



4th Sunday in
ORDINARY TIME
Year A
29th January 2017
Psalter Week 4

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

• **Recently deceased:**

Ricardo Daroy, Helen Fairhall.

• **Anniversaries:**

Andrew Flanagan, Bill Wise,
 Marie Therese & Pierre Stanislas,
 Ernest & Morva Burton,
 Wesley Christoffelsz,
 Matilde Carpio, Tirso Carpio, Re-
 nato Carpio, Angelita Carpio,
 Agnes Arahill, Patricia Wilmott.

• **Remembrances:**

William Arahill, Pauline Menezes.

• **And the sick:**

Kevin & Sheila Houghton, Kath Hardy,
 Maryanne Diorio, Alan Harland,
 John Allen, Audrey Barsendich,
 Keith Oakes, Margaret Thoms, Marga-
 ret Jackson, Lorna Russom, Nicola
 (Nick) Bubici, Jason Wellin, Maureen
 Cows, Beryl Allen, Ian Wilks
 Sr. Margaret Wall RSJ, Irudaya Mary,
 Maureen Carlon, Celeste Boonaerts,
 Elizabeth Anne Kenney, Steve Paino,
 Ralph Weate, Chev Shengi,

Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula

THE VOICE

The Beatitudes ...

A Call to Action

In the tradition of Moses on Mt Sinai, Jesus goes up a mountain, a traditional Jewish sacred site. As we might expect, we receive a revelation as to how God intends that human beings should live together.

Jesus doesn't start in a fantasy dream world of perfection. Jesus looks at the world as it often is for many people, perhaps for most people around the world.

First, 'the poor in spirit': those suffering grinding poverty, a destitution which can crush their spirits, a lacking of the necessities of life such that their whole personality, bodymindspirit, is impoverished.

Then 'those who mourn': perhaps especially those whose grieving comes from the too early death of those crushed by the society in which they live.

Then 'those who are gentle': so often denied a fair share of the earth's resources which are taken by the strong and belligerent.

Then 'those who hunger and thirst for justice,' for individuals and even for whole societies.

Jesus astonishes the crowd by saying that such people are 'Blessed'. How can this be? It sounds callous, nonsensical or sarcastic. Is this the 'opium of the masses' about which Karl Marx had spoken?

Certainly, it is paradoxical.

The answer lies in our Lord's emphasis on the community, the new society, the new people he is establishing under the reign of God: what he calls 'the Kingdom of God'.

Those in such wretched circumstances *will* have things set right, *will* experience a great reversal of their situation, but only if *other* people in this new group of the followers of Jesus

do everything possible to lift the poor out of the poverty which crushes their spirit, do everything possible to comfort those who mourn, do everything possible to make sure the gentle share the earth's resources, do everything possible to satisfy the craving for justice.

Our Lord describes the personality traits of those who will help bring about this reversal.

'The merciful.' The Hebrew word for mercy is closely allied to the word for womb and even beyond the womb. To be merciful is to be as caring as a mother would be towards the child of her womb. Our Lord is attempting to build up a community of followers as maternal as that. *How do we measure up?*

'The pure in heart.' This does not refer to ritual or sexual purity. It refers to people in whom there is no duplicity or hypocrisy. They are people of integrity.

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Psalms Response

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Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! Rejoice and be glad; your reward will be great in heaven. *Alleluia!*



Around the Parish

Important Notice - Woy Woy Youth Group will be starting up on February 12th after Sunday 6pm Mass! The first session will be held in the Leo Mahon room, so if you have friends or family in high school (Grades 7-12) who might be interested, encourage them to come along! For more information contact Matthew French on 0411 792 587.

'El Shaddai' Prayer Group Meetings for February are 4th, 11th and 18th.

Volunteer Church Cleaning Roster 3/2/17:
Mary McCumstie,
Maria Wickens,
Linda Potestas,
Rano Spiteri.

Thank You: I would like to thank our Parish Family for all your prayers and our Priests, Fr. Timothy Fr. Philip for their hospital visits during my recent illness. I gained strength from your prayers and after 24 days in hospital I hope to be blessed with a full recovery over coming weeks. Don Matheson.

Catholics Returning Home:

A 5 week support programme that to the church. This programme is designed

- To recognise the feelings of each participant
- To help each participant to understand that they are not alone
- To give the participant the opportunity to view things in

a new light.
Programme commences 15th February, Wednesday nights, 7.30pm-9pm in the Leo Mahon Room, providing a welcoming space in your Faith community.

Readers and Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion: New rosters now available in the Servers Sacristy.

99 Not Out I

Our parish offers best wishes for continuing good health to Felix Seady who celebrated his 99th Birthday on January 19th. May God bless you Felix for many more birthdays to come.

Social Justice

Church Land for Social Housing:

A safe and affordable place to live is a basic human right and fundamental to an individual and family's wellbeing. Yet there are 200,000 households on waiting lists for social housing in Australia and the numbers are growing.

Two thirds of households in the lowest 40 per cent of income distribution spend more than 30 per cent of their income on housing, the established benchmark for housing stress. Even for people on wages, the private rental market in many parts of Australia is unaffordable, and not surprisingly, homelessness is on the rise.

Concerned about these trends, in 2012 a group of Catholic

organisations got together to create the Australian Catholic Housing Alliance (ACHA). Members of the Alliance meet quarterly to share their collective expertise in developing new and innovative housing developments, auspiced by Catholic Social Services Australia and Catholic Health Australia. The Catholic Church in Australia has considerable land holdings that are either no longer in use or are underutilised. Many of these are in locations with good transport access, close to services and employment. ACHA members are promoting the use of that land for housing, to remedy the current undersupply of social and affordable housing. Some member organisations are also buying land as a way to invest in assets with good growth

prospects that can also meet housing needs. Sean Scanlon, property and finance manager with the Maitland Newcastle Diocese, explained how his property developments achieved both social impact and financial returns. Tim Gourlay, executive director of Catholic Care Tasmania, described his organisation's journey since 2009, with a wide range of housing and accommodation services, 380 owned and managed living units and 110 properties transferred by the Tasmanian Government to be managed by CatholicCare and its partner Evolve Housing.

More information contact Dr. May Lam, ACHA Secretariat, 0457 575 013. may.lam@maristyc.com.au

From the Diocese and beyond

Tools for the Year Ahead -

Day Retreat: God is always doing something new in our lives! This year has never been before, even if we are already sure of much that it will bring. Join us for a day of reflection as we explore the tools that will enable us to work with God in all the love, hope and healing that awaits us this year. Saturday 4th February, Benedictine Abbey, 695 Jamberoo Mountain Rd, Jamberoo, 9am commencing with Mass, and concluding with Vespers 5pm. Presenter: Sr. Hilda Scott OSB. Cost: \$30. Morning and afternoon tea provided. BYO

own lunch - tea/coffee available. Bookings: Petrina 04 2436 0533. Cottageretreats@amberg.au

Fr Wim's Next Pilgrimage

"Of Celtic Saints, English Martyrs and Aussie Links" is the name of Fr Wim Hoekstra's next pilgrimage - to Ireland, Scotland and England, departing 25th September and returning 25th October. Some of the saints we'll be following are John Henry Newman, Patrick, Oliver Plunkett, Catherine McAuley, Columba, Mary Mackillop, Hilda of Whitby, Venerable Bede, Thomas Becket and English Martyrs; places visited include Birmingham, Glastonbury, Dublin, Knock, Iona, Holy Island (Lindisfarne), York,

London, and Canterbury. Information afternoon - 12 March @ 2.30pm in Downey Room, St Michael's Offices, 1-3 Chapel Lane, Baulkham Hills. Brochures available via e-mail to Fr Wim Hoekstra at wimh@parishofbaulkhamhills.org.au or PO Box 1501, Baulkham Hills NSW 1755.

Healing Mass will be celebrated by Fr. Augustine Vallooran VC, Director of the Divine Retreat Center, India. St. Patrick's Church, East Gosford, Wednesday, 1st February 7pm-9.30pm with Rosary commencing 6.45pm. Enquiries: Contact Clary on 0434 099 088 or clary.anta@gmail.com

Homily

by Richard Leonard SJ

In any walk of life there are stories that circulate about an important facet of the job. For priests these stories often focus on sermons.

Like the young priest who was having trouble with his sermons, so he asked the Bishop for help. 'Well,' said the Bishop, 'you might start with something to get the congregation's attention, such as, "Last night I was in the warm embrace of a good woman." I've always found that sparks their interest and then you can go on to talk about how warm and accepting she was and at the end reveal she was your mother. It's great for sermons about family love.'

The young priest decided to take the advice the following Sunday, but he was so nervous, something got lost in the translation. He started, 'Last night I was in the arms of a hot woman.' As the congregation audibly gasped the young priest paused and realised he had forgotten how the Bishop's story ended, so he said, 'I don't remember who she was but the Bishop recommended her.'

We have just listened to one of the greatest sermons ever given. It is universally known as The Sermon on the Mount. What makes it great is not just the beauty of its language or the hope of its theology. It is truly great because Jesus was preaching to the reality in front of him. The Jews listening that day were poor, in grief, meek and hungry for justice. Some were trying to be merciful to their enemies, struggling to find God in the midst of persecution and attempting to make peace while their family and friends were being falsely accused and condemned.

As true as this was for the Jews of Jesus' day, it was even more so for the earliest Christian community for whom this Gospel was written.

Sometimes when we hear a sermon our reaction can be, 'What would he know?' 'If only he knew the complexities of my life, he would soon change his tune!' It's true that some of us have not been sensitive to the human frailties of the congregation in front of us and we have not been able to communicate our own frailties in the words we deliver.

The Sermon on the Mount is a model for all of us in every way. When Jesus says 'Blessed are you' he is not being patronising, glossing over all sorts of tough human realities with, 'Well done, keep it up, be happy and we'll fix it all up in heaven.'

In the Hebrew Scriptures, a blessing is the discovery that God is present and active in one's experience, right here and right now. So the Beatitudes are saying that you do not need to go past your own daily struggles to find the presence of God. Jesus tells us that if we are poor, compassionate, mournful, campaigning for a just society and suffering because of it, gentle, innocent, a peacemaker or a martyr, we are encountering, in a special way, the presence of God.

The God of the Beatitudes is a companion with us in every experience we go through. God is our best friend, walking beside us as we get out of bed and meet the days we would rather not face.

Sadly, God-as-friend is a rich image not used as much as it should be. We choose our friends, we like to spend time with them, we tell our intimate friends things we tell few others. Sometimes, when we are on top of the world or in a crisis we call our best friends ahead of our family. And we know our friends like us because they seek us out and want to share our life.

Jesus is the best friend we could ever have, interested in every daily event and he's there for us at every moment in life. Yet he doesn't barge in. He waits patiently for an invitation to enter our lives at whatever level we want.

Jesus-as-friend doesn't give us old-fashioned sermons, but rather meets us where we are, embraces us and holds us close when the going gets tough and helps us find the way forward.

Jesus-as-friend is the greatest Beatitude of all.

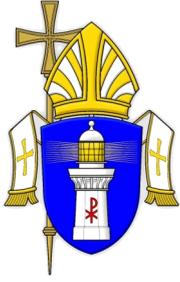
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Blessed are they who are what they are and do what they do *for the sake of the kingdom!* The Gospel today assures good stewards that their suffering and their service on behalf of the kingdom *will* be rewarded!



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 and Margaret Cooper.
Office Hours:
9.30 a.m.—4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday
Deadline for The Voice:
3.30 p.m. Wednesday

The Beatitudes ...A Call to Action

Our Lord is attempting to build up a community of followers as whole-some as that. *How do we measure up?*

'The peace-makers.' Here, Jesus is not so much interested in the noun: 'peace'. He is interested in the verb: 'peace makers'. *How do we measure up?*

So, when we read the Beatitudes, we should not think that this is contradictory nonsense, still less a message advocating a passive 'suffer your lot because there is pie in the sky'.

The Beatitudes are a call to action, a call to the followers of Jesus to be maternal, to be comforters, to be whole-hearted, to be active in overcoming those divisions which are unjust and destroy people, whether individuals or societies.

How do we measure up?

The authentic measure of humanity is Jesus Christ. Our Lord measured up superlatively. We know He was finally measured out on the Cross.

We ask him to measure us mercifully, for we will fall short of his full stature.

But every time we say the 'Our Father' we *do* pledge ourselves to help construct this new society where the Beatitudes can come true:

'Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven.

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 f 0243 445049.

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.

