

First Reading. Isaiah 35: 1—6, 10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Let the wilderness and the dry-lands exult,
Let the wasteland rejoice and bloom,
Let it bring forth flowers like the jonquil,
Let it rejoice and sing for joy.

The glory of Lebanon is bestowed on it,
The splendour of Carmel and Sharon;
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
The splendour of our God.

Strengthen all weary hands,
Steady all trembling knees
And say to all faint hearts,
'Courage! Do not be afraid.

'Look, your God is coming,
Vengeance is coming,
The retribution of God;
He is coming to save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
The ears of the deaf unsealed,
Then the lame shall leap like a deer
And the tongues of the dumb sing for joy,
For those the Lord has ransomed shall return.

They will come to Zion shouting for joy,
Everlasting joy on their faces;
Joy and gladness will go with them
and sorrow and lament be ended.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm. Ps 145:6-10. R. see Is 35:4.

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. ®

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. ®

It is the Lord who loves the just

But thwarts the path of the wicked.

The Lord will reign for ever,
Zion's God, from age to age, ®

Second Reading. Jas 5:7-10.

A reading from the letter of St James.

Be patient, brothers, until the Lord's coming. Think of a farmer: how patiently he waits for the precious fruit of the ground until it has had the autumn rains and the spring rains! You too have to be patient; do not lose heart, because the Lord's coming will be soon. Do not make complaints against one another, brothers, so as not to be brought to judgement yourselves; the Judge is already to be seen waiting at the gates. For your example, brothers, in submitting with patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation Is 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!

Gospel. Mt 11:2-11

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?' Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor; and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.'

As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: he is the one of whom scripture says: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way before you. I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**OUR LOCAL CHURCH TO
THE PLENARY COUNCIL**

“Gaudete in Domino Semper”

“Rejoice in the Lord always.

Archbishop Prowse is inviting clergy and laity to discern if they feel called to nominate as one of two delegates who will join with the Archbishop, Fr Tony Percy, our diocesan Vicar General and Mons John Woods our diocesan Episcopal Vicar for Education.

Further information is available from the parish office including an Expression of Interest form to be completed.

Any person who expresses their interest in being called by our diocese to be a delegate to the Plenary Council must be available for the following dates:

Melbourne 18-20/6/20, Brisbane 25-27/6/20,
Sydney 16-18/7/20, Perth 23-25/7/20.
Plenary Council General Assembly 4-11/10/20
and 28/6-3/7/20.

Anyone who cannot be available for all of these dates, unfortunately is ineligible to be called.

Today’s readings invite us to rejoice at the rebirth of Jesus in our lives as we are preparing for our annual Christmas celebration. Today is called Gaudete Sunday because today’s Mass begins with the opening antiphon: “*Guadete in domino semper,*” i.e., “*Rejoice in the Lord always.*” So we light the rose candle, and the priest may wear rose vestments, to express our joy in the coming of Jesus as our saviour.

The prophet Isaiah, in the First reading, encourages the exiled Jews in Babylon to rejoice because their God is going to liberate them from slavery and lead them safely to their homeland. In the Second reading, James the Apostle encourage the early Christians to rejoice and wait with patience for the imminent second coming of Jesus.

Welcome Fr George Azhakath MSFS

to the Sacred Heart Parish Moruya and Districts.

Father George was born in central Kerala state in India. He is the fourth child of Varghese and Teresa and belongs to the Syro-Malabar Rite. He studies at the Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Theology, Bangalore, India. He was ordained a Priest in 1989 and is a member of the Missionaries of St Francis de Sales (SFS), a French Order.

Father worked for 14 years in India in various capacities as an assistant priest, including finance procurator, minor seminary assistant rector, administrator of a Spirituality Institute, SFS Publications, etc.

He came to Australia and worked in the Archdiocese of Sydney for twelve years and then in the Diocese of Parramatta for two years.

Expressions of interest to be sent by 25th January, 2010.

SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN BUSY.

Both St Mary’s and Carroll College have held their Giving Masses where donations of food have been collected and given to St Vincent de Paul for inclusion in their Christmas hampers.

St Mary’s Year 6 students celebrated their Graduation Mass and Dinner this week also.

Finally, in the first part of today’s Gospel reading, Jesus encourages John the Baptist in prison to rejoice by casting away his wrong expectations about the Messiah and simply to accept his healing and preaching ministry as the fulfilling of the messianic prophecy of Isaiah. In the second part of today’s gospel, Matthew presents Jesus, the true Messiah, paying the highest compliments to John the Baptist as his herald and the last of the prophets, and giving special credit to the courage of John’s prophetic convictions.

CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH INVITATION.

All are invited to attend the Christmas Day lunch held in the Anglican Red Door hall in Page Street, Moruya on Christmas Day at noon.



Come and be company for others and perhaps for yourself. There is no charge and you just turn up.

If you would like to know more contact:

Ilonka 0428213787.

Everyone is welcome.

REFLECTION by Fr Michael Tate.

The Right Question.

John was languishing in prison, held captive by the local agent of the Roman Empire. Perhaps he was looking for evidence that Jesus was the One who would throw off Roman despotism. In answer to his questing, Jesus replied that John should rather look at what was happening on the ground in His healing ministry and orientation to the poor. *Those* are the signs that the reign of God has begun.

I admire John the Baptist because he was prepared to seek and accept the answer to the question which was crucial to him, even though the answer might upset his preconceptions. He was a true seeker after Truth.

All our activities as a parish in building community, forming faith, serving the poor, participating in the liturgy, should be undertaken so that a seeker after Truth might see and hear the evidence of the presence and mission of the risen Lord Jesus Christ amongst us.

We could pause for a moment to simply pray in the spirit of Advent: "Come, Lord Jesus' to satisfy the restlessness of the questing heart.

Fr Michael Tate: mtate@bigpond.com.

Currently Vicar General in the Archdiocese of Hobart, Tasmania.

NELLIGEN BOAT TRIP.

All are invited to join us on Thursday 16th January as we travel up the Clyde to Nelligen. The boat leaves at 11.30am. Cost is \$45 pp, \$22 child 5—14 years old. The cost includes the trip, fish and chips for lunch and afternoon tea on the way back. We will be able to have

a close up look at the new bridge being built. If you have grandchildren bring them along, families are welcome too, it is why we have chosen January. We can car pool.

Next weekend a list will be at the back of the Church. We just need an indication of those interested.

Contact either Caring Group for more information or Pat.

ARCHBISHOPS'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE.

The Christmas Season gives us a great opportunity to reflect more deeply on the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ in the humble manger in Bethlehem.

Like all newly born babies, Jesus is totally defenceless. By defenceless I mean that he is totally dependent on his parents. Mary and Joseph look after him in every way as any loving and caring parents would for their new born babe.

At the end of the life of Jesus we find Him again being totally defenceless on the Calvary Cross. Now as an adult, taking the sins of the world on Himself, he goes from the wooden manger to the wooden cross and is totally dependent on God, our Heavenly Father, to raise him up at the Resurrection.

Also, during the life of Jesus, from birth to death, he is often heard expressing his total dependence on his Heavenly Father, who He calls "Abba".

Let us unite with the defencelessness of Jesus at this Christmas time. Let us therefore become totally dependent, like the new born babe Jesus, on the Lord while facing the challenges of our daily life.

We become defences when we listen really carefully to others rather than talking. As we gather with our family and friends over Christmas time, let us be conscious of listening and building bridges by becoming vulnerable and defenceless in the face of everyday family challenges. At the same time, many of those on the periphery of life find they are totally defenceless regarding their need of the basic necessities of life, things you and I take for granted at Christmas time. Let us be extra sensitive to their needs.

Happy Christmas to you all and may God bless you and your families.

Archbishop Christopher Prowse.

**Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn
December 2019.**



SACRED HEART PARISH.

Third Sunday of Advent Year A.

14-15/12/2019.

Moruya Sacred Heart Parish.

36 Queen Street.

(P.O. Box 23)

Moruya. NSW. 2537.

Fr. George Azhakath.: 44742024.

Email: Moruya@cg.org.au.

Web: <http://cg.org.au/Moruya>

CARING GROUPS:

Tuross Head 0497 315 534.

Moruya: 0431 354 993.

SCHOOLS:

St Mary's: 4474 2817

Carroll College: 44715600

REGULAR MASS TIMES:

Sat: 6pm. Moruya.

Sun: 8am 'The Pines' Tuross Head.

10am. Moruya.

Mon: 9.15am Communion Service

Tues: 5.30pm Mass

Wed: 9.15am Mass

2.00 pm Mass Banksia Village

Thurs: 9.15am Mass

First Thursday of the month

10.30am. Mass. IRT. Moruya

Rosary: After mass.

Reconciliation: 10—10.30 am Sat.

**Baptisms, Anointings, Weddings
and Funerals by appointment.**

Please pray for the sick:

Fr. Kevin Murphy, Lee and Jerome Maat, Gail Moss, Kay Morton, Laurie-Anne Foran, John Bolton, Norman Collins, Graham Beer.

For the souls of: Yvonne Dunn, whose funeral was held on Friday 13th December and for Marie Irwin whose funeral will be held on Tuesday 17th December 11am. And Liz Hallahan and all who's death occurs about this time.

CHRISTMAS MASSES 2019:

Saturday 21/12.	6pm.	Moruya.
Sunday 22/12.	8am	Tuross Head.
	10am	Moruya
Monday 23/12	NO MASS.	
Tuesday 24/12	6pm.	St Mary's Oval.
	Midnight	Moruya
Wednesday 25th/12	8am	Tuross Head
	10am	Moruya
	*8 am.	Bodalla

*** Please note the new time for Bodalla Mass on Christmas Day.**

SECOND RITE OF RECONCILIATION

Wednesday 18th December, 2019. 7pm.

WELCOME TO FR. GEORGE.



**Come along next Sunday 22nd December
and meet Fr George.**

**A 'cuppa' will be held in the church yard
after the 10am Mass.**

If you can bring a plate to share it would be appreciated.