

CELEBRATING THE COURAGE TO RECEIVE THE GIFTS OF JESUS

Fourth Sunday of Advent – 18 December 2022



WE LIGHT THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

As we light the 4th Advent Candle, we celebrate that Christmas is one week away. Christmas is a time for celebrating Jesus in our midst.

The word '*Christmas*' is a shortening of '*Christ Mass*', the Mass of Christ.

FOUR CHRISTMAS MASSESS

We celebrate four Christmas Masses next weekend.

The **Family Mass 6pm** and the **Night Mass 9pm** are on **Saturday – Christmas Eve**.

On **Sunday morning, Christmas Day** are two **Masses at 7.30am and 9.30am**.

We hear from today's Gospel that '*God-is-with-us*'.

We wonder at the courage of both Mary and Joseph in receiving Jesus lovingly.

We are inspired by their courage in listening to God's will, despite whatever gossip, remarks and frowns might have been around the community.

We are inspired by their courage to follow God's call.

We are inspired by their courage to be just and "righteous".

We are inspired by their courage to follow wherever the Holy Spirit leads.

- We are called in Jesus to work together for justice

DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

For the four Sundays of Advent, we have quoted in the parish newsletter and homily, extracts from the Queensland Churches Together resource on Domestic Family Violence Prevention. Extracts from Week 4 are below.

"... As family members, neighbours and friends, today's scripture is a reminder to be alert, to be informed and aware, and to be prepared to offer support and understanding. Statistically across Australia, one person is killed at the hands of an intimate partner – estranged or otherwise – every week. These are the cases that come across our News feeds, airwaves and television screens, but for many more, the suffering happens behind closed doors and in the dark, and while not resulting in death, can still be devastating. The harm to children is

incalculable and long term, and the cost to the community is astronomical. Members of the Joint Churches Commission for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence have initiated this campaign to raise awareness of this largely hidden blight on our families, neighbourhoods and communities. Eliminating domestic violence starts with recognising that it occurs everywhere, even within our own church, and recognising that this season is a particularly dangerous time for such families. We want to make our churches safe places, refuges from domestic and family violence... “

Let us pray “For communities to offer safe places for people dealing with abusive relationships... Gracious God hear us.”

- We are called in compassion to be in solidarity

MESSAGE FROM ARCHBISHOP MARK COLERIDGE

“Not only the Western Downs and Queensland but people from all across Australia have been shocked to the core by the killings at Wieambilla. It’s impossible to make sense of it, so mad and demonic the whole thing seems. But one thing we can do is surround the members of the QPS, their families and friends and the communities affected, with every kind of support, including prayer for those killed, for their families and the devastated communities – especially at this Christmas time. We think in a special way and with a special sorrow of Rachel and Matthew cut down in their youth. But we think too of the Police Commissioner and all those called to lead the QPS through this traumatic time. Not everyone prays or believes that prayer has both purpose and power. But we Christians believe both. That’s why in a moment like this we have the duty, even the social duty, to pray not only for the dead but also for the living so deeply wounded by this atrocity...peace for the dead and consolation for the living.”

Let us pray in loving solidarity.

[Pause and Pray]

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 1:18-24

Joseph knows he is not the father, but his concern is for Mary.

The Gospel continues,

“Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly”.

Now God acts again, this time through an angel of the Lord appearing in a dream to Joseph and saying,

“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.”

We see Jesus instructing the early community later in Matthew Chapter 18.

He spoke about the shepherd who leaves the 99 sheep to go searching for the one missing. The shepherd moved out of his comfort zone.

And we know this applies to every Christian community.

We pray for the courage to move out of our comfort zone.

Let us now pause and identify God’s gifts to us.

[Pause]

Let us now pause and identify how we have responded to those gifts from God. **[Pause]**

May we accept this invitation of Jesus and make a difference this Christmas through the love of God for us and for creation.

ADVENT APPEAL FOR UKRAINE

At the beginning of Mass we prayed for Ukraine. This is our second weekend for a retiring collection for Ukraine. The Ukrainian Catholic Bishop in Australia has nominated the agency *Mudra Sprava (Wise Action)*, a Patriarchal Charitable Foundation in Ukraine, to distribute the funds. The organisation has three focus areas: Evacuation of people from frontline territories; Food packages for people in need; Shelters for internally displaced persons. Thanking you for your support.

Let us now pray for those who are travelling this Christmas.

Amen.

Father Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/121822.cfm>

