



St Mary's Parish

Incorporating the Catholic communities of Hamilton, Dunkeld, Macarthur, Glenthompson and Penshurst.

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Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year B

24 December 2017

First Reading 2 Sm 7:1-5. 8-12. 14. 16

The kingdom of David will be established for ever in the sight of the Lord.

Once David had settled into his house and the Lord had given him rest from all the enemies surrounding him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'Look, I am living in a house of cedar while the ark of God dwells in a tent'. Nathan said to the king, 'Go and do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you.'

But that very night the word of the Lord came to Nathan:

'Go and tell my servant David, "Thus the Lord speaks: Are you the man to build me a house to dwell in? I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel; I have been with you on all your expeditions; I have cut off all your enemies before you. I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall dwell in that place and never be disturbed again; nor shall the wicked continue to oppress them as they did, in the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel; I will give them rest from all their enemies. The Lord will make you great; the Lord will make you a House. And when your days are ended and you are laid to rest with your ancestors, I will preserve the offspring of your body after you and make his sovereignty secure. I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me and your throne be established for ever."

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 88:2-5. 27. 29. R. see v.2

(R.) For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

1. I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord; through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth.
Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever,
that your truth is firmly established as the heavens. (R.)
2. 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn to David my servant:
I will establish your dynasty for ever and set up your throne through all ages.' (R.)
3. He will say to me: 'You are my father, my God, the rock who saves me.'
I will keep my love for him always;
or him my covenant shall endure. (R.)

Second Reading Rom 16:25-27

The mystery kept secret for endless ages is now revealed.

Glory to him who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery kept secret for endless ages, but now so clear that it must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things to be. He alone is wisdom; give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation Lk 1:38

Alleluia, alleluia!

*I am the servant of the Lord:
may his will for me be done.*

Alleluia!

Gospel Lk 1:26-38

You will conceive and bear a son.

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.



Reflection by Greg Sunter

We have reached the final Sunday in the season of Advent - a time of preparing ourselves to recognise and celebrate Christ's presence in the world, both historically and in an ongoing, timeless way. This week's gospel account of the Annunciation is an ideal culmination to this season as we recall Mary's emphatic 'Yes' to all that was being asked of her. At the end of the Advent season of reflection and preparation to recognise Christ's presence in the world and in our lives, what better response could there be than to simply say, 'Yes'?

In a world that is driven by selfishness and the drive to push one's self ahead of others, Mary's selfless act stands as a challenge to our modern society. Even in her own time, Mary's decision must have been an enormously difficult one - one that had the potential to bring great shame on herself and Joseph. Yet, her decision is made swiftly and in faith. She trusts God absolutely and gives her life over into God's hands. That is perhaps the supreme act of faith; to say 'Yes' to God so completely that you are prepared to hand over direction and control of your own life.

Few of us tend to be visited by angels who lay out God's plan for us as clearly as Gabriel did for Mary. For most of us, it is a challenge to discern God's desire for us; to realise what it is that we are called to do and then give ourselves fully to that call. In the hustle and bustle of life, it is difficult to hear anything that God may be trying to ask of us. Perhaps the example of Mary's 'Yes' is a reminder to be still enough to hear the question in the first place!

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Christmas Offerings Envelopes

It is a Catholic tradition to include in our Christmas gifts an offering that contributes to the support of our priests. Their annual stipend is drawn from the First Collections which needs "topping up" with your generous Christmas Offerings. Thank you for your generosity.

Prayer Vigil New Year's Eve

New Year's Eve, there will be a vigil of prayer, in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, from 8pm till 12.30am to celebrate our parish's Patronal Feast The Mother of God: to pray for the welfare of our parish; to pray for peace; to pray in thanksgiving for the blessings of the past year and for our own intentions. Pop in and pay a visit if you have a few minutes to spare. There will be someone present throughout the evening.

www.facebook.com/stmaryschurchhamilton



PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Deaths:

Anniversary:

Brian Rigney, Terry Nunan, Nellie Landini, Melva Ackland, Vincent Kennedy, Ron Landini, Jim McElgunn.

THOSE WHO ARE SICK:

Graeme Sewell, Andrea Andre, Carissa Watt, John Duyvestyn, Jan Merrett, Kate Kuiper, Irene Donne, Peter McCluskey, Margaret Hardingham, Gladys Ryan.

Bishop's Annual Christmas Appeal

Our Christmas Appeal is one way by which the diocese can respond to the many communities from near and far who turn to us for assistance.

I commend the Christmas Appeal to all Parishioners.

I am aware that there are many time throughout the year when you are invited to respond to appeals for very worthy causes. I thank the people of the diocese for their support of last year's appeal Total \$52,000 & was distributed to:

Loreto Vietnam Australia Programme, St Columban's Mission society, Refugees in the Middle East (Melkite Catholic Eparchy), Catholic Education in Myanmar, Caritas Australia, Catholic Mission, Nazareth House Ballarat, Opening the Doors Foundation, ACRATH, Villa Maria Catholic Homes. ...

Paul Bird CSsR Bishop of Ballarat

St Mary's Parish 2016 Bishop's Appeal total \$1,987.

Ministry Roster 30 & 31 Dec

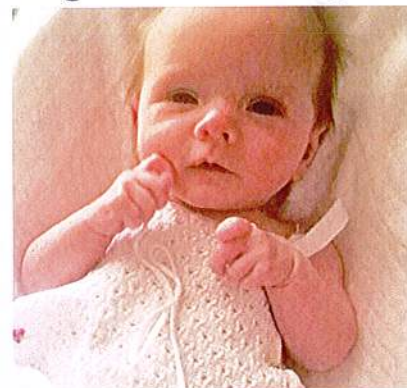
Welcome	Computer	1St Reader	2nd Reader	Commentator
J Schurmann	B Kaaye	M Meagher	T Oliver	K Stevens
A Aylmer	N McLeish	H Tripovich	C Schlaghecke	I Underwood

Eucharistic Sat: Z Celewych, J Gustus, J Ryan

Sun: V Lovell, P Fitzgerald, T Hurley, M Bell, M Dunn

We welcome into the family of God through Baptism at St Mary's Parish on Sunday 24th December.

Arghie Eldon Meagher



Son of Mark & Alison.

St Mary's Parish Office will be closed between Christmas & New Year.
Mon 25 December - Tuesday 2 January 2018.

Wishing all parishioners a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

PRAYER

**Great and merciful God,
from among this world's lowly
and humble
you choose your servants
and call them to work with you
to fulfil your loving plan of salvation.
By the power of your Spirit,
make your church fertile and fruitful,
that, imitating the obedient faith of
Mary, the church may welcome your
word of life.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen**