



CHRISTMASTIME

OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

- Recently deceased:**
 Terry Mortlock, Peg Scully,
 Edward Johnson, Phillip Gleeson,
 Jack Moulds, Josie Nixon.
- Anniversaries:**
 Lorraine Toni, August Meyer,
 Dorothy Hodges.
- Remembrances:**
 Robert and Catherine Davis,
 James and Elizabeth Carr,
 Church and McDonnell Family.
- And the sick:**
 Darcy Green, Mary Drinan,
 Margaret Davin, Helen Taylor,
 Patricia Dwyer, Laura Krauss,
 Mick Nino, Nellie Brown,
 Janet Dean, Kevin Houghton,
 Donna Vella, Bobby Sutherland,
 Dianne Briemer, Grace Wellins,
 Courtney Wellins, Betty Fraser,
 Audrey Kirkman, Malina Tugaga,
 Maria Wise, Elizabeth Skinner,
 Victor Gauci, Marta Panczyna,
 Beryl Reynolds, Terry Wilkinson,
 Rene Glaze, Pamela Power,
 Helen Tilkins,
 Teresita and Jorge Villansanti.

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The Magi and Pilgrimage

The Christian tradition of pilgrimage is strong. The Magi are among the first to go to Jerusalem and Bethlehem, to seek the Christ Child. Since then, over the centuries, Christians have travelled long distances to visit Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Rome, Compostella, Walsingham, Canterbury, Mari-azell, Altötting, Kevelaer, Skellig Michael, Loreto, Chartres, Mont Saint Michel, Montserrat, Lourdes, Fatima, and the many, many other places associated with Christ, his Mother and his saints. Pilgrimage is in our blood; it symbolises and celebrates our status as those who journey through this life to our place with God for all eternity.

A Christian *is* a pilgrim (see Hebrews 11:13). In Part II of his *Pilgrim's Progress* (1684), John Bunyan inserted his famous hymn, which begins:

Who would true valour see,
 Let him come hither;
 One here will constant be,
 Come wind, come weather.
 There's no discouragement
 Shall make him once relent
 His first avowed intent,
 To be a pilgrim.

Many Christians (especially if they start out from Australia) have, like the Magi, to travel a long way when they go on pilgrimage, but there are shorter and more frequent ways, and I would like to suggest one such way to you now.

Our church is designed for the pilgrim. The same material is under our feet from the moment we enter the pedestrian gate and (whenever we join it from the parking lot) continues through the main doors and narthex to the doors into the nave. It is under the fixed pews, the altar, the ambo and the presider's chair. It is a path we trace whenever we come to participate in Mass and other sacraments and rites, and whenever we leave to take up again our daily duties. Our coming to church is as it were a stop on the pilgrimage of faith, when we are nourished and motivated to persevere on our journey. Our coming together, our hearing and responding to God's word, our nourishment by Christ's Body and Blood - all these give us the ability and courage to persevere in what we began at Baptism.

In a very poignant way, that is driven home at funerals. These are the only occasions when the doors are opened to the left of the presider. The faithful departed, who has many times entered and left the church by the route I have just described, now, having come to the end of his journey, is taken through these doors directly to the hearse waiting outside.

So when you next come to church, think of yourself as a pilgrim. It is nice to go Jerusalem, but you really have Jerusalem here at Woy Woy.

FR JOHN HILL.

Psalm Response

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Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! We have seen his star in the East, and have come to adore the Lord. *Alleluia!*



Around the Parish

Readers and Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:

We are in need of Readers and Ministers of Holy Communion. Do you feel you would like to join one of these Ministries? Call the Parish Office 4341 1073 or Dorothy Fulton 4341 7610,

Receiving Holy Communion in our Parish:

We welcome our visitors and ask all to respect the local practice of receiving the Lord's Body and Blood: the Body of Christ is received on the hand or the tongue and the Blood of Christ is received by drinking from the cup. We kindly ask you to refrain from dipping the host if this is your parish's custom.

Readers and Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion Rosters (January to April) are now available for collection.

Volunteer Church Cleaning Roster 12/1/18: Linda Potestas, Michael French, Pam Hickey, Rano Spiteri.

Ministry of the Sick: Please ring the Parish office if you know of a

member of your family, a friend or a parishioner who wishes to receive the Sacrament of the Sick, Reconciliation or the Blessed Eucharist at home.

If some one is being admitted to hospital, please notify the Parish Office for a priest to visit as due to Hospital Privacy Policy, the clergy are not automatically notified.

Scripture Classes

As we are nearing the start of another school year there is still an urgent need for CLASSROOM HELPERS. You don't need to prepare the lessons, but by assisting the teacher the children will have a greater opportunity to understand Jesus' message. Former catechists, grandparents, retirees - you need not attend every week, but your help will be of enormous value. Please call the Coordinator anytime.

Susie Simmons 0411 566 622

Sympathy: St. John the Baptist Parish family would like to extend its prayerful sympathy to the family, relatives and friends of Peg Scully, Edward Johnson, Phil Gleeson and Jack Moulds, who

are being buried from our church. May they experience the fullness of Christ's peace.

Cash Housie

Come along, try your luck and enjoy the friendly atmosphere at our own Cash Housie/Cash Bingo night: Peninsula Community Centre, 93 McMasters Rd. Woy Woy. Every Saturday night. Games 7.30pm-10.20pm. Selling commences 6.30pm/ Hall opens 5.30pm.

Games: 50 games, 3 books of tickets; Book 1-20 games, Bk 2-20 games. Jackpot Bk 10 games.

Charity: This is the original fundraiser since 1960's in Ettalong and continues to raise essential funds for the Parish.

Transport: Busways bus stop right outside the door.

Extras: Kiosk and bingo pen & dabber shop available. Tea and coffee is free, help yourself in the kitchen. Dinner (Chinese take-away) can be ordered at the venue.

Email: wwwcphousie@hotmail.com for further details or enquiries or phone Rob on 0427 990 818.

Social Justice

Hungry for Change:

Nearly half of the deaths of children under five, worldwide are due to hunger. So how do we stop this shameful global issue?

Can we defeat world hunger?

Two factors stand in the way of attaining the Sustainable Development Goal of ending world hunger by 2030. Unicef reports that only five of the 22 leading countries have fully met their pledge of funds. Also, conflicts and famine in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and Nigeria make hitting that date difficult.

What can we do? If hunger

was an illness - a disease that killed more children than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined, as it does - perhaps we would treat it with more urgency. But hunger isn't an incurable disease. We know the cure. Huge strides have already been made in reducing levels of malnutrition, proving that eradicating hunger is achievable. For us, the cure starts with our will, our commitment and our wallets.

Help End Hunger: We often feel powerless in the face of a huge challenge, like ending hunger, but every little thing you do can help.

1) Waste less and donate the

money you save, no matter how little that is.

2) Donate to an organisation that offers a sustainable, long-term solution, e.g. Caritas Australia, the international aid and development agency of the Catholic Church, works in Partnership with local communities in over 30 countries globally to end poverty, promote justice and uphold dignity. www.caritas.org.au/ or calling 1800 024 413.

3) Make a noise. Email your local representative and tell them that Australia has to do more in living up to its responsibilities to those need help.

From the Diocese and beyond

Catholic Returning Home 2018:

We may have in our congregation today a Catholic who feels separated from the Church, who may like to know more about the Catholic Church as it is today; or, who may like to feel at home once more in the Catholic Church.

No matter how long one has been away, or for whatever reason, everyone is most welcome to be here. If you are interested, we invite you to renew your relationship with the Church through Catholics Re-

turning Home Programme which will commence at St. Patrick's Parish, East Gosford on February 12.

To view the flyer with programme details please log on to St. Patrick's website: www.gosford.dbb.org.au or call the office on 4325 1042.

St. Joseph's Spirituality and Education Centre, Kincumber South:

Group visits to Museum and Walk: Would you like to visit our museum and walk the grounds? The following op-

tions are available for Groups (min 10-15): Morning tea and Museum/Walk. \$20. or Lunch with Tea or coffee and Museum Walk \$35.00.

Please contact the centre for prices and details.

Our museum is supported by voluntary staff and group bookings by appointment only.

8 Humphreys Rd. Kincumber Sth. Ph: 02 4368 2805. Email: bookings@stjosephsretreat.org.au <http://www.stjosephskincumber.org.au/>

Scripture Readings

Bruce Janiga

Epiphany of the Lord, Sunday, January 8

Is 60:1–6
Ps 72:1–2, 7–8, 10–11, 12–13
Eph 3:2–3, 5–6
Mt 2:1–12

Today's reading from Isaiah is an obvious fit with the Gospel reading. The magi in Matthew (v 2) represent the nations of the world coming to greet the "newborn king of the Jews." It is easy to understand how early Christians could see that visitation as a fulfilment of the text in Isaiah; our prophet envisioned a time when Sion would rejoice, for "the glory of the Lord shines upon you" (v 1). The gifts of "gold and frankincense" carried from Sheba (v 6) are two of the three offerings presented by the magi in the Gospel. For Matthew and his church, God's promises, fulfilled for Jerusalem centuries earlier, are being fulfilled once again in Jesus.

In Ephesians we hear of the mystery, "made known to me by revelation" (v 3), concerning God's gift of salvation offered to the gentiles. Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, encourages his audience to persevere in their faith. God has called them to also share in the promises made to Abraham. They are "coheirs ... / and co-partners in the promise in Christ Jesus" (v 6).

There is a marked contrast between King Herod and the magi in today's Gospel. In order to assist the magi, Herod, king of the Jews, consults "all the chief priests and the scribes" to discover the place "where the Christ was to be born" (v 4). The Hebrew Scriptures point to "Bethlehem of Judea" (v 5). Following this information and the star, the magi arrive at "the place where the child was" (v 9). They respond with joy when they discover the child, and they present him with gifts fit for a king. Herod, on the other hand, who needs no star to lead him to the Messiah, is "greatly troubled" (v 3) by the news of Jesus' birth and seeks to have him eliminated. His response to the birth of Jesus reminds us that even the Prince of Peace is sometimes greeted with violence.

For reflection: Do I strive to walk in God's light? Do I, like the magi, sometimes see God's presence in the world around me?

Baptism of the Lord, Monday, January 9

Is 42:1–4, 6–7
Ps 28:1–4, 9–10
Acts 10:34–38
Mt 3:13–17

The text from Isaiah speaks of God's "servant" and "chosen one with whom I am pleased" (v 1). This servant will faithfully "bring forth justice" (v 3), a term used three times in today's passage. Writing near the end of the Babylonian exile, our prophet envisions a time of renewal for the people. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines justice as "the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbour" (1807); one who acts justly works to bring about God's will. The exiles hoped for one who would come and restore their nation. This hope is eventually incorporated into their expectation for a Messiah, an anointed servant of God who would establish God's rule on earth. For us as Christians, this hope is realised in Jesus, God's chosen one.

For the evangelist Matthew, Jesus is the fulfilment of God's promises made to Israel. This is made clear in his infancy narratives, where he references Old Testament prophecies fulfilled by Jesus five times in two chapters. In today's scene the words spoken by the heavenly voice (v 17) are related to the text from Isaiah 42:1. As God's servant, Jesus comes "to fulfil all righteousness" (v 15). His baptism serves as the first event of his public ministry, and the heavenly voice confirms his identity as God's "beloved Son" (v 17).

The scene in Acts takes place in the house of Cornelius, a Roman centurion. He is the first gentile to be baptised, along with his household. This is a significant turning point for the church in that it illustrates that the gospel is intended for people "in every nation" (v 35), not just the Jews. Peter speaks of Jesus' baptism as an anointing "with the Holy Spirit and power"; as God's anointed one, Jesus "went about doing good / and healing all those oppressed by the devil" (v 38). This is a sign of God's realm unfolding in our world. United with Christ in baptism, we too are called to do God's work.

For reflection: How am I living my baptismal call to do God's will? What can I do to promote justice in my local community?

Bruce Janiga, a priest of the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J., teaches Scripture studies at Seton Hall Prep in West Orange, N.J. From *Ministry & Liturgy*, copyright © Resource Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission under licence number 115216.



Today we remember the three wise men from the East who came to pay homage to the infant Jesus, bringing Him rich gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The gifts we bring — our time, service, and some share of what we earn for the work we do — are equally precious in His sight.



Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula

Woy Woy, Woy Woy South, Umina, Umina Beach, Ettalong, Ettalong Beach, Koolewong, Blackwall, Booker Bay, Pearl Beach, St Hubert's Island, Empire Bay, Horsfield Bay, Patonga, Woy Woy Bay, Daley's Point, Phegan's Bay and Wondabyne.

St John the Baptist Church,

(Corner) Blackwall & Victoria Rds, Woy Woy
Parish Office Ethel Cox Parish Centre
PO Box 264 Walter Baker Hall
54 Victoria Road 100 Blackwall Rd
WOY WOY NSW 2256 Woy Woy
Phone: (02) 4341 1073 **Fax: (02) 4341 0214**

Email: parish@woywoycatholic.org.au

Website: www.woywoycatholic.org.au

“He must increase, I must decrease”

Administrator: Fr. Timothy Raj. MSFS.

Assistant Priests: Fr. Philip Thottam. MSFS.

Office Staff: Helen Cameron,
Raelene Spithill.

Office Hours:
9.30am—4pm, Monday to Friday.

Deadline for The Voice:
Midday Wednesday.

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Vigil Saturday 5pm; Sunday 7.30am, 9.15am, 6pm.

WEEKDAY MASS TIMES

Monday-Friday 7.45am (Monday & Tuesday with Lauds); Saturday and Public Holidays 9am; First Friday 4pm (with Anointing of the Sick).

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Friday after morning Mass; First Friday, 3.30 p.m.; Saturday 11.30am; & 4.30pm; Sunday 7.00 a.m.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

1st & 3rd Sundays, 11am; 5th Sunday, during 9.15 a.m. Mass. Godparents are examples of faith to the child. They must be confirmed and practising Catholics, at least sixteen years old. If there is at least one godparent, a non-Catholic may act as a Christian witness. Parents and godparents must attend a pre-baptismal instruction, held on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month at 9.30 a.m.

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Every Saturday after 9am Mass until 10am; every Monday until 9am (Public Holidays 10.15am).

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Every Thursday night 7.30pm-8.30pm for the needs of the Parish.

PARISH CHOIR—Practice Wednesday nights in the church, 7 p.m. Enquiries: 4341 3367.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL,

21a Dulkara Rd South Woy Woy 2256. p 024341 0884 f 0243 445049.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST YOUTH GROUP For information and events contact Parish Office 4341 1073.

CATHOLIC CARE Counselling and Family Relationships 4356 26000

MARY MAC'S PLACE Volunteers provide nutritious, freshly cooked meals and information and referrals to appropriate community services. Open Monday to Friday, 11am-1pm, at the Ethel Cox Parish Centre. For more information, please contact Christine on 4341 0584.

CASH HOUSIE every Saturday night at Peninsula Community Centre, Cnr Ocean Beach Rd & McMasters Rd, Woy Woy. Games start at 7.30 p.m. and finish 10.20 p.m., cash prizes. Ticket sales from 6.00 p.m. Proceeds benefit Parish. Enquiries Rob: 0427 990818.



Diocese of
Broken Bay

Tithing

Paul Turner

Tithing is a sign of your gratitude for what God has done for you. The practice guides the way that many believers contribute to their own places of worship. The word “tithe” means “tenth,” and it comes from an Old Testament practice of returning to God one-tenth of what a person receives. For example, Leviticus 27:30 and 32 say that a tenth of all crops and farm animals belongs to the Lord. And not just any tenth — the first tenth, the first fruits. These go back to God.

After all, God made everything. God owns everything. The things we “own” are not really ours. They are God’s. God has placed them in our hands, making us stewards of them. We take care of them while we are alive, and we put them to the use that we believe God has in mind.

Some houses of worship recommend a full 10 percent for their support. Others suggest 5 percent, so that you can share another 5 percent with other charities.

Many people struggle to meet these goals. They have trouble paying their own bills. Others can contribute more than 10 percent, and perhaps they owe it to the community to give back a little more.

Planning your gift is usually a good idea. Those who set a personal goal have a sharper aim. If your parish asks you to make a pledge, this is a good way to set that goal. It will also help the parish to make its plans and to be better stewards of the gifts you make.

Giving a small gift is better than giving no gift. Those who tithe generally report a sense of spiritual satisfaction. They give out of love, and they feel that they are being good stewards of the gifts that God has entrusted to them.

This bulletin insert originally appeared in *Ministry & Liturgy* magazine, a pastoral planning resource used by the worship leaders in your community as an aid for better liturgy. Copyright © 2013 Resource Publications, Inc., 5369 Camden Ave., #260, San Jose, CA 95124, (408) 286-8505. Paul Turner is pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Kansas City, Missouri. A priest of the diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, he holds a doctorate in sacred theology from Sant' Anselmo in Rome.