

**Reflection on the Gospel: 2nd Sunday of Advent Year B
(Mark 1:1-8)**

-Veronica Lawson RSM

The first verse of Mark's gospel evokes the opening words of Genesis and thus situates the saving presence of Jesus in relation to the creation of earth and of all earth beings. The whole of Mark's story of Jesus is presented as a beginning. It is the beginning of a faith journey into which the listener/reader is invited. In some manuscripts of the Greek text, there are only five words in this verse, seven in other manuscripts, and twelve in our English translation. The term gospel (*euangelion*) means good news. It referred originally to the news of victory delivered by a messenger, usually in time of war. The good news in this context is about Jesus, a name meaning "Yahweh saves". The reader learns that this Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One of God, Israel's longed for Messiah. The actors within the story have to discover this truth as the drama unfolds. The two additional words present Jesus as "son of God", or as one having the characteristics of God.

John the Baptizer is identified as the messenger who proclaims the need to prepare the way for the arrival of a new Presence in our world. Mark creates the impression that something big is happening here. John draws massive crowds from city and country alike. They come to him in the wilderness, the home of the other-than-human, of diverse forms of life. At a metaphorical level, wilderness recalls Israel's experience in the Sinai desert. It is the place of testing and of new beginnings for God's people, the place of God's coming or God's "advent" to Israel. Jesus will be impelled by the Spirit into the wilderness where he will pass the tests that Israel failed.

This reading invites us to prepare for God's advent by ritualising *metanoia* (usually translated as "repentance"), and thus being ready for the one who comes. The translation "repentance" does not convey the nuances of the Greek term *metanoia* which literally means a "change of mind" and suggests an "expansion of horizons". God's advent demands a new mindset that will predispose us to receive the gift of God's forgiveness and be open to feel the pain of earth as well as the pain of those rendered poor.

Mark's depiction of John evokes the image of the prophet Elijah in 2 Kings 8 and the "hairy mantle" of the prophet in Zechariah 13:4. John is a prophet who, like the prophets of old, calls God's people to reconsider where they stand in relation to God. He is also the one who heralds the advent of the "stronger" one who will baptize "with the Holy Spirit". And yet there is nothing in the subsequent narrative about Jesus baptizing. As we reflect attentively on Mark's gospel this liturgical year, we might discover for ourselves the meaning of that reference.

BULLETIN FOR 2ND SUNDAY IN ADVENT, YR B



ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST

Including St Peter & Paul's, Buninyong

Parish Address: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East. 3350

Telephone: 5332 6611

Fax: 5332 3303

Email: ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

**MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING
MONDAY, 11th DECEMBER 2017**

MONDAY:	3.00 pm Funeral Mass at Ss Peter & Pauls
TUESDAY:	5.00 pm in Mercy Centre
WEDNESDAY:	11.00 am in Mercy Centre
THURSDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church
FRIDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

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

3rd SUNDAY IN ADVENT, YEAR B

READINGS	First: Isaiah 61:1-2.10-11
	Second: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
	Gospel: John 1:6-8.19-28

RECENT DEATH: Mona Shillito, John Griffin, Frank Dixon, Margaret Clifford, Sr M Genevieve Fitzpatrick RSM.

ANNIVERSARIES: Terry Towns.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Nathan Cambell, Denise Learmonth, Cath Wheelahan, Terry McGarry, Kevin Walsh, Peter Clohesy, Frank Nolan (Buninyong), Mary Barnett, Fiona Dickinson, Carmel Doherty, Pauline Murphy, Mary Martin, Maria Wilson.

COUNTING TEAMS:

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

Next Week: Team 5: J. Moran ©, B. Forbes.



COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$ 1,950.70
	Loose:	\$ 300.00
	Direct Debits:	\$ <u>1,255.00</u>
		\$ 3,505.70
PRESBYTERY:		\$ 712.00

ADVENT REFLECTION GROUP

On Thursdays, during Advent at 10.00 am in the Church meeting room.

COMMUNION IN THE PARISH

Will all who take Holy Communion to those in private homes please contact Jim on 5332 6611 with details.

A big *thank you* to all who have indicated their willingness to assist with this very important ministry to our nursing homes. You have not been forgotten and will be contacted soon.

GIVING TREE

Christmas is a joyous time when we celebrate the birth of Christ. Unfortunately, some people are living in very poor circumstances, so this is an opportunity to bring some joy at Christmas. The Giving Tree is at the back of the Church, and if you can help please take a card and place it on a gift to be returned around the tree as soon as possible but no later than Sunday, 17th December.

CHRISTMAS MASSES

If you are able to assist with any of the liturgies at our Christmas Masses at St Alipius (ie Readers, Ministers of the Eucharist or Offertory) will you please indicate on the sheet pinned on the notice board.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY CHRISTMAS APPEAL

We invite you to be part of our annual Christmas Appeal. Envelopes are available at the Piety Stall.

Donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible and are all used in the Ballarat area.

SVDP assistance to the whole of Ballarat for the 12 months to 6/12/17 was \$624,000. The number of calls responded to during this period was 7,700. The value of bread deliveries to the Ballarat East area was between \$30,000 and \$40,000.

FAREWELL FOR BRENDAN & JILLIAN MAHER

As you are all well aware our dear friends Brendan and Jillian Maher are taking up a new opportunity next year in South Gippsland.

We will have the opportunity to acknowledge and thank Brendan and Jillian for their commitment to our community at a Parish Mass at St Alipius this Sunday at 10.30 am. We invite everyone to join Brendan & Jillian for a cuppa in St Alipius Hall after Mass and ask that families bring a plate to share. Thank you!

Any queries please phone Tanya on 0427 418 155.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

We welcome Mr Michael Myers, Co-ordinator for Professional Standards in our Diocese, who will be speaking at Masses this weekend in the light of reports released by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

LOUD FENCE CLEAN UP DAY

Come along and help our community tidy our fence, and strengthen our recovery and message of “No More Silence”. BYO tools and gloves. BBQ provided.

When: 10th December 2017; 11.30 am to 2.00 pm.

Where: St Alipius, Victoria Street, Ballarat East.

RSVP and Queries: loudfenceballarateast@gmail.com

OLHC CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH

You are invited to join us on Christmas Day for lunch (no cost).

Time: 12.00 md—2.00 pm (meal at 12.30 pm)

Where: OLHC Parish Hall

482 Gillies Street North, Wendouree

Book early on 0419 975 914 as numbers are limited. Transport provided.

ST ALIPISU CHURCH CLEAN

A big thank you to all who assisted with the clean last Sunday. Unfortunately, not all were happy as you will see from Sally Spider’s comment on the notice board.

MERCY CONNECT BALLARAT -

Supporting Refugee and Asylum Seeker Students in Local Schools

Volunteer mentors needed

Mercy Works is currently recruiting volunteers to support refugee and asylum seeker students, in Ballarat Schools, through their Mercy Connect Project. The volunteer commitment is for approximately three hours per week for four school terms. Experience working in an educational setting is preferred, but you will receive ongoing training and support. Initial training for new volunteers will be held in February 2018. Contact Paulene Barton—Mercy Connect Project Coordinator on 0417 624 330 or email: mercyconnectb@gmail.com for information and application form.