

The Voice

14th August 2016 Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C Psalter Week 4



OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

- **Recently deceased:**
Elvira Berrios, Francis Russ,
Norman Gilbert, Julie Curtin,
Neil Cameron.
- **Anniversaries:**
Jannette Moroney, Noreen Connolly,
Andrew Flanagan,
- **Remembrances:**
All Souls in Purgatory,
- **And the sick:**
Rene Glase, Beryl Allen,
Peter John Grima, Jack Moulds,
Tracie Passlow, Cheryl Douglas,
Rosemary Anderson, Bruce Spence,
Maryanne Diorio, John Allen,
Mary Anne Gormley,
Coral Williams, Irene Beck,
Alan Harland, Keith Oakes,
Vince Zappavigna, Don Boland,
Albie Curtis, Celeste Boonaerts,
Louise Dunn, Janelle Dawson, Nola
Davies, Margaret Thoms, Baby
Winter, Baby Blake, Ian Wilks,
Elaine Finlayson, Helen McKeon,
Audrey Barsendich, Frank Schmidt,
Nicola (Nick) Bubici,
John Simmons, Brooke Simmons,
Tony Schumacher.

I have come to bring fire.

Up the back of the university colleges, or on a trip up the East Coast, we see the blackened scars across the hills – reminders of the fires which raged through those areas last year – casting an unnerving pall of smoke over Hobart and the little towns of the East Coast.

But, as Australians living on the edges of heavily timbered country we all know that a fierce fire is one of the best things which can happen to a eucalyptus forest.

The seed pods burst open in the intense heat. The fire cleanses the soil of smothering undergrowth and returns nutrients to the soil in the ashes.

The seeds have a chance to germinate in that soil.

It is that sort of fire which Jesus had in mind when he says "I have come to bring fire to the earth and I wish it were blazing already!"

What is the fire he is speaking of?

It turned out the "what" was not a "what" but a "who"!

The Holy Spirit was unleashed on the first Pentecost Sunday just like a lightning bolt in the South West Wilderness.

Recall that scene at Pentecost – the frightened and dispirited disciples huddled in a room like seeds in a pod putting a hard outer casing between themselves and a hostile world.

This might have given them some sense of security, but, so long as they stayed in that protective shell of a room, they were quite unable to realise their true destiny.

Then, what happened?

"Something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire ...They were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:2-3)

That fire – that divine fire – burst them out of the room and they began to preach the Resurrection and they realised their destiny as fearless disciples of our Risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

But this can have divisive consequences. At the extreme, following Our Lord, being baptised can mean total repudiation by members of one's family, and persecution by the society concerned. Especially in Muslim

countries, like Malaysia, to become a Christian is to lose property and inheritance rights – the family is dismembered as one becomes a member of the Body of Christ. We should pray often for those who suffer this ostracising by their families and communities.

But, for us, what does it mean to be ignited by the divine flame?

What does this mean for the undergrowth of our lives?

You and I know, if we have had a few years on the planet, what are the actions or attitudes which stifle or smother our lives as fearless Christians.

Family expectations and stereotyped roles can be one. Our Lord himself experienced that so strongly at Nazareth – his home village – that he had to break away, never to return. He knew he had to be immersed (baptised) in the chaos of the outside world in order to conduct his ministry with power.

That is why he warns that for some disciples, following him with vigour and creativity may well mean breaking out of the little boxes which families can construct for their members – and that will cause division.

My dear friends, I love roses and dahlias and holly hocks and lupins and English country gardens. But, if we see ourselves as plants in such a garden, particularly if we see ourselves as plants in a walled garden, of course in that situation fire is a real threat and our natural inclination is to look to the hose to douse it.

But, we are Catholics, not roses or dahlias. We are little eucalyptus seeds. We need fire. We need the blazing fire of the Holy Spirit to allow who we truly are to burst forth.

Then, and only then, we have a chance to be - not seeds which never break out of the pod of security or complacency

- not seedlings weakly dying in the bracken - but we are meant to be glorious young trees reaching for the sun in all its glory.

Until at the end of history we together become a great stand of tall trees reaching for the risen Son in all his glory!

© Fr Michael Tate

Inside this issue:

Notices and News	2
Sunday Readings	3
Directory	4
Homily by Richard Leonard SJ	4

Psalm Response

© Colin D. Smith cfc



Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! My sheep listen to my voice, says the Lord; I know them, and they follow me. *Alleluia!*

Around the Parish

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary this Monday, 15th August is a holy day of obligation. Masses are 7.45am, 12md School Mass in the church and evening Mass 7pm.

Update: For all those who have been asking, Fr. Jack is due for surgery on 2nd November. Please keep Father in your prayers.

C.W.F. Collection at all weekend Masses. Your generosity would be appreciated. **C.W.F** quota for this year is \$37,008 which equates to \$12,336 each appeal.

Tax Receipts for C.W.F (last financial year) available in the gathering area.

Baptisms: We pray for and welcome into our Faith community, Banjo Jeans, Emerson Casey and Jannese River who were baptised last Sunday.

Sympathy: Our Parish offers our prayerful sympathy to family of Francis Russ buried from our church the past week.

Social Justice

Homily of Pope John Paul II in the Beatification of Mary MacKillop, Randwick, 19 January 1995

"In the vastness of the Australian continent, Blessed Mary MacKillop was not daunted by the great desert, the immense expanses of the outback, nor by the spiritual 'wilderness' which affected so many of her fellow citizens. Rather she boldly prepared the way of the

Volunteer Church Cleaning Roster 19/8/16: Kathleen Cullen, Warren Sparrow, Bill Cantley, Christina Thorson.

Children's Liturgy Roster 21/8/16: Christine French, Gerri O'Keeffe and Anne Marie Tonkin,

2016 eConference: Mercy. A way of being in the world will commemorate the Jubilee Year of Mercy and take up Pope Francis' invitation to explore this central element of our faith. This eConference will be streamed live over the internet in the Leo Mahon room, Tuesday 20th September. 10.30am-2.45pm.

Speakers: Archbishop Mark Coleridge, Mr. Phil Glendenning, Sr. Veronica Lawson RSM. Further details later. List for catering purposes will be available in the gathering area.

Attention Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion: When distributing the Precious Blood you are asked to refrain from mentioning the name of the recipient. Fr. Jack.

Lord in the most trying situations. With gentleness, courage and compassion, she was a herald of the Good News among the isolated 'battlers' and the urban slum-dwellers.

Mother Mary of the Cross knew that behind the ignorance, misery and suffering which she encountered there were people, men and women, young and old, yearning for God and his righteousness. She knew, because she was a true child

Apostolic Blessing Congratulations to Joan Murphy who received an Apostolic Blessing from The Holy Father Francis for her service to our community through her activities as a member of The St Vincent de Paul Society. The Blessing was presented at the Society's Gosford Regional Festival Mass on 6.08.16. Richly deserved.

Bus Fund Fathers Day Raffle and Cake Stall: Tickets on sale 20th & 21st and 27th and 28th August at all Sunday Masses. Drawn on 29th August. 1st Prize: Ryobi Lawn Mower. There also will be a **Cake Stall** the weekend of 27/28 August. Enquiries: 4344 2288.

Bus Trip to Rooty Hill, Wednesday 24th August, leaving at 9am. Morning tea at Nurragingy Reserve, lunch at Rooty Hill RSL. Contact Susie Casey 0403 417 639 for all bookings, payments and enquiries.

of her time and place: the daughter of immigrants who had to struggle at all times to build a life for themselves in their new surroundings. Her story reminds us of the need to welcome people, to reach out to the lonely, the bereft, the disadvantaged. To strive for the Kingdom of God and his righteousness means to strive to see Christ in the stranger, to meet him in them and to help them to meet him in each one of us!"

From the Diocese and beyond

Mount St. Benedict Centre Pennant Hills— Your Journey, Your Song:

'Music...gives wings to the mind, a soul to the universe, flight to the imagination, charm to sadness, life to everything.' Plato.

An invitation to explore and celebrate the power of music and song in engaging us with our God, this day looks at how we can use music as a means of prayer and reflection on our spiritual journey, Saturday, 27th August, 10am-3.30pm. BYO lunch. Cost: \$25.

Facilitators: Beth Riolo and Marianne Patton, experienced in the areas of Religious Education, parish music and teaching music and drama in the Wollongong Diocese. Bookings: Phone 9484 6208. Email: mtstbenedict@bigpond.com

In the Footsteps of St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop: Have you considered participating in

the National Pilgrimage? The Sisters of St. Joseph invite you to participate in this pilgrimage, giving you an opportunity to journey to significant places in Australia made holy by St. Mary of the Cross. While on pilgrimage you are invited to reflect on St. Mary of the Cross's life and recognise her relevance in your own life.. Cost: ex Sydney: \$2,860 (all inclusive: airfares, accommodation, coach travel, admission fees and meals). Single Supplement: \$590.00. Further information contact Sr. Annie Bond RSJ, on 02 8912 4818. MMP.NationalPilgrimage@soj.org.au Pilgrim brochure if you wish to download a copy.

A Course in Morality and Ethics: Andrew Wood from St. John Centre for Biblical Studies will be running a course in Moral Theology. The Christian vocation to holiness is Christ's call for us to share in his own divine Sonship and divine life. In this course, we will

study the meaning of this vocation, and how to effectively live it.

A rich young man once asked Jesus, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied, "Keep the commandments" (Mt 19:16-17). This course is designed to explore the implications. Far from being an oppressive shackle, living the commandments actually grants us freedom and dignity. We will also look at the true nature of happiness and how to achieve it. We will look at sin, its consequence and how to overcome it. We will look at law and conscience and many more things associated with good morality. Monday, 22nd August to 26th September (6 Monday nights; 12 hours in total) 7-9pm each Monday night. St. Patrick's Parish, East Gosford (Primary School Library). Cost \$120 (paid in full) first night. Phone Andrew Wood 0449 574 527 or email: Andrew@stjohncentre.com for registration and information.

Sunday Readings

Bruce Janiga

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time, August 14

Jer 38:4–6, 8–10
Ps 39:2–4, 18 R. v.14
Heb 12:1–4
Lk 12:49–53

Tradition says that many of the prophets of biblical Israel suffered martyrdom because their words fell on unfriendly ears. In today's reading from Jeremiah, we hear that the prophet is thrown into a muddy cistern, left there to die because he predicts defeat for his nation. But his words are not his own; they come from God and must be spoken, despite the cost. It is through the intervention of a foreigner, Ebed-melech of Ethiopia, that the prophet is rescued. If you continue reading the text, you discover that Jeremiah does not stop preaching his words of destruction to the king and all who would listen.

The letter to the Hebrews reminds us, "Christ endured the cross ... / and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God" (v 2). In light of his suffering at the hands of "sinners" (v 3), we too should anticipate that we will suffer. But we should not lose heart, for God is with us — we do not suffer alone.

Jesus' words in the Gospel today are not comforting: "I have come to set the earth on fire" (v 49). In the biblical mind, fire could destroy or purify. The picture Luke paints for us — father divided against son, and so on — reflects the situation in the early church. The gospel caused division among family members, as some embraced it but others rejected it and those who embraced it. Jesus reminds us that sometimes the gospel afflicts the comfortable, calling us to step out of our comfort zones. Jesus paid the ultimate price; we too might be called to suffer for the sake of the word.

For reflection: Am I "on fire" with my faith? How have I suffered for the sake of the word?

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time, August 21

Is 66:18–21
Ps 116. R. Mk 16:15
Heb 12:5–7, 11–13
Lk 13:22–30

Today's reading from Isaiah speaks of the Lord gathering all the nations: "They shall come and see my glory" (v 18). Writing to the citizens of Judah who have returned from exile and are restoring the city of Jerusalem, Isaiah envisions a time when the world will be gathered in God's holy city. In the next verses (not part of our reading), the focus shifts to a future time of glory and joy; God speaks of "the new heavens and the new earth which I will make" (v 22) and to which all the people of the earth will stream. Our prophet, referred to as Third Isaiah, anticipates a time when the Lord will renew all of creation. This theme is developed further in the imagery of the Book of Revelation.

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews reminds us that "whom the Lord loves, he disciplines" (v 6). Biblical Israel understood the Babylonian exile as God's punishment for their infidelity, from which they emerged with a stronger faith. We too are called to "make straight paths for [our] feet" (v 13), that we may be "healed" and walk in God's ways.

In the Gospel, Jesus encourages us to "enter through the narrow gate" (v 24). The path of discipleship is not always easy. Eating and drinking with him is not enough; we must seek to do his will. Those who respond appropriately to the invitation will come not only from among the children of Abraham but also "from the east and the west / and from the north and the south" (v 29). This image reflects what Third Isaiah spoke of centuries earlier and reminds us that God desires that all people be saved. God's love knows no bounds.

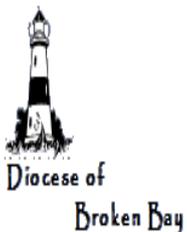
For reflection: Do I understand that God offers salvation to everyone? Have I ever had difficulty entering "through the narrow gate"? How did I respond to this difficulty?



In today's second reading, St. Paul encourages us not to grow weary or lose heart, but to persevere in following Jesus. Our willingness to give of ourselves, even in the face of conflict and division, is one way to measure our discipleship.



Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula



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

St John the Baptist Church,

(Corner) Blackwall & Victoria Rds, Woy Woy

Parish Office *Ethel Cox Parish Centre*
PO Box 264 *Walter Baker Hall*
54 Victoria Road *100 Blackwall Rd*
WOY WOY NSW 2256 *Woy Woy*

Phone: (02) 4341 1073 **Fax:** (02) 4341 0214
Email: parish@woywoycatholic.org.au
Website: www.woywoycatholic.org.au

“He must increase, I must decrease”

Parish Priest: Fr. Jack Robson.

Assistant Priests: Fr. Timothy Raj. MSFS.
Fr. Philip Thottam. MSFS.

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

Office Hours:
9.30am—4pm, Monday to Friday.

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 7am.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

1st & 3rd Sundays, 11am; 5th Sunday, during 9.15am 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 9.30am.

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. ph: 4341 0884 fax: 4344 5049.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST YOUTH GROUP

For information and events contact Parish office 4341 1073.

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.

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

Homily © Richard Leonard SJ

In our desire to affirm that the scriptures are inspired, it can be easy to forget that they come out of the lived experience of a community of faith. Indeed, one of the things that is wonderful about our belief in God's revelation is that it occurs within human experience. Today's Gospel is an excellent example. Jesus predicts that one of the consequences of believing in him is that divisions will follow.

We can tell from the whole text of Luke's Gospel that these divisions were certainly a part of the earliest Christian community which wrote this book and that their faith in Christ led them to confront some very tough issues: how could Gentiles inherit the promises made to the Jews; why the rich members of the community had special responsibility to the poor; the centrality of forgiveness in the Christian life; and what leadership role women should have in the earliest Church. We know that fights over these issues and faith in Jesus as the Christ or the Messiah, divided families and villages, cities, nations and a religious tradition.

This gospel is both a stark reminder of the costs involved in following Jesus and a comfort to us in the church today. Sometimes we can domesticate the Christian community into a 'feel-good' society. Our religious words and actions, however, are always meant to have an edge; our faith should 'afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted'. If Christians at home, at work, in society and on the international stage just go along with what is trendy or current because we're frightened of conflict or because we want to be seen to be part of the crowd, then we are not worthy of this Gospel.

Sometimes when we hear Jesus use the metaphor of a blazing fire we can see a violent image, but I am not sure if it has to be exclusively

interpreted this way. Fire is sometimes necessary and good to clear out the layers of undergrowth built up over time that smother the soil of a forest and prevent new growth. Fire is a beacon that gives guidance and attracts attention. A blazing fire can attract everyone to its light, warmth and power. So maybe this Gospel is a call to purge the weight of old growth that can stop fresh thinking. Maybe it gives guidance to us in the justice we are meant to live and the attention we must call to the needs of all God's children. And maybe it is a reminder that the life of our Christian community is meant to be attractive through its gentle power and warmth. If the price we pay for witnessing to any of these values is that we divide the crowd, so be it.

What's comforting about this gospel is that it recognises conflict as a necessary part of the Christian life. There are some who want to pretend that the followers of Jesus should never disagree with one another or with those outside the Church. Conflict in itself, Jesus teaches us today, is an element of our commitment to the kingdom of God. What marks out the way we should disagree with one another inside and outside the Church, however, is that it is conducted with charity, dignity, careful listening and compassion. Christians always look to put the best possible interpretation on the opinions of those with whom we disagree and to be reconciled to those we have hurt, to heal divisions where we can.

May this Eucharist give us the courage to divide the crowd for the right reasons. May we be a blazing fire that casts light on darkness where people are exploited and injustice smothers the growth Christ wants to see in the human family. No one promised us that Christian faith was ever going to be a picnic!