



St Michael's Parish, Nowra

Incorporating the Catholic Communities of St Michael's, Nowra – St. Patrick's, Berry – Sacred Heart, Bomaderry - Help of Christians, Culburra – St Joseph's, Kangaroo Valley – Holy Spirit, Vincentia.

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Bookings for Weekend Masses, please see notice inside bulletin

First Sunday of Advent

29th November 2020

Advent – A Time to Learn How to Wait

Ron Rolheiser OMI

Carlo Carretto, the renowned spiritual writer, spent many years living alone as a hermit in the Sahara Desert. He wrote a number of books from that place of solitude, including one entitled, *Letters from the Desert*. In that book, he has a message for those of us who live busy lives in the world. “What is God trying to say to us in our busy lives?” He suggests this: “Be patient! Learn to wait – for each other, for love, for happiness, for God!” Learn to wait! That’s not something we do easily and many of our problems flow from that. We often don’t wait properly for things.

Annie Dillard shares this story about proper waiting: She had been watching a butterfly emerge from its cocoon and was fascinated by the process until she grew impatient with how long it was taking and, to speed things up, took a candle and heated the cocoon, albeit very gently.

The experiment worked, but it was a mistake in the long run. The butterfly emerged more quickly; however, because adding heat violated something within the natural process, the butterfly was born with wings too weak to fly. Haste and prematurity had stunted and deformed a natural process. Some things can’t be rushed. Dillard understood immediately what had gone wrong. A certain chastity had been violated. Impatience had triggered an irreverence that had interfered with and damaged the natural order of things. In essence, the Christmas gift had been opened too early; the bride had been slept with before the wedding; a process that needed an allotted period of time had been short-circuited. There hadn’t been enough advent.

Advent means waiting. Among other things, it celebrates the idea that the messiah must be born from a virgin. Why? Is sex something unworthy of God? If Jesus had been born in a natural way, would that somehow have given him less dignity? This is a dark underside in some spiritualities, but Jesus’ birth from a virgin has nothing to do with that.

Scripture and Christian tradition emphasize that Jesus was born of a virgin to underscore the fact that he had no human father and also to teach an important truth, namely, that in order for something sublime to be born there must, first, be a proper chastity, a proper time of waiting, a season of advent. Why?

The answer lies in properly understanding chastity. Chastity is not, first of all, something to do with sex. Chastity has to do with how we experience reality in general, all experience. To be chaste is to have proper reverence – towards God, towards each other, towards nature, towards ourselves, towards reality in general, and towards sex. Lack of chastity is irreverence, in any area of life, sex included. And reverence is a lot about proper waiting. We can see this by looking at its opposite: To lack chastity, to be irreverent, is to be impatient, selfish, callous, immature, undisciplined, or boorish in any way so that our actions deprive someone else of his or her full uniqueness, dignity, and preciousness. And we do this every time we short-circuit waiting.

Thus, it is understandable why the prime analogate for chastity is proper reverence in the area of sex. Sex, because it so deeply affects the soul, speaks most loudly about chastity or lack of it. Sex is only chaste when it is not short-circuited by impatience, selfishness, or lack of respect. Sadly, because sex is so powerful, these things are often short-circuited. We violate chastity in sex whenever there is prematurity, unfair pressure, subtle manipulation, crass force, taking without giving, posturing an intimacy we don’t mean, lack of respect for previous commitments, disregard for the wider relationships of family and community, or failure to respect long-range happiness and health. Annie Dillard’s metaphor basically captures it: There is a fault in our chastity when we put a candle to the cocoon so as to unnaturally rush the process.

Chastity is about proper waiting and waiting is about patience in carrying the tensions and frustrations we suffer as we live the unfinished symphony that constitutes our lives.

There are some wonderful refrains in apocalyptic literature around the importance of waiting. Before the messiah can be conceived, gestated, and given birth to, there must always be a proper time of waiting, a necessary advent, a certain quota of suffering, which alone can create the proper virginal space within which the messiah can be born: “God is never in a hurry!” “Every tear brings the messiah closer!” “It is with much groaning of the flesh that the life of the spirit is brought forth!”

All of these phrases say the same thing: What’s sublime depends upon there first having been some sublimation; a feast can only happen after there has first been some fasting; love can only be a gift if the gift is fully respected; and (as Carretto so poignantly puts it) we must learn to wait – for God, for love, for the bride, and for Christmas.



A time to step aside with ...
Quiet Prayer & Reflection – Scripture & Advent Music
Take home material to nourish your spirit.

Session One: **Monday 30th November** - 7:00 pm – 7:50 pm
Repeated: **Tuesday 1st December** – 11:00 am – 11:50 am

ADVENT
Prayer reflection
at
St. Michael's Church

Catechist Mass and Awards - Monday 7th December, 10am St Michael's Church.

- * For all those who are active in our ministry, * those who are retired
- * or on leave from the ministry and those who support us, such as our spouses.

Please register by emailing frances.fairs@dow.org.au or call the Parish Office (44231712).



The Advent Wreath

The Advent wreaths and candles are an important centrepiece to the season. On each Sunday of the four weeks of Advent, we light one Advent candle to mark our progress toward His birth. This could signify that as we move closer to Jesus, our world becomes brighter.

Celebrating with the Family

Collectively, the candles represent the four weeks of Advent. Some believe each represents a 1,000-year epoch from Adam and Eve to Christ's birth, others think they represent the four centuries of waiting between the prophet Malachi and the birth of Jesus. Individually, the candles take us from prayer and penitence to rejoicing the birth of Jesus. Many churches light a new Advent Candle each Sunday, but families can integrate a bonding devotional practice into their lives during the season each week as well by gathering for Sunday dinner, lighting an Advent candle, and contemplating its meaning as it related to the birth of Jesus.

A simple ritual for your family to use.

Traditionally, the Advent wreath is blessed at the beginning of the season. Here is one blessing:

Leader: The people who have walked in darkness have seen a great light.

All: Upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone.

Leader: Today we begin to prepare, through prayer and works of charity, for the coming of the Lord at Christmas. Let us ask God to bless our wreath that we will use to mark the days until the Lord's coming. *(Pause for silent reflection.)*

Leader: Let us pray. Father of all creation and Lord of light, bless our wreath of evergreens and candles. Be present among us as we come together to celebrate in Scripture and prayer the coming of Christ. May our hearts and minds reflect the lights of these candles, that Christmas will find us joyfully ready to receive the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

- First Advent Candle - purple -- represents hope
- Second Advent Candle - purple -- signifies the preparation to receive Christ
- Third Advent Candle - rose or pink -- speaks of joy
- Fourth Advent Candle - purple -- stands for love

Following the Blessing of the Wreath, traditionally, the first Advent Candle is lit by the youngest child. The next is lit by the oldest child. The mother lights the candle on the third week and the father lights the fourth candle. Often, this is done at dinner time when the family can gather for devotion and prayer.



Advent Reflection Booklet - Adore – are available at all Churches.

Catholic Weekly, Calendars and Christmas Cards – if you wish to purchase any of these items and do not have the money with you, you can take the items and pay the following week or drop the money into the Parish Office.

In line with COVID restrictions, the **attendance monitors** will be selling the booklets, **after Mass**. \$2 per copy. (correct money would be appreciated, as no change can be given).





Fr. Pat's Presentation Night

On Thursday night the Parish Pastoral Council and representatives from the various communities and groups from within the parish gathered to make a presentation to Fr. Pat in thanksgiving for his services and pastoral care of St. Michael's Parish, on the occasion of his retirement.

We thank all our parishioners and Fr. Pat's friends for your contribution to the special collection, and the messages of good wishes, which were collocated and compiled into a book and presented to him.

The event was recorded and will be available for viewing on parish webpage soon.



Congratulations & God's Blessing to Deacon Peter Presdee.

On the 27th Nov. 2010 he was ordained to the Diaconate. We thank God for Deacon Peter's work in the Prison Ministry and in our Parish. We ask that God bless him, his wife Robyn and family abundantly now and always.



We prayerfully remember the recently deceased **Frank Landers, Clorraine Carroll** and **Guiseppe Azzone** and all those whose anniversaries occur at this time, **The Seyffer Family** and **Julie Seyffer**. We pray also for all who have died from Covid-19 in Australia and worldwide.

Christmas Masses and services

Dear parishioners,

I would like to offer the following proposals regarding the Christmas schedule.

This and next weekend, at all the Masses, in the Nowra area, there will be **pre-Registration** forms like the forms you are used to for the weekends masses.

This is to give you, our parishioners, advance notice before we open bookings to the general population and visitors who will be wanting to celebrate Christmas away from their homes.

We ask, that if you already know which Mass you might be attending, please indicate by registering.

The forms will include all the churches, except for Vincentia and Kangaroo Valley, as they have their own method of registration. I am grateful to those who been advising me in this tricky challenge

Please be patient if we must make changes due to changing regulations, lack of Priests and even the weather. Also I ask that you be flexible but above all, take all the precautions necessary.

I will have more to add in next week's bulletin.

Fr Leo Mifsud

Christmas Vigil

Nowra	5:30pm	8:00pm	9:30		
Berry		7:00pm	(outdoor – weather permitting)		
Culburra	6:00pm	7:30pm	(A Communion Service if no priest becomes available)		
Kangaroo Valley		8:00pm			
			Vincentia	5:30pm	7:00pm 8:30pm

Christmas Day

Nowra	8:00am	9:30am		
Berry	8:00am			
Bomaderry		9:30am		
Culburra	8:00am			
Kangaroo Valley	10:00am		Vincentia	8:00am 9:30am

Registering for weekend Masses:

For Nowra, Culburra, Berry and Bomaderry - call **0477 427 396** (Mon to Fri between 10am & 3pm)

For Mass at Kangaroo Valley, please email ronankangaroo1@gmail.com

For Mass at Vincentia - call **0435 862 156** or email holyspiritvincentia@gmail.com

***** PLEASE ADVISE IF YOU HAVE REGISTERED FOR MASS AND ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND*****

Entrance Antiphon - Cf. Ps 24:1-3

To you, I lift up my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me; and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah - Is 63:16-17; 64:1. 3-8

You, Lord, yourself are our Father, Our Redeemer is your ancient name. Why, Lord, leave us to stray from your ways and harden our hearts against fearing you? Return, for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your inheritance. Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down – at your Presence the mountains would melt. No ear has heard, no eye has seen any god but you act like this for those who trust him. You guide those who act with integrity and keep your ways in mind. You were angry when we were sinners; we had long been rebels against you. We were all like men unclean, all that integrity of ours like filthy clothing. We have all withered like leaves and our sins blew us away like the wind. No one invoked your name or roused himself to catch hold of you. For you hid your face from us and gave us up to the power of our sins. And yet, Lord, you are our Father; we the clay, you the potter, we are all the work of your hand.

Responsorial Psalm - Ps 79:2-3. 15-16. 18-19 R. v.4

(R.) Lord, make us turn to you, let us see your face and we shall be saved.

O shepherd of Israel, hear us,
shine forth from your cherubim throne.
O Lord, rouse up your might,
O Lord, come to our help. **(R.)**

May your hand be on the man you have chosen,
the man you have given your strength.
And we shall never forsake you again:
give us life that we may call upon your name. **(R.)**

God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from heaven and see.
Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted. **(R.)**

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians -1 Cor 1:3-9

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.

I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through Jesus Christ. I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways, especially in your teachers and preachers; the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed; and he will keep you steady and without blame until the last day, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, because God by calling you has joined you to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God is faithful.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation. Alleluia!

Gospel - Mk 13:33-37

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!'

Communion Antiphon - Ps 84:13

The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.

<i>Mass Times</i>		Sunday Mass Times			MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
		Nowra	Berry	Bomaderry	Nowra	Berry	Culburra	Bomaderry	Vincentia
Saturday Vigils		8:00 am	9:30am	5:00 pm	8:00 am	8:00 am	8:00 am	8:00 am	8:00 am
Nowra	5:00pm	8:00 am				5:30 pm			11:30 am
Culburra	5:00pm	9:30 am					5:30 pm		
Vincentia	5:00pm 6:15pm	9:00 am 10:15			8:00 am	5:30 pm	5:30 pm	8:00am	8:00 am
		11:00 am				9:00 am	9:00 am	9:00 am	

Reconciliation / Confession times:

Nowra: Saturday: 9.30 – 10.30am

Berry: Tuesday following 5.30pm Mass

Culburra: Saturday prior to Vigil Mass at 5.00pm

Bomaderry: Friday following 5.30pm Mass

Vincentia: Saturday 4pm