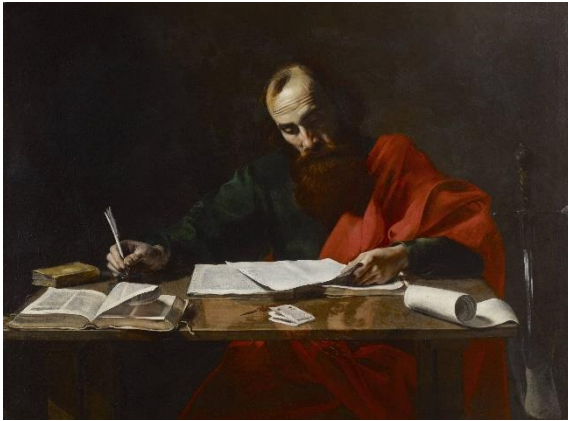


'DO WE HAVE TIME FOR GOD THIS CHRISTMAS?'

Second Sunday of Advent - 9 Dec 2018

Today we reflect on *St Paul's Letter to the Philippians 1:3-11*
and on the *Gospel of Luke 3:1-6*

ST. PAUL HAD TIME



St Paul had time.

He was in jail as he wrote the letter to the community in Philippi.

Perhaps he was in Ephesus. He doesn't tell us. Being in jail, he decided that he had time to thank people and encourage people by letter.

Paul could write, and he needed the letter to be delivered.

It is easier for us today with the benefit of so many ways of communication.

Let us read what he wrote in today's 2nd Reading.

ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11

*'I thank my God every time I remember you,
constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you,
because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.*

*I am confident of this,
that the one who began a good work among you
will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.
It is right for me to think this way about all of you,
because you hold me in your heart,
for all of you share in God's grace with me,
both in my imprisonment
and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel.
For God is my witness,
how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus.*

*And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow
more and more with knowledge and full insight
to help you to determine what is best,
so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless,
having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes
through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.'*

As we approach this Christmas,
each of us has opportunities
to thank people in our lives, to hold them in our heart,
to pray for each of them,
and to take the time and opportunities to thank God for them.

We think of those people to whom we would say

*'I thank my God every time I remember you,
constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you,
because of your sharing in the gospel'*

And if we haven't seen them for a while, to say

*'For God is my witness,
how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus.'*

And we could pray for them to God with these words

*'And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow
more and more with knowledge and full insight
to help you to determine what is best'*

Whether we are in hospital, or at home, at work or on holidays,
in jail or at the beach,
we can express our gratitude to people and to God.
We can take the time.

GOD TAKES TIME FOR US

The list of excuses we can devise, to say that we are too
busy to take time for God this week seems endless.

Let us pause and list some of our most common excuses.
To name them. And to ask God to help us. [pause]

Let us ask for God's help to rise above these temptations.

Paul thought of others, prayed for them, and entrusted
them to God.

May we think of, pray for, and entrust people we know to God.

LUKE 3:1-6

In today's Gospel passage, after being given a time setting,
we hear about John the Baptist

'the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.'



*He went into all the region around the Jordan,
proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins,
as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,
'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.
Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." '*

And we ask ourselves –

How do we prepare the way for others to believe in Jesus this Christmas?
How do we reach out to the disillusioned, the seekers, the lonely?
Who will we invite to share our Christmas Mass this year?

And when we come to Christmas Mass this year,
it will be the **Bicentenary of the Christmas Hymn 'Silent Night'**,
first sung on Christmas Eve in 1818 at St Nicholas Church in Austria.
Father Joseph Mohr wrote the words in 1816
and he asked organist Franz Gruber to compose the music for Christmas 1818.
But there was a problem – the church organ wouldn't work.
They adapted. No excuses.
And so Silent Night was accompanied by guitar.

We will celebrate Silent Night's **200th anniversary** as our thanksgiving hymn
at all three Christmas Masses.
Christmas Eve December 24th **Evening** Mass at **6pm**
Christmas Eve December 24th **Night** Mass at **9pm**
and Christmas Day December 25th **Morning** Mass at **9am**.

In addition, a new Christmas hymn has been composed by a young couple in our parish.

The members of our parish family recently returned from Blackall / Tambo Parish
are now invited to come forward and share the story of the Blackall Fete for us.
A sheep figure, a gift from Blackall, is now placed in our Christmas Crib.
[Sharing]

Thank you to all who took the time to travel to Blackall and share as family.
Let us Pray.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/120918.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook09122018>]