



The Voice

1st February 2015

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Psalter Week 4



Customers and Partners

OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

- **Recently deceased:**
Mollie Kennedy, Anne Bartlett,
Jack Gudgeon, Colin Lindfield,
Jean Mierendorf.
- **And the Sick:**
Fr. Bill Meacham, Lola Proctor,
Grace Williams, Alan Harland,
Ruth Fuller, Betty Foster,
Peter Crookes, Terry Curtis,
Maureen O'Brien, Beryl Allen,
Sr. Margaret Wall, R.S.J.
Mary Dwyer, Wendy Taylor,
Victor and Wanda Grima.

In a recent column in *The Tablet*, Sara Maitland observes how, with regard to the NHS (National Health Service) in the United Kingdom, people want to be both customers and partners: they want a good service (for which they pay through their taxes) and they want a (big) say in their personal health care.

Fair enough, you might say, but Maitland goes on: *The problem is that customers are "always right", but partners are responsible – and it is nearly impossible to be both at once...As both shareholder and active partner, I surely need to address my duties as well as my "profit line".*

She then applies Christian principles to NHS, but I confess that I see her distinction as of more general application. In fact, I think that it applies quite neatly to the Christian life as a whole, especially as lived in the parish.

The distinction became crucial for parish life in modern times with the emergence of the phenomenon of "believing without belonging:" there are many Catholics who believe (on their own terms), and for whom the Church has to be there when they want it (sacraments of the dying; Catholic schools; etc), but who do not belong in the sense of being partners, jointly responsible for the preaching of the gospel and the progress of the Kingdom.

In today's readings, the concept of prophecy puts all this in context. One cannot fail to observe in the gospels the difference between being a disciple of Jesus and being part of the crowd. For the latter, Jesus is a celebrity, a nine-days wonder, who interrupts the boredom of day-to-day Galilean life. His miracles impress them, but most of the crowd do not feel impelled to follow him.

This allows them to be "customers," free to drop him when he pushes them too far, or when the attitude of the ruling authorities makes it dangerous to have anything to do with him. At least the unclean spirits know him as the enemy – and see themselves as confronted by the Holy Spirit who has come down on him – because they recognise him as *the Holy One of God*.

Jesus is portrayed today as the fulfilment of God's promise through Moses that he would send another prophet like Moses. He speaks with authority, not like the scribes. What he asks of us is what we sing in responding to the Psalm: *If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts*. That means being partners, not mere customers. As the Pentecost experience illustrates, all Christians are meant to be prophets and to share in Christ's teaching work: we not only believe; we also belong.

FR JOHN HILL, P.P.

Inside this issue:

Notices and News	2
Scripture Readings	3
Directory	4
Greeting	4

Psalm Response

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Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! A people in darkness have seen a great light:
A radiant dawn shines on those lost in death. *Alleluia!*

Around the Parish

Anointing of the Sick will be administered during 4pm Mass this Friday, 6th February.

Lenten Discussion Groups: During Lent our Parish encourages parishioners to come together in groups to pray and reflect on the significance of the season. We are calling on you to consider hosting a group. You only need to *lead* (not teach) others through a prepared programme of prayers, readings and reflections over 6 weeks, so we can deepen our understanding and journey spiritually towards Easter. Please contact the parish office 4341 1073 if you can lead a group or if you wish to participate in a group. Details will be advertised in the next newsletter. We thank you in advance for your act of stewardship.

Attention All Readers and Extra-Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion: Would you please advise Dorothy Fulton 4341 7610 or the parish office 4341 1073 if you no longer wish to be rostered on these two Ministries. Likewise, anyone wishing to join either of these Ministries, please contact one of the above numbers.

Bus Trip—Pokolkin Hunter Valley Sausage Sizzle. Leaving 8.30am Wednesday, 25th February. \$25. Morning tea and lunch provided. Contact Susie Casey 4344 1742 or 0403 417 639.

Sympathy: St. John the Baptist Parish Family extend its prayerful sympathy to family, relatives and friends of Anne Bartlett who was buried from our Church last week.

Free e-book for computer or e-reader: Son of God: The Daily Gospel: This e-book, which may be downloaded free of charge to a computer or e-reader, offers the Gospel for everyday of the Liturgical Year B-1 (Sundays Year B, weekdays Year 1), together with a reflection of some 750 words on each daily Gospel. It contains the Gospel passages not only for this present year but for any B-1 Liturgical Year in the future, together with their respective reflections. It may be passed on to friends or acquaintances as desired. It carries the Imprimatur of Archbishop Anthony Fisher, the Archbishop of Sydney.

'El Shaddai' Prayer Group meetings 14th and 21st February. Enq: Linda Thurlow Ph: 4342 9092.

Two Catechists URGENTLY needed: A delightful small group of Year 5 and Year 6 students at Umina Primary School *urgently* need a catechist. Friday mornings 9.20-9.50 in supervised class room. All materials provided, loads of support and help from fellow scripture teachers. Please consider this wonderful rewarding opportunity. These children are our future and deserve our invaluable time right now. Enquiries: Susie 4369 6235.

Volunteer Church Cleaning Roster 6/2/15: Judy French, Elena Egan, Terry Murphy, Rano Spiteri.

Children's Liturgy Roster 8/2/15: Anne Marie Tonkin, Mary Wood, Mimi Lambert.

Morning Tea will re-commence Sunday 8/2/15 after 9.15am Mass. Rostered is the 'El Shaddai' prayer group.

Cancer Support Group for those suffering from cancer or those wishing to pray for them, meeting this Tuesday, 3rd February, 2.30pm in the Leo Mahon room. Enq: Phoebe Glacken on 4341 6324.



The Just Word

Scourge of Poverty in our Rich Nation:

Poverty remains at an alarming level in Australia, with the estimated 2.5 million people or 13.9 per cent of the population, living below the poverty line.

A new report, *Poverty in Australia 2014*, prepared by the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) provides an up-to-date picture of poverty in the nation and also reveals that 603,000 or 17.7 per cent of all children were living in poverty in Australia.

This is deeply disturbing and highlights the need for a national plan to tackle the scourge of poverty, which diminishes us all in one of the wealthiest countries in the world," said ACOSS chief executive Cassandra Goldie.

"In particular, the child poverty rate should be of deep concern to us all, with over a third (36.8%) of children in sole parent families living in poverty," Dr. Goldie said.

"This is due to the low levels of

employment among the sole parent households, especially those with very young children, and the low level of social security payments for these families.

"Most of the poverty we found is concentrated among the groups of people facing the most disadvantage and barriers to fully participating in our community.

Those who are most likely to be in poverty are people who are unemployed (61.2%) and those in household that relies on social security as its main source of income (40.1%), particularly on the Newstart Allowance (55.1%) or Youth Allowance (50.6%).

Dr. Goldie said being unemployed is the strongest predictor of poverty, but a significant number of employed people are living in poverty. "Although workers in paid employment face a lower risk of poverty, they form one third (33.2%) of all people below the 50 per cent poverty line. It is likely that

most of these are either employed part-time or supporting dependent children on a low wage.

These overall findings are a wakeup call for us as a community and shine a spotlight on the current policy direction of the Federal Government. It provides an opportunity for the government to work with the whole community to reconfigure its first budget and national policy priorities around the urgent need to address poverty in Australia.

"We need a comprehensive national plan to tackle poverty if we are going to build on our great wealth and more fairly share the opportunities that will include all our citizens." Dr. Goldie said.

To access the 'Poverty in Australia 2014' report, go to http://www.acoss.org.au/images/uploads/ACOSS_Poverty_in_Australia_2014.pdf

Scripture Readings

Bruce Janiga

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time, February 1

Dt 18:15-20
Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9
1 Cor 7:32-35
Mk 1:21-28

In Jesus's first visit to a synagogue in Mark's Gospel, we encounter a key theme in this evangelist's writing: Jesus's authority. This is evidenced both in his words – "the people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority" (v 22) – and in the exorcism of the unclean spirit. Unlike other exorcists of his day, who used many words while performing exorcisms, Jesus commands the unclean spirit with just two words in the Greek text, and it leaves. The brevity of his command illustrates his power over the spirit.

In the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses promises the people that in the future God will send "a prophet like me" (v 15) to lead the people. This desire for an intermediary between the Lord and the people is based on their experience of God's great power on Mount Sinai, mediated through Moses. The people believe that to experience God face to face is to risk death. God promises to "raise up for them a prophet ... [who] shall tell them all that I command" (v 18). Over the centuries, this prophetic figure came to be understood as the longed-for Messiah.

Paul continues to advise the Corinthians with the expectation of Christ's imminent second coming, as we heard last week. His advice to the unmarried, that they should refrain from marrying, is based on the idea that one who is unmarried can dedicate more time to serving the Lord. If the Lord's return is near, then focusing on the things of God is advisable. Though we do not expect Jesus's return soon, we still can follow Paul's advice by making sure our lives have a sense of balance between worldly affairs and the things of God.

For reflection: In what ways have I experienced Jesus's authority? Have I ever experienced God's liberating power in my life or in the life of another?

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time, February 8

Job 7:1-4, 6-7
Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6
1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23
Mk 1:29-39

Today's first reading reminds us that we all experience difficulty in our lives; it is part of the human condition. Life can seem like "a drudgery" (v 1), filled with "months of misery, and troubled nights" (v 3). But the Book of Job ultimately calls us to recognise that all we have comes from God and that our destiny is in God's hands. We are called to hope in God's goodness.

Paul tells the Corinthians that his mission of preaching the gospel is "an obligation ... imposed on me" (v 16) by God. His task is to "win over as many as possible" (v 19), both Jews and gentiles, "those outside the law" (see v 21). In this preaching he is helping to fulfil God's will of saving as many as will accept the word, "so that I too may have a share in it" (v 23).

In the Gospel today, Jesus's cure of Simon Peter's mother-in-law serves to illustrate Jesus's authority once again, an idea we encountered last week. Her response is to minister to Jesus and his disciples. Mark then tells us that when the Sabbath was over, "after sunset, they brought to him all who were ill or possessed by demons" (v 32), and Jesus continues to exercise his authority by healing them. Jesus does not allow the demons "to speak because they knew him" (v 34). This silencing is another example of Jesus's power, which is superior to that of the demons. We will encounter this theme frequently in Mark's text.

For reflection: When have I empathised with Job? How did I get through the suffering? Like Peter's mother-in-law, God has blessed me in many ways. What has been my response?



Moses told the people, "The Lord will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own kinsmen." God still provides among His people the gifts and talents necessary to continue the work of His Church. What gifts are yours to share?

See Deuteronomy 18:15



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, corner of Blackwall and Victoria Roads, Woy Woy

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"He must increase, I must decrease"

Dr John Hill, *Parish Priest*

Fr Stephen Wayoyi, A.J. *Assistant Priest*

Office Staff: Helen Cameron, Raelene McLenaghan & Margaret Cooper

Parish Nurse: Ellen Bevan

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, 3.30 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 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.

CASH HOUSIE every Saturday night at Peninsula Community Centre, Cnr Ocean Beach Rd & McMasters Rd, Woy Woy. Games start at 7.30 p.m. and finish 10.20 p.m., cash prizes. Ticket sales from 6.00 p.m. Proceeds benefit Parish. Enquiries Rob: 0427 990818.

Greeting

Paul Turner

When the priest greets the people at the beginning of Mass, he has three options. The simplest is, "The Lord be with you," which has a biblical origin in the Book of Ruth (2:4). There, Boaz greets the reapers in the field. Ruth, a young widow who has come there as an immigrant trying to support her mother-in-law on what she can glean after the reapers are done, hears these words of comfort. She may have nothing, but she has the Lord.

The priest may use instead a more expanded greeting taken from the end of Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all." This is the only place in his epistles where St. Paul greets the community in the name of the entire Trinity. It makes an expansive, solemn greeting to begin the Eucharist today.

The other greeting the priest may use is this: "Grace to you and peace from God our

Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." This occurs many times in the letters of St. Paul (for example, Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3), twice in the letters of St. Peter (1:2 in both letters), and twice in books attributed to St. John (2 Jn 1:3; Rv 1:4). Its repetition in these books indicates that it probably served as a liturgical formula in the time of the apostles. The word order feels a little unusual; "Grace and peace to you" would be more natural. Perhaps this greeting served as a kind of password among the first Christians. This formula has been an option ever since the Second Vatican Council, but the revised English translation restored its biblical word order, letting us hear it now in our own language for the first time in history.

This bulletin insert originally appeared in Ministry & Liturgy, a pastoral planning resource used by the worship leaders in your parish as an aid for better liturgy. Copyright © 2011, Resource Publications, Inc. 160 E. Virginia St. #290, San Jose, CA 95112, (408) 286-8505. This article may not be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher. For permission e-mail info@rpinet.com. Paul Turner, pastor of St. Munchin Parish in Cameron, MO, holds a doctorate in sacramental theology from Sant' Anselmo University in Rome. Comment online at ML Current Issue Discussion.

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Diocese of
Broken Bay