

Spiritual Reflections on Sunday's Readings

Glancing Thoughts - Getting Ready and Being Blameless

The First Reading and the Gospel both talk about a time when the Lord comes - for justice, as the First Reading says; and for judgment, as the Gospel implies. In the Gospel, Jesus warns people not to be overcome with the pleasures and anxieties of the world but to be ready for his coming. Those who are not ready will practically die of fright when they see him.

Well, then, what do we need to do to get ready?

The Second Reading in effect answers that question. At Christ's coming again, we are to be blameless in holiness.

And what is *that*?

If you are blameless *under law*, then no one can blame you for any violation of the law of the land. You weren't speeding, for example, or cheating on your income tax, or violating any other law of the city or country in which you are.

If you are *morally* blameless, then no one can blame you for any violation of the moral law. You weren't lying, for example, or cheating on your spouse, or violating any other command of the universal moral law that applies to all people no matter where they are.

But what is it to be blameless *in holiness*? The answer is in the Second Reading: in order to be ready for Christ at his coming, Christians need to increase in love and abound in it.

So here's the thing to see.

You can keep all the laws of your land and still be a real jerk. And the same truth holds for the moral law. You can be a priggishly righteous jerk too. Something more than having a great record for keeping the laws is necessary to be ready for the Lord.

That more is love.

If you want what is bad for your neighbour, if you curse him in public or even in your heart, if you wish he would just go away, if you tell him in your thoughts or to his face to go to hell—you do *not* love him. And you are blameworthy with regard to holiness if you don't. It doesn't matter how moral or legal your conduct is otherwise.

To be blameless in holiness, then, takes being loving. And being loving is what makes us ready for the return of the Lord.

Eleonore Stump

Eleonore Stump is Professor of Philosophy, Saint Louis University

- Friday, 3rd December : Memorial of St Francis Xavier
- Sunday, 5th December : *Second Sunday of Advent*
- Monday, 6th December : Feast of St Nicholas of Myra
- Wednesday, 8th December : Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Sunday, 12th December : *Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday)*
- Saturday, 25th December : *Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)*
- Sunday, 26th December : *Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph*
- Monday, 27th December : Feast of St John the Evangelist
- Tuesday, 28th December : Feast of the Holy Innocents

December Dates



St Thomas Aquinas Parish Bulletin



168 Hawkesbury Road, Springwood, NSW, 2777
 PO Box 4410, Winmalee, NSW 2777
 Parish Office: 02 4754 1052

Parish Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm
Parish Email: springwood@parracatholic.org
Parish Website: www.stachurchspringwood.org.au
Parish Facebook Page: St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community Springwood
Parish Priest: Fr Paul Slyney - 4754 1052 *Emergency ONLY:* 0418 461 316
Assistant Priest: Fr Shinto Francis - 4754 1052 *Emergency ONLY:* 0415 077 969

Weekend Masses: Saturday Vigil Mass 5.00 pm, Sunday 8.00 am and 9.30 am
Weekday Mass: Tuesday - Saturday 9.30 am

Rosary Devotion: Tuesday - Friday 9.00 am
Adoration, Rosary & Chaplet: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month, 7.30 - 8.30 pm
Intercession & Adoration: None until further notice

Baptisms: 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month - 10.30am and by appointment

Reconciliation: By request

Weddings: By appointment - restricted numbers

Funerals: By appointment - restricted numbers

**MASKS ARE
 COMPULSORY**

A Poem to Sit With

*All the paths of the Lord are kindness and constancy
 toward those who keep his covenant and his decrees
 (Responsorial Psalm)*

She had heard
 a voice of fire
 and listened
 and listened
 Cry Abba Father
 it said and
 "comfort my people
 comfort them"
 And so she lived until the
 forge could no longer hold
 the fire - that Fire -
 that no cosmos could contain
 only trace
 or mirror

J. Janda

THE GOSPEL

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

Be vigilant at all times.

Jesus.
 You came into our world with all its sorrows.
 Keep us watchful for your presence
 in the midst of our struggles.
 Tell us again that your
 love will triumph.
 Make us vigilant. Put our hearts on alert.
 Let us be aware of all the places
 in our world where
 you are.
 In all beauty.
 Anywhere there is love.
 In helping hands reaching out.
 Come,
 Lord Jesus, to all the dwellings
 in our lives where you are not
 yet.

Anne Osdieck

Today's Readings: Jer 33:14-16; 1 Thess 3:12 - 4:2; Lk 21:25-28, 34-36

Entrance Antiphon: To you, I lift up my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me; and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 24:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14

R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation. Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon: The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.

Next Week: Baruch 5:1-9; Phil 1:4-6, 8-11; Lk 3:1-6



Sick: Molly Hurley, Gerry Thistleton, Roshan Rupesinghe, Evelyn Robinson, Susie Ziino, James Wallace, Mischa Damaguc and family, Margaret Day, Adam McCully, Christopher Coombs, Kate Moore, Luca Hurley and all Private Intentions.

Due to the strict privacy laws, names of the deceased and sick can only be included in the Bulletin with the express permission of the immediate family. Thank you.

Parish and Local Community News

CAMPION COLLEGE SUMMER PROGRAM: Registration for the Campion College Summer Program is now open! If you know a 16-20 year old with an interest in history, literature, philosophy and theology, encourage them to sign up for one of the immersive four-day programs in January 2022. Attendance is fully funded but spaces are limited! Find out more and register on the Campion College website: www.campion.edu.au/summer-program.

ST FINBAR'S ADVENT RETREAT: The goal of this retreat is to reflect on the birth of Jesus. We can come in touch with God through reflection on creation and through prayer, walking meditation in the garden with the Stations of the Cross and through the reading of Scripture and quiet meditative examen of conscience. Morning tea and lunch provided. \$5 per person. Please RSVP to secretary@stfinbars.org.au prior to 29th November.

Are you able to help our Parish...Do you have a spare 2 hours every 3 weeks?



If you have a spare 2 hours every 3 weeks we would love to hear from you as we seek volunteers to be added to our cleaning list for vacuuming or dusting our beautiful Church. *Please contact the Parish office if you can help.*

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES 2021:

	Springwood	Lawson (OLN)
Christmas Eve, Fri 24 th Dec	5.00pm Children's Mass 8.00pm VIGIL	5.00pm Children's Mass 8.00pm VIGIL
Christmas Day, Sat 25 th Dec	9.30am	9.00am
Boxing Day, Sun 26 th Dec	9.30am	9.00am
Tues 28 th , Wed 29 th Dec	9.30am	
Thurs 30 th Dec	9.30am	
Fri 31 st Dec	9.30am	
Sat 1 st Jan	9.30am	



2nd Rite of Reconciliation

LAWSON

The 2nd Rite of Reconciliation has been scheduled for **Monday, 20th December at 7.00pm.**

SPRINGWOOD

The 2nd Rite of Reconciliation has been scheduled for **Tuesday, 21st December at 7.00pm.**
Fr Paul and Fr Shinto will be present on the evening.

The Sacrament of Penance, at this time during Advent, is an ideal way of remaining focused on the beautiful spirituality of Christmas.

Normal safety protocols will be in place.
You must sign in upon entry using the QR Code System.
Masks are compulsory.

St Thomas Aquinas Parish Christmas Giving Tree

This year, our Parish is supporting the **Wimlah Women's Refuge Outreach and Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service**, a specialist domestic violence service, located in the Blue Mountains.

They offer a Domestic Violence Support Group, and Family Law Support Group (National online support), in addition to residential crisis accommodation and many other forms of support.

We would love for our parishioners to this year wrap a small gift for a woman or a child (aged up to 16) to open this Christmas, who might otherwise not be able to open anything.

Please leave this gift under our Christmas Tree and it will be hand delivered the Wednesday prior to Christmas Day to the women and children who will be relying on the refuge this year as their safe haven - **a place to call home.**



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

This is the time of year when the St. Vincent de Paul Society members ask parishioners to support families in need by providing something special for Christmas.

We are aware that our Mass attendee numbers are well down, and that everyone has in some way been affected by Covid-19, so conference members have decided that this year our main area of support will be vouchers for food, fruit, vegetables and meat or fish.

Envelopes for your donations are available on the table near Our Lady's statue at the entrance to our church and conference members will be at all Masses on the weekends of 4th / 5th and 11th / 12th December to accept all donations.

If your family feels able to provide **towards a hamper** that would be wonderful. Please make it suitable for a family of 2 adults and 2 children. We have a priority list of families which, with your support, we will endeavour to fill. Many thanks for your ongoing support to Vinnies and the people we support. Any inquiries may be made to Margaret on 4753 1031.

Bishop's Christmas Appeal

No mother or child should be homeless and without support at Christmas. CatholicCare's Houses to Homes provides hope for vulnerable women and children facing abuse and hardship. Your kind donation today will help change the lives of homeless young women, who like Mary, seek a safe haven to raise their newborn child. Please give generously via the Bishop's Christmas Appeal giving envelopes (located at the back of the church) or online at yourcatholicfoundation.org.au/appeal.

Catholic SRE



Catholic SRE lessons were not reinstated this term, but your SRE teachers have been thinking and praying for you and your families.

We now share this interactive **Advent & Christmas Activity Booklet** with you, that can be used at home. Please follow the following link

https://issuu.com/ccressnsw/docs/2021_adventchristmas_sre_family_resource_parramatt
The SRE teachers wish you a very happy Christmas and look forward to seeing you again in 2022.