

THE VOICE

Boundaries and Juries



ORDINARY TIME

23rd Sunday in
ORDINARY TIME
Year A
10th September 2017
Psalter Week 3

OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

- **Recently deceased:** Eileen Redrup, Anthony Yeo, Val Moses, James Burns, Fr. Bruce Busby, Maria Sipkova.
- **Anniversaries:** Patricia Ryan, Peter Jirgins, Luis Panos, Leonard Owen.
- **Remembrances:** Kevin Deep.
- **And the sick:** Maryanne Diorio, Pat Burgmann, Mary Scarf, Margarita Gomez, June Towson, Therese Corner, Peter Wellis, Audrey Barsenbach, Margaret Davin, Helen Taylor, Patricia Dwyer, Roy Beverage, Bryan Finlayson, Laura Krauss, Nola McKeowen, Rene Glase, Mary Drinan, Marylou Tafilagi, Matilda Tawake, Mick Nino, Kevin Houghton, Betty Fraser, Nellie Brown, Ken Thorsen, Ian Wilks, Tom Thornton.

There are some things I just could not do. One would be to watch my old school playing a football match against another school and barrack for that other team. My old schoolmates would make it pretty clear that they regarded this as an act of betrayal. If I persisted, they would shun me.

Why? Because even on such a minor scale of things they would be asserting the need for boundaries which help define a group, help to give its members a sense of identity, help to reinforce common values they can gather around. This is a very human thing to do, essential for personal identity and sanity.

It is the same for the Church. Our Lord acknowledged that the community he was establishing had to set boundaries. Forces of disintegration cannot be allowed to create a situation where we are unsure of our identity gathering around core beliefs and practices as desired by Jesus Christ.

But who is to decide who is within or who is outside those boundaries?

Sometimes, a local bishop can get it right in declaring who is within and who is beyond the boundaries. I have heard of several bishops in Italy and Sicily, encouraged by Pope Francis, who have refused public Christian burial for those mafia leaders who have notoriously pursued a lifetime of corruption, drug trafficking and killing of their opponents.

But I equally recall my parents being summoned by the Archbishop when they decided to move my brother from the Catholic school to the state high school when the Catholic school stopped teaching French. The bishop threatened to exclude my parents from the sacraments because they were bringing scandal upon the faithful by sending their Catholic boy to a state school. (My parents stood up to him and he backed down.)

What went wrong in that case?

I think it lay in the fact that one man exercised plenary power in deciding who was in and who was out. In today's gospel, Our Lord teaches that a much more nuanced step by step process should be invoked. First, there is private conversation, then slightly extended to bring in two or three others, then the community of the church can make the final decision to treat the person as an outsider.

I am a great believer in the jury system. Now and again I have noted cases where the jury, in the face of overwhelming evidence, has refused to convict a person. I assume the jury decided that, despite what had occurred, the person did not deserve to be branded with a conviction and punished. A certain common sense prevailed.

I think St Matthew's gospel is suggesting that some such church community jury should be convoked before a person is put beyond the pale and excommunicated. Where such a jury meets in prayerful discernment, then Our Lord promises to be with them to help guide their decision. Then they can be sure it will be ratified in heaven.

How might this work? Let us take one area of current discussion. The Church teaches that a valid marriage endures until one partner dies. A person who divorces and then remarries cannot be admitted to Holy Communion as he or she is regarded as committing adultery. We all know of marriages which are fractured and where one partner has found intimacy and security in a second (civil) marriage. Such situations are found in our families and amongst our friends.

Pope Francis has not suggested that the second marriage may be regarded as valid. But he has suggested a possible boundary-breaking starting point for our reflection on this matter. He has said: 'The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.'

Those who have suffered the breakup of a marriage, and have married again, may well require such medicine and nourishment.

Could not a jury of ordinary Catholic lay people make a discerning judgement, distinguishing between the callous, self-indulgent walking away from the marriage on the one hand, and the finding of a life-giving committed relationship by the injured party?

The jury could then advise the Bishop as to the next step.

This would require of the Church the same process in which families often have to engage: pain, struggle, difficulties. But Our Lord Jesus Christ gives us confidence deriving from his promise: 'Where two or three are gathered into my name, I am there with them.'

© Fr Michael Tate

Psalm Response

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If to - day you hear his voice, har - den not your hearts.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! God was in Christ, to reconcile the world to himself; and the Good News of reconciliation he has entrusted to us. *Alleluia!*

Around the Parish

Ecumenical Luncheon: The Annual Ecumenical Progressive luncheon that we share with The Anglican Church and the Uniting Church will be on Saturday 16th September from 12 midday.

3rd Course: Sweets will be held at our St. John the Baptist (Walter Baker Hall), Blackwall Rd. Details of other courses on the sheet in the gathering area. Admission \$5 for main course and gold coin donation for other courses. Please notify us of any dietary requirements. Please put your name on the list in the gathering area if you wish to come. Anyone willing to make a dessert - it will be greatly appreciated. Please advise Dorothy by this Wednesday. Please ring Mary 4342 1515 or Dorothy 4341 7610.

Catechists Meeting will be held on Thursday 21st September for *this month only*. As usual, we will start at 9am following Mass. This meeting is primarily to discuss the Annual Children's Mass, so attendance by as many as possible will be appreciated.

Social Justice

World Suicide Prevention Day: World Suicide Prevention Day is observed on 10 September each year. Its aims are to:

- Raise awareness that suicide is preventable
- Improve education about suicide
- Spread information about suicide awareness
- Decrease stigmatisation regarding suicide.

According to the World Health Organisation, about one million

Woy Woy Youth Group will be hosting a cake stall on the weekend of the 23rd and 24th of September. The fundraising stall will be held following 5pm Mass on Saturday and the two morning Masses on Sunday, with the purpose being to raise funds so that the youth of St John the Baptist have the opportunity to attend a great event.

This Year, from December 7th-9th, there will be a national gathering of Catholic young people known as the Australian Catholic Youth Festival. The event was established by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, and exists to provide young people with opportunities to deepen their relationship with Jesus, be empowered to be disciples in the world today, and celebrate the vitality of the Church in Australia. There will be a national gathering of Catholic young people at the Australian Catholic Youth Festival. The event was established by the Australian Catholic Bishops

Conference, and exists to provide young people with opportunities to deepen their relationship with Jesus, be empowered to be disciples in the world today, and celebrate the vitality of the Church in Australia. If you would like to help out, or for more information, please contact Matthew French on 0411792587.

Children's Liturgy Roster 17/9/17: Marian Bowyer, Mimi Lambert, Ingrid Stevens

Volunteer Church Cleaning Roster 15/9/17: Jo Salter, Cheryl Sillick, Maria Wickens, Rano Spiteri.

Of Grace and Faith Study Group: Thursday 14th September, 11am, Leo Mahon room. All welcome.

Sympathy: St. John the Baptist Family wish to extend their sympathy to the families of James Burns and Anthony Yeo who were buried from our church the past week.

die by suicide each year, or nearly 3000 people on average every day. There is a strong evidence that adequate prevention can reduce suicide rates.

Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA) is an organisation devoted to the reduction of suicide in Australia.

If you, or someone is close to you, are feeling distressed, troubled or in danger, remember that you are not alone. For help

and advise you can call:

- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467
- Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800
- MensLine Australia: 1300 78 99 78

These organisations can also help with grief and stress if you have lost someone close to you.

For more information, see Suicide Prevention Australia: <http://wspd.org.au>

From the Diocese and beyond

The Faith We Believe: Breaking Open the Creed:

The Creed acts as a measure of correct belief, having been developed as a response to conflict concerning doctrine lasting several centuries. What were the controversies, and how were they resolved? This 2 session course will explore these questions and the meaning of the Nicene Constantinopolitan Creed, giving participants a sense of the underlying themes that run through the entire Catechism of the Catholic Church. Please come along for a deeper appreciation of what it means to state, "I believe..."

Presenter: David Patterson
Catholic Life & Faith Formation.
Course Duration: 2 x 2 hour sessions.

Session 1 - Thursday 28 September. Session 2 - Thursday 5 October. 10am-12pm. Parish Hall, Wyong Parish, 23 Byron St. Wyong.
RSVP: by 25 September to office@wyongcatholicparish.com or 4352 1011 or David Patterson on 02 9847 0514 or David.patterson@dbb.org.au

A Musical "Witness" by Carol and Jimmy Owens. Life of Jesus, through the eyes of those who love Him. (65 minutes duration) *This Sunday, 10th*

September. 3pm. St. Patrick's. East Gosford. Tickets \$10 Adults. \$5 Children.

Prayer: Affirming the Relationship: This Encounter course highlights the necessity of an active, vibrant prayer life for fostering a personal relationship with Jesus. It will cover the nature, aims and ways of praying, thereby giving a sense of confidence of how to pray. The course aims to relate that prayer is about fostering a relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Presenter: Very Rev. Dr. David Ranson, PP.VG. Tuesday 12th September. 7pm-9.30pm. St. Cecilia's Parish. Wyong.



Food Groups

Ron Raab

I enjoy meeting people in diners, coffee shops, and hangouts. I use coffee shops as places to hear people's complaints about their family members. I listen to a young post-grad describe falling in love during lunch at my favourite diner. These are not just places to sit and eat and drink. Food is not just function. These are places of profound conversation that open people to the truth of their lives.

I have moved 10 times since my ordination, living in places as varied as Southern California, Chicago, Portland, and Colorado Springs. I can often describe my ministry by my hangouts, where I meet people for conversations. Some of the eating establishments have also been onsite confessionals. I hear sins and offenses scrambled together with eggs in the early morning. Some barstools have been places of spiritual direction for me, where I have poured out my heart to other people over drinks or coffee or dinner or ice cream. No matter the city, conversation around food and drink creates a safe place where stories are told and matters of conscience are talked about freely and lovingly. In fact, as I ponder these personal conversations, I believe I have had the most intimate and profound conversations of my adult life in these local dives or hangouts and even in a few elegant dining rooms.

So I am aware that we all need our daily bread. Our hunger for intimacy is real: to be heard or to share our stories with other people. Our hunger is not static or just other-worldly or confined to church pews. We are starving for God's love. I realize with every move around the country that we all need people on earth to receive our stories of doubt, sin, insecurity, anger, and sadness. We need to become food for one another — partaking of the Eucharist in our own lives in order to then receive the hunger of other people.

The Eucharist is lived in the world when a sleepless parent feeds a screaming newborn in the darkness of night among the bonds of family love. I view the Eucharist when an elderly woman spoon-feeds her husband of nearly 60 years who is dying of a brain tumour. This intimacy is unmistakable. This is God feeding us when we are called to feed those we love no matter the circumstances.

The Eucharist also challenges us to become a real presence of love for people we do not

know. We may stumble over our excuses not to offer a sandwich to someone who holds a sign for help at a local street intersection. We may cringe when a pastor suggests we take our youth group over to a soup kitchen on Friday nights. The challenge for us is to move beyond our places of feeling satisfied, of feeling full and powerful. We are all called to feed from our need for God, our powerlessness, our human emptiness, in order to really experience other people's starvation and insecurity.

We receive the sacred presence of Christ in bread and wine deep within our human ache for love and intimacy. This presence is then lived in the world in places we least expect. We must realize that our hunger binds us one to another. The Eucharist feeds us no matter our hardship or suffering, no matter our blindness to our neighbour or our sinful past. Food heals when we share it in mutual respect, when we are present to another person's brokenness and pain.

Jesus's real presence is often hidden from the learned and the clever. The gospels continue to open us to the fact that love is given to those who are burdened and lowly. The invitation to Christ's love comes from the holy Eucharist. We live out this love in Christ in all we do and in all we hope to become. This invitation to rest and consolation continues from the heart of Christ to those who are starving for hope, intimacy, and healing.

The holy Eucharist is not about a convenient Mass time on a weekend or something external to our daily lives. This real presence of Christ Jesus is an everyday life of values, a belief system that all of life is holy, and a revealed hope among all people who starve for holiness and the basics of life. The Eucharist challenges us to become a sacred and real presence in the world, whether among strangers we meet at a local diner or among our family members over a home-cooked meal. Sharing our stories in love and faith with food here on earth opens us to the healing of Christ Jesus, our food from heaven.

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Ronald Patrick Raab, CSC, broadcasts a weekly Scripture commentary, *On the Margins*, on radio KBVM.fm. Learn more at www.ronaldraab.com. From *Ministry & Liturgy*, copyright © Resource Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission under licence number 115216.



Am I my brother's keeper?
All three readings today
suggest that for the
Christian steward the
answer is "Yes!"



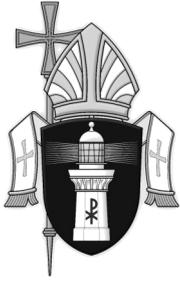
Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula

Woy Woy,

Woy Woy South, Umina, Umina Beach, Ettalong, Ettalong Beach, Koolewong, Blackwall,

Booker Bay,

St Hubert's Island, Empire Bay, Horsfield Bay, Pearl Beach, Patonga, Woy Woy Bay, Daley's Point, Phegan's Bay and Wondabyne.



St John the Baptist Church,

Cnr Blackwall and Victoria Roads, Woy Woy

Parish Office Ethel Cox Parish Centre
P.O. Box 264 100 Blackwall Road.
54 Victoria Road
WOY WOY N.S.W. 2256

Phone: (02) 4341 1073
Fax: (02) 4341 0214
Email: parish@woywoycatholic.org.au
Website: www.woywoycatholic.org.au
Out of hours **medical emergency**
0438 631 327.

"He must increase, I must decrease"

Administrator: Fr. Timothy Raj. M.S.F.S.

Assistant Priest: Fr. Philip Thottam. M.S.F.S.

Office Staff: Helen Cameron, Raelene Spithill.

Office Hours:

9.30 a.m.—4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday

Deadline for The Voice:

3.30 p.m. Wednesday

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Vigil Saturday 5pm; Sunday 7.30am, 9.15am, 6pm.

WEEKDAY MASS TIMES

Monday-Friday 7.45am (Monday & Tuesday with Lauds);

Saturday and Public Holidays 9am; First Friday 4pm (with Anointing of the Sick).

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Friday after morning Mass; First Friday 3.30pm; Saturday 11.30am & 4.30pm; Sunday 7.00am.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

1st & 3rd Sundays, 11am; (5th Sunday during 9.15am Mass by arrangement only).

Godparents are examples of faith to the child. They must be confirmed and practising Catholics, at least sixteen years old. If there is at least one godparent, a non-Catholic may act as a Christian witness. Parents and godparents must attend a pre-baptismal instruction, held on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month at 9.30am.

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Every Saturday after 9am Mass until 10am; every Monday until 9am (Public Holidays 10.15am). Every Thursday 7.30pm-8.30pm for the needs of the Parish.

MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION . Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Every Thursday night, 7.30pm-8.30 pm.

PARISH CHOIR - Practice Wednesday nights in the church, 7pm. Enquiries: 4341 3367.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL,

21a Dulkara Rd South Woy Woy 2256. p 024341 0884 www.sjbwoywoy.org.au

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST YOUTH GROUP Held once a fortnight in the Leo Mahon Room. Term 3 dates: 16th July, 30th July, 13th August and 27th August. High school (Years 7-12). For more information, contact Matthew French on 0411 792 587.

CATECHISTS conduct special religious education classes at the four Primary State Schools in our Parish. Experience isn't necessary—but Volunteers are always needed—to teach and help. Details: Susie 0411 566 622 without any obligation.

CATHOLIC CARE Counselling and Family Relationships 4356 2600.

MARY MAC'S PLACE Volunteers provide nutritious, freshly cooked meals and information and referrals to appropriate community services. Open Monday to Friday, 11am-1pm, at the Ethel Cox Parish Centre. For more information, please contact Christine on 4341 0584.

ST VINCENT de PAUL SOCIETY on the Peninsula assist and give a hand up to people in need. We have two Conferences with volunteers sharing the visiting or office work. We always welcome new Volunteers to our Conference. Please ring Peter 0425 358 376 or Joan 0422 272 339.

CASH HOUSIE every Saturday night at Peninsula Community Centre, Cnr Ocean Beach Rd & McMasters Rd, Woy Woy.

Games start at 7.30pm and finish 10.20pm, cash prizes.

Ticket sales from 6pm. Proceeds benefit Parish. Enquiries Rob: 0427 990 818.

October Long weekend—Bingo Marathon

Saturday, 30th September 2017

100 Games, \$100, \$150, \$180 Prizes and a chance of winning \$2,000 jackpot (game 50 reverts to \$1,000 if not won in certain calls, game 100 unlimited).

\$48 for 6 tickets in 50 games (\$96 for 100 games)

2.30pm to 10.30pm at Peninsula Community Centre,
93 McMasters Rd Woy Woy.

Free Catering during half time break 5.30pm - Free Tea and Coffee all day.

Fundraising goes to Woy Woy Catholic Parish

Enquiries: Rob 0427990818 or wwcphousie@hotmail.com

FACEBOOK/Woy Woy Bingo