



Parishes of Mater Dei Blakehurst & St Raphael's South Hurstville

First Sunday of Advent Year A *Bulletin* 27th Nov 2022

BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

CELEBRANT: Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

CONGREGATION: A light no darkness can overpower.

CELEBRANT: Lord God, let our prayers rise up like incense before you, as we ask that you bless our Advent wreath and these four candles. May this wreath be a sign to us of the new life Jesus promised us. May these candles remind us to wait, full of hope, so that when the Lord comes into our lives we will recognise and welcome him.



Entrance Antiphon : Cf. Ps 24:1-3

To you, I lift up my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me; and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

First Reading: Is 2:1-5

The Lord will gather all nations in eternal peace in the kingdom of God.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 121:1-2. 4-5. 6-9. R. see v.1.

(R.) Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

1. I rejoiced when I heard them say: 'Let us go to God's house.' And now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem. (R.)
2. It is there that the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord. For Israel's law it is, there to praise the Lord's name. There were set the thrones of judgement of the house of David. (R.)
3. For the peace of Jerusalem pray: 'Peace be to your homes! May peace reign in your walls, in your palaces, peace!' (R.)
4. For love of my brethren and friends I say: 'Peace upon you!' For love of the house of the Lord I will ask for your good. (R.)

Second Reading: Rom 13:11-14

The time has come, our salvation is near.

Gospel Acclamation Ps 84:8

Alleluia, alleluia!
Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation.
Alleluia!

Gospel : Mt 24:37-44

Stay awake, you must be ready.

Communion Antiphon: Ps 84:13

The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.

REFLECTION by Greg Sunter

The first Sunday of Advent sees the commencement of the new liturgical year. This new liturgical cycle is referred to as Year A and features the gospel of Matthew. (Year B features the gospel of Mark and Year C, that we have just completed, features the gospel of Luke.) Advent comes from the Latin word *Adventus* which literally means 'coming'; it is also reflected in the Greek word *Parousia*, which is used to describe the second coming of Jesus. So Advent is a time of preparation and anticipation of the coming of Christ into the world that is celebrated in the Nativity at Christmas. The gospel passage chosen for today's reading richly expresses that anticipation and need for preparation.

It may seem a little confusing that we begin our year-long exploration of the gospel of Matthew by taking a reading from chapter 24. However, the need for readiness and alertness that Jesus speaks about in relation to the coming of the Kingdom is equally suitable for a modern audience when preparing to celebrate once again the coming of Jesus into the world. Jesus is the best expression of the Kingdom that we have yet experienced and so rather than seeing the choice of this passage as a confusion, we should recognise the alignment that exists between the anticipation of the Kingdom and the anticipation of the Nativity.

The two great feasts of Christianity – the Nativity and Easter – are each preceded by a period of preparation: Advent and Lent. The emphasis of these seasons is on the mental and spiritual preparation to fully enter into one of the great mysteries of faith. In the Nativity, we celebrate God become human; God present in the world in a physical way. Advent is a time to remember the many and varied ways that God continues to be present in the world.

Gospel Focus – Get Ready!

Jesus draws a parallel between the people in Noah's time and the people of his own time. What it reflects is a complacency that periodically overtook the Jewish people. When the people bound themselves to God in covenant their lives gradually became better. Inevitably, their lives improved to such a state that they forgot God was responsible for their blessings. They ignored their relationship with God and became complacent about their good fortune. Ultimately, their comfort was brought to an end and they recognised once again their need for God. Jesus calls the people to get ready because the pattern is repeating itself.

**UNITED IN FAITH, GUIDED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT NOURISHED BY THE EUCHARIST,
COMMITTED TO PROCLAIMING THE
GOSPEL WE STRIVE TO LIVE AS GOD ASKS**

"to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God' (Micah 6:8)

