

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

There stands among you, unknown to you, the one who is coming after me.

A man came, sent by God.

His name was John.

He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, 'I am not the Christ.' 'Well then,' they asked 'are you Elijah?' 'I am not' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?' So John said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied:

a voice that cries in the wilderness:
Make a straight way for the Lord.'

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?' John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.' This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL

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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT / B

17 DECEMBER 2023

SHEER JOY

What brings joy to you? What makes your heart sing? Joy is infectious. Joy rings out today from the beginning of our prayer with the Entrance Antiphon "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near." (Phil 4:4-5). Isaiah proclaims, "I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God" (Isa 61:10). The psalm, drawn from the Magnificat in Luke, invites us to respond: "My soul rejoices in my God" (Luke 1:46), and we hear "My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God, my saviour" (vv. 46-47). Paul's final exhortation from his First Letter to the Thessalonians begins "Rejoice always" (1 Thess 5:16). What is the cause of all this rejoicing? It is the story of the Good News unfolding from the prophet Isaiah, becoming flesh through Mary's faithful response; it is God's gift of God's son, Jesus, born among us who has been raised. We draw near to the celebration of Jesus' birth but we live in the light of resurrection, so we have reason to rejoice.

Today's Gospel reveals the witness to the coming of Jesus, "a man sent from God" (John 1:6). We hear emphatic repetition of the truth with both "witness" and "light" repeated three times. John is the voice in the wilderness confirming "the one who is coming after" (1:27).

Today our hearts lift with joy amid all that might distress us. We are faithful believers in God's saving grace. Take a moment to hear: "Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks to God" (1 Thess 5:16-17).

Dr Rosemary Canavan

FIRST READING

Isa 61:1-2, 10-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah
I exult for joy in the Lord.

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me.

He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken; to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord. 'I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me in the garments of

salvation, he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity, like a bridegroom wearing his wreath, like a bride adorned in her jewels.

'For as the earth makes fresh things grow, as a garden makes seeds spring up, so will the Lord make both integrity and praise spring up in the sight of nations.'

■ The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

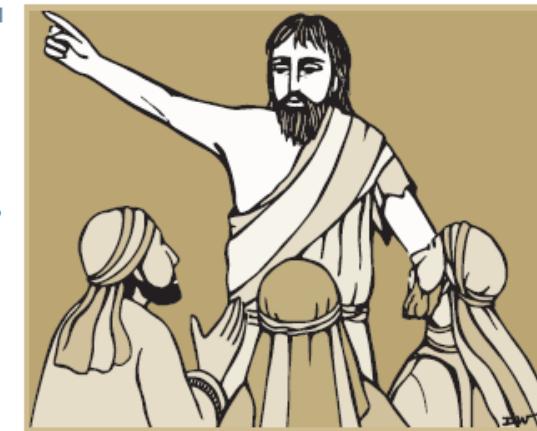
Lk 1:46-50, 53-54

R. My soul rejoices in my God.

1. My soul glorifies the Lord,/ my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour./ He looks on his servant in her nothingness;/ henceforth all ages will call me blessed. R.

2. The Almighty works marvels for me./ Holy his name!/ His mercy is from age to age,/ on those who fear him. R.

3. He fills the starving with good things,/ sends the rich away empty./ He protects Israel, his servant,/ remembering his mercy. R.



SECOND READING

1 Thess 5:16-24

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

May you all be kept blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus.

Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything – hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

■ 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!

17 Dec 23

Wk 3 Advent Yr B

WELCOME TO ST PATRICK'S CHURCH

Website: <https://stpatrickswesttamworthparish.org>

Email: westtamworthparish@armidale.catholic.org.au



Parish Priest

Fr Anthony Koppman

Pastoral Associate:

Sr Kathryn Sweeney RSJ

Administration

Di Bolitho, Anne Bowden

Sacristan

Elaine Smyth

School Principals

Greg O'Toole and Maree Holland

Office Hrs: Wed & Thurs 8.30-11.30 am

Presbytery 67658211

Pastoral Associate 0411703608

St Josephs School 67654079

WEEKEND
MASSES Sat: 5.30 pm Sun: 9 am Sun: 5 pm



CONFESIONS

Sat: 4.30-5.00 pm

*Or by appointment

WEEKDAY
MASSES Wed: 12 noon

Thur: 9 am Mass Fri: 12 noon Mass

ENTRANCE
ANTIPHON:

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

COMMUNION
ANTIPHON:

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

May God have mercy on all those asked to be remembered in prayer:

RECENTLY DECEASED: Cathie Menck, Sr Iris Fittler rsj, Jacqueline Galvin, Father Morrie Clarke.

ANNIVERSARIES: Richard Bowler (1/12), Perce McInnes (2/12), John Paul Vella (4/12), Pamela Mary Davy (nee Barry (6/1), Lawrence Vella (23/1), Anna Chu.

DECEASED: Hugh and Dalis O'Brien, John O'Brien, Raphael, Evita and Philomena Smith, Peter Nally, Fr John Carey, Sandra Sheedy, Frank Koppman (Fr Anthony's Dad).

SICK: Elaine Murray, Pauline Miller, Monica Austin, Margaret Doyle, Baby Walker MacAlpine, John Betts, Gerard Dunn, Sr Gerard Joseph, Shane Davidson, Joan Crowe, Lisa Foster, Norma O'Brien, Terry Dean, Barbara Brennan, Colin MacPherson, Graeme Bussell, Kate Harrison, Maureen Harrison, Deacon Peter Harrison, Alison and baby Huxley Gallagher, William Bonner, Fr Bernie Flood, Pauline Wiley.

VEENA'S VERSIONS

A teenage boy had just passed his driving test ... and asked his father as to when they could discuss his use of the car.

His father said he'd make a deal with his son, "You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk about the car" The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer and they agreed on it. After about six weeks his father said, "Son, you've brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm disappointed you haven't had your hair cut." The boy said, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair, and there's even strong evidence that Jesus had long hair." The father responded, "Did you also notice that they all walked everywhere !?"

CHURCH COLLECTIONS: BSB 082 105

1st. Collection West Tamworth Presbytery (Diocesan collection) Acc No: 001023642

2nd Collection West Tamworth Church (St Pats Church) Acc No:001041198

COMING EVENTS:

Dec 17 Parish Advent/Christmas Morning Tea after 9 am mass

Dec 24 Christmas Eve Mass 6pm Dec 25 Christmas 9am Mass

"The little crosses are harder to bear patiently than the thumping big ones" (1884)



CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Christmas Eve: Sunday 24 Dec 23 - Vigil Mass 6pm

Christmas Day: Monday 25 Dec 23 - Christmas Mass 9am

**** No evening Mass on Christmas Day**



PRAYER FOR OUR NEW BISHOP

God our Father, in Jesus, your Son,

You have given to your Church the perfect model of priest, prophet and king, and so You have blessed us through His sacrifice, taught us through His Word, and guided us through His rule. We ask You, Father, to guide and enlighten those who will be tasked with helping to choose the next bishop of our diocese.

May the person they choose be one of deep and true prayer, a person of a compassionate heart and firm resolve,

and a person of joy and peace, who desires above all to do Your will. We entrust our prayers to our Patroness, Mary, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, and ask this through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen



ADVENT PREPARATION: As the end of the year speeds to a conclusion there is always much to do and prepare for. If you will be away over the Christmas period and unable to fulfil your commitments such as reading, preparation, cleaning and counting etc could you please notify the parish of your dates of unavailability so rosters may be prepared accordingly. Thank you
How long till Christmas : <https://www.timeanddate.com/countdown/christmas>
try this link in your browser (7 days this Sunday).

CHRISTMAS EVENTS AT ST PATRICKS: ; Parish Morning Tea this Sunday 17 December after 9am mass—please bring a plate if you are able to. Christmas Eve mass at 6 pm is the Vigil Mass for Christmas Day and will not meet your Sunday mass obligation for the weekend.

IMMACULATA MISSION SCHOOL 2024: FISHERS OF MEN: Daily Mass, Adoration and the Rosary, praise and worship, fellowship and more! There are two different programs, -Youth & adults (14 years & up): 1-6 Jan. 2024 Married couples & families (specifically designed for married couples. Includes children's and teens program): 7-10 Jan 2024. Special guest speakers: Dan & Stephanie Burke from the USA (co-founders of the Avila Institute, presenters on EWTN. Dan is an author of over 15 books on Catholic spirituality), plus Fr Francesco Gavazzi (from the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal). Held: NEGS (New England Girls' School), Armidale



WEEK 6 ROSTER: 17/12/23

Vigil: R D Gowing, G Styman

9am Sun: R S Brown, A Sartori

5.00pm Sun: R M Murray D Bearman

Counting Team G & M Thrift, A Bowden

Altar Linen: J Hutt

WEEK 1 ROSTER: 24/12/23

Christmas Vigil: R Sr Kathryn P Bamford

9am Sun: R S Nichols G Clout

5.00pm Sun: No Mass

Counting Team O & J Whale, A Bowden

Altar Linen: M Vella

We acknowledge the First Nations people who have walked upon and care for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations people to this land and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

