



## Second Sunday of Advent B

St Thomas More Parish, Glenfield 6 December 2020

### The WORD This Week

Throughout the first three weeks of Advent our focus is very clearly on the Second Coming of the Lord - not so much on the run up to Christmas until the last week. If we view Advent as a preparation for Christmas these readings will make little sense - and neither will the figure of John the Baptist who appears today: if it's about the preparation for Christmas, then John the Baptist, preaching after Jesus was born, is a confusing figure: but his role is to preach to us, as he did of old, and to prepare us for the second coming of the Lord. Today we have a very graphic reference to the end of time and the Second Coming in the reading from Saint Peter; it is a frightening picture, and so the first reading offers tender words of comfort to help us understand who is coming, and why we should be ready to meet him.

### A Prayer for the Second Sunday of Advent

Jesus, you came among us  
with the irresistible power of a baby,  
requiring both our hands  
and captivating our whole hearts.

Help us to cast aside the sin  
and brokenness that we cling to,  
so we might be ready to hold you  
When you come again.

Amen

### ADVENT SPIRITUALITY The Things That Hinder Us

We are getting closer and closer to the "day of the Lord," a term which the authors of the Christian Scriptures carried over from the Hebrew Scriptures. The author of the Second Letter of Peter describes it this way: "What we await are new heavens and a new earth where, according to his promise, the justice of God will reside." It is the day of God's salvation when "Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and justice shall look down from heaven." We await the day of the Lord, but it is to be an active waiting. John the Baptist echoes the prophet's message: "In the desert prepare the way of the Lord!" "Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!" The reading from Peter speaks of our "looking for the coming of the day of God" and of our "trying to hasten it!" We stand, as it were, in a desert, an empty wasteland of broken lives and discarded people. The challenge of Advent is to clear a straight path for God: to end injustices, to stop wars and the preparations for wars, to put discrimination behind us, or in the words of the opening prayer, to "remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy." The promise of Advent is that "the Lord will come to save all nations." shower his gifts, and our land will yield its fruit."

Gerald Darring /liturgy.slu.edu

### QuoteMeal Saint Francis Xavier

"I will go anywhere and do anything in order to communicate the love of Jesus who do not know him or have forgotten him."

## Becoming St John the Baptist...

### Accepting the Call to Prepare the Way for Jesus

Advent can take us way beyond preparing for Christmas. It certainly does prepare us to be open to the gifts that come with this season. It is a season of hope and expectation. We encounter what happens when we taste our longing and can say, "Come, Lord, Jesus" at a deeper and more personal level. However, Advent can also draw us into the mystery of being not only "preparing" but to become one who is called to prepare the way for Jesus, in our world, for others.

### Looking at John the Baptist

John the Baptist is given to Elizabeth and Zachariah, and to us, as a Hebrew testament prophet. He comes in order to be a precursor. He is the one who steps right out of the message of the Prophet Isaiah to prepare a way for our God to save us - in the midst of the wilderness, the wasteland - wherever there is hopelessness. His message is that the mountains aren't too high, the valleys aren't too severe for our God to come and save us - to be with us. He comes to make it clear that he himself is not the promised one. He is only to announce and prepare his way. He calls for repentance and offers forgiveness. He comes with power to speak the truth to those who would be threatened by the good news. And, John pays a prophet's price for his discipleship.

### Becoming John the Baptist

Advent is a time for us to hear the call - ultimately which comes from Jesus - to prepare his way. We are sent before him to the non-geographical places where the good news of Jesus hasn't been heard or where it is no longer accepted... Our role in preparing the way for Jesus is to announce, to witness, to show how full of joy and how free we are by the personal relationship we have with Jesus.

### Becoming John the Baptist, we point to Jesus

Like John, we don't call attention to ourselves. We point the way to Jesus. We say, "Look, there he is." "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" When we point the way to Jesus, who is mercy, we become ambassadors of his mercy. One of the most effective ways we can do this is to let ourselves not only be filled with the good news, personally, but to let ourselves fall in love with Jesus - to fall in love with his story, his example, his way of being, his trust in the Father, his parables, his healing presence. Everything about Jesus becomes more and more attractive to us. We come to him and learn from him. Our very being "proclaims the greatness of our God."

### The Cost of this Discipleship

As we live the life of Jesus in our world, we will experience immediately how counter-cultural it is. It is very difficult to be non-judgmental and compassionate in a very harsh world, in a sometimes very severe community. Living the life of Jesus, speaking truth to those who sustain injustice, will cost us. If we actively engage in dismantling unjust social structures, it will cost us dearly. Sometimes, even being kind and compassionate will cost us. Speaking about mercy and acting with forgiveness, building bridges, rather than walls, will too often place us at odds with others. John gave his life, becoming a martyr who inspires us today. He died in the consolation of Jesus' assurance that he was blessed in his trust in Jesus and his way. John had prepared the way, and pointed others to Jesus, where they found healing and good news.

### Asking for the Grace

During Advent, we can ask for the grace to become a John the Baptist, in whatever way the Lord wants to use us to open a door for him today. The opportunities will come. We can simply ask to be opened to see them - to recognize them - and to be given the courage and the trust to be an instrument of grace for others.

We can give that special content to the prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus, Come." [onlineministries.creighton.edu](http://onlineministries.creighton.edu)

# MISSION MAP

Mata kaupapa Mihana



## Second Sunday of Advent

### THE WORD OF GOD

#### Sunday

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11  
2 Peter 3:8-14  
Mark 1:1-8

#### Monday

Isaiah 35:1-10  
Luke 5:17-26

**St Ambrose, bishop, doctor**

#### Tuesday

Genesis 3:9-15, 20  
Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12  
Luke 1:26-38

**The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

#### Wednesday

Isaiah 40:25-31  
Matthew 11:28-30

#### Thursday

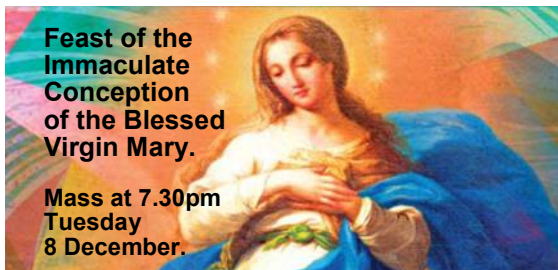
Isaiah 41:13-20  
Matthew 11:11-15

#### Friday

Isaiah 48:17-19  
Matthew 11:16-19

#### Saturday

Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11  
Matthew 17:10-13



## Advent Reconciliation

SUNDAY	6 Dec	Devonport	6pm
TUESDAY	8 Dec	Orewa	7pm
WEDNESDAY	9 Dec	Northcote	7pm
THURSDAY	10 Dec	Takapuna	7pm
FRIDAY	11 Dec	Mairangi Bay	7pm
THURSDAY	17 Dec	Glenfield	7pm
FRIDAY	18 Dec	Beach Haven	7pm



**Midnight Mass: Tuesday 15 December** at 7.30 pm in the church. The fourth of five practices. All singers and classical/orchestral instrumentalists are welcome.

**Family Vigil Mass: Monday 7 December** at 7.30pm in the church. All singers and musicians, please join us in the church for the second of four practices.

## CHRISTMAS SENIORS

Next meeting  
**10am Tuesday 15 December 2020**  
in St Thomas More parish hall  
Time for some Christmas celebrations!



**ALL WELCOME.**



## Titipounamu Study & Joy

More information & registration:  
[info@studyjoy.nz](mailto:info@studyjoy.nz) or [www.studyjoy.nz/events](http://www.studyjoy.nz/events)  
**Online Session (Evening): Christmas "Self Care Nibbles"** with Clare Barnett. Tuesday, 15 December, 7.15-8.45pm. Fee: \$30. ZOOM  
**Online Session (Retreat Day): Who am I? - Reflecting on our Identity in God** with Eamon Butler. Saturday, 30 January, 10.30am-4pm. Fee: \$60, ZOOM

# THE GIVING TREE

**The Giving Tree is displayed in the church.**  
Return the gift items, unwrapped, with the ornament attached and place them under the tree. **Please return all gifts/food items/money donations by TODAY** or to parish office during the week

**MIHA MĀORI AT HĀTO PETERA CHAPEL**  
Miha Māori (Mass in Te Reo Māori) will once again be celebrated in the Hāto Petera Chapel, 103 College Road, Northcote. The Miha will be celebrated on Sunday 13 December 2020, at 9.30am. All welcome. More info call Manuel Beazley, Vicar for Māori on (09) 360 3058.

Last Thursday Adoration will be **10 December 2020** and will resume on **Thursday 10 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 after mass or Parish office

**The latest issue**  
in your church, Sunday Nov. 29

All welcome to a cuppa after 8am Mass today

All Welcome to a cuppa after **10am mass** hosted by **South African community**



## Confirmation & Eucharist 2021

Registration forms are in the church foyer.

**Please pray for our sick parishioners and their families**

Peter Marshall, Cathy Sigley  
Tamar Mathews,  
Israel Nathan, Tom Cotter,  
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**

**CDA Connect** monthly newsletter concerning happenings in the diocese.  
<https://mailchi.mp/cda/cda-connect-issue-5827470>

## ENCOUNTER Youth Group

Saturday 12 December at 7.30pm.

Young adults (18+) and the youth (year 11-13) are warmly welcome to attend. A talk by Father Alfredo on "Spirituality in Advent" followed by Worship/Adoration. Later on, we will head to the hall for a bite to eat and to socialise.

## Christmas Vigil play

If any children of school age would like to participate in the Christmas Vigil play, the first practice will be after the 10am Mass on **Sunday 13 December**. Contact Vasi Jones for more information 021 135 5710 or email: [vasi.jones@gmail.com](mailto:vasi.jones@gmail.com)

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.

## PLEDGE ENVELOPES

We haven't printed envelopes this year as we missed so many Sunday collections due to Covid-19. However if you need more envelopes please contact Mary in the parish office and she will post you out some extras until our next printing in 2021. Ph: 444 8624 or email: [st.thomas.more@xtra.co.nz](mailto:st.thomas.more@xtra.co.nz)

**NZpray2day** - An app to encourage people to seek a moment to reflect, pray and respond to the ancient Christian cycle of seasons, saints and readings. Available from Apple's App Store or the Google Play Store; search for NZpray2day. It is free a gift for you from Te Kupenga - the Catholic Leadership Institute.