

**Reflection on the Gospel-Birthday of John the Baptizer  
(Luke 1:57-66, 80)**

-Veronica Lawson RSM

Today's gospel is a good news story. Most of us respond with joy to the birth of a child, especially when the odds are stacked against the parents conceiving. As the child grows to maturity, friends and family might look back and interpret later achievements in the light of childhood expectation and promise. Stories of birth and childhood are often told in the light of later events. The story of the birth of John the Baptizer is told with hindsight and against the background of Jewish expectations in the Second Temple period. The gospel writers reflect on the role John played in recognising the significance of Jesus of Nazareth and in pointing to Jesus as the unique agent and prophet of God's empire over against the Roman Empire.

Luke is the only gospel writer to reflect on John's "pre-history" and to hint that his birth belonged within the biblical tradition of the "wondrous" births of remarkable people. He interprets the birth of John as an expression of God's "great mercy". Luke narrates the childhood story of John in parallel and yet in appropriate relationship with the story of the child Jesus, whose identity and mission represent the ultimate revelation of Israel's God.

In announcing the birth of John the Baptizer, storyteller Luke uses the language of fulfilment: "the time came" [for Elizabeth to give birth] is literally "the time was fulfilled". The birth of this child is a time of the fulfilment of God's word, as previously announced by the angel Gabriel to his father Zechariah (Luke 1:13-17). Zechariah had been told not to fear, for his wife Elizabeth would give birth to a son and "you will name him John".

Joy and gladness would be the response to the birth of this child who was to be "filled with Holy Spirit even before his birth". John's destiny was "to make ready a people". Jesus, the one for whom John is "preparing the way" will later refer to him as "a prophet" and "more than a prophet" (Luke 7:27). Zechariah, who refuses to believe that he and Elizabeth will have a child in their advanced years, is told that he will be mute "until the day these things occur" (1:17. "These things" encompass the birth of the child, the joy-filled response of the faith community and the naming of the child eight days after birth. John's name, meaning "YHWH (the God of Israel) has shown grace", foreshadows the extraordinary mark that this child, the son of Elizabeth and Zechariah, will make on his world and consequently on ours. Like John, we are called to "make ready a people", to prepare the way. For Australian Catholics, commitment to creative participation in the forthcoming Plenary Council preparations might be a fitting way to celebrate this feast.

**THE NATIVITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST — YEAR B**



**ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST**

Including St Peter & Paul's, Buninyong  
*(The Parish of St Alipius, the communities of Ballarat East and Buninyong are committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and vulnerable adults.)*

**Office Hours:** Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 9.30 am—1.30 pm  
**Parish Address:** 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East 3350  
**Telephone:** 5332 6611  
**Email:** ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au  
**Parish Website:** <http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au>

**MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING  
MONDAY, 25 JUNE 2018**

**MONDAY:** No Mass  
**TUESDAY:** 5.00 pm at Mercy Centre  
**WEDNESDAY:** 11.00 am at Mercy Centre  
**THURSDAY:** 9.30 am in Parish Church  
**FRIDAY:** 9.45 am in Buninyong Church, and  
12.00 pm in St Alipius Church (end of Term  
School Masses)

**NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES**

<b>ST. ALIPIUS</b>	SAT	6.00 PM
	SUN	9.00 AM
<b>BUNINYONG</b>	SUN	10.30 AM

**13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME—YEAR B**

**READINGS** First: Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24  
Second: 2 Corinthians 8:7,9, 13-15  
Gospel: Mark 5:21-43

**ANNIVERSARIES:** Tom Ballinger.

**PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK:** Nathan Cambell, Denise Learmonth, Cath Wheelahan, Terry McGarry, Kevin Walsh, Peter Clohesy, Frank Nolan (Buninyong), Mary Barnett, Fiona Dickinson, Carmel Doherty, Pauline Murphy, Maria Wilson, Aurora Ferrer, Patricia Harman, Leonie Sinnot, John Darroch.

### COUNTING TEAMS:

**This Week: Team 8:** B. McKeegan©, M. Ridsdale, K. McKeegan.  
**Next Week: Team 9:** J. Patton©, B. Brisbane, J. O'Brien, J. Gibcus.

### COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

**PARISH:** Envelopes: \$ 628.40  
Loose: \$ 150.00  
Direct Debits: \$ 260.00  
\$ 1,038.40

**PRESBYTERY:** \$ 1,453.00



### PARISH FINANCE MEETING

The quarterly Parish Finance Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, 26th June, 5:30 pm in the Parish House.

### RCIA MEETING

The monthly Rite of Catholic Initiation for Adults (RCIA) meeting will be held on Thursday, 28th June, 7:00 pm in the Parish House.

### FIRST EUCHARIST

Welcome and congratulations to our young people from Emmaus who have completed their initiation into the community of the Church through the reception of Holy Communion. Thank you to parents, Geoff and Rachel, and the school community for supporting and preparing the children for this special time. We pray that they celebrate the Eucharist with joy and often.

### STRENGTHENING LINKS BETWEEN PARISH & SCHOOL

Parishioners are invited to join the weekly *Whole School Prayer* on Fridays, 9am in the McNerney Centre, St Alipius Parish Primary School during school term.

### DAMASCUS COLLEGE PERFORMING ARTS

DC Performing Arts presents *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*. 8 pm on July 25, 26, 27, and 28; plus 2 pm Matinee session on July 28. at Damascus College Valda Ward Auditorium. Tickets: Adults \$15, Children \$10, Family (2 adults + 2 children) \$40. Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au).

### URGENT ACCOMMODATION NEEDED

A Refugee Family in Ballarat needs a house to rent urgently. Reliable people including 2 adults and 3 small children. Short or long term lease. If you know of anyone who has a house available to rent please contact Des on 0418537713 or Doreen on 0417117382.

### PARISH ANNUAL MASS COUNT

The Annual Mass Count took place in parishes across the diocese over four weekends between May and June. The average attendance at Parish Masses during that period is noted below for your information. One weekend included the celebration of First Eucharist.

St Alipius	Average Attendance	Sts Peter & Paul	Average Attendance
Sat. 6.00pm	204		
Sun. 9.00am	119	Sun. 9.00am	68
Sun. 10.30am	134	Sun. 10.30am	128

### PLENARY COUNCIL 2020—THE PROCESS

The process of the Plenary Council is a journey of listening to God by listening to one another. All Australians have been invited to participate in the open process of dialogue and discernment about the future of the Catholic Church in Australia. The focus question is: *What is God asking of the Church at this time?*

It is anticipated that issues nominated will range from the specific to the broad, from the place of women in the Church, to clericalism, to the Church's position on refugees, to the lack of ordinations and lay leadership in the Church. Parish and school groups are encouraged to conduct listening/dialogue sessions in small groups, using the process set out by the Plenary Council.

**You are encouraged to visit the Plenary Council website at:**

<http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/>

*I am calling for expressions of interest to assist in coordinating this process in our parish. If you can assist, please contact the Parish Office on 5332 6611.*

Fr Peter

### JOY SPREADING—SAM CLEAR SPECIAL GUEST

Sam Clear is the guest speaker at the next *Joy Spreading* event for young adults (18 -30yo) on Friday 27 July from 6.30pm – 9.00pm at the Lake View Hotel, Ballarat. An opportunity for young Catholic adults to share ideas and views in a friendly environment. Free event. This is a Year of Youth initiative - *Open New Horizons for Spreading Joy*. More info [www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au) or 53377125.

### CTC INTENSIVE STUDY OPTIONS

Catholic Theological College (CTC) Intensive Study Options are now available.

**Winter Intensives:** 6 Weekdays in July: Choice of *Philosophy, Systematic Theology, Religious Education or Christian Spirituality* units.

**Saturday Intensives:** 6 Saturdays: Choice of *Meditation or Ageing* units.

**Weekend Intensives:** 3 Weekends: *Liturgy and Sacraments* unit

*Audit and Credit options available.* Enquiries to Mr Jude Caspersz (Registrar), Tel: 9412 3309 or Email: [ctc@ctc.edu.au](mailto:ctc@ctc.edu.au).