares and the generational grief that has formed the life of my brother and me. Every year, these days before Christmas remind me that I do not wait for a baby to be born in a manger. I long instead for a new expression on my own face that reflects God's intervention in me now, reminding me that I am not a lost child, not an heir of only loss and failure.

Every year before Christmas, I view faces in our urban parish — those of parents and children — that reflect subsurface suffering and losses. Many people who make their home outside often hide their longing to be connected to their past. One late autumn, to begin to unveil the stories behind some of the faces in our daily hospitality centre, a parishioner initiated the "Portrait Project."

Our parish staff called on a professional photographer and his students to sit with our guests and capture their faces on camera. When the day came to shoot the photos, some people cleaned up, and others asked if a friend could join them in the frame. Some women dabbed on makeup, which so changed them I could hardly recognise their worn expressions. People felt excitement, wearing grins and smiles because we wanted to capture their features, their present stories. Their entire bodies lit up as they stood opposite a lens for the first time in years.

The finished photographs arrived back at the parish in the dark shadows of Advent. I viewed each face with a tender respect. The paper icons revealed the dignity and emotional energy of each person. Personalities jumped out from the 5" x 7" portraits, each face glowing off the golden background. In what was previously a group of wet, darkly clothed, anonymous poor who line up every day at our church door, I now see individual people. Their faces teach me to see them for who they are, with individ-

ual histories, with stories of suffering and being lost, stories that are not so different from my own as I might have thought before.

All the labels I put on others peeled away as I held that stack of portraits. I realised the variety of violent names and tags I put on other people. When I squeeze these human faces into categories such as "uneducated," "smelly," or "lazy," my own fear is unmasked. The fear keeps others at bay in an attempt to protect myself from being in relationship with the real world, with people beyond my own history and comfort. But Jesus' birth confirmed the dignity of the human condition. Our preparation for Christmas invites us to explore within our communities how we view the people around us. These four weeks stir our hearts for the God who lives behind each human face, underneath each expression of unworthiness, fear, and loss.

When the photographs were distributed, volunteers wrote letters dictated by those whose portraits were taken, provided Christmas cards, and addressed envelopes so the photographed people could send a loved one this very personal gift. One volunteer received this dictation, "Please forgive the wreckage I left behind. Someday I hope to come home."

If we are all honest in this Advent season, that same sentiment may very well be ours. We stumble around our own consciences, unable to fully believe that the Christ who once was human still heals and forgives. The Saviour is still being born among all of us who need him the most. Without this faith, we will never see the true dignity of other people and never realize our own true home.

When I step out from behind my mask of success and authority, Advent reveals in me the hidden face of God. This grace opens me to a new power greater than myself and calls me to forgiveness, love, and hope. The liturgies of Advent shake all of us out of our slumber and wake us to recognise the gift of the people around us and our ancestors before us. My brow relaxes and my expressions become free when finally I experience God's saving face.

ML

Rev. Ronald Patrick Raab, CSC, serves as an associate pastor at the Downtown Chapel of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Portland, Ore. He hosts the radio program *On the Margins*, a weekly Gospel reflection that can be heard online at KBVM.com. His email address is raab@downtownchapel.org From *Ministry & Liturgy*, copyright © Resource Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission under licence number 6744.



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

Devotions

Catechism of the Catholic Church in Brief:

1407. The Eucharist is the heart and summit of the Church's life, for in it Christ associates his Church and all her members with his sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once and for all on the cross to his Father; by this sacrifice he pours out the graces of salvation on his

Body which is the Church.

1410. It is Christ himself, the eternal high priest of the New Covenant, who, acting through the ministry of the priests, offers the Eucharistic sacrifice. And it is the same Christ really present under the species of bread and wine, who is offering the Eucharistic sacrifice.



Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula

Woy Woy, Umina, Ettalong, Koolewong, 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 Dul-kara Rd South Woy Woy 2256. p 024341 0884 f 0243 445049

Alpha and Omega

Paul Turner

Alpha and *omega* are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. They are both vowels. *Alpha* equates to our letter A and is shaped the same way. *Omega* looks like a horseshoe: S. It has a long O sound, so its aural equivalent appears earlier in our alphabet. In Greek, though, *alpha* leads to *omega* as A leads to Z.

These two letters appear several times in the Book of Revelation (1:8; 21:6; 22:13), at the end of the Bible. Together they form a title of Jesus Christ, who is the first and the last; the beginning and the end; the one who is, who was, and who is to come; the almighty; the one who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

At the Easter Vigil each year, the priest carves the letters Alpha and Omega into the candle while reciting a text that proclaims Christ as the beginning and the end. The symbols remain in the candle throughout the year. They may appear elsewhere in

Christian art, often associated with the cross.

As one church year draws to a close and another begins on the First Sunday of Advent, it is appropriate to remember Christ, who stands above all time as the beginning and the end. He existed before time began. He will rule as judge at the end of days. And he appeared in human history, an event we recall every Christmas Day. Whether we are celebrating the turning of the church year or of the calendar year, we hail Christ as our Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the one to whom all time belongs, and in whom we live, move, and have our being. **ML**

This bulletin insert originally appeared in *Ministry & Liturgy*, a pastoral planning resource used by the worship leaders in your parish as an aid for better liturgy. Copyright © 2006, Resource Publications, Inc. 160 E. Virginia St. #290, San Jose, CA 95112, (408) 286-8505. This article may not be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher. For permission e-mail info@rpinet.com. Paul Turner, pastor of St. Munchin Parish in Cameron, MO, holds a doctorate in sacramental theology from Sant' Anselmo University in Rome. Comment online at [ML Current Issue Discussion](http://MLCurrentIssueDiscussion.com).

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Broken Bay