

*Welcome to*



for

# Sunday, December 13, 2015

## 3rd Sunday of Advent, Year C



[John \[the Baptist\] answered them:](#) “...one who is more powerful than I is coming.”  
(Luke 3:10-18, image from [Salt & Light TV website](#))

**This digest of links, images and material is designed to support parish secretaries and pastoral associates in their roles serving others.**

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Issue 50.15

Hello

This week's edition of *Bulletin Notes* focusses on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent. It also marks the first Sunday in the Jubilee Year of Mercy, which began on Tuesday, December 8.

On this same Sunday (December 13), the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese is hosting a special event to mark both the Year of Mercy and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation.

The event will include a liturgy, food and entertainment, including Irish music and Christmas carols, and the Sacrament of Penance.

If you are based in the diocese, or can visit, head along to the Victor Peters Suite (841 Hunter St, Newcastle West) from 4pm.

In announcing the Jubilee Year, the Pontiff wrote: "It is indeed my wish that the Jubilee be a living experience of the closeness of the Father, whose tenderness is almost tangible, so that the faith of every believer may be strengthened and thus testimony to it be ever more effective.

"My thought first of all goes to all the faithful who, whether in individual Dioceses or as pilgrims to Rome, will experience the grace of the Jubilee. I wish that the Jubilee Indulgence may reach each one as a genuine experience of God's mercy, which comes to meet each person in the Face of the Father who welcomes and forgives, forgetting completely the sin committed.

Meanwhile, *CathNews* is offering access to great resources on the Year of Mercy, via the *Catholic Australia website*. It also will offer regular reflections from various Archbishops and Bishops throughout the year, with a special series of Year of Mercy editions to be published in June 2016. (To ensure you don't miss out on any of them, please go to [CathNews](http://CathNews) and subscribe.)

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## Part 1

### [Luke 3:10-18](#)

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptised, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptise you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

#### **Notes on the text**

Like John's proclamation at the River Jordan, we are called to be witnesses of God's love by the love we extend to others; precursors of his justice by our unfailing commitment to what is right and good; lamps reflecting the light of God's Christ in our forgiveness, mercy and compassion; harvesters of souls through our humble and dedicated servanthood.

As John proclaims at the Jordan, we can only celebrate the Messiah in our lives when we step beyond ourselves to embrace the needs and hopes of others.

Every act of compassion, justice and reconciliation is a sign of the "expectation" that "fills" every human heart for the coming of God's kingdom in our time as well as in the time to come.

- From [a reflection on the Gospel](#) by Dr. Jay Cormier, communications consultant, writer and teacher. He provides content for the [Connections website](#).

## Part II

### Commentary 1 - Repent and change the way we think and live

For all the austerity of his life, John spoke to people in words they could grasp. It was his austerity that drew people's respect and trust. Here was a man who cared nothing for comfort, money or fame, who could not be bought, and who could speak the truth without fear.

Preparing the way for the Messiah is not simply a matter of belonging to the Jewish nation, John insists, but comes about through repentance, through changing the way one thinks and changing one's lifestyle. John gives some practical examples. People should share clothing and food with those who have none as basic expressions of faith. To tax collectors he says, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also ask him, "And we, what should we do?" John replies, "Do not extort money from anyone with threats or false accusations, and be satisfied with your wages."

What does my lifestyle say about my faith in Christ? Do I hoard or share what I have with others, especially those who are poor and on the margins of society?

- from [a reflection on the Gospel](#) on the Sacred Space website

### Commentary 2 - Love one another but do it in practical ways

This mid-point of Advent alerts us to issues of justice and equality. The prophet John has been asked as a sort of trick by people who exploited others with tax bills, and soldiers who often used their brute force on others, how they should repent. His words were tough but quite ordinary – don't overcharge, share your surplus with the needy and don't exploit people. It's another, but more figurative way, of stating the basic demands of 'Love one another'.

Christmas can bring out the best in us to care for the needy. We are surrounded by charities looking for aid. We know that Jesus hears the cries of the poor, and he joins every carol singing group trying to help.

Christmas also asks us to consider our honesty and integrity, for we know that many are poor, at home and abroad, because of the greed of others. Christmas is a reminder and a challenge that all can live with the human dignity we have come to regard as human rights – education, safety, shelter, food, water, employment, freedom. The Christ child who was born poor represents all the poor of the world especially children. As he was born ordinary, he represents that God meets, greets and helps us in the ordinary of life.

The one who is to come is the one who will live and love according to these truths of human dignity and equality.

- From [a reflection on the Gospel](#) by Donal Neary SJ, at the *Sacred Heart Messenger website*

## Part III

### Graphics/Imagery



[Image 1](#)



[Image 2](#)



[Image 3](#)

## Part IV

### *Laudato Si': On the Care of Our Common Home*

Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si': On the Care for Our Common Home* is a call for global action as well as an appeal for deep inner conversion. He points to numerous ways world organisations, nations and communities must move forward and the way individuals -- believers and people of good will -- should see, think, feel and act. Each week, we offer [one of the Pope's suggestions](#), with the paragraph numbers to indicate its place in the Encyclical.

"Business is a noble vocation. Create jobs that allow for personal growth, stability, living out one's values." (Pars 124-128)

### Saint of the Week – [St John of the Cross](#) (Dec 14)

Born in Spain in 1542, John learned the importance of self-sacrificing love from his parents. His father gave up wealth, status, and comfort when he married a weaver's daughter and was disowned by his noble family. After his father died, his mother kept the destitute family together as they wandered homeless in search of work.

When the family finally found work, John still went hungry in the middle of the wealthiest city in Spain. At 14, he took a job caring for hospital patients who suffered from incurable diseases and madness. It was out of this poverty and suffering that John learned to search for beauty and happiness not in the world, but in God.

After John joined the Carmelite order, Saint Teresa of Avila asked him to help her reform movement. John supported her belief that the order should return to its life of prayer. But many Carmelites felt threatened by this reform, and some members of John's own order kidnapped him. He was locked in a cell 3m by 2m and beaten three times a week by the monks. There was only one tiny window high up near the ceiling. Yet in that unbearable dark, cold, and desolation, his love and faith were like fire and light. He had nothing left but God -- and God brought John his greatest joys in that tiny cell.

After nine months, John escaped by unscrewing the lock on his door and creeping past the guard. Taking only the mystical poetry he had written in his cell, he climbed out a window using a rope made of strips of blankets. With no idea where he was, he followed a dog to civilisation. He hid from pursuers in a convent infirmary where he read his poetry to the nuns. From then on his life was devoted to sharing and explaining his experience of God's love.

His life of poverty and persecution could have produced a bitter cynic. Instead it gave birth to a compassionate mystic, who lived by the beliefs that "Who has ever seen people persuaded to love God by harshness?" and "Where there is no love, put love -- and you will find love."

John left us many books of practical advice on spiritual growth and prayer that are just as relevant today as they were then. These books include: *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, *Dark Night of the Soul* and *A Spiritual Canticle of the Soul and the Bridegroom Christ*.



(To access the above image, click on [this link](#))

## Part V

### Words of Wisdom – The Outer Spiritual Disciplines

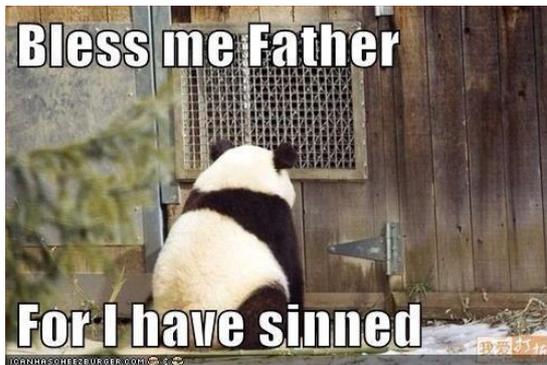
During November, *Bulletin Notes* is presenting a series of quotes on some of the spiritual disciplines. Last month, we highlighted four inward disciplines (meditation, prayer, fasting and study). Last week, we began focussing on the corporate disciplines, starting with confession and worship. This week, we highlight the corporate discipline of Guidance. (The final discipline will be celebration.)

This week's image draws upon [Matthew 18:19-20](#)



To access this image, click on [this link](#).

### Meme of the week



(To source this image, click on [this link](#))

## Part VI

Besides this digest of items for use in your parish bulletin/newsletter, Church Resources supports parishes in a number of other practical ways. That includes:

### News

*CathNews* provides online Catholic news, both from Australia and abroad, five mornings a week. *CathNews Perspectives* is published every Friday afternoon, and contains background stories, deeper reflections and comment. To receive *CathNews* and *CathNews Perspectives*, please visit: [www.cathnews.com](http://www.cathnews.com), where you can set up a free subscription.

### Parish Secretaries' Forum

This is an email-based forum where Parish Secretaries can share resources. To join, please send an email with your name, parish and phone number to [parishsecretaries@connect.org.au](mailto:parishsecretaries@connect.org.au). You also can check us out on our new Facebook page ([www.Facebook.com/bulletinnotes](http://www.Facebook.com/bulletinnotes))

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### Purchasing

Need a New Apple iPad?

Did you know Church Resources is Australia's first not-for-profit Apple reseller? Church Resources can help you find the right product, get a good price, and ensure that there is follow-up if needed.

Church Resources can supply most of the needs of parishes, schools, and nursing homes:

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- Electricity and gas
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- Business travel, hotel accommodation and car hire
- Educational resources
- Aged care supplies
- And more!

It makes sense to check with Church Resources first.

Call Church Resources on 1300-248-724 or email: [info@cr.org.au](mailto:info@cr.org.au) – and ask to be put in touch with the person responsible for the service or product you require.

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These notes are provided by Church Resources:

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