



3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
YEAR B

17 December 2023

LITURGY AND BULLETIN

### OPENING PRAYER

*Lord God,*

*may we, your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ  
experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast  
with love and thanksgiving. Amen.*

**FIRST READING:** A reading from the prophet Isaiah

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 the nations.'

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

**Response: 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:** A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

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.

**Gospel Acclamation**

Alleluia, alleluia!

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

Alleluia!

**GOSPEL:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 1:6-8, 19-28

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.



## Reflection on the Gospel of John 1:6-8, 19-28 by Greg Sunter

This week's gospel should sound very familiar. It is the gospel of John version of the passage used in last week's liturgy, which came from the gospel of Mark. Again it recalls the ministry of John the Baptist but it is given the particular slant of the gospel of John. Aside from the greater focus on the conversational interaction, it presents John as a 'witness'. This is perhaps more typical of the John gospel emphasis on personal encounter with Jesus. Rather than acting as something of a herald, as in last week's account, here John the Baptist is witnessing 'to speak for the light'. He makes a very clear distinction between himself and the Christ, his mission is simply to point towards the light; the Christ.

Our common understanding of the word 'witness' tends to be related to legal situations: providing a witness statement or acting as a witness to a fact in court. The use of witness in this gospel carries a different connotation: to provide witness through action and lifestyle that draws others to wonder about and perhaps come to accept the motivating belief. It is this understanding of witness that all Christians are called to provide. We are called to witness to our beliefs in the way that we live our lives, engage with others and hold to certain truths. Of course, there are some Christians who believe that their witness needs to be more obvious and more clearly stated. They feel that providing witness, or testimony, to their faith through spoken proclamation has a greater potential to change lives. Whether we choose to witness through our words or through our actions it is essential that both words and actions have integrity; that there is no clash between what we proclaim and the way we live.

### PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

We pray for all believers anointed by the Spirit in baptism and confirmation, that they will gladly play their part in the church's mission of grace. (Pause) Lord, hear us.

We pray for the multitude of human beings afflicted with poverty in all its forms; that the good news will come to them not just as words but as practical relief. (Pause) Lord, hear us.

We pray for the whole of humanity; that by God's grace and favour this year of conflict and struggle will give way to a new year of solidarity, justice and peace. (Pause) Lord, hear us.

We pray for today's children and young people; that the pledges made at the climate summit in the United Arab Emirates will assure them of a future in a safe and healthy world. (Pause) Lord, hear us.

We pray for teachers and students at primary schools across the land, that they will look back over the school year with pride and enjoy a refreshing long break. (Pause) Lord, hear us.

We pray for ourselves in this last week of the Advent season, that we will heed Paul's advice and be happy, pray constantly, and for all things give thanks to God. (Pause) Lord, hear us.

We pray for all who suffer in mind, body or spirit, especially Kerry Prothero, Des Pollard, Dennis Dempsey, Fr. Mick, Tony Riley, Jenny Bodman, those on our prayer list and all who need our prayers. May they not suffer alone but be assured of the love and care of the whole community. (Pause) Lord, hear us

We pray for those who have died recently Darren Rowley . . . and for those whose anniversary of death occurs around this time, that they will be clothed joyfully in the garments of eternal salvation. (Pause) Lord, hear us.

### CONCLUDING PRAYER

*Lord, have mercy on your people.*

*Grant us in this life the good things that lead to the everlasting life you prepare for us. Amen*

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**PARISH ADMINISTRATOR: Father Tony Percy M. 0431 225 574**

**Braidwood Contact Numbers: Ph. 4842 2444; Mobile: 0430 169 849 (Helen)**

**Parish email: [braidwood@cg.org.au](mailto:braidwood@cg.org.au)**

**Parish Website: <http://cg.org.au/braidwood/Home.aaspx>**

**SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: Marylou Gorham Ph. 4842 2413**

**PARISH OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays: 9.30am – 3.30pm; Fridays: 9.30am – 12.30pm**

**Mass: Saturdays at 6.00pm.**

**Meditation: Thursdays in Presbytery at 10.30am**

**Christmas Mass: Vigil 24<sup>th</sup> December at 5pm.**

**1<sup>st</sup> Rite of Reconciliation: Saturday evenings before Mass 5.30-5.45pm**

**Vinnies Christmas Appeal is still open.** Envelopes are available on pews. Place in 2<sup>nd</sup> (green) bag.

**Braidwood Community Christmas Party and Shopping Night Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> Dec from 3-7pm**

**St Bede's Christmas markets: Sat 16 December from 8am – 1pm.** Last chance for that last minute gift. We have had a ham donated for the Dec raffle, so feel a hamper is now unnecessary.

**Parish Christmas get-together: Drinks and Nibbles under the bell 16<sup>th</sup> December after Mass.** Please bring a plate to share and BYO drinks. Tea/coffee supplied.

**Readings for Mass: 1<sup>st</sup>: Isaiah 61:1-2,10-11. 2<sup>nd</sup>: 1 Thes. 5:16-24. Gospel: John 1:6-8,19-28.**

**Next week: 1<sup>st</sup>: Samuel 7:1-5,8-12,14-16. 2<sup>nd</sup>: Romans 16:25-27. Gospel: Luke 1:26-38**

**Radio Church: Sundays at 6pm**

<b>Ministries for our Mass:</b>	<b>16 Dec</b>	<b>23 Dec</b>	<b>24 Dec 5pm</b>	<b>30 Dec</b>	<b>6 Jan</b>
Welcomer:	Helen P	Cathy F	Helen P	Geraldine	Helen P
Acolyte:		Felix (when available)			
Reader 1:	Germaine	Ann T	TBA	Cathy	Tommy
Reader 2:	Bobbie	Wendy H	Germaine	Michael	Bobbie
<b>Ministries of service:</b>	<b>15 Dec</b>	<b>24 Dec</b>	<b>29 Dec</b>	<b>5 Jan</b>	
Altar Decorating:	Joy	All please	Helen P	Cathy F	
Cleaning:		Pauline & Bobbie		Bronnie & Felix	
Counters: 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday:	Pauline & Bobbie.		2 <sup>nd</sup> : Sunday: Wendy H		
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday:	Brenda		4 <sup>th</sup> : Phil Owen		5 <sup>th</sup> Helen Bopping

Please advise if you are unable to fulfil your roster or get a substitute from the list on the reverse side of the roster, so alternative arrangements may be made.

Cast of Kinder  
Nativity

Take care of each other,

Helen Hart



The Parish of St Bede's Braidwood acknowledges the Yuin people, the Traditional Custodians who have walked upon and cared for this land for many thousands of years. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.