


 Servicing St. George, Shire and Eastern Suburbs
St. George ELECTRICS
 ■ Power points
 ■ Light fittings
 ■ Safety switches
 ■ Smoke detectors
 ■ Ceiling fans
 ■ Exhaust fans
 ■ Ovens and hot plates repaired or replaced
 ■ Water heater elements and thermostats
 ■ Garden and security lighting
 ■ Rewiring
 ■ Free Quotes ■ No job too small ■ Pensioner/Seniors Discounts
 Mobile: 0415 240 415
 Email: stgeorgeelectrics@live.com.au
 Jerome Cruickshank your local electrical contractor Lic. No.: EC38914

MIR BROS GROUP
OF COMPANIES



Supporting our local Parish and Community



ormonde dental centre
Integrity & care

Suite 2
2 Ormonde Parade
Hurstville NSW 2220
ph. (02) 9580 2728
fax. (02) 9586 3067
info@odc.net.au


Handcrafted to Perfection
 Custom made Indoor/Outdoor
SIGNS BANNERS POSTERS
 FACTORY, SHOP, BOAT AND VEHICLE SIGNS
 • Engraved plaques/signs
 • 3D timber, plastic, aluminium, or brass letters and shapes
9587 5159
 designer@aartisticsigns.com
 www.aartisticsigns.com

Immaculate Heart of Mary Pray for us.

CHRISTMAS MASS & RECONCILIATION TIMES

MATER DEI

Christmas Eve Tuesday 24 Dec

- Family Mass 6.15pm (in the school grounds)
- Carols followed by Mass 11.30pm

Christmas Day Wednesday 25 Dec

Mass 10.00am

New Years Day Wednesday 1 Jan 9.00am

2nd Rite of Reconciliation

Wednesday 18 Dec 7pm

ST RAPHAEL'S

Christmas Eve Tuesday 24 Dec

- Carols Service 4.00pm
- Family Mass 4.30pm

Christmas Day Wednesday 25 Dec

- Mass 8.30am
- Croatian Mass 12.15pm

New Years Day Wednesday 1 Jan

- tba

2nd Rite of Reconciliation,

Thursday 19 Dec 7pm

1st Rite of Reconciliation,

Saturday 21 Dec 4.30pm

Parishes of

Mater Dei Blakehurst
St Raphael's South Hurstville



3rd Sunday of Advent Year A

BULLETIN

15 December 2013



GOSPEL COMMENTARY

by Greg Sunter

Why would John the Baptist send messengers to question Jesus? We recall from last week's gospel passage that John had a somewhat 'fire and brimstone' perception of what Jesus would be like. Perhaps as he sat in his prison cell John began to wonder whether Jesus was indeed the Messiah that John believed him to be. Perhaps the question was not for himself but rather for his disciples that he sent to Jesus. Given the answer that Jesus provided them, perhaps John's intention was for the disciples to recognise that Jesus was in fact the one that John had proclaimed and that the disciples should switch their allegiance to Jesus. John probably guessed that he would not be leaving that prison alive and may have been leading his disciples to the next step in their discipleship by having them go and scrutinise Jesus.

The indirect answer that Jesus provides to the query would have not sounded like such a roundabout response as it does to us. The picture Jesus describes of the blind seeing, the lame walking, lepers cleansed, and the deaf hearing would have been very familiar to those who were listening and the first audience of this gospel. These were signs of the coming of the Messiah that had been foretold by the prophets. In his answer, Jesus effectively says, 'Well, all the things that are supposed to happen when the Messiah comes are happening now with me. There's your answer!'

The reading continues to build on the Advent themes of anticipation, preparedness and hope. As we draw closer to the celebration of the Nativity, in this reading is confirmation that our hope is not misplaced. Today's readings emphasise the joy that lies in the anticipation and expectation of what is coming.

Jesus declares that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater even than John whom he has just finishing praising as greatest of all men. It is an indication that in the kingdom, things are not as they are on earth. The blind, lame, deaf, poor and lepers that Jesus named earlier would have been seen as the very lowest of society. Their afflictions were seen as punishments from God and so it was assumed that they, or their parents, had done something to deserve this punishment. Jesus rejects this interpretation and shows these people to be the most open to responding to his message.

Jesus is not recorded as asking the messengers about John's wellbeing. He doesn't appear to express any concern about John's imprisonment. Yet Jesus must have felt this situation very deeply. John the Baptist and Jesus were related; they were cousins. The depth of his feeling is reflected when Jesus speaks so positively and powerfully about John. It reads almost as a eulogy that might be given at a funeral; praising the greatness of the deceased. Yet regardless of John's greatness, Jesus assures his audience that even the least in the kingdom is greater than John.

The third Sunday of Advent was traditionally known as Gaudete Sunday. The word, gaudete, (pronounced gow-day-tay) is from Latin and means Rejoice! The name was given to this Sunday because the entrance antiphon for the day is: 'Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice! The Lord is near.' When Advent was observed as a more penitential season, this third Sunday was a break from the sombre mood and was more celebratory. The rose-coloured candle in the Advent wreath and rose-coloured vestments convey a mood of joy and celebration.

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 your God" (Micah 6:8)

Entrance antiphon:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.

First Reading: Is 35:1-6. 10

God himself will come and save us.

Psalm: 145

R. Lord, come and save us.

It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever, who is just to those who are oppressed.

It is he who gives bread to the hungry, the Lord, who sets prisoners free. R.

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind, who raises up those who are bowed down, the Lord, who protects the stranger and upholds the widow and orphan. R.

It is the Lord who loves the just s but thwarts the path of the wicked. The Lord will reign for ever, Zion's God, from age to age. R.

Second Reading: James 5:7-10

You also must be patient; do not lose heart, the Lord's coming will be soon.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring Good News to the poor.
Alleluia!

Gospel: Matt 11: 2-11

Are you the one who is to come, or must we wait for someone else?

Communion antiphon:

Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

MASS TIMES this week		
	Mater Dei	St.Raphael's
Saturday	6.15pm	5.00pm
Sunday	10.00am	8.30am
Tuesday	8.00am	
Wednesday	8.00am	
Thursday		9.15am
Friday	8am	9.00am
RECONCILIATION: (also by appointment)		
Saturday		4.30pm
EXPOSITION		
Saturday	from	4.00pm

Legions of Mary
MD: Meets 10am every Monday morning in the Piety Stall at Mater Dei.
St R's Rosary and Meeting every Friday at 9:30 am downstairs in the Hall.
St Vincent de Paul Society
 Meets second Tuesday of each month in the Kennedy Centre at Mater Dei at 7.30 pm.

HOME ROSARY
 Rosary breaks until January. Participants wish everybody a very happy and holy Christmas

TRUTH JUSTICE HEALING COUNCIL
 Please pray for the work of this Council which has been set up as part of the Church's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Please pray especially, too, for the victims of child sexual abuse by clergy, religious and Church employees.



Please pray for
Deceased: Mary-Anne Krone, Mr Ignatius Anderson, Giovanna Buffone, Domenico Cardillo, Natele Pelle, Antonietta Galluccio
Sick: Br Joe, Mary Krone, Ann, Sr Maree Henderson, rsc, Margaret Hopkinson, Blaza Kursar, Howard Courtney, Paul Foley, Ann Davies, Joanne McRea, Patrick & Sidney Yenson, Matthew Tuffin, Joanne Martin, George & Therese Mir, Jack & Sylvia Wood.

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND		
TYPE	StR	MD
First	480	237
Second: loose	338	285
Envelopes	490	589

Both Churches have a hearing loop installed: switch your hearing aid to "T-coil".

Vinnies Christmas Appeal.

The annual appeal continues. There are still envelopes on the seats. As happens every year, Vinnies are also asking for non-perishable goods for their **Christmas Hampers**, for local families who are doing it tough at the moment. Items for hampers include sweet and savoury biscuits, tinned fruit, jams, nuts, jellies, tea, coffee, puddings, tarts.... Donation can be left at the Churches up until the weekend before Christmas. They will be distributed on 23 December.

If you would like to help with the distribution you would be most welcome and should be at the Kennedy Centre at Mater Dei by 5pm Monday 23 December. Your support is much appreciated.

As well as money, and items for hampers, the Mater Dei Pastoral Council has also recommended that parishioners be offered the opportunity to give a more personal gift to those who may not get many at Christmas time. There are tags (in a box under the Tree) which you can take and personalise to label your gift so that it gets to the right person—for example: a young child, a young mother, an older mother, an older single woman, an adult male. You can bring your wrapped and labelled gift to the Church and put it under the Christmas tree for St Vincent de Paul to collect. These gifts may not necessarily go to local families, but will certainly go to families in need in Sydney somewhere.



Calling all children to be part of a wonderful **Christmas musical celebration** at the Christmas Vigil Mass at 6.15pm on 24 December at Mater Dei. Children who enjoy singing, or play a musical instrument, are invited to rehearsals which continue in Mater Dei Church as follows: Sunday 22 December (after Mass) 11am – 12pm, Monday 23 December 9.30 – 10.30am. For more information please contact the Parish Office.



THE MUSTARD SEED BOOKSHOP EXTENDED CHRISTMAS TRADING HOURS. The Mustard Seed Bookshop will be extending its opening hours throughout December for the Christmas shopping season. The shop will be opening late on Thursdays - 5, 12 & 19 December till 9pm. The Mustard Seed Bookshop, 3 Keating Street Lidcombe bookshop@caec.com.au / 9646 9000 / www.mustardseed.org.au .



This Christmas, give the gift of friendship
 Christmas is a hard time of year for people who are alone. Could you spare an hour a week to ease someone's isolation?

Compeer is a mental health friendship program which matches volunteers in one-to-one friendship with someone in their local community who is isolated and living with a mental illness.

There is a huge need for adult male and female volunteers across Sydney to spend an hour a week doing social activities with a new friend, such as having coffee, watching the footy, or going for a walk.

Training and ongoing support is provided, and you will be connected to a welcoming community of volunteers through social events and catch-ups.

Your friendship can make a big difference to your new friend's quality of life, and help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.

"Compeer is a simple, meaningful way of making a difference." - Volunteer

To find out more about Compeer volunteering phone 9568 0295, visit the website www.compeer.org.au or email compeer.sydneycitysoutheast@vinnies.org.au

Father Macs Famous Christmas Puddings
 Family Size 1.6kg, small 800gm, Gluten Free 800gm, delivery arranged. Fax 93492146, phone 93493066, mobile 0419243285. (The Priests Retirement foundation benefits from every pudding sold. Why not order an extra one as a contribution for the Vinnies Christmas Hampers?)

HELPING PALMS
 Buying delicious, fair trade organic coffee, tea and hot chocolate for yourself or Christmas presents will help Palms Australia, a Catholic agency, support skilled Australian volunteers in long-term placements across Asia, Africa and the Pacific. Simply shop at www.coffup.com.au.

EXCERPT FROM EVANGELII GAUDIUM (Apostolic Exhortation by Pope Francis, issued November 2013)

The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew. In this Exhortation I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come....

II. The delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing

9. Goodness always tends to spread. Every authentic experience of truth and goodness seeks by its very nature to grow within us, and any person who has experienced a profound liberation becomes more sensitive to the needs of others. As it expands, goodness takes root and develops. If we wish to lead a dignified and fulfilling life, we have to reach out to others and seek their good. In this regard, several sayings of Saint Paul will not surprise us: "The love of Christ urges us on" (2 Cor 5:14); "Woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel" (1 Cor 9:16).

10. The Gospel offers us the chance to live life on a higher plane, but with no less intensity: "Life grows by being given away, and it weakens in isolation and comfort. Indeed, those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others".[4] When the Church summons Christians to take up the task of evangelization, she is simply pointing to the source of authentic personal fulfilment. For "here we discover a profound law of reality: that life is attained and matures in the measure that it is offered up in order to give life to others. This is certainly what mission means".[5] Consequently, an evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral! Let us recover and deepen our enthusiasm, that "delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow... And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervour, who have first received the joy of Christ".[6]



a FUNNY My husband's uncle thought he had conquered his problem of trying to remember his wife's birthday and their wedding anniversary. He opened an account with a florist, provided that florist with the dates and instructions to send flowers to his wife on these dates along with an appropriate note signed, "Your loving husband".

His wife was thrilled by this new display of attention and all went well until one day when he came home he saw a bouquet of flowers, kissed his wife and said offhandedly, "Nice flowers, my dear. Where'd you get them?"

This weekend St Raphael's Parish will farewell Jo Stores who is leaving the school to take up duty at the Catholic Education Office. She is very much loved and respected as an outstanding leader, and she will be sorely missed. The parish wishes her and her family the very best for the future. A new Principal has been selected who will take up the role in 2014.

This weekend we welcome Havana Pallister into the family of the Catholic Church at St Raphael's. Congratulations to her parents Alyssa and Luke.



The Fr Colin McKay Institute of Counselling, established in 1969, offers a course designed to develop skills in personal growth, communication, parenting and general counselling principles. Participants can learn new skills in dealing with daily personal challenges and the issues that arise within families, the school environment and in the workplace. It is conducted on Tuesday evenings within the school term between 7.30pm – 9.45pm at Holy Cross College, Victoria Road, Ryde commencing on Tuesday 4 February. For enquiries please contact: Michael Hill - 9869 3774 or 0410 774 432; Carol Harding - 9639 0096 or 0411 022 478; Janelle Carille - 0431 598 004

PARISH DIRECTORY

Parish Priest
Fr Isidore Anantharaj
 Phone: 95462605
 pp@materdeiparish.org.au
 Website: www.materdei-straphael.org.au
Presbytery & Parish Office
 1008 King Georges Rd.,
 Blakehurst, NSW 2221
 Fax: 95472323
Mater Dei Church: 1008 King Georges Rd,
 Blakehurst,
St Raphael's Church: 84 George St,
 South Hurstville
Parish Coordinator & Secretary:
 Maryanne Hemsley
 admin@materdeiparish.org.au
 Br. Joe Cassar
 9546 1232

Pastoral Assistant (St Raphael's):
 Br. Ben Krupowicz
 Phone: 9546 2544
Priest in Residence
 Fr. Jan Chrzczonowicz
 (Chaplain to the French)
 Mobile: 0412786 245

SCHOOLS:
Mater Dei Primary 9546 7298
 Principal: Mrs Jenni Payne
St Raphael's Primary 9546 4898
 Principal: Mrs Jo Stores