

St. Monica's Parish

North Parramatta



"Our mission is to build up an active parish community with the Eucharist as the centre, foster deeper prayer and spirituality and reach out as a witnessing community"

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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YEAR C

19TH DECEMBER 2021

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

A reading from the Prophet Micah

Mi 5: 1 - 4

The Lord says this:

You, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
the least of the clans of Judah,
out of you will be born for me
the one who is to rule over Israel;
his origin goes back to the distant past,
to the days of old.

The Lord is therefore going to abandon them
till the time when she who is to give birth gives birth.
Then the remnant of his brothers will come back
to the sons of Israel.

He will stand and feed his flock
with the power of the Lord,
with the majesty of the name of his God.
They will live secure, for from then on he will extend
his power
to the ends of the land.
He himself will be peace.

This is the word of the Lord

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 79

Response: Lord, make us turn to you;
let us see your face and we shall be saved.

1. 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.)**
2. 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.)**
3. 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.)**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

Heb 10: 5 - 10

This is what Christ said, on coming into the world:
You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation,
prepared a body for me.

You took no pleasure in holocausts or sacrifices for sin;
then I said, just as I was commanded in the scroll of the
book, 'God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will.'
Notice that he says first: You did not want what the Law lays
down as the things to be offered, that is: the sacrifices, the
oblations, the holocausts and the sacrifices for sin, and you
took no pleasure in them; and then he says: Here I am! I am
coming to obey your will. He is abolishing the first sort to
replace it with the second. And this will was for us to be
made holy by the offering of his body made once and for all
by Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to St Luke

Lk 1: 39 - 45

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in
the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house
and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard
Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth
was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said,
'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the
fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit
from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting
reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes,
blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by
the Lord would be fulfilled.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Is 7

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

St. Monica's Catholic Parish

Cnr Church Street and North Rocks Road, North Parramatta

SUNDAY MASSES:	Saturday Vigil - 5pm; Sunday - 9am, 11.30am (Cantonese/Chinese Mass) and 6pm	
WEEKDAY MASSES:	Tuesday-Friday - 9.15am	
EXPOSITION:	Every Thursday 8pm—9pm Every Friday following 9.15am Mass until 10.45am,	
RECONCILIATION:	Friday 10-10.30am, Saturday 4-4.40pm, 3rd Sunday of the month 10:15-11am, or on request	
MARRIAGES:	Please contact the Parish Priest at least 12 months prior	
BAPTISMS:	Please contact the Parish Office for appointment with the Parish Priest. Phone: 9630-1951	
ANOIDING OF THE SICK/ EUCHARIST AT HOME	Please contact the Parish Office or Fr Ephraim Lam Phone: 9630-1951	
PARISH PRIEST/ CHINESE CHAPLAIN:	Fr. Ephraim Lam Phone: 9630 -1951	Email: shingmanlam@gmail.com
POSTAL ADDRESS:	8 Daking Street, North Parramatta, 2151	Website: http://www.stmonicanp.org.au
OFFICE HOURS:	Tuesday-Friday 8.30am-2.30pm	Phone: 9630-1951 Fax: 9630-8738 Email: stmonicanp@bigpond.com

St. Monica's School

School Principal: Lisa Crampton

Phone: 8832 4100

Fax: 8832-4199

Email: stmonicasnparra@parra.catholic.edu.au

COMMENTARY

The reference to Bethlehem is rich in early royal importance quite distinct from association with Jerusalem, the capital of the royal family. The ruler promised is not the dynastic successor, but a new Davidic king, fresh and totally committed to God as the young David was. He will be called forth for God and strengthened by God to rule. Kings were frequently characterised as shepherds, because of their responsibility to care for the people. This promised king will shepherd in the strength and majesty of God. The oracle suggests that tribulation will precede the birth of this new ruler. However, once the tribulation of birth is over, the joy of new life will blot out the pain.

The communal lament contains several images of God. As shepherd, God is responsible for the care of the flock, leading it to verdant pastures and protecting it from danger. God is also an imperial ruler, majestically enthroned and surrounded by cherubim. As Lord of Hosts, God can marshal the 'hosts' (units) of heavenly defenders. Finally, as keeper of vines, God cares for the growth and productivity of the community. These apt images characterise the relationship between God and the people. Though God is powerful like an imperial ruler or a military leader, the care that God provides compares to that of an attentive shepherd or a patient vine dresser.

The author of Hebrews contrasts the former sacrificial ritual with Christ's sacrifice. The sacrifices mentioned represent the entire sacrificial system. Christ's sacrifice is preferred over all others, because of the preeminence of his human body as compared with the bodies of the sacrificial animals. The author also contrasts adherence to the law and Christ's obedience to God's will. Christ annuls the first (external adherence) in order to establish the second (internal obedience). By freely offering his body in sacrifice, Christ identifies his own will with the will of God. We are sanctified through this sacrifice, not through any sacrifice required by law. For it was through his human body, a body like ours, that he demonstrated his obedience.

The response of the child in Elizabeth's womb is reminiscent of the joy that filled David as he leaped before the ark of the covenant. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaimed her faith in the child that Mary was carrying. In both cases, it was the realisation of being in the presence of God that caused them to rejoice. It is as if Mary is the ark and the child within her is the glory of God. There is a sequence of recognition that begins and ends with Mary. At the sound of Mary's greeting the child in Elizabeth leaped for joy, signalling to her the presence of her Lord in Mary's womb; at this, Elizabeth recognises the blessedness of Mary's unborn child and, through him, the blessedness of Mary.

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FEAST DAYS & COMMEMORATIONS

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR THOSE OF OUR PARISH FAMILY WHO ARE SICK. ESPECIALLY

Paul Chiu, John Rodrigues, Dave & Fan Lin Wilson, Francis Lee, Jerry A, Michelle Barnes, Levi Bell, Grace Boitano, Gesualda Borg, Monica Teresa & Fernanda Carigliano, Veronica Coorey, Margaret Dorahy, Heidi Ellich, Josie Estera, Philippe Kalife, Tim Kelly, Mary Korunic, Lillian Leigh, Monique Malouf, Maria Itang Tagle, Sheila Watts, Tina de Larrazabal, Rosa Santos, Llave Family, Gloria Cherote,

MASS INTENTIONS

Sti Pathmanathan
Cyril, Lettica, Raymond,
Delisha Barlholomeusz
Rodrigues Family
Gabriella Wehbe
Joseph Sajih Wehbe
Hinid Wehbe
Mouris Takchi
Hasna Takchi
Elias Hkeik
Loretta Wehbe

PARISH ACTIVITES



Silent Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
Every Thursday from 8pm—9pm.
Every Friday following 9.15am Mass until
10.45am. All are welcome.



Collections toward Parish Toilets & Kitchenette renovation:

We have received a total of **\$ 47,301** in donations to date. To achieve our target of \$70,000 your continued support is most appreciated. Donations can be handed into Church or the Parish Office. Please use the special envelopes provided at the entrance to the Church. **Thank you.**



Timetable for Christmas Masses are available at the main entrance to the Church. Please take a copy.



St Monica's Parish and Chinese Chaplaincy Raffle tickets will be on sale from the 12/12/21 to 15/01/22. All monies collected will

go toward the Renovation at the Parish Centre. For inquires please contact the Chinese Chaplaincy on 0411 192 278. Tickets are priced at \$2/- each. Please refer to the Poster on the notice board for prize list.



VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Our traditional Christmas Appeal will take place over the next few weekends, envelopes will be placed at the back of the Church for the time being and you may place your donations in the 2nd Collection bucket or the Poor Box.

Christmas Cards will also be available along with Columban Calendars and the proceeds of these may also be placed in the POOR BOX.

CHRISTMAS GIFT TREE/CHRISTMAS TREE (HAMPERS)
These will be in place at the back of the Church and the usual generosity of gifts and Christmas food items will be appreciated, please ensure such items are in place by Sunday night Mass 19th December as Hampers will be collated on Monday 20th December and delivered the next day.
SVDP

Christmas and New Year Mass Time Table :

24th Dec (Friday)	Christmas Eve	6pm	English
		9pm	Cantonese
25th Dec (Saturday)	Christmas Day	12am	English
		9am	English
		11.30am	Cantonese
		5pm	English
26th Dec (Sunday)	Feast of the Holy Family	9am	English
		11.30am	Cantonese
		6pm	English

25th/26th December ROSTERS

	5pm Vigil	9am	6pm
Readers	S. Meleca C. Meleca	S. Joseph M. Falamich	T. Jones D. Cruz
Acolytes	Patrick Senjak	Rashane Joseph	Adrian Cheung
Cleaning	Group 1 Chinese Chaplaincy		

Youth Corner

Zechariah's Doubt and Mary's Faith

The first chapter of Luke's gospel contains parallel stories in which the angel Gabriel announces two miraculous births: John the Baptist to his father Zechariah, and Jesus Christ to His mother Mary. On the surface, Zechariah's and Mary's respective responses to Gabriel appear quite similar. However, the results of their questions could not be more different. Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were both members of the priestly class by birth. As a priest, Zechariah had periodic duties in the Temple in Jerusalem. On the day of his annunciation the angel Gabriel appeared to him, announcing that his wife, who was beyond childbearing years, would give birth to a great prophet who would prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. Zechariah and Elizabeth, despite her age, would soon conceive a son. Zechariah, however, would remain mute until the birth of his son John. Mary, contrarily was an unknown figure living in the obscure town of Nazareth. She was young, newly betrothed, and probably less educated than Zechariah. Yet she had been prepared and graced by God from the moment of her conception for a world-changing task. Gabriel, the same angel who had appeared to the priest Zechariah in God's Temple, appeared to the lowly Virgin of Nazareth, announcing that she would soon become pregnant with a Son, the Messiah. Luke undoubtedly wished for these two accounts to mirror one another. Yet while Zechariah was struck dumb for questioning Gabriel, Mary was given the assurance of Elizabeth's miraculous pregnancy. Zechariah's question was accounted a sin, whereas Mary's was not met with even a rebuke.

How is Mary's question so different than Zechariah's? Zechariah has a wife, he has the scriptures which contain stories of the barren conceiving (Abraham and Sarah being only one of several), and a vision of God's angel has promised him this. Mary is betrothed to be married. News of a coming pregnancy shouldn't be so surprising to a young, engaged woman. Even though she had "no relations with a man," she will soon be wed. Married couples have children. Mary's "how?" is initially baffling. Gabriel responds by explaining that Mary's future Son is in fact God's Son, and that His Spirit will cause this miraculous birth. Mary could never have known this on her own. A Virgin Birth had never happened before. To human ears, it sounds like a contradiction. Yet nothing could be farther from the truth! It was a necessity beyond human comprehension. Jesus had to be born of the flesh a woman to share in our humanity, but He also had to be conceived in the glory of holy virginity to show forth the power of His Divinity. There is no Old Testament story about such a birth. However, with all the proof in front of Zechariah, he still asks for a sign. Mary, on the other hand, although she did not ask for a sign or proof, is given one when Gabriel tells her of Elizabeth's miraculous pregnancy. Nevertheless, Zechariah ought not to be judged harshly by Luke's readers for his doubt. In comparison to our Lord and our Lady, we all fall far short. His doubt was a minor error. Our Lord says that whoever does His Father's will is His family, and that those who hear the word of God and obey it are blessed beyond kinship. His moment of doubt did not so disappoint God as to bar him from fatherhood. He may have deserved his punishment, but by God's grace he was also worthy of this miracle.

-written by Joseph Calabrese, first published on Your Daily Cup of Faith blog

Youth Announcements



St Monica's Youth Group (FYRE)

We have resumed face to face youth group! Feel free to join us in the community room at 10:30AM!

Youth Camp January 2022- Mission Impossible - For those who were disheartened by our cancellation of youth camp this year, we have managed to reschedule it to next year Tuesday 18th January- Friday 21st January 2022! Hope to you all there! Please see Cheryl Wong (0481507169) or Rebecca Cheung (0449055395) for forms and/or questions. **Also note forms need to be returned by Tuesday 28th December 2021**

Puddle Jumpers December 2021 - Thank you to everyone who supported our youth and brought in any items/ toiletries these past few weeks Unfortunately we are NOT accepting anymore donations as we are packaging and sending them off before Christmas.

Youth Christmas Party 20th December - As we near the end of the year, we will also be having our annual Christmas Party on 20th December (Monday) at 6PM-9:30PM! It will be held in the hall, with \$10 entry fee as food will be provided. Hope to see you all there !