



**7th Sunday in
ORDINARY TIME
Year A
19th February 2017
Psalter Week 3**

**OF YOUR
CHARITY
PRAY FOR THE
SOULS OF**

- **Recently deceased:**
Thora Duffy,
Bro. Michael Knights, c.f.c.
- **Anniversaries:**
Fr. Lawrence (Vince) Pedemont,
Fatima Fowzy, Ned & Josephine Borg,
Pat Dolan, Angela Briggs,
Katharina and Frank Justic,
Bill Finlayson.
- **Remembrances:**
Sara Selim, Ernest Burton,
Mary Catania, John Kelly
Edgar Camilleri.
- **And the sick:**
Alan Ford, Kevin Houghton,
Margaret Davin, Maryanne Diorio,
Alan Harland, Tracie Passlow,
John Allen, Audrey Barsendich,
Maureen Cowls, Celeste Boonaerts,
Kath Hardy, Chev Shengi,
Steve Paino, Beryl Allen,
Colleen Giles, John Purser.

Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula

THE VOICE

Warfare and the Church

One cannot choose which passage of scripture is going to really hit home, make an impact, and become a huge challenge in your life.

This passage of scripture, today's Gospel, changed my life – completely. Revelation became revolution!

I had always read 'Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect' as advocating rather static anaemic fault-less-ness. Not very appealing!

But, sitting in my room one day, I realised that the Greek word we usually translate as 'perfect' is closer to the idea of a perfect wine – one that has matured and has reached its full potential, everything it was capable of being.

So, Our Lord is saying, 'Be a person who is becoming fully mature, someone who is everything you are capable of being.'

Our Lord gives a striking example of the challenge. It is far from static or anaemic! ...our Father in Heaven ...causes his sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest men alike.' And then Our Lord commands us to be everything we are meant to be as human beings in exactly the same respect.

We are to be gracefully mature adult disciples of Jesus by imitating God who does not withhold life-giving sun and rain from people because they are bad or dishonest. God does not extinguish the life of human beings because they are evil, because they are enemies.

This exploded in my consciousness like a bomb! We are to be the same as God in this regard. That is how we are to love our enemies.

To cut a short story short, I became a Christian Pacifist. I revered the Church of the first three Centuries, the Martyr Church which refused to bear arms.

Psalm Response

The Lord is kind and merciful.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! Whoever keeps the word of Christ, grows perfect in the love of God. Alleluia!

Dr Martin Luther King became my hero. He had practised active non-violence precisely in following the Sermon on the Mount, and had transformed a segregated and racist United States.

I purchased a black and white poster of King, hanging it on the wall above my desk. On my return to Australia, I got involved in politics.

The rest is history. I was elected to the Senate and was Minister for Justice for six years. Everything was going swimmingly, and I had the satisfaction of a certain superiority. I knew what it was to be a true follower of Jesus Christ, and I was living the dream.

The dream was shattered in January of 1991. Iraq's Saddam Hussein had invaded and occupied Kuwait. The Prime Minister required a vote in the Senate supporting the despatch of naval units for a UN Security Council-authorised military operation to expel Iraqi forces.

To cut a very long story short, after an anguished weekend I voted for the motion. I was sure that *that* first Iraq war was justified by the teaching of the Church for the last sixteen hundred years – the "Just War" doctrine.

But my heart broke. I realised that I had betrayed the Divine Teacher of the Sermon on the Mount. I turned the photo of Martin Luther King to the wall. I could not bear his eyes gazing into my soul. I could not open Matthew's Gospel for fear of opening it at today's passage.

I am still not entirely at peace. I derive some consolation from the fact that

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Around the Parish

Lent Begins—Ash Wednesday 1st March. Masses will be 7.45am and 7.30pm. A School Mass will be held at SJB school, 21a Dulkara Rd., South Woy Woy at 12middy.

Reconciliation will be available every Wednesday 7pm-8pm throughout Lent.

Stations of the Cross will be followed during Lent every Friday 7.30pm and every Wednesday 4pm. Commencing Friday 3rd March.

Palms for Burning: Please bring in your palms for burning and leave them in the basket in the gathering area.

Fast and Abstinence: There are two days on which we are obliged to fast and abstain: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Project Compassion: Your donations to Project Compassion give expression to the Gospel imperative to pursue justice and help those vulnerable to extreme poverty and injustice. Please take home a Project Compassion box or a set of envelopes available in the gathering area.

Parish Pastoral Council will be meeting Monday, 20th February, 7pm. Parish Office.

Fr. Jack's Farewell will be held on Friday night 24th March 2017. A venue is still to be confirmed as approximate numbers are needed. For those interested in attending, please place your contact details on the list on the gathering table or call the Parish Office.

Catechists: Please keep our volunteer Catechists (and all Scripture teachers) in your prayers as they begin their classes for 2017 this week. They have nearly 500 young hearts in their care and your prayers to the Holy Spirit will give them strength.

World Day of Prayer, Friday, 3rd March, 10.30am, St. Luke's Anglican Church, 147 Blackwall Rd. Woy Woy. Refreshments after Service. All welcome!

Liturgy Meeting Thursday 23rd February, 7.30pm in the Parish Office

Volunteer Church Cleaning

Roster 24/2/17: Kevin Glacken, Laurie Jarvis, Cheryl Sillick, Pamela Burton.

The Live, Pray and Love –Event: Is Jesus Really Present in the Eucharist by Ron Tesoriero.

In Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1996, a piece of bread spontaneously transformed into what looked like flesh and blood. Pope Francis, who was then Archbishop wanted a scientific investigation. Ron Tesoriero, author, lawyer and documentary film maker and journalist Mike Willesee were directly involved with the investigation, and which is now of world interest will share the research work into this Eucharistic miracle. Sunday, 5th March, Leo Mahon room 10.30am-1.00pm. Phone Gladys 0421 312 362 if attending or if you have any questions.

Morning Tea Roster 26/2/17: 'El Shaddai' Prayer Group.

Thank You: to all for your prayers and good wishes for my father in his recent illness. My father is now home and much improved. Jenny Fitzgerald.

Sympathy: St. John the Baptist Parish Family extends its prayerful sympathy to family and relatives of Thora Duffy who was buried from our church the past week.

Social Justice

Eight Gifts that you can give at no cost:

1. **The Gift of Listening**....But you must REALLY listen. No interrupting, no daydreaming, no planning your response. Just listening.
2. **The Gift of Affection**...Be generous with appropriate hugs, kisses, pats on the back and handholds. Let these small actions demonstrate the love you have for family and friends.

3. **The Gift of Laughter**....Clip cartoons. Share articles and funny stories. Your gift will say, "I love to laugh with you."

4. **The Gift of a Written Note**....It can be simple "Thanks for the help" note or a full sonnet. A brief, handwritten note may be remembered for a lifetime and may even change a life.

5. **The Gift of a Compliment**.... A simple and sincere, "You look great in red," "You did a super job" or "That was a wonderful meal" can make someone's day.

6. **The gift of a Favour**....Everyday go out of your way to do something kind.

7. **The Gift of Solitude**....There are times when we want nothing better than to be left alone. Be sensitive to those times, and give the gift of solitude to others.

8. **The Gift of a Cheerful Disposition**....The easiest way to feel good is to extend a kind word to someone, really it's not that hard to say "Hello" or "Thank You".

From the Diocese and beyond

Packing for the Desert Praisefest: Catholic Youth Broken Bay. St. Peter's Catholic College Hall, Tuggerah Lakes. Friday 24th February, 6pm-9pm.

Walking the Camino in France and Spain. Saturday, 25th February, Nth. Sydney, Tenison Room, Mary MacKillop Place, 80 Williams St. Nth. Sydney. Attend one or both presentations by Peter Kearney, who has walked these pilgrimage routes to Santiago. Live commentary by Peter. Photographs and music from a large screen television. 1. Camino in France: 11.00 am &/ or 2. Camino in Spain: 2.00pm. Admission per session—\$10 at door.

Advance Registration essential. Email Peter: camino@peterkearneysongs.com.au. Please specify 'France' or 'Spain' or 'Both'. Also state 'North Sydney' and number of seats needed.

Alpha in the Catholic Context @ St. Patrick's Gosford: Intensive Leadership Training: Thursday, 23rd February, 10am-4pm and 6.15pm-8.30pm in the church. Exploring the basics of the Christian faith in a friendly, open and informal environment and aiming to develop people with the knowledge, skill and attributes to successfully run Alpha in their parish. RSVP 20/2. registrations@ddb.org.au or 9847 0448/ 4332 9825

Alan Ames, Spiritual Healer: St. Patrick's East Gosford. Monday, 27th February 7 pm commencing with Mass. Ever since 1994, Alan has been travelling all continents to witness how God lifted him from misery and hopelessness into a life full of joy and freedom. Alan has a gift of healing. After his talks, he prays over each of those present (by laying of the hands).

The fruits of Alan's ministry are healing, conversion, hope, comfort and strengthening of those blessed by God during the prayer meetings.

Scripture Commentary

by Brendan Byrne SJ

Today's Gospel takes up the last two of the six pronouncements with which Jesus authoritatively reinterprets the Torah (Law) of Moses in the direction of the 'deeper righteousness' required of the community of the Kingdom.

The radical reinterpretation he offers in the Gospel is very helpfully foreshadowed by the passage from Leviticus 19 (vv 1-2, 17-18) in the First Reading. This shows that, while Jesus' pronouncements in the Gospel involve a contrast with what was said 'of old' (that is, in the Law of Moses), there is no absolute opposition. Rather, his fulfilment of the Law brings out its radical depth. The opening statement, 'Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy,' serves as a kind of theme for what is called the 'Holiness Code' in the Book of Leviticus (chapters 17-26). It makes the point – one that Jesus will take up – that the 'righteousness' required of Israel reflects the character and action of Israel's God. The concluding sentences address the issue of dealing with injury received from a fellow Israelite. Anticipating the teaching of Jesus, the Law looks to the human heart and insists that grudges must not be held in a way that seeks opportunities for vengeance. On the contrary, the matter must be brought out into the open and resolved within the wider ideal of 'loving one's neighbour as oneself'.

Jesus' reinterpretation of the Torah arrives at its most radical point in the two final rulings that make up the Gospel: on retaliation (Matt 5:38-42) and love of enemies (5:43-48). The old prescription about 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' (Exod 21:24; Deut 19:21; Lev 24:20) is commonly cited as an example of the harshness of the Old Testament dispensation. This is unfair. In the tribal situation of early Israel, where institutions of justice were barely established, the law of strict reciprocity was a realistic measure to contain and limit the spiral of violence – to bring 'payback' to a closure that all parties would recognise as fair. What Jesus commands is a readiness to disarm violence by being prepared to accept double what the perpetrator requires. The specific instances that he mentions – surrendering your cloak as well as your tunic; going two miles instead of just one – reflect social conditions in the Palestine of his day when soldiers of the occupying Roman forces could make such demands of members of the populace with impunity – something perfectly illustrated in Simon of Cyrene being compelled to

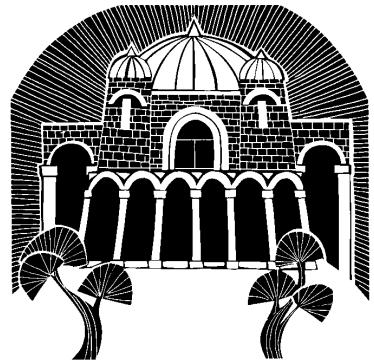
carry Jesus' cross (Matt 27:32). Readiness to meet such demands with disarming is hardly realistic on the level of society as a whole where evil and evildoers must be resisted and restrained. If disciples of Jesus, on an individual or small group level (as, for example, in Christian non-violent protest), adopt a generous stance in the face of injury and unreasonable demand, the freedom to do so will stem from consciousness of the far greater generosity they have themselves received from God.

In the case of the ruling about enemies (5:43-43) it is again important again not to drive a wedge between the old and the new. Lev 19:18, cited in the First Reading, says 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself,' adding nothing about enemies. Hating one's enemy is simply a human tendency that Jesus knows to be widely prevalent. He resists it in the context, now made explicit, of the disposition and action of God, whose 'children' his disciples know themselves to be. 'Like parent, like child,' the adage runs. So they will truly show themselves to be children of God if they reflect the divine action in this radical way.

In conclusion, Jesus offers a definition of what it means to be 'perfect' in observance of the Torah: 'You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.' The stress here falls upon the little word 'as': perfection means acting towards others, including one's enemies, as the Creator acts towards all, good and bad alike.

The Second Reading, 1 Cor 3:16-23, offers a fine evocation of Christian community identity. In the Christian dispensation the sense of God's dwelling in the Temple in Jerusalem has been transferred to the community of believers. As the 'body' of the risen Lord, vivified by the Spirit, they now constitute the dwelling place of God. Divisive allegiances to particular teachers – whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas (Peter) – on the basis of a 'wisdom' specific to each, threaten the very existence of this Temple. The only one to whom believers can truly 'belong' is Christ. Through this belonging, insignificant though they be in the sight of the world, believers participate in his lordship of the universe. Within this perspective, 'All things', the teachers included, belong to them.

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In today's first reading, the Israelites are urged to love their neighbours as themselves. In the Gospel, Jesus spells out how we are to do that — to give generously to those who ask of us and not to turn our backs on those who seek to borrow.



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

"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).

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Every Thursday 7.30pm–8.30pm for the needs of the Parish.

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 or www.sjbwoywoy.org.au.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST YOUTH GROUP For information and events contact the parish office 4341 1073.

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 Ken 0400 335 351 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.

Warfare and the Church

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Pope John Paul II, usually a Pope of great certainties, experienced the same turmoil of heart and mind in wrestling with this issue.

No-one can read his Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* without seeing the struggle. [see especially *Evangelium Vitae* 55]

We need two things to happen.

First, the Church as a whole has to keep wrestling with the issue. Jesus' command: 'You must be ...' is directed to *You* in the plural. It is communal, social. The Holy Spirit is moving the Church as the community of Christ's faithful in a direction not experienced since its first three Centuries.

It will be interesting to see what Pope Francis has to say in his homily on today's Gospel, should he choose to focus on this point.

Second, Our Lord insists in this passage that we pray *on behalf* of those who want to do us harm. If they are evil, if they are aggressors, if they are willing to harm the innocent, they *need* prayer. We have to pray *on their behalf* that they be rescued from the deforming, dehumanising, diabolical ideology which impels them.

To pray for such as these is to share in the perfection of 'Our Heavenly Father who causes his sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest men alike.' It is to move towards becoming *perfectly mature* followers of the Divine Teacher, those who might better hear His voice: 'Blessed are the peacemakers.'