



Fourth Sunday of Advent B

St Thomas More Parish, Glenfield 20 December 2020

The WORD This Week

Here we enter a new stage of Advent: having spent so much time on the Second Coming, now we look back, to remember the details of the Lord's First Coming. Today we focus on the character of Mary, and hear of the angel Gabriel being sent to her, to invite her to take her part in the mystery of the Incarnation, the revelation of the mystery kept secret for endless ages. This mystery springs from the House of David, and so we lead into the Gospel by hearing of the establishing of that house. An interesting idea is that the first reading talks of David wishing to build a house for the Lord; through the prophet he is told not of the house that he would build, but the House which is his line: eventually, in Mary (betrothed to Joseph) the House of David does itself become the house of the Lord, the womb wherein he has a dwelling place.

A Prayer for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

God of Angels,
you spoke your word to Mary
and hoped she would receive you.
As you call us, help us to hear you
and welcome you
into the most unlikely moments
that they might be places of grace.
Help us to give ourselves over to you,
so this Christmas season is one
where your will may be done
in and through us. Amen

ADVENT SPIRITUALITY

The Joy of Liberation

The focus of today's liturgy is the Davidic covenant, the promise of a throne that will last forever. It appears in the First Reading, in the Responsorial Psalm, and in the Gospel, where the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that "the Lord God will give (her son) the throne of David his father." Jesus is to transform that covenant, revealing "the mystery hidden for many ages." The throne in this new kingdom is to be occupied by "the Son of the Most High ... the Son of God." Indeed, he is "Emmanuel," God-with-us. We are very close now to the coming of Christ. What would the world be like if we were to allow Christ to really come as king? What would a world ruled by Jesus Christ be like? Would we have the poverty and homelessness that we have now? Would we have the death penalty? Would there be abortion and child abuse and negligence of the elderly? Would Jesus Christ allow the people of his kingdom to kill each other in wars? If only we could join in consenting to God's rule as Mary did: "Let it be done to me as you say." Who knows what joy the world would know!

Gerald Darring liturgy.slu.edu

QuoteMeal

St. Ephrem (306-373) Father & Doctor of the Church

"And so when God's birth is proclaimed to you, keep silent. Let Gabriel's word be held in your mind for nothing is impossible to this glorious Majesty, who humbled Himself for us and was born of our humanity."

The Witness of Mary and Joseph

As we enter into the fourth week of Advent, we are given our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph to reflect upon. Though our Blessed Mother was perfect, and St. Joseph was a deeply virtuous man, they were both still fully human and would have walked through Mary's pregnancy and Jesus' birth with every human emotion and experience. St. Joseph was faced with an extraordinary mystery as he discovered his wife was pregnant. He knew her to be a woman of exceptional virtue and holiness and had to reconcile that with her surprising pregnancy. Even after the angel appeared to him in a dream he would have had questions arise in his mind as he faced this situation. Our Blessed Mother was also invited by God to face her pregnancy in faith. Her response was perfect, "Let it be done to me according to your word." She could not explain nor understand what was happening but, nonetheless, she knew deep in her soul that God was in charge leading all to His glory. Both Mary and Joseph are wonderful models of faith and obedience. They were obedient to the will of God despite the fact that the will of God drew them into an incredible and unfathomable mystery. They were first-hand witnesses to the salvation of the world and to the greatest act ever known. And they both embraced this mystery and accepted it in faith. Reflect, today, upon your own invitations from God to embrace the mysteries of life. God's ways are often more than we can comprehend and figure out. Mary and Joseph give us the witness of how we are to handle every mystery God invites us to participate in. Say yes to the will of God just as this holy couple did. mycatholic.life



Christmas & New Year's Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve, Thursday 24 December 2020

6:55 pm - Children's Nativity Play
7:30 pm - Family Christmas Mass

11:30 pm - Candlelight Carol Service
12:00 am - Midnight Christmas Mass

Christmas Day, Friday 25 December 2020

8:45 am - Christmas Carols
9:00 am - Christmas Day Mass
11:00 am - Chaldean Christmas Mass

New Year's Eve, Thursday 31 December 2020

7:30 pm - New Year's Eve Mass

New Year's Day, Friday 1 January 2021

9:15am & 7.30pm - Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God



Mass with Anointing

2 January 2021 Saturday 9.15am.



**Fourth
Sunday of Advent
THE WORD OF GOD**

Sunday

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12,
14, 16
Romans 16: 25-27
Luke 1:26-38

Monday

Song 2:8-14 or
Zephaniah 3:14-18
Luke 1:39-45

Tuesday

1 Samuel 1:24-28
Luke 1:46-56

Wednesday

Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24
Luke 1:57-66

Thursday

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16
Luke 1:67-79

Friday - Christmas Day

Isaiah 52:7-10
Hebrews 1:1-6
John 1:1-18

Saturday

Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59
Matthew 10:17-22

St Stephen, the first martyr



**Christmas
Novena Masses**

16 - 24
December 2020
6:00 am



Midnight Mass: Tuesday 22 December at 7.30 pm in the church. Our last practice. All singers and classical/orchestral instrumentalists are welcome.

Family Vigil Mass: Monday 21 December at 7.30pm in the church. All singers and musicians, please join us in the church for the fourth of four practices.

Heading North this summer?

A reminder and encouragement to visit the places of important Catholic history in our diocese, particular Motuti, where Bishop Pompallier remains are interred in St Mary's Church, and Tōtara Point, where the first official Mass was celebrated on 13 January 1838. All are invited to **Mass at Tōtara Point Sunday, 10 January 2021 at 11am** to commemorate the first Mass in Aotearoa. The map on the poster describes the route. *See poster in foyer.*



Thank you for your generous donations to the Giving tree requests.

Last Saturday a happy band of parishioners, sorted, boxed and decorated twenty-six Christmas food hampers and sorted 17 family Christmas gift boxes. **Thank you all.**



Adoration will resume on Thursday 11 February 2021. There will be no evening Masses/adoration/novenas during January 2021



St Vincent de Paul Christmas Cards
\$2 pack/3 packs for \$5

2021 Columban calendars \$12

Daily Mass Calendars \$3.50
all available from Parish office

A refreshed diocesan website same address <https://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/> is live. Bishop Pat invites you to explore it. You will also find a message from him and Bishop Michael regarding the Mission Map on the site as well as a wealth of information & resources.

The latest issue
in your church, Sunday Dec. 13

All Welcome to a cuppa after 10am mass hosted by the Iraqi community. This will be the last cuppa for 2020 until they resume **7 February 2021**



Confirmation & Eucharist 2021
Registration forms are in the foyer.

Please pray for our sick parishioners and their families
Peter Marshall, Cathy Sigley, Tamar Mathews, Israel Nathan, Eloise McFadden, Troy Angelo Madrigal and Mary Anne Clark
Contact Parish office for any name changes.

Baptism Preparation Courses will start again in **February 2021**

PRAY CHRISTMAS MASS
Christmas Day @ 1.50pm SHINE TV
Free-to-air TV Channel 25
SKY TV Channel 201

Christmas Day Mass Shine TV – Shine will broadcast Christmas Day Mass starting at **1.50pm**. Shine is on Free-to-air Channel 25 and Sky TV Channel 201. Mass comes from the Cathedral of St Patrick and St Joseph and the presider is Bishop Michael Gielen. Join in the singing beautifully led by the Cathedral Choir and Vocal ensemble. Or it can be watched from <https://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/our-events/mass/> Mass will be broadcast at 2pm the next Sunday the Feast of the Holy Family and that will conclude this current provision of broadcast Mass.

The Parish office will be closed from 24 December 2020 and will reopen **Tuesday 19 January 2021**

Social Justice Retreat
Social Justice Retreat 9am-4pm Saturday 6 March 2021 at St Francis Retreat Centre 50 Hillsborough Rd led by Fr Merv Duffy SM. It will focus on some Social Justice aspects of Mark's Gospel and *Fratelli Tutti*. \$20 including lunch. Places are limited so please contact Peter Garrick peterg@cda.org.nz asap if you are interested in attending.

May this Christmas season fill your home with joy, your hearts with love and your life with laughter.

Merry Christmas

The annual parish report from St Thomas More parish is now available in the foyer. Please take one copy per family.