



St Paul Apostle Catholic Community

One Family

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First Sunday of ADVENT Year B, 2-3 December, 2023

Reflection on pilgrimage to Vietnam orphanages

In the September school holidays, our whole family braved the 8 hour plane flight to Vietnam for a pilgrimage, facilitated by the Passionist priest Fr Peter Gardiner.

What We Did

We first spent a couple of days at a school for children with blindness. We spent time in their classrooms participating in their lessons, praying in the chapel with them, and making friends with the students who we quickly became attached to. Music was a great connector, and we had a lot of fun attempting to play "Simon Says" and "Duck Duck Goose" with the teenagers, and "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" with the little ones.

We then spent a morning at a Buddhist Pagoda preparing meals for those in need. We were all put to work (even our 2 year old!) chopping cucumbers, mixing huge woks full of veggies, and putting rubber bands around the food boxes in the packaging assembly line. In Australia, kids under 18 are not allowed to participate in work like this, so this was really special to be part of and there was a great sense of camaraderie in our family and with the other workers there who welcomed us seamlessly into their operation without hesitation. That afternoon we visited an orphanage where all of the children had severe physical or intellectual disabilities. We spent time interacting with the kids as best we could as so many were non-verbal and/or unable to move. There was lots of clapping, singing, high fives, hugs and gross-motor games like tag.

Two days later we took about 30 kids from the Mai Tam Centre to an outdoor swimming pool for a fun experience they don't normally have. Kids from the Mai Tam Centre were all born with HIV and many have been abandoned by their families. These children fell in love with our kids and we had a lot of fun not only at the pools, but then back at the centre dancing, playing musical statues and musical chairs, and having pillow fights. On our last day we visited "The Francis Shelter" - a home for kids, adults and the elderly with physical or intellectual disabilities who have no family or anyone to care for them. We helped feed some of the children with severe disabilities, many of

whom had physical restraints so they could not hurt themselves. We went upstairs and said hello to many of the elderly. There were many giggles at our attempts of saying "Xin chao" (hello), many big smiles and warm handshakes and even some thank you's for coming.

Our Top 3 Takeaways Now We are Back Here in Australia

1. God wants us to think big, outside of our comfort zones and the limitations we place on ourselves to use the gifts we have been given to love and serve all those around us.
2. We should never underestimate the power of our touch, our smile, and our time. Our mere presence is a present.
3. We have so much to be grateful for...not only for the blessings that come from living in Australia, but also just being able to see, get out of bed, walk - and for family that loves us!

The Lawless Family:

Nicholas, Isabelle, Emmanuel, Odella, Joash, Aliyah, Augustine, Piera, and Miriam
(Miriam had not yet been born at that stage)



Moved by the experience and on returning to their 'comfortable' surrounds, the family decided they wanted to engage in some action to support the orphanages. The whole family now are trying to raise funds for a 'Christmas Gift' to those whom they encountered in Vietnam by selling lemonade and biscuits after 9am & 11am Masses. All proceeds will go to the Vietnamese orphanages and assist the work of Fr Peter Gardiner CP. Your support for family 'giving' spirit will be greatly appreciated.

Weekday Masses

Monday
9am Mass

Tuesday
9am Mass

Wednesday
7pm Mass

Thursday
9am Mass

Friday
9am Mass

Saturday
6pm

Sunday
9am, 11am and 6pm

Please note Sunday 11am is also
ONLINE

Please click on this link to follow
https://youtube.com/live/MC20Ff_1mzE?feature=share

Reconciliation
Saturdays
10am—10.30am

Priests:

Fr Brendan Connell CP (PP)
Fr Luke Bulley CP

Parish Staff:

Gillian Velupillay (Bursar)
Didi Karkas (Secretary)

Passionist Community

Fr Brendan Connell CP
Fr Kevin Hennessy CP
Fr Luke Bulley CP
Dcn Tuan Paul Anh-Do CP

St Paul Apostle North

Primary School
Ph. 9700 6068
Principal
Mrs Mary Lucas

St Paul Apostle South

Primary School
Ph. 9700 3663
Principal
Mr Paul Gleeson

St John's

Regional College
Ph. 9791 3366
Principal
Mr Tim Hogan

Readings for Next Week

Third Sunday of ADVENT Yr B

First Reading

Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations

Psalm

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

The Lord has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Brothers and sisters,
rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.
May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this

Gospel

John 1:6-8, 19-28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said.
Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing

Reflection on the readings

Q. Are there forms of witnessing to faith that 'turn you off'?

Q. How can you effectively witness to your faith?

Second Sunday of ADVENT

This time, children are invited to bring home one of the DOVE pictures.

Children are asked to decorate, colour in and return their artwork to the Church next weekend
to be hung as decorations to adorn our Christmas Tree



We are committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and vulnerable adults

THANK YOU

To all who have helped at the Senior's Christmas lunch event, from planning, preparations, work on the actual day and cleaning up after. Once again, Peter has completed the fun with his fantastic singing. Most important, thank you to all who have attended the event, as without you, this event would have not taken place.

Thank you!

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Thank you to all who have contacted the parish office and kindly offered their assistance. By now we should have contacted you with some feedback. We have now been informed by St Vincent de Paul that they have enough people to help with the deliveries

GARDENING—16 December

Our gardening day is **SATURDAY the 16th of December, commencing at 8.30am** and running for about 2 hrs (however, feel free to come at a time which suits you)
All are welcome to help. Just come along and remember to bring your gardening tools.

ADVENT REFLECTION BOOK—Few copies left

There are only a few copies left at the Piety Stall. Priced at \$7 each (this only covers the cost of obtaining the booklet)

PARISH CHRISTMAS CAROLS at Martin Place

Finally, we have set the date for this annual event. It will be held on **SUNDAY, 17th December after 6pm Mass until 9pm**. Fr Chris and his team will be leading us singing carols. Our parish choirs will also take part during



the night. Weather permitting, we will hold the carols at Martin Place (the backyard of the Parish Office). Please come along and join us carolling

HAMPER

Please remember the following:

- 1/ Mark the hamper with the **'CODE'** from the coloured card
- 2/ Bring the hamper to the church by **Sunday 17th December**, before 6pm Mass. We kindly ask you to ensure you deliver your hamper to Church on time

The agencies will be picking them up on Monday the 18th of December, in the morning.
If you wish to make up a hamper, but missed out on one from the list, please feel free to make one up and mark it as 'SPARE'

Children's Nativity Play (Christmas Eve 6pm Mass)

As mentioned last weekend, this year we are trying to revive the nativity play. Thank you to those who have put their name down to be involved. If your children wish to join in and have not as yet put their names down, please call the parish office or just come to practice on **TUESDAY, 12th December at 4pm in the Church**. This invitation is open to young children up to 14 years of age

HOLY WATER

We now have Blessed Water available in the foyer. Please feel free to take some at any time. However, if you want a large amount, please let the office know so we can organize it separately.

Mission Catholic and Melbourne Overseas Missions

This weekend, we have a special collection to support the work of the Mission Catholic and Melbourne Overseas Mission.

Readings:

Second Sunday of ADVENT Year B

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 ;
2 Peter 3:8-14 ;
Mark 1:1-8

Third Sunday of ADVENT Year B

Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11;
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24;
John 1:6-8, 19-28

www.universalis.com

This weekend we pray for:

Those who are sick

Annette Evans, Meti Pereira-VanEijk, Danny Sugunasekera, Imelda Lynch, Agnes Fernandez, Shirley C. Esteban, Joaquina Braz, Norah Ekanayake, Grace Sprigg, Lara Moyle, Michael D' Silva, Lina Jom, Giorgia Vella, Lucia Lay, Bernardo Cabrera, Anne Ghatt, June Enright, Leang Diep, Roger Gray, Anthona Henderson, Nimal Pandithakoralage, Cecil Harper, Nicole Pinto, Toni Celona, Shinead Kralj, Carlos Aquino, Jamie Cabrera, Angela Schink, Roy Conyers, Sandra D'Costa, Annette Perera, Ronald Peters, Godfrey Joseph, Camilla D'Rozario, Esric Jackson, Emily Broadbent, *and All those in aged care or home-bound with chronic health issues*

Those who have died

Brian Dwyer, Serge De Mezieres, Aurora Mesa-Manzanilla Vda de Jover, Marcia Harter, Natividad Inductivo Chua, Sonia Singh, Matthew Brady, Asesela Cokanacagi, Meresiana Cokanacagi, Francisco Bernardes, Russell Sugunasekera, Verna Cole, Joe Madeira, Emmanuel Cardona *and all who are named in our church memorial book*

May they rest in peace

**"DON'T LET ANYONE
LOOK DOWN ON YOU
BECAUSE YOU ARE
YOUNG, BUT BE AN
EXAMPLE IN THE WAY
YOU SPEAK AND BEHAVE,
IN YOUR LOVE, FAITH
AND PURITY"
1 TIMOTHY 4:12**

ST PAUL APOSTLE

4:12 YOUTH

**\$5
DONATION**

**YEAR'S
5-9**

**CHRISTMAS
EDITION!**



FRIDAY, 15 DEC. 7-9PM

FOOD . FAITH . FUN

FR TIM O'TOOLE ANNEXE

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