



Sunday 11th December 2022

Parish Priest: Fr. Steven Rigo **Assistant Priests:** Fr. Tao Pham & Fr. Martin Tanti

Parish Pastoral Associates: Sandy Starbuck & Sr. Margaret Sapsford

The Partnered Parishes of:

St. Mary's

204 Grimshaw St.,
Greensborough, 3088

Parish: 9435 1543 **Presbytery:** 7036 9329

Email: Greensborough@cam.org.au

Website: www.cam1.org.au/greensborough

Secretaries: Francesca Olofsson & Sharon Prosser

Mass Times

Tuesday to Friday: Mass 9.15am

Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.30pm

Sunday: Mass 8.00am, 10.00am & 5.00pm

Reconciliation Times

Saturday: 5.45pm-6.15pm before evening Mass

Parish School Principal

Mrs. Marisa Matthys **Ph:** 9433 4000 **or Email**
principal@smgreensborough.catholic.edu.au

Sacred Heart & St Peter's

25 Gipson Street,
Diamond Creek 3089

Parish: 9401 6361

Email: DiamondCreek@cam.org.au

Website: www.pol.org.au/diamondcreek

Secretary: Pat Guatta

Mass Times

Wednesday & Friday: Mass 9.15am

St Peter's: 1st & 3rd Saturday 7.15pm

Sunday: Mass 9.00am

Reconciliation Times

Friday: 9.45am to 10.15am

Parish School Principal

Mr. Jim O'Sullivan **Ph:** 9438 1590 **or Email**
principal@shdiamondcreek.catholic.edu.au

St. Thomas the Apostle

251 Diamond Creek Road,
Greensborough Nth 3088

Parish: 9434 7373

Email: greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au

Website: www.pol.org.au/greensboroughnorth

Secretary: Lisa Leahy

Mass Times

Tuesday & Thursday: Mass 9.15am

Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.00pm

Sunday: Mass 10.30am

Reconciliation Times

Saturday: 9.30am to 10.00am

Parish School Principal

Mr David Delaney **Ph:** 9434 4565 **or Email**
principal@stgreensboroughnth.catholic.edu.au

THE CELEBRATION OF MASS IN OUR PARISHES

Communal Penitential Service Will take place at St Thomas' on Wednesday, 14th December at 7:30 pm
With supper to follow.



We belong to a loving community that longs for, and trusts in, the light of Christ.

Third Sunday of Advent Year A, 11th December 2022.

<https://www.australiancatholics.com.au/article/scripture-reflection--rejoice--the-lord-is-near>

Sacred Heart, St Mary's & St Thomas the Apostle are all members of the Diamond Valley Deanery.



www.diamondvalleydeanery.org.au

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

www.cam.org.au



Our Partnered Parishes respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the traditional custodians of this land and we pay respect to the Elders past and present.

PARTNERED PARISHES NEWS

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

The focus for the third week of Advent is: Trust in the One who is to come.

In this Gospel Jesus called on the faith and trust of his disciples and the prophet John that He was the promised one, the Messiah. The Jewish people were waiting for a saviour, one who would sweep away their oppressors and restore the glory of an earthly kingdom of God. Even John, who knew that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God, wondered about His ministry, which was particularly directed at the poor, offering healing, comfort and teachings that led to spiritual salvation, rather than confrontation of the Romans. Through His ministry, Jesus offered himself as a Saviour whose kingdom was not of this world, and He asks of us now that we believe and trust that the real kingdom is within us and that He will come again.

ADVENT CHRISTMAS TIMETABLE 2022

Communal Penitential Service

Will take place at **St Thomas'** on **Wednesday, 14th December** at 7:30 pm with supper to follow.

Individual Reconciliation

Sacred Heart	Friday	2/9/16/23 December	9:45-10:15 am
St Mary's	Saturday	3/10/17 December	5:45-6:15 pm
St Thomas	Saturday	3/10/17/24 December	9:30-10:00 am

Masses for Christmas

Sacred Heart	Christmas Eve	6:00 pm	
		Carols 8.30pm	Mass 9:00 pm
	Christmas Day	9:00 am	
St Mary's	Christmas Eve	Carols: 6.00pm	Mass: 6:30 pm
		Carols : 9.00pm	Mass: 9:30 pm (Please note change of Time)
	Christmas Day	8:00 am and 10:00 am	(no 5:00 pm Mass)
St Thomas	Christmas Eve	6:00 pm	
	Christmas Day	10:30 am	



2022 COMBINED CATHOLIC PARISHES RAFFLE

Drawn Saturday 3rd December at 7.30pm

*Thank you to everyone who purchased tickets for the
Combined Catholic Parishes Raffle.
Here are the results of the raffle drawn at
Resurrection Parish,
402 Corrigan Road, Keysborough
Permit Number—10389/22*

PRIZE	WINNING	WINNER	ORGANIZATION
Kia Picanto	54292	Tyler	Keysborough Parish
\$5,000 Coles/	11950	Joan	St Damian's Parish
\$2,000 Coles	75332	Maryann	Keysborough Parish
\$1,000 Coles/ Myer Voucher	19962	Maya	Lifeboat Geelong
\$500 Coles/ Myer Voucher	39104	St Francis Mill Park	St Francis Mill Park
\$500 Coles/	52755	Kane	Keysborough Parish

PARTNERED PARISHES NEWS continued

The Partnered parishes THINK AND BREATHE Child Safety –KEEP CHILDREN SAFE.

With the return of families at our Masses and as our toilets are out of view, parental supervision of your children is required while using the facilities. Parents/guardians are to supervise children at all times when at our parishes.

SAFEGUARDING ESSENTIALS ONLINE TRAINING MODULE LAUNCHED FOR CLERGY AND VOLUNTEERS

Safeguarding Essentials is a 30-60 minute online training module for all clergy and volunteers within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. Employees will soon be able to access the training module on Employment Hero.

This accessible and engaging resource provides clergy and volunteers with foundational knowledge in relation to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable persons from abuse and harm.

This will be:

- an annual requirement for everyone
- possible to complete individually online.

At the completion of the training:

- participants will receive a certificate of completion accessible via the training module dashboard.
- participants will receive email notification that the module has been completed successfully.
- To access the online training go to: www.safeguarding.melbournecatholic.org



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY - GREENSBOROUGH CONFERENCE 2022 CHRISTMAS APPEAL

This year's Christmas Appeal will be officially launched at St. Mary's and St. Thomas' Parishes on the weekend of **3rd/4th December**. With the current cost-of-living crisis, the assistance we provide for people in Greensborough and Watsonia experiencing hardship this Christmas will be needed more than ever. If possible we ask Parishioners to please consider donating whatever is affordable to help continue our local Conference's work of helping those who really struggle to pay for the basics of normal living. In the next few months, we also know there will be requests for assistance from families as they prepare for school in 2023. To donate please see below -

1. Appeal envelopes will be provided at the end of the pews and in the Gathering Spaces of both Churches - they can then be placed in the 2nd Collection or in the 'after Mass' Collection bag.
2. Credit card donations can be arranged by calling [13 18 12](tel:131812) and stating you are donating to the **Greensborough** Conference Christmas Appeal
3. Donations can be made online via vinnies.org.au – please make sure you include **Greensborough** in the 'Comments/Conference Name' section

With our continued gratitude for your ongoing support and incredible generosity!

Maureen Lonsdale, Greensborough Conference President

St. Vincent De Paul Society



THE WAY PRAYER GROUP

You are warmly invited to our final Charismatic Mass for 2022 and Christmas break-up at St Thomas the Apostle Church, 251 Diamond Creek Rd, Nth Greensborough.

Thursday, 15th December commencing with praise & worship at 7.30pm followed by Mass at 8pm.

Enquiries: Rose 0411 650 339 or Emilia 0418 120 902.



CATHOLIC MISSION WORLD MISSION SUNDAY



Thank You! Your support of this year's Appeal for World Mission Sunday enables Church workers in 1047 mission dioceses to offer Good News to their local communities. Thank you for contributing to Catholic Mission.

Our partnership with local churches in over 160 countries is dependent upon the prayerful and financial support of many. Through your contribution, communities in Ethiopia look forward with hope, with easier access to health, educational and spiritual resources. THANK YOU.

We have plenty of information on our own website here: <https://www.catholicmission.org.au/see-our-work-in-action/ethiopia>

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT SACRED HEART & ST PETER'S



Baptisms: we pray for Sullivan, Edie, Xavier, Harper and Ethan who we welcomed into the Sacred Heart community in December.

St Peter's Church: Thank you to everyone who contributed by organizing, attending working bees and participating in the wonderful Mass and celebration of **St Peter's church 50th anniversary** last Saturday. We were blessed with the presence of our 3 Priests, Steve, Tao and Martin, many past and present parishioners, and live music.

Special thanks to longtime **Heart Beat** editor Pat Frisby who along with Pam Leonard and Patricia Keenan raised funds over many years by inviting people to advertise their businesses in the magazine. Proceeds enabled purchase of updated photo boards, painting, carpet cleaning, flowers and refreshments. Thank you to generous school mum Sue (from Makan District Restaurant Diamond Creek) who supplied the 50th cake and the highly recommended cup cakes.

St Peter's and Sacred Heart Readers are invited to meet at Sacred Heart church **7.30pm Thursday 15th December**.

New readers welcome. Please contact Sr Margaret: Margaret.sapsford@cam.org.au

Quiet Christmas Service: The combined churches of Diamond Creek, together with Hall's Funeral Services, organise a quiet reflective service each year for those who have been bereaved or who have experienced loss, ill health, or other difficulties throughout the year.

This year our Quiet Christmas service will be held at St John's Anglican Church Diamond Creek: 7:30pm Thursday 15th December.

Christmas Working Bee: Volunteers welcome to Sacred Heart church pre Christmas clean up. Dusting, vacuuming and setting up extra chairs etc. **Tuesday 20th December 10am.**



Thank you to parishioners for your generous response to the **St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal leaving collections**

at St Peter's and Sacred Heart last weekend. *Cash donations* in envelopes or *gift cards* can still be placed in collection bags or left at Parish Office.

Advent Reflections booklets are available for private reflection, or you are welcome to join the group who meet after 9.15am Mass Wednesday mornings throughout Advent. Please contact Moya Roadley.

Please note: 8.30pm Carols will precede 9pm Christmas Eve Mass at Sacred Heart.

Senior Moments: Wish everyone a Holy and Happy Christmas. 2023 Planning Meeting Wednesday 1st February 12pm in Parish Office. New members welcome.

Parish Pastoral Council: Suggestion box in church. Email: ppcdiamondcreek@gmail.com

Rosters

Saturday 17th December 7.15pm St Peter's

Reader: M. Frisby **Commentator:** B. Greaves **Eucharistic Ministers:** Volunteers

Sunday 18th December 9am Sacred Heart

Reader: C. Fernando **Commentator:** F. Ledda **Eucharistic Ministers:** A. Pieper, C. Ledda

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners and friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Catherine Leonard, Peter Mejak, Joan Moran, Margaret Holland, Bridie Burke, Mary Rafferty,

Thomas Keenan, Mervyn Bourke, Jacob Draper, Vi Hurley, Kevin Hurley

We pray for those who have died and all those whose Anniversaries occur in the month of December that they may enter Joyfully into God's Kingdom:

Adam Hibbert, Martin Padget, Eileen Dunn, Kevin Hewitt, Frank Orders, Julian Federico, Brian Bell,

Bridgette Tancredi-Roberts, John Elliott, Clara Mercieca, Paul Clements, Bernice Burke.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST THOMAS



Square Tap Machine: Now that our property has been connected to the NBN we are now able to process donations on the Square Tap Machine more efficiently.

Parish Pastoral Council: Email: stthomasppc@gmail.com Next meeting Wednesday 15th February 2023

The new sets of thanksgiving envelopes commencing 6th November are now ready for collection.
Could parishioners please have a look and see if there is anyone that lives close to you and you could assist by dropping them in their letterbox.

COLUMBAN CALENDAR: The calendar's are now available at St Thomas, \$10.00 each, cash or by the Square tap machine. Pay to Church.

Rosters: Thankyou to all our volunteers who continues to help out with weekend Masses. I am currently in the process of putting together the rosters for next year. If anyone would be available to help out with Setup for Mass, Eucharistic Ministers, Readers, Commentators, Communion to the nursing homes (during the week) please give me a call in the office.

You would need a current Working with Children Check, and training would be provided.

Thank you Lisa.

Rosters for Weekend 17th & 18th December

Saturday 6.00pm

Reader: K. Salm

Commentator: T. Holland

Eucharistic Ministers: S. Bishop, K. Salm, C. Leahy

Set Up: K. Salm

Sunday 10.30am

Reader: F. Landy

Commentator: Volunteer

Eucharistic Ministers: A. Kerr, C. Riordan, B. Riordan

Set Up: C. O'Brien

St Thomas prayers are asked for the following Parishioners:

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners and friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Miran Kasalo, John Iacobucci, Andelko Korculanin,

We pray for those who have died including Livio Di Nino recently and all those whose Anniversaries occur in the month of December that they may enter Joyfully into God's Kingdom:

Emilia Micomonaco, Adrian DeGier, Doris Morfea, Frank Jordan, John Winter, Arthur Eames, Cass Sheehan,

Nancy Marzella, Giovanni Marzella, Leo Glennon, Rose Hegarty Stjepan Kernjak

ARCHDIOCESE AND COMMUNITY NEWS

PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND: The Parish of Ivanhoe has a couple of vacancies for its Parish Pilgrimage to the Holy Land 11th – 28th April 2023. If you are interested please visit our Parish website: www.melbcatholic.org/ivanhoe and click on the News Page or phone Fr. Bill Edebohl 0427 879 733.

PALMS AUSTRALIA: You've got a lot to give beyond Christmas gifts. In January you can prepare for mission at home or abroad. Palms Australia has trained Australians to live and work within cultures and communities overseas since 1961. Now four days of that training will be available for parishioners interested to assist harness the diverse gifts of our community and make it stronger.

At Home: Palms' [Neighbours Without Borders](#) program (January 7 – 11) will "focus on building communities that are welcoming to all, with particular attention to those on the margins of society and the church" as urged by the recent Plenary Council.

Overseas: Completing a further four days (January 12 – 15) will prepare you to meet one of the [many requests Palms has from communities](#) in Africa, Asia and the Pacific who need educators; health professionals; administrators and others in Africa, Asia and the Pacific who need educators; health professionals; administrators and others to assist build on the strengths of their people who otherwise have little opportunity for training.

Enquire about Palms Orientation for mission via www.palms.org.au or call 02 9560 533 or 0422 472 567.

AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED AUSTRALIA: : ACN is the Pontifical Foundation dedicated to supporting the suffering and persecuted Church. That Catholic Shop - Christmas orders from Aid to the Church in Need's online store – That Catholic Shop – can still be made all the way up to 19 December! Choose from our broad range of religious gifts and receive free shipping for orders over \$100. Peruse our Christmas range at www.thatcatholicshop.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST MARY'S

Vision Statement "To be a vibrant Christian community engaging with the world"

PARISH OFFICE HOURS—Tuesdays 9am-5pm, Thursdays and Fridays 10am-4pm. Please send any bulletin contributions to greensborough@cam.org.au by 2pm Wednesday to ensure inclusion in the weekend combined bulletin. Thank you



SILENCE IN LITURGY God addresses us through the scriptures. But silence is what helps us discover the meaning and power of these words, letting them 'sink in' and be absorbed into our minds and hearts. In addition to the short periods of silence observed by the Reader after the first and second readings, we will again have a period of silent reflection following the Homily. **The first collection** will be taken up after this period of reflection.

SACRISTANS, PROJECTIONISTS AND READERS Christmas Masses Invitation. If you are available to exercise your ministry at our Christmas celebrations, you are invited to add your name to the roster on the table nearest the kitchen in the Gathering Space. Two Readers are required – one to introduce the Mass and read the Prayers, and another to read Scripture. Thank you.

FRIENDSHIP GROUP: Wednesday 14th Dec, Come join us for our last gathering for 2022 from 12.00-2.30.pm In the Gathering Space: Wear something Christmas. Light lunch provided and Bingo (\$5 for 10 games) All welcome. For catering purposes: **PLEASE** Contact **Geraldine** 0438 148 896 or **Angela** 0421 273 476.



FROM THE LADIES' AUXILIARY: THANK YOU to everyone who supported our stalls, social events & raffles throughout the year. Raffle results. Christmas stocking. Maria - green ticket C12. Nativity set Jackie D46 Voucher G/Boro RSL. Susan M42. Painting Jan C41. Cradle Maureen D8. Plant Silvana H47. Knitted rug. Des B34. Aldi voucher. Sharon E6. Noah's Ark wall hanging. Melvin C40. All winners notified. Happy Christmas & a Happy Healthy New Year to all.



FROM THE PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY: Christmas Blessings of the Lord be with each one who has been so generous to our ministry throughout 2022. We pray that the blessing of joy abide within each of you and your loved ones, during this Season and in the New Year!

Appreciatively, Maureen Leahy and Anne Fleming.

The prayer shawl ministry meets in the Gathering Space 10am - 12pm on Mondays. Enquires: Maureen Leahy—0407 687 517; Anne Fleming— 0409 234 326 .



"Think. Is this a bet you really want to place?"

Australians have the highest gambling losses in the world - about \$1,276 per person per year. Never before have betting products been so heavily promoted and so easily accessible. Gambling causes many serious social problems.

Help with gambling issues can be sought at:

Gambling Helpline - open 24/7 - phone 1800 858 858

"You win some. You lose more."

- St Mary's Social Justice Group



WE NEED YOUR HELP. We have a number of people to whom we take Communion of a Friday morning. Currently we don't have enough Ministers of Communion to the Sick, to meet our needs. If you have time on a Friday morning and would be willing to join the roster, or at least see what you think, please contact Sandy Starbuck, our Pastoral Associate, or the parish office (94351543 or Greensborough@cam.org.au). Training and support is provided. Hopefully we can have enough Ministers so that each person is

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT: First Friday of month, after 9.15am Mass to 3pm. Spend whatever time you can. All Welcome.

Saint Lucy 13th December: *Lucy*, whose name can mean "light" or "lucid," is the *patron saint* of the blind. She is often seen with the emblem of eyes on a cup or plate. Legend has it that St. Lucy delivered wheat and bread to the poor and homebound, and possibly to Christians staying in the catacombs, often in the darkness of night to avoid detection.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST MARY'S CONTINUED

PLEASE PRAY FOR

December Baptisms: Lexi Kelly, Ari Remedio, Annika Sayers, Heather Suen, Harvey Amendola

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners & friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time: Peter Mejak, Michael McAleer, Barbara Fernandez, Christos Pittas, Noah Thorley, Jocelyn Tibayan, Margaret Schreenan, John Mullins, Margaret Bramley, Mark Madio, Sr Estelita Manabo, Dan Quigley

Recently Deceased: Elma Larson, Luba Friscic

We Pray for those whose Anniversaries occur this week, may they enter joyfully into God's Kingdom: John Dunn, Ritty Beck, Patric Mary Boswell, Jacqueline Duncan, Shirley Griffin, Anecito Entice, Michael Cheng, Leonard Ollington, Jesiane St. Martin, Pamela Anne Griffin, John Hill, Ignacio Drendain, Nick Kelly, Giuseppe Agosta, Thecla Meneze, Paul Debonis, John Bowler, Gwen Phillips, Phyllis Shewan, Primo Santucci, Roland Gonzaga, Norman Rose, Mons John Murphy, Finbo Woroh, Hinko Novak, Philippa Morgan, Francesca Pezzopane, Anne Mackie, James Cheevers, Simon Sequeira, Sarah Robinson, Franc Hack, Mario Sculli, Charlie Bedington, Sr Aletha, Franz Denk, Cyril Shead, Antonio A Pena, David McAleer, David Turner, Gwen Rooney, Irene Barker, Antonio San Pedro, Cliff Rowse, Joseph Puckeridge, Doris Doolan, Mary Russell, Betty Robins, Jose Tarnate, Sr Josephine, E.M.Thomas, Stefan & John Dancek, Mary Ashby, Noel Dragwidge, Ken Walters

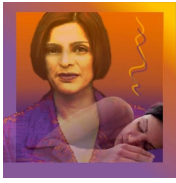
ALIVE AGAIN

"Are you a young adult aged 18-35 years old? Join other Catholic young adults and become **Alive Again** at Summer School of Evangelisation Melbourne, a week-long retreat led by prayer, fellowship, praise & worship, catechesis and sacraments. There's no better way to start the year than on a retreat spent with the Lord. Jan 15-22, 2023. Early bird rates now available. Register @ ssemelbourne.org.au or follow us on Facebook & Instagram @ssemelbourne for more info and updates"

melbourne.sse@gmail.com

<https://ssemelbourne.org.au>





Lectionary Art and Reflection by Jenny Close

Matthew's gospel, in this first week of Advent, reminds us to stay alert. The advice is timely since in Advent we are in waiting mode. We await the coming of the kingdom in the person of Jesus and in the fullness of time.

Third Sunday of Advent, Year A

11 December 2022

First Reading Is 35:1-6, 10

God himself will come and save us.

Let the wilderness and the dry-lands exult,
let the wasteland rejoice and bloom,
let it bring forth flowers like the jonquil,
let it rejoice and sing for joy.
The glory of Lebanon is bestowed on it,
the splendour of Carmel and Sharon;
they shall see the glory of the Lord,
the splendour of our God.
Strengthen all weary hands,
steady all trembling knees
and say to all faint hearts,
'Courage! Do not be afraid.
'Look, your God is coming,
vengeance is coming,
the retribution of God;
he is coming to save you.'
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
the ears of the deaf unsealed,
then the lame shall leap like a deer
and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy,
for those the Lord has ransomed shall return.
They will come to Zion shouting for joy,
everlasting joy on their faces;
joy and gladness will go with them
and sorrow and lament be ended.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 145:6-10. R. see Is 35:4

(R.) Lord, come and save us.

or

(R.) Alleluia!

1. It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever,
who is just to those who are oppressed.
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,
the Lord, who sets prisoners free. (R.)
2. It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,
who raises up those who are bowed down,
the Lord, who protects the stranger
and upholds the widow and orphan. (R.)
3. It is the Lord who loves the just
but thwarts the path of the wicked.
The Lord will reign for ever,
Zion's God, from age to age. (R.)

Second Reading Jas 5:7-10

You also must be patient; do not lose heart, the Lord's coming will be soon.

Be patient, brothers, until the Lord's coming. Think of a farmer: how patiently he waits for the precious fruit of the ground until it has had the autumn rains and the

spring rains! You too have to be patient; do not lose heart, because the Lord's coming will be soon. Do not make complaints against one another, brothers, so as not to be brought to judgement yourselves; the Judge is already to be seen waiting at the gates. For your example, brothers, in submitting with patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation Is 61:1 (Lk 4:18)

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;

he sent me to bring Good News to the poor.

Alleluia!

Gospel Mt 11:2-11

Are you the one who is to come, or must we wait for someone else?

John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?' Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor; and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.'

As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: he is the one of whom scripture says: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way before you. I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.'



Reflection by Dianne Bergant CSA

Half way through Advent we pause for a moment to celebrate Gaudete Sunday, a Sunday for rejoicing. Isaiah paints a picture of regeneration. The desert that once seemed to be dead is now bursting with life; eyes that lacked sight, ears incapable of capturing and holding sound, limbs without strength, and tongues devoid of speech are all given new life. There will be no death in that age of fulfilment, no limitations, no mourning. As we move deeper and deeper into the reality of God's presence in our midst, we will discover the meaning of true fulfilment.

John the Baptist is a standard for judging the privilege of entering here and now, the kingdom of heaven. He was the herald of the coming of Jesus, the one who prepared for him, but John himself died before the death and resurrection of Jesus opened the flood gates of the eschatological tide. By comparison, even the least in the kingdom of God is far greater than this prophetic herald. John also serves as a model of patience in suffering. His circumstances teach us that moving toward eschatological fulfilment is not without cost.

Just as Matthew presents us with the example of John the Baptist, so James describes the patience required of those who await the age of fulfilment. That age of fulfilment will dawn in its time; all we can do is discharge our responsibilities regardless of how demanding they might be, and wait for that day patiently, convinced that it will come in God's due time.

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