

The Parish of Our Lady of the Valleys
3rd Sunday in Advent 2017
17th December 2017



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THE DEEP END

Light and Darkness

Last week we were introduced to John the Baptist as part of our Advent journey. We hear his story again today, and in this account, from the fourth gospel, we hear John's voice and his testimony about Jesus. Light and darkness is a key theme of the fourth gospel and its opening verses proclaims that this light has always shone in the dark; the darkness cannot overpower it. The evangelist goes on to tell us that John the Baptist's mission is that he has been sent by God to 'speak for the light'. John is a light-bearer, he is not the light, but he points to the light. He is a witness to the light of God in our world, a light that cannot be put out.

We celebrate this light today on Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete means 'rejoice'; we light the pink candle and we celebrate with joy. It might be a good opportunity to ask today: 'who have been the light-bearers on your own faith journey'? Who testified to the Light of God and passed the torch on to you? We thank God for them.

Lord there is much darkness in society and in our church ... We become cynical and settle for mediocrity. We thank you that someone always comes on the scene, sent by you as a witness to speak for the light ... teachers, community leaders, grandparents, children, a friend ... they bear witness to the rest of us that somewhere in the dark a light shines that darkness cannot overcome. Michel de Verteuil

Jane Mellett

We have a new email address which is: office@olov.org.nz and a new website which is: www.olv.org.nz. Please visit the new website and let us have your feedback. Please change old email address as this will soon be no longer available.



Calling all Angels and Shepherds of all ages, please dress appropriately for the occasion, to gather at the Christmas Eve, 5.30pm, Mass at Our Lady of Grace and join Father on the Altar.

Meetings in the Parish

17th December – Reconciliation at St Joseph's at 4pm

19th December – St Brendan's School - End of Year Mass at 10.45am

20th December – Healing Mass at OLG at 11.00

21st December – Healing Mass at Stokeswood, Stokes Valley at 1.30pm

24th December – Christmas Eve at OLG at 5.30pm Carol Singing from 5pm

24th December – Midnight Mass at SFX – Carol Singing from 11.30pm

25th December – Christmas Morning Mass at 8.30am at SFX

25th December – Christmas Morning Mass at 10.30am at OLG



End of Year School Mass Details Change - Could you please note the change to the time of St Brendan's School End of Year Mass from 11:30 am to 10:45 am on Tuesday 19th December. Thank you

Sacramental Preparation Programme 2018 - Enrolments for the 2018 Sacramental Preparation Program are now open for those candidates who would like to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Eucharist. Enrolment forms are available in the foyer of both churches. Though enrolments close on 9th February 2018 please endeavour to enrol before the 18th December as this allows time over the January period to undertake preparation work. The Programme starts on 18th February and the Reconciliation portion happens over Lent. Any enquiries please contact Fr Tony or Louise Peirce the Sacramental Programme Co-ordinator.



Sacrament of Anointing

Mass with Anointing Wednesday 20th December at 11am - Please come and join us in the Pettit Centre next to Our Lady of Grace Church for this Mass, followed by a shared lunch this Wednesday. Extra helping hands are always welcome and transport can be provided please contact Patricia on 972 8043. There will be no Mass at 9am at Heretaunga on Wednesday the 20th December as this is replaced by the Anointing Mass at 11am.



Mass of Anointing in Stokes Valley Thursday 21st December at 1-30pm at "Stokeswood" Rotary Lounge, Glen Road, Stokes Valley. Afternoon tea will follow Mass. If anyone needs transport please ring Gordon or Linda Holmes on 9382750.

Food for Faith - Through his website www.foodforfaith.org.nz Fr John O'Connor of Christchurch is offering an opportunity for Advent reflection. Every day in December those who sign up will receive a short reflection by email. Visit the website and look for the purple sign-up box.



El Pozon Mission Appeal. In accordance with information previously published, the Comedor at El Pozon has now closed. The sisters are looking after the Parish over the Christmas period, and will then move to Peru. A number of parishioners have donated anonymously for some time, and, for their benefit, a copy of the final letter from the sisters is posted in the foyer of both churches. Arrangements are in hand for the disposition of the remaining funds which have been built up with a view of a continuing application. Thank you, and the joy and blessings of the Christmas Season. Tony Packer, Jim Stott.

At the time of writing this, **David Seymour's 'End of Life Choice' bill** is about to have its first reading and vote in parliament (Wednesday 13 December). The bill seeks to legalise euthanasia and assisted suicide in New Zealand for those over 18 years with a terminal illness or an irremediable condition. At the time this notice is in your parish newsletter, the result will be known.

If the majority of MPs voted 'no', the bill will have been defeated and will not progress any further. If the majority of MPs voted 'yes', then the bill will go to Select Committee where the public can submit their views on it. This Select Committee process will be specifically about Seymour's bill.

The Health Select Committee conducted an inquiry last year about the issues of euthanasia and assisted suicide, releasing their report in August 2017. With over 21,000 unique submissions, 80% of those were opposed to the legalisation of euthanasia and assisted suicide.

Legalising euthanasia or assisted suicide would endanger the lives and wellbeing of people who are vulnerable, including those suffering from mental health issues, our elders, and the disabled.

Regardless of the outcome of Wednesday's vote, this issue is important and will continue to be a topic of public debate.

More information and resources on this issue will be provided in January. You can also check out www.nathaniel.org.nz/euthanasia.

Community Carols at Silverstream Park - Carols will be led by the Hutt Valley Singers and St Mary's Anglican Church at Silverstream Park on Sunday 17th December at 6pm BYO picnic and join in the singing

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Jordan - planned for 29th April – 19th May 2018. For full brochure and itinerary, contact Pukekohe Travel Phone: 09 237 0013 or toll free: 0800 785 386. Email: tours@pukekohetravel.co.nz.



2018 Columban Art Calendars – These are now available from Parish Office or Margaret at SFX -\$12.00 a calendar.

Message from Fr Rick Loughnan – Diocesan Administrator - It is with great joy that I can announce that Pope Francis has appointed Father Paul Martin SM as the tenth Bishop of the Diocese of Christchurch. Let us join together as a Diocesan family to pray for Bishop-Elect Paul. The Bishop's ordination will take place early in 2018 at a date yet to be decided by Bishop Elect Paul. Let us remember with fondness Bishop Barry Jones as we rejoice in the appointment of a new Bishop for our diocese. **Check out the latest NZ Catholic – “New Bishop for Christchurch”, on sale now.**

Christmas Cards are available at St Francis Xavier church after Mass on Saturday and Sunday's. A new supply of Christmas Cards have arrived but unfortunately the price has raised up to \$4.50 per pack of 8 Cards. Similar designs as last year. Please leave money in the box or give it to Margaret Lanigan. All proceeds go to the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Please remember in prayer, all who are sick and unwell and those who are lonely and worried. We pray also for those who have died recently (James Worthington – son of Gaye Worthington, Cha-Huk-Um, Norma Harris and Valerie Hodson) that they may rest in peace and those whose anniversary (Maria Tuifoa) occur around this time.



Weekly Collection: \$1,271.20

Our Lady of Grace Church 5 Palmer Crescent, Heretaunga

Mass Times Sunday –10:30am

Samoan Community - Mass 3rd Sunday – Church 12 noon

Weekdays Wed, Sat 9:00am Mass, Fri 9:30 am

Reconciliation – Please ring for an appointment

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament Friday (during school terms) 10.00 am – 6pm

St Francis Xavier Church 152 Stokes Valley Road, Stokes Valley

Mass Times Weekends 5.30pm Vigil (Saturday) and 8.30am (Sunday)

Samoan Community - Mass 4th Sunday – Church 11.30am

Weekdays – Tues, Thurs, 9.30am Mass – Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat 9.30am Liturgy of the Word

Reconciliation - Please ring for an appointment

Pastoral Council Chairperson John Benvenuti 563 8775

St Vincent de Paul – Heretaunga Terry 528 6313

Petone Shop 568 6408

St Vincent de Paul – Stokes Valley Gordon 938 2750

Stokes Valley Shop 563 9278

Sunday Readings		Sunday Readings	
17 th December – 3 rd Sunday in Advent		24 th December – 4 th Sunday in Advent	
First Reading	Isaiah 61: 1-2, 10-11	First Reading	Samuel 7: 1-5, 8-12, 14, 16
Second Reading	1Thessalonians 5:16-24	Second Reading	Romans 16: 25-27
Gospel	John 1:6-8, 19-28	Gospel	Luke 1:26-38

Next week the 24th December will be the last newsletter for 2017. The office will closed from the 22nd December until 8th January 2018. The phone messages will be checked on a regular basis so please ring and leave a message if you need a priest for whatever reason and I will get back to you as soon as I possibly can. Season Greetings to you all - Marilyn