

**Reflection on the Gospel-1st Sunday of Advent Year A
(Matthew 24:37-44)**

Veronica Lawson RSM

“Where is the Life we have lost in living?” asks the Chorus in T. S. Eliot's *The Rock*. The Jesus of Matthew's gospel is implicitly asking the same question as Eliot's Chorus. He is making much the same observation as Henry David Thoreau, “Most [people] lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with the song still in them.” We are invited to find Life in our living and to sing the songs that are in us. We are to be agents of our own future rather than unthinking participants in the destruction of our planet. Right now, the human community is challenged in unprecedented ways to restore the life we have lost by living beyond our means and by destructively exploiting the riches of the Earth.

As we begin a new liturgical year, Matthew's Jesus invites us to contemplate the ultimate realities even as we attend to the demands of the present. He tells us to be “awake”, to be “ready” all the time, not because death or the end of the world are around the corner, but because we need to recognise the multiple “advents” or arrivals of the Christ, the Human One, who calls us beyond self-absorption to Life. He reminds us that we are no different from our forebears who from earliest days have gone about their daily business without being sufficiently attentive to what really matters.

In our times, we have allowed thieves to break in and plunder our planet, our common home, because thieves come in guises that we fail to recognise. They so often look just like us and do the things we do. It may be that we must first be attentive to our own ways of plundering the house that is home to all of God's creatures.

We spend much of our time looking back. That has its place, since our history informs our present and helps us in shaping our future, though all the while we know with Auden that ‘[t]he past is foreign country: they do things differently there’. Advent invites us to look forward rather than back and to dream gospel-inspired dreams that will enable creative change in our own lives and in the life of our planet. It invites us to be awake, to be ready for any eventuality.

Dreams and visions have always been the precursors to effective and life-giving change. We need the grace to see visions and to dream dreams that make for justice and peace and that permit us to walk more freely in the light of God's ways. We seek the grace to “see” God's word as did the prophet Isaiah in the first reading (Isa 2:1-5). We need to put our energy into creating life-generating systems that enable us to move forward in the paths of gospel compassion and love.

Matthew 24:37-44 For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Human One. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Human One. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your master is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Human One is coming at an unexpected hour.

**ST ALIPIUS PARISH — BALLARAT EAST & BUNINYONG
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT — YEAR A, SUNDAY 1ST DECEMBER, 2019**

*Our parish is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity
of all children and vulnerable adults.*

St Alipius' Parish Church
82 Victoria Street, BALLARAT EAST 3350

SS Peter & Paul's Church
701 Fiskens St, BUNINYONG

Contact Details

Parish Office: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East 3350

Hours: 9.30am - 1.30pm Tues, Thurs, Fri **SAP Liturgy email:** sapliturgy@gmail.com
Telephone: 5332 6611 **SAP Liturgy website:** www.sapliturgy.net.au
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Clergy and Staff

Priests: Frs Justin Driscoll, Jorge De Chavez OSJ, Vincent Pham Van Long CSsR
Visiting Priests: Frs Dan Arundell and Barry Ryan

Parish Coordinator: Lucy O'Beirne **Child Safety Officer:** Roxanne Leed
Finance Officer: Kerrie McTigue **Funeral Ministry:** Kathy Curran & Carmel Flynn

Masses This Week

Thursday, 5th December	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Church
	11.00 am	Mercy Place (Corbett St)
Friday, 6th December	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Church

Next Weekend's Masses

St Alipius' Church , Ballarat East	Saturday	7th December	6.00 pm
	Sunday	8th December	10.30 am
SS Peter & Paul's Church , Buninyong	Sunday	8th December	9.00 am

Second Sunday of Advent — Year A

Readings	First:	Isaiah	11:1-10
	Second:	Romans	15:4-9
	Gospel:	Matthew	3:1-12

Baptisms: Charlie Bird, Gracie Bird, Ella Swain

Recent Deaths: Peter Burns, Bernard O'Callaghan, Bill Tyrer, Gret Urch

Anniversaries: Elizabeth Clark, George Clark, Anne Veronica Duck, Peter Lamb, Fr. John Martin, Helen Watt, Kevin Woof

We pray for Kateri Byrne (Albury) and Peter Martin and all who are unwell

What's on for Advent that can help us prepare for Christmas?

Lead Kindly Light, Buninyong and Ballarat East Advent Reflection Opportunities. Week 2 on Thursday December 5th and following, 12th & 19th. 10.30 am at Ss Peter Paul Buninyong & in the evenings, 7.00 pm at St Alipius'. Fr Justin will lead the second gathering. All welcome.

An **Advent Retreat** will be held on Sunday December 15th, St Alipius' Hall, 2pm - 5pm Loreto Sisters Natalie Houlihan and Rachel McLoughlin will lead the retreat which will be an advent time of reflections, readings, music, images, silence and ending with Spiritual Conversation circles. All are welcome.

St Alipius' Advent Anointing Mass & afternoon tea

Wednesday 11th December at 2.00pm. Afternoon tea will follow in the St Alipius' Hall. A plate to help with the afternoon tea would be appreciated. Those needing transport please contact a member of the Caring Group or Lucy in the parish office.

Plenary Council 2020 — Discernment Gatherings this week

*How is God calling us to be a Christ-centred Church that is **Inclusive, Participatory and Synodal?*** Our next parish discernment gatherings will be held on Monday 2nd December 7.00pm - 9.00pm, and Tuesday 3rd December 1.00pm - 3.00pm. If you are open to participating in the discernment process please join us to help shape our future.

Thanks to Bernadette Tolan, John Clonan and Kristen Murray our facilitators for this theme.

Parish Pastoral Council

18 parishioners have been nominated & invited to consider membership of the Parish Pastoral Council. Rachel McLoughlin IBVM will facilitate a discernment evening for those who accept the invitation to participate on Monday December 16th 7pm - 9pm in St Alipius' Parish Hall.

Giving Tree

Gift tags, to attach to donated gifts, will be available for parishioners to take home next week! Thanks to Ruby Dean and Marg McCarty who will be coordinating this outreach.

Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve 6pm & 8pm St Alipius with Fr Jorge, 7pm at Buninyong with Fr Justin and on Christmas Day 9am at St Alipius' with Fr Barry Ryan. New Year's Day Mass at 9.30am.

Counting Teams

This Week: **Team 6:** K. Cummins ©, J. O'Meara, B. Hood, G. Duck
 Next Week: **Team 7:** B. McKeegan ©, M. Ridsdale, K. McKeegan

Parish: Envelopes: \$ 1024.00
 Loose: \$ 300.00
 Credit Card \$ 350.00
 Direct Debits: \$ 135.00
 \$ 1809.00

Presbytery: \$ 904.00

*Thank you to those who
 contributed to the
 collections last weekend*

Stewardship Renewal - Parish Groups, Ministries and Organisations

This week we look at parishioner responses received for interest in Mission and Outreach:

- 5 Anointing Mass
- 6 Bereavement Support
- 6 Caring Group
- 9 Communion to the Sick
- 3 Ecumenical/Interfaith Group
- 4 Home Visitation
- 10 Hospitality after Funerals
- 4 Outreach — Driving to Mass
- 4 Outreach — Making a Meal
- 3 Outreach — Mowing Lawn
- 2 Social Justice Group
- 5 St Vincent de Paul Society
- 7 Support for Refugees
- 2 Welcoming Group for New Parishioners

St Vincent de Paul Society Christmas Appeal

St Alipius' Conference is most grateful for the support they received from the parish as it enables them to continue assistance to those in need in the local area. This year, the theme of our appeal is, "**Help A Family Celebrate Christmas**" and they invite you to join them in their challenge to "*help families put food on the table this Christmas*". Envelopes are available at the Piety Stall. All donations are used in the Ballarat area and donations of over \$2.00 are tax deductible.

Making a Scene at Christmas

Making a Scene at Christmas nativity displays will be held at Ss Michael & John's Church Horsham from December 5-8 and Ss Peter & Paul's Church Buninyong from December 12-15. Thursdays and Fridays between 9.30am – 3.00pm we welcome school groups.

OLHC Parish Wendouree Christmas Day Lunch

OLHC Parish Wendouree are hosting lunch on Christmas Day in the Parish Hall, 482 Gillies Street, Wendouree from 12.00noon – 2.00pm. Transport is available. For bookings or further information ph. 0419 975914 or email christmaslunchwendouree@gmail.com.

Clergy Appointments

Bishop Paul has announced the following appointments to take effect in January: Fr Sajan Matthew will be Administrator of Bungaree Parish and Visiting Priest of Gordon Parish Fr Michael O'Toole will be Supervising Priest of Cororooke Parish (in addition to PP of Colac) Fr Peter Jose CMI will be the priest for the Robinvale Parish and Fr Jim McKay will work with Fr Eugene McKinnon in the East Wimmera Parish.

Carols during Advent

St Peter's Anglican Church, 1309 Sturt Street - a service of Lessons and Carols for Advent this Sunday, December 1st at 5pm. The service will feature all the old favourite Advent hymns alongside lessons. The service will be followed by light refreshments served in the West Transept of the church. All welcome.

Nazareth House Carols Sunday December 8th in the Chapel from 6.00pm, Nazareth House Hall. All children are invited to play a part in the Nativity scene. Parishioners welcome.

Christ Church Anglican Cathedral Lydiard St Sth Carol Service - 9 Lessons and Carols, Sunday December 22nd 7.00 pm