

**Reflection on the Gospel-4th Sunday of Advent Year B
(Luke 1:26-38)**

-Veronica Lawson RSM

We are all familiar with Luke's story of the annunciation, a story that has inspired artists through the ages. God's messenger, Gabriel, approaches a young Galilean Jewish woman, Mary of Nazareth, and greets her as God's graced one. The angel's greeting to Mary is unique. No other person in the Christian scriptures is addressed as "favoured one" or "graced one". The Greek form *kecharitōmenē* contains within it the notion of grace, *charis* in Greek. It can also mean "mercied one".

Mary is troubled by the angel's greeting, succinct as it is. After being addressed as "favoured one", she has been told only that God is with her. She knows the traditions of her people. She knows that those said to be the graced or favoured of God (Noah and Moses and Gideon and Samuel) are called to be agents of God's saving action and to carry heavy responsibilities. Now a young woman is called to be God's agent. In a formula that forms part of angelic announcements of birth, the angel tells Mary not to be afraid and reassures her by stating explicitly that she has been graced by God. The angel then proceeds to announce the conception and birth of the child she is to name "Jesus". This child will reign forever. The prophecy of Nathan, recounted in today's first reading, is to be fulfilled in the conception and birth of Mary's son who is also, and especially, God's son in the line of David who in his turn was first of many "sons of God" called to rule with the justice and the wisdom of God. In the face of almost constant failure on the part of the kings, later prophets projected Israel's hope into the future and looked for one who would truly have the characteristics of God, who would truly be "son of God".

Mary's response to the angel, "How can this be...?" echoes the prayer of David that follows today's first reading: "Who am I...and who are we that you have brought us to this point?" (2 Sam 7:18). Mary learns that God's dwelling place is her own human flesh and that this extraordinary event will be accomplished through the grace of God and the power of God's Holy Spirit. Mary is also to learn that her cousin Elizabeth will conceive a child despite her age "for nothing will be impossible for God." The mysterious workings of God in our world invite the response of Mary: "How can this be...?" As we approach the celebration of the birth of Jesus, we might pause to wonder at the goodness of God at work in the lives of all who incarnate the grace and mercy of God in our world. Let us name them, and give thanks in the spirit of today's gospel.

BULLETIN FOR 4TH 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, 25th DECEMBER 2017**

MONDAY: See Christmas Masses (over)
TUESDAY: No Mass
WEDNESDAY: No Mass
THURSDAY: No Mass
FRIDAY: No Mass

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

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

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

READINGS First: Genesis 15:1-6,21:1-3
Second: Hebrews 11:8,11-12,17-19
Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

ANNIVERSARIES: Nancy Nugent, George Tung, Marie Graham, Nola & Leo Clamp, Margaret Flanagan, Mary Hammer, John Taffe, Jane Taffe, Terry Howlett, John Curran, Bob MacDonald.

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 6:** M. Stewart ©, M. Anderson, R. Reynolds.
Next Week: **Team 7:** K. Cummins©, J. O'Meara, B. Hood, G. Duck.

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$ 1,227.50
	Loose:	\$ 300.00
	Credit Cards:	\$ 3,477.00
	Direct Debits:	\$ 150.00
		\$ 5,154.50
PRESBYTERY:		\$ 813.00



CHRISTMAS MASSES

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

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....5

Please help out if there is a shortage.

BISHOP'S COLLECTION

The annual Bishop's Collection will be taken up at Christmas Masses after Holy Communion.

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.

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.

ST ALIPIUS LITURGY ROSTERS

Are available for collection near the Piety Stall this weekend.

SINCERE APPRECIATION

John O'Brien and family, and Nolene, Frank and family would like to thank the St Alipius community for their love and support through phone calls, visits, flowers, cards and food on the recent passing of our beloved Lyn. Special thanks to the doctors and staff of St John of God and the Base Hospital for their loving care of Lyn.

Thanks to Sr Joan, Fathers Peter and Adrian, Paula and staff of Peter Tobin Funerals.

To the members of St Cecilia Singers and everyone who contributed and attended the celebration of Lyn's life, including the St Alipius ladies who put on a lovely spread after Mass, our sincere thanks.

PARISH BEREAVEMENT TEAM

The Parish Bereavement Team has found that is has not been possible before Christmas, to visit each of the families saddened by the death of a loved one during this year. As you grieve, we join you in remembering the goodness that this loved one contributed to the life of the Parish, and we celebrate that they have come to the fullness of peace and joy with Christ, that they were created to enjoy. Our love & care will be with you as we pray and celebrate the Christmas Masses.

SUPPORT

Note from Fathers Ed Moloney and John Monaghan

Fr Albert Mligo: Several people, maybe many, have received emails from this Tanzania priest seeking donations in lieu of previous generous assistance given to Fr Albert and his Projects by the late Fr Paul Mercovich. As Fr Paul's executors, we advise that Fr Albert will receive substantial ongoing benefit from his Estate, and suggest help be instead directed to other overseas charitable causes, such as those helped by Bishop Paul Bird's Christmas Appeal, Caritas and Catholic Mission.