



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 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.

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The Living Word

Third Sunday of Advent, Year B

17 December 2023

First Reading Is 61:1-2.10-11

I exult for joy in the Lord.

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

Lk 1:46-50. 53-54. R. Is 61:10

(R.) 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 1 Thes 5:16-24

May you all be kept blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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 Is 61:1 (Lk 4:18)

Alleluia, alleluia!

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

Alleluia!

Gospel Jn1:6-8.19-28

There stands among you, unknown to you, the one who is coming after me.

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness,



Catholic Parish of St Mary Queen of Heaven Georges Hall

Parish Priest: Rev. Peter Krigovsky
Secretary: Mrs. Zenna Azar (Tues 9.30am—5.30pm)
Address: 15 Georges Cres, Georges Hall NSW 2198 **Telephone:** 9727 3759
Website: <http://www.smgh.org.au> **Email:** parishoffice.smgh@bigpond.com
Facebook: fb.me/smgh2 **Streaming:** <https://cutt.ly/StMarys>

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Georges Hall
God and Us Together

Principal: Mrs Monica Palmer **Website:** www.stmgeorghall.syd.catholic.edu.au
School Tel: 02 9727 0000 **School email:** info@stmgeorghall.catholic.edu.au

MASS TIMES (English):
 Vigil Mass 5 pm (Saturday)
 Sunday 8.00 am & 10.00 am
 Weekdays: Wednesday 6 pm
 Mon. Tue. Thu. Fri. Sat. 9.00am

VIETNAMESE MASS
 Vigil Mass 6.30 pm (Saturday)
 Sunday 5.30pm

RECONCILIATION
 Saturday 4.30pm-4.55pm
 or anytime on request

**ADORATION OF THE
 BLESSED SACRAMENT**
 Wednesday 5.00pm—6.00pm
 Friday after Mass 9am-10.30am

**SACRAMENT OF THE
 ANOINTING OF THE SICK**
 Offered to those in need on
 1st Tuesday at 9.00am Mass

Baptisms: Sunday 11.00am
 Bookings are necessary

Children first Sacraments:
 Please contact Elaine Nehme:
nehme.elaine@yahoo.com.au

Parish site maintenance:
 John Impala Phone TBA
 Ivan Leskur Phone TBA

Parish Pastoral Council:
 Bernie Freeburn, Veronica Dening,
 Elaine Nehme, Zenna Azar,
 Paul Abdul Ahad, Natalie Goetz,
 Monica Palmer, Linh Bui,
 Jannette Samawi, Grace Mokdassi

Finance Committee:
 Bernie Freeburn, Michael Anderson,
 Ted Goetz, Veronica Dening, Eileen
 Stevenson

Golden oldies:
 Lorraine Impala

St Vincent de Paul: Mary Scott

Special Religious Education:
 Lorraine Corkeron

Music Ministry: Vivienne Mosely

Youth Ministry: Grace Mokdassi

Children's Liturgy: Nancy Khalil

COVID-19 is still around, please use
 sanitiser when you enter the church.

ADDITIONAL NOTICES If you are
 interested in any diocesan events,
 please collect a copy of the additional
 bulletin at the back of the church.

**LISTEN TO THE WORD: Prepare
 for His Birth** - The 2023 Advent
 Companion is designed to support
 parishes and individuals in fostering
 conversion and renewal in preparation
 for the Birth of Christ. Please take a
 copy from the back of the church.

THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE -
 The third candle of Advent **symbolizes
 Joy**. As we continue to approach
 Christmas Day, our joy grows more
 and more. The third candle takes us
 back to the joyful anticipation of the
 shepherds who journeyed to see Jesus
 in Bethlehem, even before the wise
 men.

CHOIR PRACTICE for Christmas
 night Mass will be on Thursday 21
 December at 7pm. New members are
 always welcome. Please ring Pat Falvy
 on 0425 219 660.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS will be sung
 from 7.30pm on Christmas Eve.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES
 This year the Christmas falls on
 Monday 25th December, which means
 that the Christmas Vigil and the
 Christmas Mass of the Night will take
 place on Sunday 24th December.
 Please note that to fulfill the Sunday
 Mass Obligation and the Holy Day of
 Obligation (Christmas) one needs to
 attend the proper 4th Sunday of Advent
 Mass and the proper Christmas Mass.
 The 4th Sunday of Advent Mass times
 will be as usual: the Saturday Vigil at
 5pm and Sunday morning at 8.00am
 and 10.00am. The Christmas Mass
 times will be as follows. Christmas
 Vigil Sunday 24 December at 5.00pm,
 this will be Children's Mass. The

Christmas Mass of the Night (also
 colloquially known as the Midnight
 Mass) will take place at 8.00pm. The
 Christmas Dawn and Christmas Day
 Mass will take place on Monday 25
 December at 8.00am and 10.00am
 respectively. One fulfills the Christmas
 Holy Day of Obligation by attending
 any one of the four Christmas Masses.
 Of course if you attend 2 Masses on
 one day, you can receive Holy
 Communion at both Masses.

CHRISTMAS ROSTERS - Greeters,
 Commentators, Proclaimers, Acolytes,
 Extraordinary Ministers of Holy
 Communion and Altar Servers wanting
 to serve at Christmas Masses are
 invited to provide their details on the
 sheets at the back of the church.

**SETTING UP NATIVITY AND
 CHRISTMAS TREES - THANK
 YOU** to the parishioners who set up the
 Nativity and Christmas trees on Friday
 evening.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR The
 Children's Choir will be leading the
 hymns at the Christmas Eve Children's
 Mass at 5pm. We invite all parishioners
 to attend. If your child is interested in
 joining and would like further
 information please message Jess on
 0414 187 081 or Natalie on 0431 102
 408. The next rehearsal will be after
 mass this Saturday 9 December at
 9:30am.

CHILDREN'S NATIVITY PLAY -
 The Children's Liturgy team are
 looking for more children to join the
 Nativity play which will be performed
 on Christmas Eve during the 5:00pm
 Children's mass. If your child would
 like to join, please contact
nancy.gnk@protonmail.com.
 Rehearsals occur each Friday afternoon
 at 3:30pm - 4:30pm in the school hall.

**LATEST UPDATE ON PARISH
 ROLES THAT DO NOT REQUIRE**



WWCN (Working with children number)

• Cleaners, Gardener, Choir members, Musicians,
 Finance Committee, Parish Pastoral Council,
 Counters, Audio Visual Coordinators, Piety Stall, Flower
 Arranger, Offertory, Hospitality Workers, Ministers of
 the Homebound, Welcoming/greeting Ministry,
 Ministers of the Word/Readers/Lectors, Parish Collectors
 (AKA Wardens)

PARISH CENTRE A meeting with our architect and
 members of our Building Committee took place two
 weeks ago. External side views were presented and
 additional changes were suggested. We are expecting the
 latest changes to be implemented and new, hopefully a
 final plan presented.

DAILY MASS BOOK 2024 - Copies of the Daily Mass
 books are at the back of the church. Please return them at
 the end of mass.

THANKSGIVING BBQ 2023 - (some pictures above)
 in gratitude to all the volunteer ministers at St Mary
 Queen of Heaven Parish. Special thank you to the
 organisers. May God bless and reward all our volunteer

ministers hundredfold. At St Mary's all parishioners are
 welcome and encouraged to contribute to the life of our
 parish by joining in any of the active ministries.

BREAK OPEN THE WORD - This beautiful resource
 is available to assist Proclaimers prepare for Sunday
 liturgy. Proclaimers are all invited to collect a copy of
 the 2024 Break Open the Word book from the sacristy -
 one copy per family.

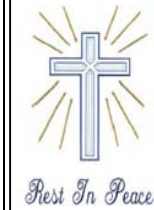
SAFEGUARDING OUR PARISH - Child sexual abuse is a
 crime. The appropriate people to deal with crimes are the
 police. If you, or anyone you know, have been abused, please
 contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the
 Safeguarding Office at 02 9390 5810 or Email:
safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org. The Archdiocese
 has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.
Our parish has a folder with Safeguarding information in the
 church for parishioners to view. Check out the latest safe-
 guarding newsletter. A link to the Archdiocese's Child Safe-
 guarding Policy is available from the homepage of our parish
 website and on display in the folder. Enquiries: Veronica via
 email: parishoffice.smgh@bigpond.com
Check out the latest Safeguarding newsletter-in the folder

Date/Mass	Greeters	Commentator	Proclaimers	Extraordinary Ministers	Acolytes	Altar Servers	Altar Servers
December 16/17 - 3rd Sunday of Advent, Year B							
5.00 pm Sat	Chris Lockart	Pauline Tonkli	Mary Gibbons	Annette Simpson Eileen Stevenson	Laurie Simpson	Gabriel Azar Charlie Delfino	Anthony Torbay
8.00 am Sun		Jenny Freeburn	Danuta Maka	Goetz Family	Bernie Freeburn	Lucas Ross Harry Ross	Nicholas Coorey Gabriel Serratore
10.00 am Sun		Maurice Gili	Rosemary Lim	Gill Cramp Maurice Gili	Andrew Driessen	James Ghanem	
December 23/24—4th Sunday of Advent, Year B							
5.00 pm Sat	Lorraine Impala	Abraham Family	Pauline Tonkli	Pauline Tonkli	Eileen Stevenson	Barbara Kains	Paul Evans
8.00 am Sun		Coorey Family	Goetz Family	Goetz Family	Carmen Heredia	Karent Worley	Mike Anderson
10.00 am Sun		Cramp Family	Alex Driessen	Alex Driessen	Maurice Gili	Gill Cramp	Volunteer



Please Remember In Your Prayers Our Sick

Jayden Turk, Joseph Akkary, Paul Tonkli, Daniel Clarke, Warren Clarke, Azelia Donati, Eileen Ellery, Paul Evans, Kerry Gibbons, Kathleen Gibson, Christine Hughes, Sue James, Barbara Kains, Daniel Matesic, Phillip Nehme, David Sanders, John Smallwood, Tony Strambio, Cornelius Van Baardwyk



Let us Pray For All Those Who Have Died

Barry Sligar, Carmelina Calcagni, Trevor + Colin + Eileen Newton, James Barrett, Wilson + Ursula Barrett, Sara + Michael Dolahenty, Elizabeth + Philomena Dolahenty, George + Jenny + Mary Goure, Ian Urquhart, Louis & Mary Grech, Wood Fml, Janet & John & Debbie Wood, Mary Strambio, John & David Huskinson, Jan & Jozefa & Bernard & John, John & Joe & Bruno Lozinski, Jaduiga & Maria Kazob, Hayat Busuleiman, Pientka fml

*Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them.
 May they rest in peace. Amen.*