

Reflection on the Gospel-4th Sunday of Advent Year C (Luke 1:39-44)

-Veronica Lawson RSM

The final Sunday of Advent draws us closer to the celebration of the Christmas mysteries. The gospel offers the story of the young pregnant woman, Miriam of Nazareth, travelling in haste from her home town of Nazareth to the hill country of Judea, some 130 kilometres to the south, to be with an older woman who is also pregnant, her cousin Elizabeth. Mary enters "the house of Zechariah" who remains silent and in the background throughout. While Zechariah is the householder according to Jewish law, his earlier reluctance to believe renders him silent and powerless to offer hospitality. Elizabeth's contrasting openness to recognise and affirm the living presence of God in their midst makes her the true householder and foreshadows the reversal that is to characterise the new order. The two women embrace and, in their loving embrace, the Spirit-filled life gestating within Mary encounters and physically affects the life that is coming to birth in Elizabeth.

Elizabeth's words resound throughout the ages in the prayer we know as the Hail Mary: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb..." These are the words of one woman prophet to another. Elizabeth recognises that Mary is blessed by God because she believed that God's promise to her would be fulfilled. As God's prophet, Elizabeth gives expression to the faith that is to be embraced by all those who accept that Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Miriam of Nazareth, is the Holy One of God (Luke 1:35). The lives of both women have been transformed through the power of God's Spirit. The birth of their children will bring to birth an unprecedented event in human history.

Elizabeth's proclamation of the blessing of God on Mary is found daily on the lips of countless faith-filled Christians across the globe. It echoes the blessing prayer of Moses to the Israelites (Deut 28: 2-4): "May you be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. Blessed is the fruit of your womb, the produce of your soil and the offspring of your livestock..." In our times, God's blessing on the whole Earth community can only become a reality when we stop playing politics in the interests of short-term gains or personal greed, when we read the signs of the times, and work together to address the underlying causes of global warming and its effects. Advent is not a time of passive waiting. It is a time to ponder the various ways that God sustains life in its diverse forms and to become householders, like Elizabeth, who clear the paths and open our doors for the God of life to enter in.

BULLETIN for FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR C



ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST

Including St Peter & Paul's, Buninyong

Parish Address: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East. 3350

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MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING MONDAY, 21st DECEMBER 2015

MONDAY:	No Mass
TUESDAY:	11.00 at Emmaus
WEDNESDAY:	11.00 at Emmaus
THURSDAY:	CHRISTMAS EVE:
	St. Alipius - 6.00 pm
	- 9.00 pm
	Ss Peter & Paul - 7.00 pm
FRIDAY:	CHRISTMAS DAY:
	St. Alipius - 9.00 am
SATURDAY:	No Sacrament of Reconciliation

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

ST. ALIPIUS	SAT	6.00 PM
	SUN	10.30 AM
BUNINYONG	SUN	9.00 AM

READINGS - The FEAST of the HOLY FAMILY, YEAR C

First:	Samuel 1:20-22.24-28
Second:	John 3-2.21-24
Gospel:	Luke 2:41-52

RECENT DEATHS: James Stanes, Patrick Ryan.

ANNIVERSARIES: William, Bridie, Bill and Brian Pearce, Marie Graham, Nola & Leo Clamp, Margaret Flanagan, Mary Hammer, John Taffe, Jane Taffe, Terry Howlett, John Curran, Bob MacDonald.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Nell McGettigan, Pamela Hayes, Anthony Conroy, Nathan Cambell, Karen Hayes, Denise Learmonth, Mary-Rose McLaren, Cath Wheelahan, Marinna Lenkic, Barbara Keirl, Mick Kent, Mary Barnett, Frank Forbes.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: .Team 3: M. O'Donnell ©, L. O'Donnell, F. Colasante.

Next Week: .Team 4: C. Tarquino ©, M. Tarquino.



COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$ 1,361.50
	Loose money:	\$ 300.00
	Direct debits:	\$ <u>735.00</u>
		\$ 2,396.50

PRESBYTERY: \$ 1,045.00

EVENTS

- Wednesdays **Rosary** in the Chapel of Visitation at St. John of God Hospital at 12.45 pm. All welcome.
- Wednesday afternoons **Legion of Mary** meets at Nazareth House, Mill St. Ballarat, at 1.30 pm. Enquiries: 5332 8624 or 5332 7227.
- **Legion of Mary Prayers:** Prayers of Petition to Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help, will be held at St. Patrick's Cathedral from 11.15 am - 11.45 am on 1st & 3rd Thursdays.

FREE E-BOOK FOR YOUR COMPUTER OR E-READER

(Son of God: The Daily Gospel Year C-2)

This e-book, which may be downloaded free of charge to a computer or e-reader (or tablet), offers the Gospel for everyday of this Liturgical Year C-2 (Sundays Year C, weekdays Year 2), together with a reflection of some 750 words on each daily Gospel. This Liturgical Year C-2 has now begun and will continue till November of 2016. The e-book contains the Gospel passages not only for this present but for any C-2 Liturgical Year in the future, together with their reflections. www.catholic-thoughts.info/ebook/

KIMBERLEY CATHOLIC VOLUNTEER SERVICE:

VOLUNTEERS WORKERS WANTED

The Diocese of Broome, WA, requires volunteers to assist with the work of the local Church on Aboriginal Missions. There are various important voluntary tasks - administration, building maintenance, gardening, shop staffing, cooking, cleaning, etc. Placements are preferred for a period of 6 months plus. For further details, and an application form, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Anneliese Rohr, ph. 08 9192 1060, email: volunteers@broomedioocese.org web: www.broomedioocese.org or mail: PO Box 76 Broome WA 6725.

CHRISTMAS MASSES

The following number of Ministers of the Eucharist will be required at the St. Alipius Christmas Eve Masses:

- 6.00 pm.....7
- 9.00 pm.....5

Please help out if you are available as there is no roster.

ADVENT REFLECTION GROUP

10.00 am Thursdays, in the meeting room of St Alipius Church.

COMMUNAL RITE OF PENANCE

Wednesday, 23rd December at 7.00 pm.

ST. VINCENT de PAUL CHRISTMAS APPEAL

We invite you to be part of our "Restore their hope this Christmas" appeal. Envelopes are available at the Piety Stall. All donations are used in the Ballarat area and donations of over \$2.00 are tax deductible.

COLUMBAN CALENDARS

Are available at the Piety Stall—\$9.00 each, or if multiple copies are purchased \$8.00 each. Christmas items also available including cards, packs of eight for \$3.00. They make great Christmas gifts.

MERCY WORKS

Has launched a campaign to raise funds to provide relief for the drought in PNG. The campaign is in direct response to a request from the Bishop of Daru-Kiunga who has requested funds to be able to supply fresh drinking water. People can donate by:

- The campaign is live on <https://chuffed.org/project/let-mercy-rain>
- Is on the Mercy Facebook page with a direct link to the crowd funding site
- Via the Mercy website - special donate button at www.mercyworks.org.au
- Paper campaign (see forms on notice board)

OLHC CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH

OLHC Christmas Day lunch will be held in OLHC Parish Hall, 482 Gillies St., Wendouree from 12.00 midday - 2.00 pm (meal at 12.30 pm). Transport provided. Bookings by 24th December (add any diets). Phone: 0419 975 914.

CORRECTION

It has been noted that the "Stewardship" giving, via envelopes, for 25th October was not recorded. We apologise for this oversight and advise that it has been corrected and will appear on your next statement.