

SEASONS

Newsletter of the Catholic Parish of St. Thomas More, Mount Eliza

4th Sunday of Advent -Year B

December 24th 2023



Dear Friends,

As we come to the very end of the season of Advent, we journey with Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem and prepare ourselves to welcome Jesus into our hearts. In today's first reading from the second book of Samuel, we hear about the promise that God makes to King David – that God's kingdom of peace and justice will continue "forever". The second reading is a call to be strengthened so that we can live the good news of Jesus Christ. The Gospel details the visit of the angel Gabriel to Mary, where she is given the incredible news that she is to become the mother of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. We see through all of this that so much of our journey as followers of the Lord is about waiting and hoping for God's promises to be fulfilled. This is what we have been doing over these last three weeks- waiting, hoping, preparing ourselves spiritually and physically to prepare for the coming of the King.

The peace that is promised at first glance seems very elusive; difficult to find. In the time of Mary and Joseph, the Roman Empire had conquered much of the Near East and nearly all of Europe, but at great cost to the local population. In the first century in Palestine there was unrest and tension between the different sects who had very different visions of what the future would look like. It seemed that it would only take a small spark to inflame the whole region into total war and chaos. Amongst all of this comes a humble family with a child who would bring peace by offering himself so that humanity would be reconciled with God and reconciled with each other.

Today this peace seems more fragile than ever around the world. With the recent shootings in Austria, the war in Ukraine responsible for around 70,000 deaths and the ongoing conflict in and around Gaza so far killing 21,000 since October. War is a terrible plague which affects the whole human family in a profound way, even those of us who live far away from the destruction. In recent days Pope Francis has spoken of the tragedy that has now afflicted the small but tight knit Christian community in Gaza. According to Pope Francis, "a mother, Mrs. Nahida Khalil Anton, and her daughter, Samar Kamal Anton, were killed, and others were wounded by the shooters while they were going to the bathroom," said the Pope. "Let us not forget our brothers and sisters suffering from war, in Ukraine, in Palestine and Israel, and in other conflict zones," he said. "May the approach of Christmas strengthen the commitment to open paths of peace".

Aid to the Church in Need has reported that Holy Family is the only Catholic parish in the Gaza Strip where several hundred Christians are sheltering in the church itself, and on the Church grounds, including children, senior citizens and people with disabilities. As we gather together to celebrate the Holy Mass, let us remember our brothers and sisters in Christ for whom this Christmas is, like the Holy Family being spent away from home and reliant on the hospitality of others. We pray too for all the victims of violence in the Holy Land and beyond, and pray that Christ's gift of peace will make a real difference to our world.

Fourth Sunday of Advent
24th December 2023

Entrance Antiphon:

Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

First Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12,14,16

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

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 88

For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Second Reading: Romans 16:25-27

The mystery kept secret for endless ages is now revealed.

Gospel Acclamation: Luke 1:38

Alleluia alleluia! I am the servant of the Lord: may his will for me be done. Alleluia!

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

You will conceive and bear a son.

Communion Antiphon: Isaiah 7-14

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

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Mass Parts for December/January

Penitential Act

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,

And, striking their breast, they say:

through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God. Amen

Gloria

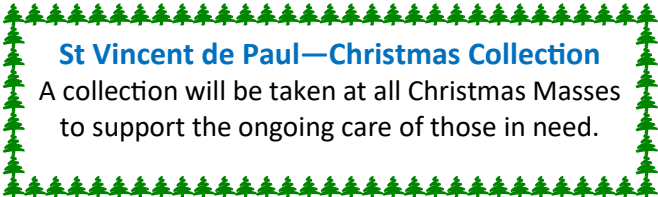
Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of good will. we praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, We give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

The mystery of faith

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

 **St Vincent de Paul—Christmas Collection**
A collection will be taken at all Christmas Masses to support the ongoing care of those in need.