22 DECEMBER 2024

ALEXANDRA CATHOLIC PASTORAL AREA
[St John the Baptist (1924) Alexandra;
St Peter's (1932) Omakau;
St Dunstan's (1903) Clyde;
St Patrick's (1892) St Bathans;
Our Lady of Peace (1910) Roxburgh]

4th Sunday of Advent, Year C

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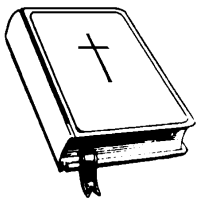
SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS SUNDAY

(1) *Micah 5:1-4.* the prophet Micah assures the Jews that God is faithful to His promises and that from the unimportant village of Bethlehem He will send to them the long-expected ruler.

(2) *Hebrews 10:5-10*. St Paul reminds us to be thankful for Jesus Christ's salvational self-offering, as compensation for humanity's sins, which it had proved incapable of delivering itself from the consequences of. Christ gave Himself in the place of all other ritual sacrifices offered for humanity's sanctification.



(3) *Luke 1:39-44.* Luke tells us how two seemingly insignificant women met to celebrate the kindness and fidelity of God. We see here how sensitive Mary was to the needs of Elizabeth, her older cousin who had miraculously become pregnant in her old age. For Luke, discipleship consists in listening to God's word and then carrying it out, and Mary does both, to become the most perfect disciple.

NEXT WEEK (The Holy Family):
(1) *Samuel 1:20-22,24-28* (2) *1 John 3:1-2, 21-24*
(3) *Luke 2:41-52*

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Died Recently: Rosalie Harrex; Paul Gibbons.
Anniversaries: Joseph Tohill, Mary Paulin, Heather McGelligot, and Bryan Lamb
'May they rest in peace.'

NB: The requiem Mass for Rosalie Harrex will be at 1pm this Monday in Alexandra at St John the Baptist Catholic church.

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VANUATU EARTHQUAKE RELIEF APPEAL: There will be an extra collection after Communion at each Mass next Sunday, in support of the people of Vanuatu. (See the article below under 'Vatican News'.) Vanuatuan workers are a significant support to the orchardist industry of Central Otago, with 160 arriving in Roxburgh (plus others elsewhere) just 3 weeks ago to help with fruit harvesting over the next 5 months.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Alexandra:
*Tuesday 24th, vigil Mass at 5:30pm.
(A children's Mass.)
*Wednesday 25th, 9am.

Omakau:
*Tuesday 24th, vigil Mass at 7:30pm.

Roxburgh: *(5 Liddle St).*
*Wednesday 25th, 11am.

NB: Some Mass times have changed from those of past years. i.e. Please notify people you know who often holiday in the Alexandra-Omakau-St. Bathans-Clyde and Roxburgh areas over the Christmas holiday period of the changes, in whatever ways possible.

For the 5:30pm vigil Mass in Alexandra children are invited to attend dressed as a favourite Christmas person. e.g. Mary, Joseph, Angels, Shepherds, Magi, Inn Keeper, …

ALEXANDRA COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DAY BBQ LUNCH: 12:30pm 25th December, St Enoch's Church Grounds, Corner Dunorling Street and Centennial Avenue. All welcome, free event. Register to support, volunteer & attend by going to www.alexchurch.org.nz/christmas. (Alexandra Clyde Lauder Union Parish)

VATICAN NEWS (www.vaticannews.va): (NB: For those receiving emailed digital copies, clicking on the headings below gives Internet access to the full article.)

Forty thousand children impacted by Vanuatu earthquake. The UN Children's Fund, UNICEF, warns that an estimated 40,000 children are in need of humanitarian assistance following the devastating 7.3-magnitude earthquake that hit Vanuatu, Oceania, on 17 December, and which was followed by several major aftershocks.Vanuatu consists of 83 islands, located 500km NE of New Caledonia, and has a population of some 300,000 people. According to authorities, 14 deaths have so far been

reported, with over 200 injured. Many buildings, including hospitals, have sustained damages. With landslides across the island, key roads and bridges connecting the airport and the main seaport are also reported to be severely damaged. Telecommunication networks in most areas are either down or intermittent.

Pope: A pilgrimage needs silence, the Gospel, and Matthew 25. "Walking in silence allows one to listen, to listen with the heart," he described, "and to find, as we walk, the answers that the heart seeks." Second, "always have the Gospel in your pocket." Third, he stressed the need to pay attention to what others need or those who are struggling; "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me (Matt 25)."

Pope to students: Each one of you can change the world. "The world may appear crowded and distracted as you arrive, but it lacks your contribution. I want to tell each one of you that you bring something new to the world. With you, everything, truly everything, can change. … As you enter the world of work you may almost be overwhelmed by what is expected of you. In these circumstances," Pope Francis urged, "learn to guard your heart, in order to remain at peace and free. Do not bend to demands that humiliate you and cause you discomfort, to ways of proceeding and demands that undermine your genuineness." He concluded with an invitation to students to "work together and build networks" in order to "rebuild our common home and reweave the network of human fraternity".

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The Combined Churches foodbank would like to express their gratitude for the generosity and support we have received from our community this year. Thank you. Wishing you all a very happy Christmas.

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ATHEIST - THEIST DEBATE: (Professor Richard Dawkins, evolutionist and atheist, vs Professor John Lennox, mathematician and theologian. See www.youtube.com/watch?v=66OWd3DMDW0)

"There is inconsistency in how Richard Dawkins applies his logic to everything else but God. e.g. He will acknowledge that when you see beauty on the canvas of a painting it is logical to assume that there is a mind behind the creation of that painting because minds can create beauty as well. But when you look at the universe itself, which contains all of those things to the nth degree and much more because it also includes a universe where humans have rights, and dignity, and there's morality, etc etc, he looks at all of that and says 'No!' Suddenly now … the same logic that applies to all of the particulars does not apply to the whole system. For some reason he cannot see that the only logical explanation for the universe, that is, for reality itself, is that it is a derivative of a divine intelligence. It is the only logical explanation if you are going to be consistent and if you are not biased against it because of a fear of a moral law giver or a Heavenly Father."

CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRE (CEC): The CEC is the NZ Bishops agency that provides resources, written and on-line, for anyone seeking to enquire about the Catholic faith. The contact details are:
Posted mail: CEC. PO Box 1937, Wellington 6140.
Email (for resources): john@catholicenquiry.nz.
All enquiries treated confidentially.

HEALTH CENTRAL URGENT CARE CENTRE: This is a walk-in medical service for locals and visitors. Open 7 days, 8am to 6pm, for non-life-threatening illnesses and injuries. 105-107 Tarbert St, Alexandra. See the flyer on the church foyer noticeboards for more information.

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SUNDAY MASSES

Omakau, St Peters: (Saturday) 6pm
Alexandra, St John the Baptist: 9am
Roxburgh, Our Lady of Peace: 11am.

WEEKDAY MASSES

Alexandra:
Tuesday: 5pm
Wed, Thurs, Sat: 9am
Friday: Noon

Roxburgh:
Wednesday 5:15pm (in presbytery):

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RECONCILIATION (Rite I)

Alexandra: Saturdays 9:30-10am;
Otherwise on request.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

(March, June, September, December)
Alexandra: First Friday Mass (noon)
Roxburgh: First Wednesday Mass (5:15pm, in presbytery)

EXPOSITION and BENEDICTION

Alexandra side chapel, Fridays 11:30-11:50am.

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PARISH CONTACT DETAILS

Parish Priest: Fr Brendan Ward.
Address: 3 Killarney St, Alexandra.
Phone: 03 448 8202, or 027 975 3272
Email: alexcatholic@xtra.co.nz
Parish Council: Mr Pat Cooney; 027 768 9918
Finance Chair: Mr Phil Peguero; 027 499 0277
St Gerard's Principal: Mrs Julie Flannery; 034488339
Catholic Social Services: 0800 277 669 (toll-free); 03 448 5385 (Mon-Thu).
Parish Website: www.alexcatholic.nz
Diocese Website: www.cdd.nz.