

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

What, then, must we do?

When all the people asked John, 'What must we do?' he answered, 'If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same.' There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and these said to him, 'Master, what must we do?' He said to them, 'Exact no more than your rate.' Some soldiers asked him in their turn, 'What must we do?' He said to them, 'No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!'

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.' As well as this, there were many other things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them.

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflections on the Gospel



THE SAVING WORD

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT / C

16 DECEMBER 2018

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE

Today's Gospel continues to let us hear the preaching of John the Baptist. His message comes in two rather different parts.

In response to the people's query about how conversion of heart might work itself out in practice, John first offers some concrete suggestions, addressed to three distinct groups: the crowds, tax collectors and soldiers. Beneath the advice in each case is a central Lukan concern: nothing so hinders our relationship to God, dehumanises human beings, and ruins life in community, as attachment to wealth and possessions.

In each case John urges generosity. The tax collectors and the soldiers were both in a position to extort money from ordinary people. John urges the former to exact no more than is just and the latter, who performed a role more like that of police today, not to augment their pay by violence and extortion. The acid test of conversion of heart is always social justice.

The second part of John's message returns more directly to his role as precursor of Christ. Deflecting speculation that he himself might be the Messiah, he points to the distinction between his role and that of the One who is to come: while he baptises with water—a simple ritual of repentance—the Messiah will baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Such a 'baptism' may sound a bit threatening. But 'fire' refers to the fire of God's love communicated by the Spirit. Jesus' ministry will extend to us his own experience of the Father's love following *his* baptism at the hands of John (Luke 3:22).

Brendan Byrne, SJ

FIRST READING

Zeph 3:14-18

A reading from the prophet Zephaniah.

With gladness the Lord will rejoice over you.

Shout for joy, daughter of Zion, Israel, shout aloud!

Rejoice, exult with all your heart, daughter of Jerusalem!

The Lord has repealed your sentence; he has driven your enemies away.

The Lord, the king of Israel, is in your midst; you have no more evil to fear.

When that day comes, word will come to Jerusalem:

Zion, have no fear,

do not let your hands fall limp.

The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior.

He will exult with joy over you,

he will renew you by his love;

he will dance with shouts of joy for you as on a day of festival.

■ The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Isa 12:2-6. R. v. 6

R. Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

1. Truly, God is my salvation, / I trust, I shall not fear. / For the Lord is my strength, my song, / he became my saviour. / With joy you will draw water / from the wells of salvation. **R.**

2. Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name! / Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples! / Declare the greatness of his name. **R.**

3. Sing a psalm to the Lord / for he has done glorious deeds, / make them known to all the earth! / People of Zion, sing and shout for joy / for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. **R.**



SECOND READING

Phil 4:4-7

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians.

The Lord is near.

I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness. Let your tolerance be evident to everyone: the Lord is very near. There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Isa 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!

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St Clement of Rome Church

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Parish Priest : Monsignor Franco Cavarra (Parish Office 9850 3262) or (Presbytery 9850 6073)
 Italian Chaplain: Fr Vito Pegolo (0419 736 890), School Principal: Mr Michael Heenan (9850 1216)
 Pastoral Associate: Cecilia Tan (9850 3262), Assistant Pastoral Associate : Franka Waters
 Parish Secretary: Bernadine De Silva (9850 3262)
 Clifton Centre: Mary Hansen (9850 1860) St Vincent de Paul Helpline (1800 305 330)

Wishing you every blessing for the
 Christmas Season!



Christmas Mass Time Table – 2018

Monday 24th December
 5.30pm Family Mass
 7.30pm Italian Vigil
 9.30pm Maronite Vigil
 11.30pm Carols & 12.00 Midnight Mass

Tuesday 25th December
 9.15am Mass
 11.00am Mass in Italian
 6.00pm Maronite Mass

Prepare the Way – Advent Reflection: Week 3

John, the Baptist is honest and realistic about himself and his role. He does not try to promote himself. His task is to point Jesus out to others and to help prepare the way for Jesus Christ to enter hearts. What does John's response to the question 'What shall we do?' mean for my life?



God of Love, our hearts long for your coming. God of Mercy, open our eyes to see you in the poor and vulnerable. God of Hope, make us bearers of Good News.

Special Collection—Melbourne Overseas Mission

Will be held this weekend. Envelopes available. Appreciate your generosity.

Christmas Choir Practices

All are invited to join in our practices so we can have a wonderful celebration. Sessions in the School Library on Mon 17th Dec, Wed 19th Dec, and Friday 21st Dec all @ 7 pm with a final practice at the Church on Saturday 22nd Dec @ 4.00pm.

We are fortunate to have Paul Grosse visiting from Singapore to be our musician. Paul kindly accepted our invitation when we desperately needed one.

Readers & Eucharist Ministers, please collect the new Rosters from the Foyer. Thank you.

Craft & Pray Group

Will be having a sale of handmade craft items this weekend after Sat 5.30pm, Sun 9am & 11am Masses. All proceeds to be donated to St Vincent de Paul Society. Please support.

MASS TIMES, RECONCILIATION & OTHER SACRAMENTS

Mass Times: Sat 5:30pm (Vigil), Sun - 9am, 11am (Italian) & 6pm (Maronite Community Mass)

Tues 9:15am (Italian), Wed-Sat 9:15am. Eucharistic Adoration: Tues-Fri 8-9am (in the Chapel)

Reconciliation: Sat 10am (and on request). Marian Devotions: Sat 8.40am.

Baptisms: Welcoming (3rd weekend) & Baptism (4th weekend) every month. Weddings: By Appointment.

Recently Deceased : Orfeo Biondo, Solange Rouge, Marie Therese Victor, Sisto Malaspina, Felice Cannistra
 Death Anniversaries : Toney Italia, Joanne Rossiani, Noeline Barsenbach, Montano Equibal, Bill Frankel, Conrada Dela Cruz
 Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.
 May they rest in peace. Amen

PARISH DIARY

Sun 16th Dec @ 10am—SVDP Meeting in the Clifton Centre
 Mon 17th Dec @ 7pm—Choir Practices in the School Library
 Tue 18th Dec @ 9.15am—Advent 3 Grade 5 School Mass
 Wed 19th Dec @ 7pm—Choir Practices in the School Library
 Thurs 20th Dec @ 7.30pm—Advent Scripture Studies in the School Library
 Fri 21st Dec @ 7pm—Choir Practices in the School Library
 Sat 22nd Dec @ 4pm—Final Choir Practices in the Church

Plenary Council 2020— Please pick up a copy of Fr. Noel Connolly's article from the Foyer. Thanks

Christmas Pageant

Christmas Family Mass- 5.30pm Monday 24th Dec:

A children's Christmas Pageant will be presented at the beginning of Mass. Children may come dressed as shepherds/angels/stable animals etc. and are welcome to join in. Adult singers are also welcome to join the children's choir at Mass. For more details contact Susan Russo: 0411436925/ suzperry@hotmail.com.

Parish Pastoral Leadership Team (Parish Pastoral Council)

The nominated Parish Pastoral Leadership Team met twice to pray and discern the direction in which God's Spirit is calling the team into pastoral planning and service to the community. The second meeting held on Sunday, 25 November with the election of office-bearers and leaders to oversee particular areas of Parish Life:

Chairperson: Sue De Bortoli

Vice-Chair: Joe Cataldo

Secretary: Martin Teh

Other members: Mark Gregor, Gabriella Grande, Alwin Ho, Enrique Da Silva with the possibility of others.

The team will be formally commissioned to serve an initial two-year term with a possibility of no more than another, during the weekend Masses of 23/24 December.

For a full view of the makeup and structure the Team will work with, please see the notice board.

Sacramental Program 2019

Please register your interest for 2019. The fee to cover all administrative and resource cost is \$200 per sacrament per child. Fees payable on enrolment through the Parish Office. Enrolment forms can be downloaded from the website or collected from the Parish Office.

Confirmation classes commence on Tue 12th Feb 2019 Last enrolment date : 5th Feb 2019

Sacrament of Confirmation on Fri 3rd May 2019 at 7pm

Reconciliation classes commence on Tue 21st May 2019 Last enrolment date : 14th May 2019

Sacrament of Reconciliation on Sat 27th July at 10.30am

Eucharist classes commence on Tue 6th Aug 2019

Last enrolment date : 30th July 2019

Sacrament of First Holy Communion on Sat 26th Oct at 5.30pm

All classes : 4.30pm—5.30pm in the Parish Office.

Liturgy Roster

	Sat 5.30pm	Sun 9am
15/16 December	Sacristan John Bruce	Francis & Gloria Ng
3 Advent	COMMENTATOR Jacinta De La Cruz	Tim Landsberg
	Reader Rene De La Cruz	David Mitchell
	Special Ministers Jaqueline Kha	Pam Mitchell
	Cecilia Lam	Gloria Ng
	Reg Lecordier	Maria Papalia
		Elsa Waters
		Chris Zordan
		Trish Atherton
		Grace Canatelli

22/23 December	Sacristan Elroy	Francis & Gloria Ng
4 Advent	COMMENTATOR Rene De La Cruz	David Mitchell
	Reader Paul Sammut	Maria Papalia
	Special Ministers Maree Marsi	Anne Fusca
	May Teh	Gabriella Grande
	Martin Teh	Eleanora Mascitti
		Pam Mitchell
		Gloria Ng
		Maria Papalia
		Elsa Waters

DATE	LETTORI	OFFERTORIO	MINISTRI DELL'EUCARISTA
23/12	P. LOMBARDO I. ROMANIN	FAM. E. CASTRIOTTA	L. VETTORETTO G. VETTORETTO C. TRAVAGLINI

Scripture Classes

Our last Parish Advent Scripture Studies is scheduled for: 20 December, beginning at 7.30pm.

The 2019 schedule of meetings will be out soon. We will be studying St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Paul by the time of his visit to Corinth was aware of the great disunity among Christians. This study is timely given the challenging times we live. Come, reflect and pray with St. Paul for our Church, for Christian unity and for our world as we explore his writings together. May Christian unity begin with us first in our family at St. Clement of Rome.

Contact: Mark Gregor, Sue de Bortoli (9.00am Mass)
 Martin The (5.00pm Mass)