

**Thought for the week
4th Sunday of Advent
19th December, 2021**

Loving God,
Creator of heaven and earth and all that is in them,
you created us in your own image and
made us stewards of creation.
You blessed us with the sun, water and bountiful land
so that all might be nourished.

Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we may attend to your gift of creation
Help us to be conscious that our common home
belongs not only to us, but to all of your creatures
and to all future generations,
and that it is our responsibility to preserve it.
May we help each person secure the food and resources
that they need.

Be present to those in need in these trying times,
especially the poorest and those most at risk
of being left behind.
Transform our fear and feelings of isolation
into hope and fraternity
so that we may experience a true conversion of the heart.

Help us to show creative solidarity
in addressing the consequences of this global pandemic.
Make us courageous to embrace the changes
that are needed in search of the common good.
Now more than ever may we feel
that we are all interconnected and interdependent.
Enable us to listen and respond
to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.
May the present sufferings be the birth pangs
of a more fraternal and sustainable world.

Under the loving gaze of Mary Help of Christians,
we make this prayer through Christ Our Lord.
Amen.

Christmas is almost upon us. The waiting is nearly over.

Both Mary and Elizabeth were waiting in today's Gospel. Both were due to be mothers for the first time. Both pregnancies were signalled by the visit of an angel.

Elizabeth and Zechariah had longed for a child for many years and she might have been a little apprehensive about the impending birth. Mary, having conceived a son by the power of the Holy Spirit while she was engaged was in a unique position.

Women often need the support and reassurance of family and friends during pregnancy, especially the first one. Elizabeth felt the reaction of the son in her womb to the presence of the Messiah and His mother. As two women who were key instruments in God's plan for salvation, this visit was an opportunity for them to share confidences, fears for the future and feelings of being special and valued.

This year has been a time of uncertainty. Plans such as holidays or celebrations have been made, changed, put on hold, rearranged and sometimes cancelled altogether. It seems as though we are re-entering a time similar to last Christmas when families might not be able to spend time with each other in the unrestricted way we had hoped for.

Both expectant mothers experienced the love of God in a special way and rejoiced in the peace they found in accepting their parts in the unfolding story. May the peace of the Christ-child at Christmas help us to cope with the unforeseen and help us to appreciate God's gift of His Son as our Saviour.

A Parishioner



We ask you to please pray for the following people who continue to ask for your prayers;

Please pray for Beth Selwood

Please pray for Mary Haggar

Please pray for Carmel Barker

Please pray for Vivien Kear (Krissie's friend) who has cancer

Please pray for Rita Lonsdale.

Maddy Sharman has asked for our prayers.

Vera Bird has asked for our prayers for her Great, Great Grandson Harry

Please pray for Cecilia Fung, the mother of Fr Jojo. She has had a stroke.

Prayers please for Antonita's nephew Peppin who has long covid.

Please pray for Caroline Mikhail (daughter - in - law of Jane and Ramsay Mikhail) who suffered a stroke.

Please pray for Peter Halter's sister Jean who has macular degeneration and for Jean's great grandson Rogan who is 9 and has leukemia. Rogan continues to need our prayers.

Please pray for the children and teachers of the Parish

Please pray for the residents and staff at the two nursing homes in our parish, Abbeycrest and St Luke's.

Please pray for all victims of the Coronavirus.



Please also remember in your prayers those whose anniversaries occur at this time including;

Peter Ellison, George Raynard, Sheila Wright, Abigail Gonzalez, Eamonn and Nancey Keogh, Nan and Laurance Maxwell, Paul Fay, Ann Wevlin, Bride McGarry, Tessie McNamara, Gwen Payne, Bridget Mullaniff, Fr. Robert O'Neill O.F.M, Fr. Xavier O.F.MQ, Benjamin Roman Zambrano, Phyllis Baning –Gould, Robert Nicholson, Maud Cooper, Gino Dell'Aqua, Ivy Edna Roberts