



The Voice

14th June 2015

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Psalter Week 3

The Sowing of the Seed

In Australia, so far as I know, a farmer ploughs the land and *then* plants the seed. In Galilee, the farmer scattered the seed on the old field and therefore on tracks which people made walking across it after cropping, on thorny areas, and also on what he hoped was good soil. He *then* ploughed in the seed.

It is a wonder that anything grew, and generally the return was about 7:1. In a previous parable Jesus had spoken of the Kingdom he was inaugurating as if it would turn out to be like a bumper harvest of up to a hundredfold.

What would such a harvest mean for a peasant tilling the rocky soil of Galilee? It would mean release from the endless servitude to a landlord, generation after generation. It would mean liberation, not only from hunger, but from the power structure which was quite content with a permanent underclass of subsistence farmers.

In other words, Jesus was telling his listeners that God's Kingdom would turn the world as they knew it 'upside down'. As Mary sang in the Magnificat: 'The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away.' Power structures would be shattered by the impulses of the Gospel to create a society where there was a just distribution of the world's resources.

Naturally, the peasant farmers of Galilee wanted to know 'when' and 'how'. We want to know the 'when' and the 'how' of the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God. Jesus' answer to them, and to us, is basically: 'It is not for you to know. Just get on with the sowing of the Gospel seed. Something will happen with the seed you sow, something out of all proportion to your part in the process.'

Our Lord pictured this by contrasting the tiny mustard seed and the mustard bush which he even exaggerates into a tree in which birds could find shelter!

In this parable Jesus says: 'Be patient, allow

the creative power of God to work in the earth and the small seed will be "raised up".'

When did God's creative power work in the depths of the stony ground so that the Gospel Seed was raised up? The answer is, of course, in the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

And what effect did this have? We read in the Acts of the Apostles concerning the early Christian community that 'The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.' (Acts 2:44) In other words, the social system was being subverted by the power of the Gospel. A more just distribution of resources was taking place in the immediate aftermath of the proclamation of the Resurrection by Peter on the Feast of Pentecost.

I think it is very telling that a little further on in the Acts of the Apostles we read: 'The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no-one claimed for his own use anything that he had, as everything they owned was held in common. The apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power.' (Acts 4:32-33)

There is a correlation between the commitment of Christians to a just distribution of the world's resources and the proclamation of the Lord's resurrection. Only if the commitment is authentic and real will the proclamation be powerful and effective. So, let us lead lives with an authentic dimension of social justice, let us get on with sowing the seed of the Gospel whenever we get the opportunity, let God get on with germinating that seed with the power of the Resurrection so that the Tree of Life may grow to such a height that all peoples 'can shelter in its shade.'

© Fr Michael Tate

OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

- **Recently deceased:**
Tui Tuilekutu,
Ron Filewood.
- **Anniversaries:**
Lisa Rutherford,
Mary Ann Hardwick.
- **And the sick:**
Hanna El-Khatib, June Ferry,
Kate Stinson, Janelle Darson,
Pat Bombell, Kevin Houghton,
Lola Proctor, Beryl Allen,
Fr. Brian Rowland,
Fr. Bill Meacham,
Alan Harland, Terry Curtis,
Grace Williams, Irene Beck,
Roy Beveridge, Arnold Diorio,
Rene Glaze, Audrey Winsbury,
Peter Kenneth Thorson,
Patricia Welsh.

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Psalm Response



Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower; all who come to him will live for ever. *Alleluia!*

Around the Parish

Clergy Conference: Bishop Peter has requested all priests to be present at a Clergy Conference next week. Therefore there will be the usual morning Masses Monday and Tuesday, but *no morning Mass* Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Morning Prayer will replace Mass at the usual time. There will *not* be a Communion Service. For the sick and those in nursing homes holy communion *will be* available.

Installation: 9.15am Mass, July 26th 2015 will see Bishop Peter return to Woy Woy to install Fr. Jack as our Parish Priest and Frs. Timothy and Philip as our Assistant Priests.

The occasion will be marked with morning tea in the Leo Mahon room to which you are warmly invited.

Sacrament of Confirmation will be conferred on our children this Saturday 20th June. Please pray for them.

Baptisms: We welcome into our Faith community and pray for Noah Bartlett, Seth Bartlett, Jack Cross, Angus Lawson, Cohen Loudon, Shayla McEvoy, and Tobias McEvoy baptised last Sunday and James Joseph Leary who received the Sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation.

Message from Fr. Stephen:

Dear Woy Woy Friends,
Words cannot adequately express my gratitude to you all for your generosity to me. The Farewell Dinner was wonderful and gave me great joy; it was good to see so many familiar, smiling faces there. The beautiful stole presented to me will remind me of you all and of the happy times I spent with you at St. John the Baptist Parish.

Your kindness has made my leaving difficult. But I take with me many very wonderful memories. I will keep you in my prayers always and ask that you remember me sometimes as well.

Asanteni Sana na Mungu Awarabari. (Thank you very much and God bless you).

There is also a thank you card from Father in the gathering area for you to read.

Ordination to the Diaconate:

Brother Matthew Boland, O.P. will be ordained to the Diaconate by Archbishop Anthony Fisher, O.P. on 4th July, 10.30am. St. Benedict's Church, 104 Broadway. Parishioners are invited to attend. Refreshments will follow across the courtyard from the church. RSVP by 24 June. matthew.boland@op.org.au or james.baxter@op.org.au

2015 e Conference streamed live over the internet Tuesday 23rd June, 10am-2.30pm in the Leo Mahon room. Topic: Religion: Catalyst for Violence or Peace? Probing the Abrahamic traditions for answers. This conference will tap into interfaith issues. **A b r a h a m i c**, Judaism and Islam. For catering purposes, please write your name on the list in the gathering area if you are attending.

Children's Liturgy Roster 21/6/15: Geraldine Baxter, Jenny Fitzgerald, Joanna Baxter.

Volunteer Church Cleaning Roster 19/6/15: Elena Egan, Jo Salter, Christina Thorson, Philomena Curtis.

Cuppa and a Chat: A group of seniors meet every third Monday in the Leo Mahon room due this Monday, 15th June, 1.30pm-3pm. If you would like to join us phone Bernard 4341 6343. Transport provided.

The Craft Group would like to thank everyone who attended the recent Biggest Morning Tea & for the many donations raising \$860 towards this worthy cause.

St. Vincent de Paul Clothing Appeal will be held the weekend 27/28 June.

The Just Word

Gaps arising from changes to the system:

Federal Government funding for social services underwent a significant, rapid change in 2014. Organisations had to tender to receive funding for existing programs under the new model.

Funding announcements were made just prior to Christmas. The confidentiality around the arrangements means it has been difficult to see which areas suffered most under the funding cuts, however Ms Mogg says that gaps are appearing.

'We do know, anecdotally, that waiting lists for family support programs are already increasing.

Sometimes as much as tenfold', she says.

'We know that there has been significant cuts to emergency relief funding, which helps people pay the rent if there's a shortfall, or pay their electricity bills if they run out of cash.

'There have also been cuts to housing and homelessness support, as well as—interestingly, given the government's support for it—to family violence support services.'

Indigenous communities are also facing uncertainty, with around 150 rural and remote communities in Western Australia facing closure after the federal government transferred responsibility

to the state last year.

'What it means, most likely, is that people are moved into town camps and into cities, where the problems that those communities are facing are only worsened'. Says Ms Mogg.

'Rather than seeing an efficiency for the government's services delivery, we will see an increasing demand for more complex interventionist services further down the line, because of the compounding disadvantages relocation is likely to bring.

*Catholic Social Services Australia
CEO Marcelle Mogg.
www.australiancatholics.com.au*

From the Diocese and beyond

"What do I want to do in life?"

Are you a young Catholic (18-35) wondering what direction you want to take in life? If you are, why not come along to our Vocations' Retreat at Mount Carmel Retreat Centre (SW Sydney) on July 24-26th. More information or to speak with one of the team

giving the retreat please contact the Centre on 8795 3400.

'**Old fashion Dessert**' Afternoon Entertainment—Los Bongos. 2pm-4pm. Uniting Church, Crn. Neptune St. & Ocean Beach Rd. Umina. Saturday, 20th June, 2pm-4pm. Cost \$10. Proceeds to Red Cross. Contact Linda 4344 2994

DBB WYD Krakow Information Sessions for Pilgrims:

St. Peter's College, Tuggerah Lakes. Monday 22nd June, 7.30pm-9.30pm. OR St. Leo's College, Wahroonga. Thursday, 25th June, 7.30pm-9.30pm. rspwuyd@dbb.org.au

The Readings for Today and Next Sunday

Bruce Janiga

11th Sunday in Ordinary Time, June 14

Ez 17:22-24

Ps 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16

2 Cor 5:6-10

Mk 4:26-34

The prophet Ezekiel, writing in exile from Babylon, speaks words of comfort and promise to the exiles. God speaks of transplanting a "tender shoot" (v 22) to his mountain. This shoot will "become a majestic cedar" (v 23), a tree known for its strength, and provide a place of refuge. These words offer Israel the hope that they will be restored as a nation and become a source of blessing for others.

Writing to the church at Corinth, Paul reminds us that "we walk by faith" (v 7); our destiny is in the hands of God. Because God has called us, we must strive to live as disciples of Christ as long as we are in this world. We long to be with the Lord, but as long as we are in this world and away from him, let us serve him faithfully.

Jesus' parables often employ agricultural imagery. In today's text we are presented with the parable of the seed that grows in secret. Though we have much better knowledge of the processes of germination and plant growth today, the process remains the same: we plant and the seed slowly comes to life if conditions are agreeable. The growth is gradual and predictable. So it is with the reign of God, Jesus tells us. God's word will produce a harvest, and to the outsider its growth is a mystery. But Jesus has revealed to his disciples that the growth is the consequence of cooperation between God and the believer. If we work with the word of God planted within us, then we will produce a good harvest. The mustard seed, starting out small, is destined to become a mustard plant. The church is called to become a mustard plant, where God's children can find refuge and welcome "in its shade" (v 32).

For reflection: When have I experienced the hope of the exiles, knowing that in my darkest hour, God is still with me? How have I seen God at work in my spiritual growth and in my service to others?

Birth of St. John the Baptist, June 24

Is 49:1-6

Ps 139:1-3, 13-14, 14-15

Acts 13:22-26

Lk 1:57-66, 80

John the Baptist's birth — six months and a day before Christmas — is a major milestone on the road of salvation history. The Gospels present John as the forerunner of the Messiah. Luke in particular places John and Jesus side by side. The announcements of their births, their nativities, and their being given names are presented alternately — John, then Jesus. But Jesus is always the greater figure.

In Isaiah, the mysterious Servant of the Lord speaks of having been called in the womb by God. Like the prophet Jeremiah, his mission is part of the fabric of his being. It is an awareness of a lifelong mission in service to the Lord. Though frequently frustrated, the Servant is called to speak God's word and to be "a light to the nations" (v 6).

In Acts of the Apostles, Paul is preaching in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia. He proclaims that Jesus, a son of David, was sent by God as our saviour in fulfilment of his promise. Paul speaks of how John the Baptist prepared people for the coming of Jesus by announcing a call to repentance. Paul's homily in the synagogue serves as an invitation to the people of Antioch to also repent and believe.

The name John means "Yahweh has compassion." This name, given to the child by the angel before he was born, indicates the importance of the child: he will be the one who announces God's good news of the coming of the Messiah, the ultimate act of divine compassion. Like the Servant in Isaiah, John has been designated before his birth for God's mission. The mysterious events surrounding his beginnings in Luke's text indicate that "the hand of the Lord was with him" (v 66), as the evangelist writes. Elizabeth and Zechariah may not fully understand God's plan, but they cooperate with it.

For reflection: Do I have a sense of having been called by God for a mission? How have I experienced God's compassion in my life and shared it with others?

Bruce Janiga, a priest of the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J., teaches Scripture studies at Seton Hall Prep in West Orange, N.J. He is the Sunday assistant at St. Cassian Church in Upper Montclair, N.J. From *Ministry & Liturgy*, copyright © Resource Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission under licence number 115216.



Like the sower in today's Gospel, I scatter as seed my gifts of time, talent, and resources; and I trust that, by God's grace and in God's time, these small gifts of myself may grow and flourish and help to bring about the kingdom of God.



Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula

Woy Woy, Umina, Ettalong, Koolewong, Tascott, Blackwall, Booker Bay, St Hubert's Island, Empire Bay, Horsfield Bay, Pearl Beach, Patonga, Woy Woy Bay, Daley's Point and Phegan's Bay.

St John the Baptist Church, corner of Blackwall and Victoria Roads, Woy Woy

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

Phone: (02) 4341 1073

Fax: (02) 4341 0214

Email: parish@woywoycatholic.org.au

"He must increase, I must decrease"

Fr. Jack Robson. *Parish Priest.*

Fr. Timothy Raj MSPS & Fr. Philip Thottam MSPS. *Assistant Priests.*

Office Staff: Helen Cameron, Raelene Spithill, & Margaret Cooper.

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 7.45am, 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, 3.30 p.m.; Saturday 11.30am; & 4.30pm; Sunday 7.00 a.m.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

1st & 3rd Sundays, 11am; 5th Sunday, during 9.15 a.m. Mass.

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 9.30 a.m.

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Every Saturday after 9am Mass until 10am; every Monday until 9am (Public Holidays 10.15am).

PARISH CHOIR – Practice Wednesday nights in the church, 7 p.m.

Enquiries: 4341 3367.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, 21a Dulkara Rd South Woy Woy 2256. p 024341 0884 f 0243 445049.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST YOUTH GROUP For information and events contact Sam French 042 244 9539.

CATHOLICCARE Marriage & Family Relationships. Phone: 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.

CASH HOUSIE every Saturday night at Peninsula Community Centre, Cnr. Ocean Beach Rd and McMasters Rd., Woy Woy. Games start at 7.30 p.m. and finish approx 10.20 p.m. Cash prizes. Ticket sales from 6.00 p.m. Proceeds benefit Parish. Enquiries Rob 0427 990 818.

Random Thoughts on the Mass

Richard Husted ofm & Caroline Thomas

Receiving Communion Twice

Sometimes people ask if it is permissible to receive Holy Communion more than once a day. The norm is to receive the Lord once a day. (This rule is meant to avoid a previous abuse during which people would "church-hop," going to receive Holy Communion from many churches a day so as to become "holier.") Occasions might arise, however, in which you find yourself celebrating at more than one Mass (for example, while attending a funeral, a wedding, a Confirmation, or another occasion of special significance). Then, of course, an additional communion is certainly approved.

Announcements

Q: Why do we interrupt Mass with announcements? Wouldn't it be better to make them before Mass begins?

A: The placement of announcements during the Liturgy has been the subject of a great deal of discussion. There are reasons that they are best put at the end of Mass before

the dismissal. The Communion Rite ends with the Prayer after Communion prayed by the presider at the chair. What follows is really all part of the Rite of Sending. "We can't stay here—we have work to do," and so the announcements bring us back to the concrete tasks of building the kingdom. We are then blessed for the task and dismissed as a community by the presider.

Dismissal

Each time we gather for the Eucharist, we are blessed for the work of building the kingdom before we leave. The blessing is part of our dismissal, a reminder of the task that is ours as a result of what we have heard and celebrated. Our dismissal is much more than "The Mass is over." It is a blessing and a commission to put into practice what we have celebrated. And so we say: "Thanks be to God!" We pray for one another that we can have the grace to open our doors, our hearts, and our hands. The sense is "Go, you are sent."

We're on the Web!
www.woywoycatholic.org.au



Diocese of
Broken Bay