

Parish Newsletter

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT | 2 DECEMBER 2018
CYCLE C | ISSUE 01

It was only last week I heard of a person identifying the end of the world to be in October 2018 (I write in July 2018) – so on the off-chance you're reading this – it looks like he was wrong. Anyhow it reminds of an amusing story of a meeting that took place between Saints Peter and Paul and some senior archangels: Gabriel, Raphael and Michael. With the year ending, they were balancing up the books on the people of the earth. The bottom line was that 70 per cent of the human race had become so deviant and degenerate and corrupt that something had to be done. It was 'Sodom and Tomorrow' rather than 'Sodom and Gomorrah' but the action was needed again by way of another great flood. Raphael, who, is the angel of healing asked, was it fair to punish the 'good' 30 per cent with the 'bad' 70 per cent? Gabriel the messenger helpfully said not to worry, that he could contact the 30 per cent, give them the date of the next flood and tell them where to go for safety, where they would survive. St Paul was on hand to draft yet another letter. All were agreed and the letter was sent.

As I heard it the storyteller paused then and somebody asked, 'What did the letter say? What is the date and where is the safe place?' To which the raconteur replied,

THE TIMES THAT ARE IN IT...

'Goodness! Didn't you get a letter?'

Thankfully it's just a yarn – because I didn't get a letter either. But there is a message today from the Lord for everyone. Christmas is almost upon us. We will hear the age-old story of the birth of Jesus, the Christ-child. The manger, the joy of Mary and Joseph and the shepherds, the joy of the elderly couple Simeon and Anna and of the Magi (wise men) who find the Christ-child after a long, hard journey. But you can feel the sorrow of the story also, which we gloss over. The power-grabbing Herod did slaughter the innocent children, the Baby Jesus' life is in danger. Jesus, Mary and Joseph are forced to flee their homeland and become refugees.

Today's Gospel is not about being a killjoy but it is realistic. God comes

to us in our joy and each of us has special moments and times of joy and it is good to realise that God is with us – loving us in those days of 'wines and roses'. But there are other moments, too, that we are asked to live through. When they do, we are to stand erect, hold our heads high, for our liberation is near at hand (Gospel).

– Tom Cox

THIS WEEK (3-9 DECEMBER)

- 3 **Mon** St Francis Xavier, priest
- 4 **Tue** St John Damascene, priest and doctor
- 5 **Wed** St Crispina, martyr
- 6 **Thur** St Nicholas, bishop
- 7 **Fri** St Ambrose, bishop and doctor
- 8 **Sat** THE IMM. CONCEPTION OF THE BVM
- 9 **Sun** SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS



Baruch 5:1-9
Psalm 125:1-16
Philippians 1:4-6,8-11
Luke 3:1-6

Reflection

How do we prepare ourselves worthily for the birth of Jesus?

Lesson

There is a call for us to persevere in centring our lives in Jesus.

Prayer

Lord, as I prepare myself for Christmas, let my thoughts be on you and my less privileged brothers and sisters in society. Let my preparation be more a spiritual one rather than a material one. Amen.