

**Reflection on the Gospel: 3rd Sunday of Advent Year B
(John 1:6-8, 19-28)**

-Veronica Lawson RSM

Today's gospel reading falls into two sections. The first section comprises a statement from the prologue of John's gospel and the second revolves around a question that has already been answered in the prologue. In other words, the reader knows the answer to the question posed by the characters in the second section. The prologue presents John the baptizer as "a man sent from God". He is not "the light"; he is rather a "witness" whose role is to testify to "the light". The true light [Jesus] was "coming into the world". As we proclaim Jesus as "the light", we might take time to appreciate the wonder and the properties of the material reality that informs this metaphor.

In the face of less than friendly questioning, John the baptizer responds simply and honestly to questions about his identity. The questions are relentless and John's responses are unambiguous. He is not the Messiah, the Anointed of God. He is not the prophet Elijah that some identified with God's messenger of Malachi 3:1-3 who would return and restore the "descendants of Levi" He is not the prophet-like-Moses of Deuteronomy 15. He states his identity with reference to the words of the prophet Isaiah: he is the voice crying out in the wilderness, inviting God's people to prepare the way for God's advent, God's coming.

John knows who he is. He understands the parameters of his mission and he points his questioners in the direction of the truth. His role is a pivotal one in the story of God's saving action. His story is also pivotal in the unfolding of the drama of the fourth gospel. It is worth asking how we might answer the question that the priests and Levites put to John on behalf of the Jerusalem "Jews": "Who are you?" If we can honestly answer that question, if we can admit who we are with all our strengths and weaknesses, if we can know our place in the scheme of things and own it in all humility, then we are probably in a good position to recognise and, like John, witness to the "one who is coming", the light of the world, the revelation of God.

A caution is in order regarding this gospel reading: we must remember that not only the opponents of Jesus but most of the actors in the gospel drama, including Jesus, are Jewish. The group of characters specifically named in the narrative as "the Jews" includes some influential members of the Jewish religious leadership, but cannot be identified with them because it comprises a more extensive group who are consistently in conflict with Jesus. It would be a serious disservice to the gospel to condemn the Jewish people on the basis of this and similar stories of Jewish opposition to Jesus.

BULLETIN FOR 3RD SUNDAY IN ADVENT, YR B



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, 18th DECEMBER 2017**

MONDAY:	No Mass
TUESDAY:	12.00 noon St Alipius School End of Year Mass
WEDNESDAY:	9.30 am - St Francis Xavier School End of Year Mass
THURSDAY:	12.00 noon Emmaus School End of Year Mass
FRIDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

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

4th SUNDAY IN ADVENT, YEAR B

READINGS	First: 2 Samuel 7:1-5.8-12.14.16
	Second: Romans 16:25-27
	Gospel: Luke 1:26-38 11

CHRISTMAS MASSES

SUNDAY:	CHRISTMAS EVE	
	St Alipius	6.00 pm
		9.00 pm
	Ss Peter & Paul	7.00 pm
	CHRISTMAS DAY	
MONDAY:	St Alipius	9.00 am

ANNIVERSARIES: Anna Ridsdale.

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, Maria Wilson.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: Team 5: J. Moran ©, B. Forbes
Next Week: Team 6: M. Stewart ©, M. Anderson, R. Reynolds



COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH: Envelopes: \$ 1,294.75
Loose: \$ 300.00
Direct Debits: \$ 1,255.00
\$ 2,849.75

PRESBYTERY: \$ 1,502.00

ADVENT REFLECTION GROUP

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

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.

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

Christmas Eve: 6.00 pm....7
9.00 pm....5

Christmas Day: 9.00 am....3

Please help out if there is a shortage.

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.

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.

SVPD 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.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM BISHOP PAUL

Bishop Paul's Christmas Message is available to view on the diocesan website www.ballarat.catholic.org.au

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.

CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2017

Our Christmas Appeal is one way by which the diocese can respond to the many communities near and far who turn to us for assistance. The Bishop is aware of the many times we respond to appeals for many very worthy causes, but is hopeful that we can continue to support this particular appeal.

See notice board for the distribution of last year's appeal.

KARDIA FORMATION

Invites you to join us for a weekend Summit with Margaret Silf, 18-20 May 2018.

Imagining the Self in a Spiritually Expansive World and/or a four-day workshop

The Future is Within Us. 14-17 May 2018. For more information:

www.kardia.com.au

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.

STUDY TOUR OF THE BIBLICAL LANDS 2018

Information sessions will be held on 20th January, 2018 from 2.00 pm—4.00 pm.

Contact 9412 3314 or jenny.delahunt@ctc.edu.au

BALLARAT DIOCESE LAY MINISTRY PROGRAM— NOW OPEN FOR NEW PARTICIPANTS

Details at www.ballarat.catholic.org.au (link is on home page) or contact Amanda on 5337 7125 or amanda.smith@ballarat.catholic.org.au