

CATHOLIC VIEWPOINT

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2022

ADVENT REFLECTION

The God of Encounter invites each of us to meet him this Christmas



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The hit series about the life of Jesus, 'The Chosen' shows a Jesus who encounters individuals in a manner so profound it is as if time stops and at that very moment that person is all that matters to him; that they are loved, validated, and chosen, right where they are on their journey through life.

As we move through Advent toward another Christmas we are reminded that God Our Father set the tone for Jesus to become known as the God of encounter through the providential events surrounding the Nativity of the Lord.

Consider who came to visit the baby Jesus: lowly shepherds and foreign kings who were not even Jews show the 'height, length, breadth and depth' of God's love and prefigured Jesus' mission not only to profoundly impact those he encountered while walking the earth, but to encounter you and I as if we were all that mattered to him.

And consider the star, a miracle visible to all symbolising an

invitation to everyone without exception, and showing us that Emmanuel, God with us, had arrived. It is clear from the biblical accounts that not everyone responded to this invitation, and even clearer from the actions of King Herod that not everyone welcomed this invitation, but those who did truly rejoiced.

In her loving kindness the Church makes it clear that the same invitation begun by the star and expounded by the place and people that surrounded the birth of Jesus is extended to us this Christmas and every Christmas. And crucially, the Collect from the First Sunday of Advent tells us how we are to accept that invitation: "Grant to your faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds at his coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly kingdom."

This Christmas may we all be so eager to run forth to meet Jesus, who so deeply desires to encounter us.

HOPE KITCHEN

Armidale Diocese Outreach Program

HEART OF PEACE

HOPE Kitchen – the Diocese’s Outreach to the homeless, isolated, and those in need of a friendly chat among friends has now been in operation for almost three months. Initially serving 40 services for the weekly lunch (12:30 – 1:30pm). HOPE Kitchen is presently averaging over 100 serves each Wednesday.

There are regulars who avail themselves of the opportunity to meet and enjoy the meal & dessert as well as the chance to socialise with HOPE’s volunteers and our other guests. Then there are others whom we see only occasionally when finances get very tight in their budget. With the cost of rental accommodation & living expenses soaring in our region, many are

finding their fortnightly income is just about totally expended in rent alone.

HOPE has been blessed to receive support from not only our Bishop Michael Kennedy, but also Coles, Bakers Delight, Carlo’s IGA and more recently from a community group sponsoring a week or two of catering costs. The Armidale Diocesan Investment Group is looking to also commit support to HOPE and we are presently in discussion with Centacare and the Department of Primary Health Network as to how we can collaboratively provide further services to our guests.

HOPE Kitchen would not be able to function at all without the support of our amazing cooks, servers and kitchen hands. We also have people helping from the South Tamworth Parish. HOPE would be most grateful for others who are willing to join our dedicated team. It seems that sometimes, quite often, we receive more than we give when serving others in HOPE Kitchen.



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LA SALETTE'S

Philippine Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette

THURSDAY 3RD NOVEMBER

For a few weeks in October and November Fr Manuel Medina M.S. (Fr Mani) the Provincial of the Philippine Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette visited the Diocese of Armidale. He made it a priority to spend time with each of our three La Salette missionary priests: Fr Vic; Fr James; and Fr Abmar, though the flooding in parts of the Diocese at the time of his visit made this a challenge. He and our La Salette priests also met with Bishop Kennedy, though the floods prevented Fr Abmar from attending this particular day.

Fr Mani's association with our Diocese goes back a long way, more than twenty years. Fr Mani was in Australia to visit some family members in Sydney and a long-time priest friend, Fr Joe Adriano, in the Diocese of Armidale. A conversation he had with Bishop Manning eventually led to an invitation being extended to the La Salette's to come to the Diocese.

The La Salette's and the Diocese of Armidale have now enjoyed a friendly and fruitful relationship for twenty years.

The Bishop took the opportunity of Fr Mani's visit to thank him for the wonderful priestly ministry undertaken by our La Salette priests, and they both spoke of their commitment to this relationship into the future and of ways to build upon it. The Bishop said "We are blessed to have the La Salette priests in our Diocese. They are true shepherds with the heart of Jesus who came to serve, not to be served."



L-R - Fr James Poovathinkal, Fr Mani, Bishop Michael Kennedy & Fr Vic Ignacio

ADVENT REFLECTIONS

Preparing for Christmas

How do you welcome Jesus into your heart?

You too, want to prepare for and welcome into your heart with joy and thanksgiving our Lord Jesus Christ. You want to do this every day of the year, but heeding the call of the Church, you want to do it particularly well at Christmas.

And so, in these weeks of Advent, while the world around us is already signing “Jingle Bells; Deck the halls with boughs of holly; and ‘Tis the season to be jolly”, we are still listening attentively to John the Baptist’s call to “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand”. We have withdrawn from the world this morning to hear the voice crying in the wilderness: “Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight.”

- Bishop Michael Kennedy

What is the sign in the swaddling clothes?

“And this shall be a sign unto you? How could swaddling clothes be a “sign” if all babies were wrapped in such? A baby in a “manger” yes, that would be a sign, but what of these bands? There is a tradition that the shepherds, who in the hillside were not too far from Jerusalem, provided the “lambs without blemish” for the temple sacrifice at Passover. That first new-born lamb, to protect it from blemish (as it was required to be by the Law), was wrapped in swaddling cloth and placed in a food trough apart from the other sheep.

Ah, this would be a sign indeed! They would find the Savior, Christ the Lord, wrapped just like they wrapped their own precious lamb after its birth.

This was Our Lord’s first binding, one of love. His second binding was when He was taken away by His enemies, His hands tied together by cords, in the Garden of Gethsemane. The third binding was the bands that wrapped Him in His funeral shroud. Mary removed the first bands. His executioners removed the ropes of the second binding so that He might carry the Cross of salvation. And, on Easter Sunday, the Glorified Christ Himself removed the cloths that bound His Body around His funeral shroud.

- Brian Kelly - Catholicism.org

The grace of littleness...

Today, all is turned upside down: God comes into the world in littleness. His grandeur appears in littleness. This is the challenge of Christmas: God reveals himself, but men and women fail to understand. ... God lowers himself and we try to become great.

Jesus is born in order to serve, and we spend a lifetime pursuing success. God does not seek power and might; he asks for tender love and interior littleness. This is what we should ask Jesus for at Christmas: the grace of littleness.

Lord, teach us to love littleness. Help us to understand that littleness is the way to authentic greatness. God desires to come into the little things of our life.

- Pope Francis

Wake up call...

Just as our alarm clock wakes us from sleep each morning lest we run late, Advent serves as a yearly wake-up lest we be in danger of sleeping through our lives. Let us wake and go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

- Bishop Michael Kennedy

Hope

“It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open the doors of hope.”

- Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

Will he find a warm heart?

“At this Christmas, when Christ Comes, will He find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving the others with God’s own love and concern.”

- Mother Teresa

"Christmas has always been magical for me. As a child it was a combination of Father Christmas, all the presents, and the family gathering together. Now the magic comes from the mind-blowing truth that the God of the universe, who was always worthy of adoration, actually made himself physically adorable by becoming a baby!"

- Anonymous

"Christmas is a time for reflection on the year that was, and the year ahead. It's a chance to spend time with your loved ones and enjoy without distraction. It's a chance to be closer to Jesus and to celebrate him in all his wonder.

- Anonymous

"Christmas for our family is the biggest reminder that no matter how far we may be from our family and friends, we are all brought together in God's Love. Merry Christmas to all our loved ones in Australia and abroad."

- Brendon

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN TO YOU?

Christmas has always been magical for me and a special time for all my family to gather and celebrate. It's a time of peace, love and reflection on the year that was.

- Georgina

"Growing up in Ireland, Christmas was always about hope, light and joy in the darkness of winter. Even though it is not so cold on Christmas anymore the hope, light and joy it brings to my heart still shines through."

- Carmel

For me, Christmas means a time of peace, rest and renewal, best spent with family.

- David

"It's Jesus' Birthday and we should make him a cake... Christmas makes me feel loved and happy and it makes me feel excited about the presents. I love to see my family and my Nanna and Poppa."

- Olivia (aged 6)

"Christmas is a wonderful opportunity to take time out and remember the reason for the season. The birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. It's great that practically everything stops – so there is time to remember, to gather, to celebrate and to give. It's a giving season – God gave his only Son, we give by opening up our home to others for a celebration, giving presents and our presence, giving help to those in need, giving our time and talents to assist at liturgies, serving at community Christmas meals, so many ways and opportunities in this giving season.

- Liz

Noel

IN OUR DIOCESE

The Legion of Mary Praesidium Armidale

CATHEDRAL PARISH, ARMIDALE

On Saturday 15th October 2022, the Legion of Mary Praesidium Armidale, hosted a “Nationwide Rosary Chain” (an initiative of Australia Needs Fatima) at the gazebo on the Parish grounds. It was well attended by 14 members of the Armidale Parish and they were privileged to have the NSW State President of the Catholic Womens

League; Mrs Michaëlle Pedersen, join in for the event. They are looking to make the event an annual one as it is a wonderful way to commemorate Our Lady of Fatima’s apriations to the three shepherd children and her “Miracle of the Sun” and to pray together for world peace and other intentions.



Back Row: M. Farrell, M. Armitage, M. Doherty, A. Cody, B. Robinson, K.Callaghan, M. Grant, M. Milligan. Front Row: R. Judge, M. Pederson (State President CWL Aust NSW inc), Kathy, M. Lathan, T. O’Riley. Not shown, B.Hewitt taking the photograph.

Clergy Retreat, Invercauld House, Lismore

SUNDAY 20TH - FRIDAY 25TH NOVEMBER

From Sunday 20th November to Friday 25th November Bishop Michael, Priests and Deacons from the Diocese of Armidale were on retreat in Lismore. The purpose of a retreat is to reflect and facilitate spaces of personal prayer and conversation with God without having outside distractions.

The guest speaker for the retreat was Fr Robin Koning SJ. Father Robin is a member of the Faber Jesuit Community. Throughout the retreat he offered spiritual direction and gave workshops on Ignatian prayer and the Rules for Discernment of Spirits.

Bishop Kennedy said “We were blessed this year with another excellent retreat. The talks from Fr Robin helped us to intensify our gaze upon God and to be more conscious of the love that he has for each of us. The opportunities for Mass and prayer all together each day helped us to grow as a group in communion with God and with each other. There was also time for personal prayer and reading, and opportunities to enjoy each others company at mealtimes. It is an important part of the year and helps us to be better priests and deacons for the People of God.”



INTRODUCING GEORGE NULLEY-VALDÉS

Meet the Team

ADIG ARMIDALE



George Nulley-Valdés moved from Canberra to Armidale with his family to take on the role as Relationship Manager for ADIG. Six months has now passed, and we caught up with George to see how he is finding his new role and the big move.

You've been in the role as Relationship Manager with ADIG now for over 6 months, what do you enjoy most about the role?

I have enjoyed visiting the different parts of our Diocese as well as meeting many different people along the way. There are some exceptionally beautiful parts of our Diocese and some of the most honest down to earth people who genuinely love the Church and their communities.

You moved from Canberra with your family to take this role, what has that been like and how have you found Armidale and its surrounding Parishes?

The move itself was quite hectic and it took a little while for the kids to settle. Fortunately, they are still quite young and we have been able to meet many great people within the Armidale community. We certainly appreciate the calmer pace of life that living here affords us. Every parish is different in some ways but also very similar in others. I have been impressed with the devotions to our Lady of La Salette that are fostered within certain parishes of the Diocese. It is also great to see a strong sense of community within each parish, with some holding morning teas after Mass and parishioners hanging around to have a chat and catch up on the week's events.

What is your favourite Christmas tradition with your family and how will you be celebrating this year?

This year, our little ones are more of an age where they can get involved so we have started some new traditions in our family. They've made an Advent wreath, and lighting the Advent candles while have our dinner together has been a new thing the kids have enjoyed...although when we lit the first candle on the first Sunday of Advent one of the kids wished the other a happy birthday; so it's certainly been fun.

Family prayer is something that we really want to focus on over Advent. This year, we will be visiting both sides of the family, and we are looking forward to seeing our extended families. It will also be a nice break after what has been a pretty big year.

We are looking forward to what 2023 brings.



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YOUNG ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGEMAKERS

MEG Langage Global Citizenship Program

ST MARY OF THE ANGELS GUYRA

Students from St Mary of the Angels Guyra have been on a mission and launched a MEG Language Global Citizenship Program to help combat the waste issue identified at their school, aiming to improve the schools recycling and rubbish collection before planning on moving their initiative on to the town to make a larger impact.

The students worked with the school leadership team to create behavioural changes across the whole school so that rubbish was no longer a problem. They first addressed the issue by creating a whole school education program on recycling and waste reduction, they then moved on to buying colour coded bins for the classrooms and playground. They involved parents as part of the final stage of their project, which was the encouragement of 'nude food' in student lunch boxes.



The Year 6 students including Camilla Grills, Mackenzie Ellem, Noah Brennan and Tom Graham were supported by their class teacher Miss Tiffany Martin and educational assistant Miss Casey Lennon. Together with Lottie Dowling of the Global Citizenship Ambassadors Program Leader from MEG Languages, the students engaged in monthly zoom meetings to learn about how to be change makers in today's world. They also interacted with other schools from around

Australia to share their ideas about how to develop an action plan and how to involve others in the project development phase. This successful program has changed the school's environment for the better since it's implementation and has educated students, teachers, and the wider community on the importance of correct waste management. Congratulations to the students, establishing this program will see new sustainable habits well into 2023 and beyond.



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SOCIAL MEDIA

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CORRECTION NOTE: In Issue 7, Volume 30 (July - Sept 22) of the Catholic Viewpoint, The Bishop who Ordained Fathers Bernie Flood & Ron Perrett was Bishop William Brennan from Toowoomba, not Bishop Doody who was unwell and in hospital at the time of ordination.