

SOUTH OTAGO PASTORAL AREA
Parishes of Balclutha, Milton and Lawrence

Advent Bulletin – 27 November 2022

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Parish Council Contacts:

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Weekend Masses:

Lawrence – 5.30pm Saturday
1st Sunday – 11am

Milton – 9am Sunday
Saturday

Balclutha – 10.30am Sunday
1st Sunday – 5.30pm Vigil

Weekday Masses:

Lawrence – 4pm Wednesday

Milton – 9am

Balclutha – 10am Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

Reconciliation - On request, or:

Balclutha prior to Vigil Mass @ 5pm, Milton after 9am Mass Saturdays, Lawrence prior to Vigil Mass

SUNDAY READINGS FOR THE COMING MONTH – Year A

27th November – 1st Sunday of Advent – Isaiah 2:1-5, Romans 13:11-14, Matthew 24:37-44

4th December – 2nd Sunday of Advent – Isaiah 11:1-10, Romans 15:4-9, Matthew 3:1-12

11th December – 3rd Sunday of Advent – Isaiah 35:1-6.10, James 5:7-10, Matthew 11:2-11

18th December – 4th Sunday of Advent – Isaiah 7:10-14, Romans 1:1-7, Matthew 1:18-24

Advent

Carl Houselander wrote that “Advent is the season of the seed. Christ loved this symbol of the seed. The seed, he said, is the Word of God sown in the human heart.”

The idea that the power which made the universe and everything in it could reduce itself to an infinitesimally small cluster of cells in the womb of a human woman, is truly, to use the language of Saint Paul, a scandal – skandalon – and not just to the Greeks. It is clinging to this ineffable, impossible mystery, that defines the life of faith.

While Advent only takes around four weeks, in those weeks the Church invites us to re-run all the events of that extraordinary conception and gestation. We need to hear the Word speak of himself, in order to remember who we ourselves are called to be. As Ann Voskamp says the word “conceive” is not in fact “passive, but an active verb.” And “it’s root in Latin means nothing less than to *seize*, to *take hold of*. When grace conceives in you, you take hold of God.”

Here then is the paradox of our religion. That God reaches out from his ineffable glory into the very heart and flesh of our humanity. He comes into being as a man who walks among us, teaching, healing, and showing us what love truly is: to the point of giving his life into the heart of darkness that is fallen humanity. The Word and the seed become one: God with us, Emmanuel, the face we seek, made visible at last in the features of a newborn.

Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do and seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!" Amen.

- Henri J.M. Nouwen

We pray for those recently deceased: and those whose anniversaries are at this time:
**Joan Gill, Gottfried Wimmer, Dennis Maber, Doreen Smeehuyzen, Michael Gregan,
Robert Byers, Terry Ryan, Henry Owen, Bill Darmody.**

Priest's Retreat - All the Priests of the Dunedin Diocese will be gathering for their annual retreat this coming week; Monday 28 November – Friday 2 December. Please keep them all in your prayers. Week day gathering in Balclutha at 10am will be a Service of the Word with Holy Communion. Fr Jacob can be contacted if there is an emergency need.

Reflection during Advent – a time of spiritual preparation for Christmas Joy. This is being held in St Mary MacKillop Church the Fridays of Advent. A time of learning, reflection, prayer and song. All are welcome. Please note the two different start times: Friday 25th – 7.00pm. Friday 2nd – 7.00pm. Friday 9th – 6.00pm. Friday 16th – 6.00pm. All are most welcome to attend. Thank you, Iosefa for leading us.

Sunday afternoon Mass – with Fr Sani Lam in St Mary MacKillop Church. Sunday 4th December, 2.00pm. All are welcome. Shared meal to follow in St Mary MacKillop Centre.

Holy Hour, Adoration and Benediction – this will be delayed a week this month due to the Priest's retreat – Now: Thursday 8th December 6.30pm at St Mary MacKillop Church.

Second Friday Evening Mass – with Fr Fredy Permentilla in St Mary MacKillop Church. Friday 9th December, 7.00pm (after the Advent Study). All are welcome. Shared meal to follow in St Mary MacKillop Centre. Fr Fredy will be moving to be Parish Priest in Oamaru early in 2023.

Bambinelli Sunday – 3rd Sunday of Advent – 11th December 2022.

Each year on Gaudete/Rose Sunday, Third Sunday of Advent, children and adults bring their Baby Jesus figure from the crib at their homes, to St Peter's Square, where the Pope blesses both the people and the figurines. You are invited to bring the Baby Jesus figure from your home to Mass that day to be blessed. Perhaps, take your 'bambinelli' home, place it in a gift box, wrap it, and save it for Christmas. Let this be the first gift your family opens on Christmas morning, when together you place your Baby Jesus figure in the crib.

Reconciliation/Confession – available for all in the St Mary MacKillop Church. Friday 16th December 6.30pm (after the Advent Study).

Pre-Christmas Anointing Mass – Tuesday 20th December 10.00am in St Mary MacKillop Church. All are welcome to this Mass of special grace. Morning tea to follow.

Christmas Masses

Balclutha: Christmas Vigil – 10.00pm (Carols 9.30pm) **and** Christmas Day – 11.00am

Lawrence: Christmas Day – 9.00am

Milton: Christmas Vigil – 8.00pm

Please mark all these above important dates on your calendar now so that your Advent is a special time of preparation for Christmas Joy.

There will be a later edition 'Christmas' Pastoral Area Bulletin available for Sunday 18th December. If you would like to contribute something from your Parish group by way of reflection, highlights from the year in picture or word form, or a thank you message; please get these to the Bulletin compilation email address before that date so that they can be included. Thank you. catholicchurchclutha@gmail.com