

Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ Cycle C

Sunday 19 December 2021



Readings for
this week:

Micah 5:1-4
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-44



Readings for
next Sunday

1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28
1 John 3:1-2, 21-24
Luke 2:41-52



Liturgical Jottings

Advent Prefaces

The Roman Missal has two Advent Prefaces, the first written in 1968 covers the first Sunday of Advent to 16 December. The text retells the story of salvation around the two comings (*adventus*) of Christ. The first coming of Christ in humility and his second coming in glory. The second preface for 17-24 December takes up the Gospel texts where Blessed Virgin Mary and John the Baptist have prominent roles, like the prophets of old, in announcing the imminent birth and coming of Christ.



Focus on the Readings

We have a rich selection of readings this Sunday before Christmas. It is the only time the Prophet Micah is read on a Sunday and its a passage in praise of Bethlehem, his own birthplace and the foretelling of the birthplace of the Lord. This passage is also the first reading for the feast of the birth of Mary. Our own place of birth may have a personal significance, no matter if it is well known or not. We identify not only genealogically but also geographically with our origins.

The Letter to the Hebrews presents a succinct message of the meaning of Christ's presence in the world and salvation history. It has a note of humility. Christ comes to obey the will of the Father. Christmas may also impress on us a feeling of humility to think that Christ humbled himself for us.

The encounter with Mary and Elizabeth in the Gospel is a sharing of excitement, praise and thanksgiving. We are told Elizabeth is elderly, Mary very young but they have the expectancy of birth of their children that brings them together. Mary presents us with a hymn of praise (verses 46-56), the "Magnificat" which will be read on Wednesday. But it is a prayer we may say every evening. Geographically and chronologically we are distant but spiritually we are very close to Mary, the mother of our saviour. We truly give praise and thanks to God

The Magnificat ~ Canticle of Mary

The canticle (Luke 1:46-56) is both a fulfilment and a solemn new beginning. It is presented as a song of thanksgiving in a form much like the psalms of thanksgiving. It contains phrases from psalms 9, 34, 35, 89, 98, 99, 102, 103, 105, 111, 113 and 149. It emerges from the depths of the Hebrew Scriptures from the Songs of Miriam and Hannah. Miriam on the occasion of crossing the Red Sea in the Exodus (15:21) and Hannah on the occasion of the long awaited birth of Samuel (1 Sam 2:1-8). Mary is the first to be full of faith, her song then expresses the faith of the primitive Christian community: a new Exodus in the path of her Son, Jesus. This canticle forms the Gospel on 22 December, the Feasts of the Assumption, Visitation and Mary Help of Christians and is the response to the first reading seven times during the year.

On the lighter side

What's the difference between an in-tune saxophone section of a Pops Band and Santa Clause? One is a figment of your imagination and the other delivers toys at Christmas.



	Those who are recently deceased and those who are grieving	Uliana Mercuri (1 month)
	For those whose anniversary occurs at this time	Gordon Warner, Lucia Villani
	Our sick and their carers	

Our Church is once again open to everyone to come to Mass

It was such wonderful news we received on Wednesday 15th December that we no longer have to restrict who can attend Mass based on vaccination status. Just in time for our Christmas Celebrations, we can now welcome everyone to our Mass services. This year we will be having three services as well as Carols. Please come along and bring all your family and friends.

God bless and take care
Fr John

HELPERS FOR CHRISTMAS MASS

We need volunteers for our Mass services over Christmas. Especially for our two Mass Services on Christmas Morning.

If you could do any of the following please put your name down on the Roster in the Narthex.
Commentator, Readers, Special Ministers, Gospel Procession and Gift Presentation – please put your name on the list in the Narthex.



CHRISTMAS MASS TIMETABLE 2018

Christmas Eve

Friday 24th December Carols 6:00pm
Friday 24th December Mass 6:30pm

Christmas Day

Saturday 25th December Mass 8:30am
Saturday 25th December Mass 10:00am

PLEASE NOTE THERE ARE NO RESTRICTIONS FOR ANY OF THESE MASSES –

ALL ARE WELCOME

Two Week Mass Timetable Week commencing 20 December

Weekday Mass

Mon 20th Dec No Mass
Tue 21st Dec No Mass
Wed 22nd Dec 9:15 am Mass
Thur 23rd Dec No Mass
Fri 24th Dec No Mass
6:00 pm Carols
6:30 pm Christmas Mass

Weekend Mass

Sat 25th Dec 8:30 am Christmas Mass
Sat 25th Dec 10:00 am Christmas Mass
Sun 26th Dec 10:00 am Mass

Weekday Mass

Mon 27th Dec No Mass
Tue 28th Dec No Mass
Wed 29th Dec No Mass
Thur 30th Dec No Mass
Fri 31st Dec No Mass

Weekend Mass

Sat 1st Jan No Mass
Sun 2nd Jan 10:00 am Mass (Cuppa after Mass)

Reconciliation (1st Saturday of the Month)
No Reconciliation in January

Plenary Council First Assembly Document Released.

The 'first fruits' document from the First Assembly of the Fifth Australian Plenary Council, convened in October 2021 is now available for all to read online or download: Look for "First Assembly Proposals from Small Groups and Individual Members" in

<https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/keydocuments/>

OR direct access at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_d7hhnmr8Bzf1XvG4Urjv8MBRv3eit1i/view

Message from the Bishop Shane Re Easing of Covid Restrictions

Dear Monsignors, Fathers and staff members,

Yesterday, the Minister for Health announced that most of the COVID restrictions applying to churches will be lifted from today. While there are still significant concerns about the new 'omicron variant', the extremely high vaccination rate in Victoria allows the following changes to be made in churches:

- All restrictions on attendance numbers have been lifted, regardless of vaccination status
- Face masks are not required

The Minister for Health has also reported mounting international evidence that coronavirus is an airborne or droplet-borne disease and the likelihood of becoming infected by touching a surface is very low risk. Consequently:

- Stringent cleaning requirements are no longer required
- Objects such as collection baskets can be passed between people
- Offertory processions and the sign of peace can resume

The following requirements remain in place:

- Recording of contact details, including a door marshal to assist with check-in
- Church workers must be vaccinated (including clergy, but not including those who perform particular liturgical or one-off roles). A religious worker who is not vaccinated may only conduct three specific types of religious work outside their home: conducting public worship, celebrating marriages and funerals, pastoral care at the end of life.

At this stage, it is still prudent to observe the following limitations:

- Availability of hand sanitiser
- Communion distributed only on the hand
- Communion not distributed from the chalice
- No holy water stoups

These announcements are very welcome, and will permit a joyful celebration of Christmas Masses, including all parishioners without exception. At the same time, we need to be attentive to the very understandable concerns of those who wish to avoid placing themselves at risk by having contact with others who may be unvaccinated. We have a duty of care for all those who attend liturgies and other events, which means that we need to take all available and reasonable precautions to provide an environment that is safe and respectful.

I am grateful for your patience throughout these months, and I wish you and your communities every blessing as you prepare for the celebrations of Christmas.

Yours sincerely,
Bishop Shane Mackinlay

Enrolment to the Guild of St Stephen

On Sunday 2nd January, Bishop Shane will be here to celebrate Mass and Enrol Ryerson De Lai into the Guild of St Stephen.

The Guild of St Stephen is an international organisation of altar servers founded in England in 1904 by Father Hamilton McDonald when he formed a Society of Altar Servers at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in London.

After Mass, we will be having a cuppa in St Mary's Hall – so please bring a plate to share.

Finance Committee & Parish Pastoral Council

Next year we will be seeking nominations for both the Finance Committee and Parish Pastoral Council.

Over the coming weeks, please consider helping our Parish of the Sacred Heart on one of these committees.

Synod Of Bishops 2023 – Building On The Work Of The Australian Plenary Council

In March 2020, Pope Francis announced that the next Synod of Bishops in October 2023 would be "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission" – a church in which we are 'walking together.' In the coming months, the processes of the Australian Plenary Council and the international Synod of Bishops will overlap and intertwine in many ways.

Australia's contribution to the Synod will build upon the work of our Plenary Council. To find out more or to make your own contribution at any time go to:
<https://www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch>

Happy and Safe Holidays

We wish all our students, teachers, staff and families and very happy school holiday periods. Our grade 6 students will be heading off to high school in 2022 and we wish them all the best in their new school. If you are travelling, or just at home please stay safe.