

***Our Lady of the Valleys Parish
Third Sunday of Advent Year A
22nd December 2019***



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In two days time it will be Christmas Day once more. We mark the entry of Jesus Christ into human history as a small baby born in Bethlehem. We have journeyed with Jesus Christ through the various seasons of his life, and of ours, - making his ministry, his Passion, Death and Rising. He has been with us as we have marked the birth of new Christians in the waters of Baptism, the growth of others through the various Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation, First Holy Communion, as we have healed and strengthened one another in the Sacrament of Anointing, and consecrated the love of two people in the Sacrament of Marriage. Jesus Christ has been with us too as we have said farewell to his friends whom he has called through the gates of death to life eternal.

In all these moments Jesus Christ has been with us as an unseen friend and companion. He has been with us too in the social occasions we have shared together and the hours spent working for the mission of Jesus Christ in the variety of meetings and discussions that have taken place. Some meetings have inspired us and some have challenged us. We have spent time reflecting on a way forward for our Parish family as we looked at the provision of churches and presbyteries in our Parish. We have laughed and shared good times, (for example the Parish Picnic in February – which also marked my 60th birthday), we have raised fun and funds at the various activities organised during the year. These are all times when we have made Emmanuel (God-with-is) real in our lives.

For these times I am grateful for the large number of people who work to keep our Parish family alive, vibrant and responsive to the myriad of calls on the resources we have. I believe the best resource we have is indeed you, the people who make up the members of Our Lady of the Valleys Parish family. Thank you to all who have responded in any way to enrich our lives in Heretaunga/Stokes Valley.

My prayer and blessing for you all at this Christmas time as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ is that you may also experience the joy, the peace, the grace and the love of God brought to birth in our lives today.
God bless you all and his richest blessings for 2020.

Father Tony

IN THE PARISH			
Sun 22 nd Dec	4:00 pm	Rite II Recon Service at St Joseph's U Hutt	COMING UP
CHRISTMAS MASS TIMETABLE 2019			
Tues 24 th Dec	5:30 pm	Family Mass at Our Lady of Grace HTG (preceded by Carols from 5:00 pm)	
	12:00 pm	Midnight Mass at St Francis Xavier STV (preceded by Carols from 11:30 pm)	
Wed 25 th Dec	8:30 am	Morning Mass at St Francis Xavier STV	
	10:30 am	Morning Mass at Our Lady of Grace HTG	

THE DEEP END

Joseph the dreamer



Pope Francis has spoken on several occasions about his devotion to St Joseph. St Joseph is his favourite saint, he says, because he shows us how God reveals his plan to us in our times of silence and rest. He keeps a statue of a sleeping St Joseph on his desk, placing prayer requests under it.

Speaking on a trip to the Philippines in 2015, he said: 'I have a great love for Saint Joseph, because he is a man of silence and strength...Joseph's rest revealed God's will to him. In this moment of rest in the Lord, as we pause from our many daily obligations and activities, God is also speaking to us. But like St Joseph, once we have heard God's voice, we must rise from our slumber; we must get up and act.

Today's Gospel recalls the central role played by St Joseph in the story of the birth of Jesus. A man of honour from the outset, the goodness of his character is further highlighted by his response to God's voice. When he wakes up after hearing God's instructions in a dream, he immediately acts on it and takes Mary into his home. His openness to God's will is a crucial element in the story that follows: his partnership with and support of Mary, the birth of Jesus, his care for the child 'who is to save his people'.

Christmas is very near now, and we are busy and preoccupied with our preparations. A good time, perhaps, to pause in silence, to rest with God, and to listen to what he might have to say to us.

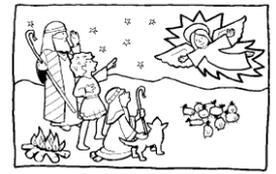
Triona Doherty
trionad@gmail.com

Weekly Collection: \$ 1,361.90



COLUMBAN CALENDARS FOR 2020 – Just **two** are available at the Parish Office for \$12 each please hurry and secure a copy for yourself or a loved one.

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.



ST VINCENT DE PAUL



The SVDP Society thank all the generous people who donated Christmas presents and cash for our needy families in the Valleys. Special thanks to the children of St. Brendan's school who so beautifully decorated boxes filled with presents for the less fortunate children. The society by your generosity were able to give 130 children gifts and 30 families food parcels for Christmas. A big thank you to all the generous people who donated food during the year. May GOD bless you all and have a HAPPY CHRISTMAS and a great 2020.

ECOLOGY, JUSTICE AND PEACE

Advent is a time of grace. It tells us that it is not enough to believe in God: it is necessary to purify our faith every day. It is a matter of preparing ourselves to welcome not a fairy-tale character, but the God who challenges us, involves us and before whom a choice is imposed. The Child who lies in the manger has the face of our brothers and sisters most in need, of the poor who are a privileged part of this mystery; often they are the first to recognize God's presence in our midst.

Pope Francis: [Angelus 15 December 2019](#)

NOVEMBER MASS COUNT

The numbers listed below are an average of the counts undertaken in the Parish over the five Sundays of November:

5:30 pm (Vigil) – Stokes Valley	77
8:30 am (Sunday) – Stokes Valley	113
10:30 am (Sunday) - Heretaunga	154
10:30 am (Sunday) – Home of Compassion)	65
11:30 am (4 th Sunday) – Stokes Valley	76
7:00 pm (Sunday) – St Patrick's College	49
TOTAL AVERAGE FOR THE MONTH	534



SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME 2020 - Enrolments for the 2020



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 and the School. The Programme starts on February 23rd and the

Reconciliation portion happens over Lent. Any enquiries please contact Fr Tony or Louise Peirce the Sacramental Programme Co-ordinator.

NZ CATHOLIC



The Dec.15 – Jan. 25 issue is out now. Some headlines are: \$126m Catholic precinct in Christchurch. Legal action looms over school funding. Moving abortion story at March for Life. Tongan Catholics clean up close to home. The next issue of NZ Catholic will be published on January 26.

CARDINAL'S CARE APPEAL

Started last week and envelopes will be available for individual donations in both churches. A video promoting this appeal is available for viewing/download at

<https://wetransfer.com/downloads/a1542a579c786c7aa1663e4974447ba220191126031439/284a4001cd868235ea1e1c5931fac36f20191126031439/3cdd47>



PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER all who are sick and unwell and those who are lonely and worried. We pray also for those souls in purgatory and who have died recently including, Sister Mary Patricia Kraus, Verdon Macartney, Greg Quinn, and Antonia Delorenzo. We also pray for those whose anniversary occurs at this time. May they rest in peace.

Our Lady of Grace Church 5 Palmer Crescent, Heretaunga

Mass Times Sunday-10:30am
Weekdays Wed, Sat 9:00 am Mass, Fri 9:30 am Mass
Reconciliation – Please ring for an appointment
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament Friday (during school terms) 10.00am –6:00pm

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 – 11:30 am
Weekdays– Tues, Thurs, 9:30am Mass – Wed, Sat 9:30 am Liturgy of the Word

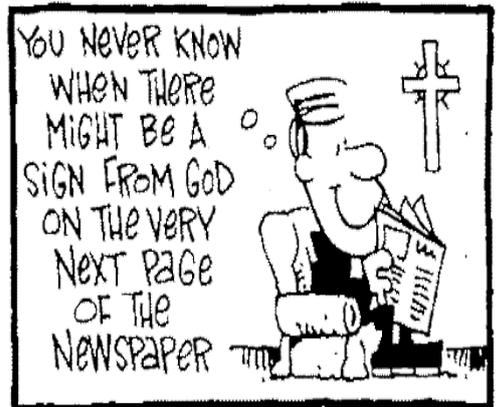
Reconciliation Please ring for an appointment

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	
15 th December – Third Sunday of Advent		22nd December – Fourth Sunday of Advent	
First Reading	Isaiah 35:1-6, 10	First Reading	Isaiah 7:10-14
Second Reading	James 5: 7-10	Second Reading	Romans 1: 1-7
Gospel	Matthew 11:2-11	Gospel	Matthew 1: 18-24



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