**ST JOSEPH’S PARISH  
OUYEN, PATCHEWOLLOCK, TEMPY, WALPEUP, UNDERBOOL**

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**Third Sunday of Advent Year B 17th December 2023**

Entrance Antiphon

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.

Indeed, the Lord is near.

First Reading[Isaiah 61:1-2. 10-11](file:////ritual/lectionary/LectionaryList|isa%23isa061" \t "_blank)

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

*I exult for joy in the Lord.*

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,

for the Lord has anointed me.

He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,

to bind up hearts that are broken;

to proclaim liberty to captives,

freedom to those in prison;

to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.

‘I exult for joy in the Lord,

my soul rejoices in my God,

for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation,

he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity,

like a bridegroom wearing his wreath,

like a bride adorned in her jewels.

‘For as the earth makes fresh things grow,

as a garden makes seeds spring up,

so will the Lord make both integrity and praise

spring up in the sight of the nations.’

Responsorial Psalm

R.) My soul rejoices in my God.

1. My soul glorifies the Lord,

my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.

He looks on his servant in her nothingness;

henceforth all ages will call me blessed. (R.)

2. The Almighty works marvels for me.

Holy his name!

His mercy is from age to age,

on those who fear him. (R.)

3. He fills the starving with good things,

sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel, his servant,

remembering his mercy. (R.)

Second Reading [1 Thessalonians 5:16-24](file:////ritual/lectionary/LectionaryList|th1%23th1005)

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

*May you all be kept blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus.

Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything – hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;

he sent me to bring Good News to the poor.

Alleluia!

Gospel [John 1:6-8. 19-28](file:////ritual/lectionary/LectionaryList|jhn%23jhn001" \t "_blank)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

*There stands among you, unknown to you, the one who is coming after me.*

A man came, sent by God.

His name was John.

He came as a witness,

as a witness to speak for the light,

so that everyone might believe through him.

He was not the light,

only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, ‘I am not the Christ.’ ‘Well then,’ they asked, ‘are you Elijah?’ ‘I am not,’ he said. ‘Are you the Prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’ So they said to him, ‘Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?’ So John said, ‘I am, as Isaiah prophesied:

a voice that cries in the wilderness:

Make a straight way for the Lord.’

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, ‘Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?’ John replied, ‘I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.’ This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

Communion Antiphon

Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear.

Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

Reflection by Dr Scott Hahn

The mysterious figure of John the Baptist comes into sharper focus today. We see in today’s Gospel that who he is, is understood more by who he isn’t.

He is not Elijah returned from the heavens, although like him he dresses in the prophet’s attire and preaches repentance and judgment. Although not Elijah in the flesh, John is nonetheless sent in the spirit and power of Elijah to fulfill his mission.

Neither is John the prophet Moses, although he is a kinsman and speaks God’s word. Nor is John the Messiah, though he has been anointed by the Spirit since he was in the womb.

John prepares the way for the Lord. The baptism he performs is symbolic, not sacramental. It is a sign given to stir our hearts to repentance.

John shows us the One upon whom the Spirit remains, the One who fulfills the promise we hear in today’s First Reading. Jesus’ bath of rebirth and the Spirit opens a fountain that purifies Israel and gives to all a new heart and a new Spirit.

John comes to us in the Advent readings to show us the light, that we might believe in the One who comes at Christmas. As we sing in today’s psalm, the Mighty One has come to lift each of us up, to fill our hunger with bread from heaven. And as Paul exhorts, we should rejoice, give thanks, and pray without ceasing that God will make us perfectly holy in spirit, soul, and body, so that we may be blameless when our Lord comes.

***Pope’s Prayer Intention for December:*** **For people with disabilities – We pray that people with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.**

***Next Social Gathering:* Thursday 18th January, 6pm at the Club, following Mass at 5:30 with Rosary & Adoration from 5pm.**

***Christmas Mass Times*:**

**Ouyen**

**11am Christmas Day**

**Underbool**

**9am Friday 22nd Dec**

**Sunraysia, Christmas Eve** (Sun 24 Dec)

**6pm Mildura  
6pm Werrimull  
8pm Red Cliffs  
8pm Merbein  
10pm Mildura**

**Midnight Mildura**

**Christmas Day** (Monday 25 Dec)

**8:30am Irymple  
9am Mildura**

**Robinvale**  
**Vigil Mass 24th December**

**6pm Mass 25th December 9am**

**Manangatang**

**Vigil Mass 24th December 4pm**

**\*Advent Reconciliation/Confession: Friday 22nd at 10:30, followed by Mass. Please note the change in order**

***Prayer For Australia*: Eternal Father, I offer you the Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ offered at all the Masses throughout the world, in atonement, and to protect Australia from the sin of abortion, euthanasia, and from every evil. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

***Prayer for Freedom of Religious Belief* Heavenly Father, we pray for our politicians to work openly with our faith communities, and for faith leaders, teachers, parents and guardians of children, to protect religious freedom from within our churches. We pray for the appropriate formation of children in accordance with the traditional teachings of their families. We ask this through the intercession of Our Lady Help of Christians and St Mary of the Cross. Amen**

***Recent Deaths****:*

***Anniversaries:*** Jean Baker

***Sick*: Cora Jardine, Judi Floyd, John Nihill and Renae Lanigan**

**Sunday 24th December *Welcomer:* Carmel Vallance**

**Reader: Leo O’Callaghan**

***Prayers of the Faithful:* Lorna Keam**

***Offertory Procession*: Les & Beryl Gregg**

***Eucharistic Minister*: Marlene O’Callaghan**

***Projectionist:* Louise Fitzpatrick Leach**

**Monday 25th December**

**Welcomer: Marlene O’Callaghan**

**Reader: Merril Boland**

**Prayers of the Faithful: Flora Moulder**

**Offertory Procession: Jessica & Ann**

**Eucharistic Minister: Leo O’Callaghan**

**Projectionist: Carmel Vallance**

**Collections: 10th December**

**Ouyen $231.00**

**Planned Giving $100.00 *December Church Cleaning* Cheryl Anderson & Celia Reidy**

***Presbytery: Carmel Vallance***

***Mass Times:***

**Ouyen each Sunday at 11am**

**Underbool 1st & 3rd Fridays at 9am**

***Weekday Masses this week* Friday at 10:30am**

***Sacrament of Reconciliation* Father will be available after the 11am Mass or any time by appointment. *Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament* Thursdays 2-5pm**

St Joseph’s Parish

Ouyen, Patchewollock, Tempy, Walpeup, Underbool

**Parish Administrator: Fr Shaiju Mathew (03) 5026 3068**

**Parish Contact Person: Faye Nihill 0429 921 326**

**Parish Email:** [**ouyen@ballarat.catholic.org.au**](mailto:ouyen@ballarat.catholic.org.au)

**St Joseph’s Parish Ouyen, Patchewollock, Tempy, Walpeup, Underbool**

***Pope’s Prayer Intention for October:*** **For the Synod– We pray for the Church, that she may adopt listening and dialogue as a way of lifestyle and be guided by the Holy Spirit.**

***Next Social Gathering:* Thursday 19th October, 6pm at the Club, following Mass at 5:30.**

***Feast Days this Week:* 16th St Margaret Mary Alacoque (1701-1771) Joined the Visitation Sisters in Parayle Monial, France. She received visions of our Lord who revealed his Sacred Heart to her asking her. Along with St Claude de la Colombiere, a French priest, they worked tirelessly to spread devotion to the immense love Jesus has for us in his Sacred Heart.**

**17th St Ignatius of Antioch (?-107) He was the third bishop of Antioch, the first being St Peter until he moved to Rome. St Ignatius was arrested when he was already an old man and condemned to death. He was transported to Rome in shackles and then feed to the lions in the Coliseum. On his journey to Rome, he wrote several letters to the local churches encouraging them to be faithful and follow the teachings of their Bishops. These letters are important documents for the Church showing the already existing organisation of the Church and Christian life at the time. The letters also show Ignatius to be a deeply holy man who begged the Christians in Rome not to deprive him of the crown of martyrdom.**

**18th St Luke, Apostle Was a Greek doctor who converted to Christianity. He was a companion of St Paul and stayed with him up until his death in Rome, wrote the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles which tells the story of the early history of the Church. As a Greek he takes care to explain to other readers the Jewish customs and meaning of Hebrew words. He died a martyr at the age of 84 after being tortured and finally hung in Thebes, Greece.**

**19th Sts John de Brebeuf &Isaac Jogues, priests & companion martyrs were French Jesuits who travelled to North America from 1642-1649. They were killed by the native Huron & Iroquois tribes after suffering terrible tortures.**

***Prayer For Australia*: Eternal Father, I offer you the Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ offered at all the Masses throughout the world, in atonement, and to protect Australia from the sin of abortion, euthanasia, and from every evil. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

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Description automatically generatedThis weekend we welcome** into our parish family **Willow May Shaddock**, who is the second child of Danielle and James Shaddock. We pray for all the family and Godparents that they will grow in strength and love of their faith and that Willow may grow into a joy-filled and vibrant member of our parish. 👏

**Bulletins next week: Next Sunday is our usual Sunday Mass, the 4th week of Advent followed on the Monday by Christmas Day. We have Mass at 11am on both days. As a result of this we will have the usual bulletin out on Sunday and there will be a bulletin with just the Mass Readings for Christmas Day on the Monday. This week’s bulletin lists the readers etc for both of those days. If you will not be available please find a replacement or contact Marie as soon as possible.**

**Peace in the Holy Land**Parishioners are being encouraged to pray the Rosary during Advent for peace in the Holy Land.

**Aid to the Church in need Supporting Christians in the Holy Land The pontifical foundation Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) has committed an aid package of 190,000 AUD to support the Christians of the Holy Land during the current crisis. This aid will assist impoverished Christians in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, as well as Christian migrant workers and asylum seekers in Israel. Use this link to donate https://aidtochurch.org/holyland**

**Christmas Cards:** a range of Christmas cards of varying styles and prices will be available from next week at the piety stall. We are supporting two of our talented parishioners in Naomi Leach and Chloe Brady, as well as our regular Majellan cards. Come and see what is available at the piety stall.

**Columban Calendars are available for $10:00 and can be paid upon collection. Please see Marie, Cheryl or Faye.**

**Ordination to the Diaconate: Congratulations to Cay who was ordained Deacon for the Diocese of Ballarat yesterday.  Let us continue to pray for Cay as he embarks upon his final step towards the priesthood.**

**150th Anniversary of the Diocese of Ballarat - Volunteers for the Mass of the Oils** As part of the Ballarat Diocese’s 150 year Anniversary in 2024, the working committee for the Mass of the Oils are looking for 1 – 2 volunteers from each parish to attend the Mass of the Oils on Monday March 25, 2024 at 11.30am.  Volunteers would be required to present a symbol or photo that best represents their parish at the beginning of the Mass. A parish volunteer is also required to collect the Oils for their parish.  This can be the same person or a different person. More information will be provided about this from the Bishop’s Office.  Many parishes have multiple communities, so the symbol or photo can represent the whole parish or it can be something from the different communities.  The symbol/photo framed should be 5in x 7in (12cm x 17.5cm) or for the larger parishes who may need more room, up to 8in x 10in (20cm x 25cm) size framed.

**Significant Catholic Person from our Parish: As part of the Ballarat Diocese’s 150th year Anniversary in 2024, the anniversary committee for the Mass of the Oils are searching for 1 or 2 significant Catholics from each parish for a display to be presented after the Mass of the Oils on March 25, 2024. This could be a well-known person who has achieved success in their chosen field or it could be someone who has left a legacy in your parish, as a benefactor, contributor or historian. Please give any suggestions to Father, Faye, Cheryl or Marie.**

**Announcement regarding CDF Merger:** Bishop Paul Bird CSsR has made an announcement regarding themerger of our Ballarat Catholic Development Fund with the Melbourne-Sale-Bunbury Catholic Development Fund.  Details are available from the diocesan website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/new-era-for-cdf/>