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

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**Fourth Sunday of Advent Year B 24th December 2023**

Entrance Antiphon

Drop down dew from above, you heavens,

and let the clouds rain down the Just One;

let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

First Reading[2 Samuel 7:1-5. 8-12. 14. 16](file:////ritual/lectionary/LectionaryList|sm2%23sm2007)

A reading from the second book of Samuel

*The kingdom of David will be established for ever in the sight of the Lord.*

Once David had settled into his house and the Lord had given him rest from all the enemies surrounding him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, ‘Look, I am living in a house of cedar while the ark of God dwells in a tent’. Nathan said to the king, ‘Go and do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you.’

But that very night the word of the Lord came to Nathan:

‘Go and tell my servant David, “Thus the Lord speaks: Are you the man to build me a house to dwell in? I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel; I have been with you on all your expeditions; I have cut off all your enemies before you. I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall dwell in that place and never be disturbed again; nor shall the wicked continue to oppress them as they did, in the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel; I will give them rest from all their enemies. The Lord will make you great; the Lord will make you a House. And when your days are ended and you are laid to rest with your ancestors, I will preserve the offspring of your body after you and make his sovereignty secure. I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me and your throne be established for ever."'

Responsorial Psalm

R.) For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

1. I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord;

through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth.

Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever,

that your truth is firmly established as the heavens. (R.)

2. ‘I have made a covenant with my chosen one;

I have sworn to David my servant:

I will establish your dynasty for ever

and set up your throne through all ages.’ (R.)

3. He will say to me: ‘You are my father,

my God, the rock who saves me.’

I will keep my love for him always;

for him my covenant shall endure. (R.)

Second Reading [Romans 16:25-27](file:////ritual/lectionary/LectionaryList|rom%23rom016)

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

*The mystery kept secret for endless ages is now revealed.*

Glory to him who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery kept secret for endless ages, but now so clear that it must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things to be. He alone is wisdom; give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the servant of the Lord:

may his will for me be done.

Alleluia!

Gospel [Luke 1:26-38](file:////ritual/lectionary/LectionaryList|luk%23luk001)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

*You will conceive and bear a son.*

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. He went in and said to her, ‘Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.’ She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, ‘Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God’s favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.’ Mary said to the angel, ‘But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?’ ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you’ the angel answered ‘and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.’ ‘I am the handmaid of the Lord,’ said Mary ‘let what you have said be done to me.’ And the angel left her.

Communion Antiphon

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son. and his name will be called Emmanuel.

Reflection by Dr Scott Hahn

What is announced to Mary in today’s Gospel is the revelation of all that the prophets had spoken. It is, as Paul declares in today’s Epistle, the mystery kept secret since before the foundation of the world.

Mary is the virgin prophesied to bear a son of the house of David. And nearly every word the angel speaks to her today evokes and echoes the long history of salvation recorded in the Bible.

Mary is hailed as the “daughter Jerusalem,” called to rejoice that her king, the Lord God, has come into her midst as a mighty saviour.

The One whom Mary is to bear will be Son of “the Most High”—an ancient divine title first used to describe the God of the priest-king Melchizedek, who brought out bread and wine to bless Abraham at the dawn of salvation history.

He will fulfill the covenant God makes with His chosen one, David, in today’s First Reading. As we sing in today’s Psalm, He will reign forever as highest of the kings of the earth, and He will call God “my Father.” As Daniel saw the Most High grant everlasting dominion to the Son of Man, His kingdom will have no end.

He is to rule over the house of Jacob, the title God used in making His covenant (**Cont inside)**

***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**

**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**

***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:***

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

**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**

**Sunday 31st December**

**Welcomer: Gerald Leach**

**Reader: Carmel Vallance**

**Prayers of the Faithful: Margaret Collins**

**Offertory Procession: Val Latta & Kathy Loxton**

**Eucharistic Minister: Peter Shaddock**

**Projectionist: Marie Shaddock**

**Collections: 17th December**

**Ouyen $286.85**

**Planned Giving $100.00 December Church CleaningCheryl Anderson & Celia Reidy**

***Presbytery: Carmel Vallance***

**Mass Times*:***

**Ouyen each Sunday at 11am**

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

**Weekday Masses this wee*k* No Masses this week**

***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.**

***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 sensitive and appropriate formation of children in accordance with the traditional teachings of the faith of their families. We ask this through the intercession of Our Lady Help of Christians and St Mary of the Cross. Amen**

**A picture containing grass, sky, outdoor, sign

Description automatically generatedCont from the back:** with Israel at Sinai and again used in promising that all nations would worship the God of Jacob. Jesus has been made known, Paul says today, to bring all nations to the obedience of faith. We are called with Mary today to marvel at all that the Lord has done throughout the ages for our salvation. And we, too, must respond to this annunciation with humble obedience—that His will be done, that our lives be lived according to His word.

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

**Bishops Christmas Appeal:** **Our Christmas Appeal is one way by which the diocese can respond to the many communities from near and far who turn to us for assistance. Often these requests come through people who have personal links with the diocese of Ballarat. Last year $44,000 was raised in the Christmas Appeal, thanks to your generosity. A break up of how the money was used is in the Bishop’s letter on the tables at the back of the church. Donations can now also be made directly via the "Parish Giving" link at the bottom of the Diocesan website home page. Click on "Parish Giving", select your Parish, then from the drop down box, "My Giving is For," select "Bishop's Christmas Appeal." Our Parish will be taking up a special Collection after Communion over two Sundays -Christmas Day and the following Sunday (31st)**

**Christmas wishes from Fr Shaiju** *“Do not be afraid; for see-I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord”. (The Gospel of Luke: 2:10-11)*

*Yet another time of good news, the time of great Joy, the time of great Hope, Love and Peace. The joy is doubled when it is shared with others. Christmas is the season for each of us as humans to spread joy to others, amplifying the sweetness of this festive delight.*

*Wishing our community, a joyous Christmas filled with love and laughter. May the festive spirit bring warmth to your hearts and homes. As we bid farewell to this year, let’s welcome the new year 2024 with hope and positivity. Embrace the opportunities and cherish the moments ahead. Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year to all. Fr Shaiju*

**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**](https://aidtochurch.org/holyland)

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

**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.