

# The Voice

18th September 2016 Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C Psalter Week I



## OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

• **Recently deceased:**

Alan Moses, Kenneth McMorrow,  
Emmanuel 'Bill' Falzon,  
Elizabeth Tobin.

• **Anniversaries:**

Fr. Ashley Jones, Fr. John Conway,  
Alfred and Isabella Dwyer,  
Beryl Murray, Audrey Armstrong.

• **Remembrances:**

Dario, Caterina and Robert Burla,  
Arthur, Muriel and John Brown and the  
Brown Family.

• **And the sick:**

Rene Glase, Beryl Allen,  
Jack Moulds, Tracie Passlow,  
Bruce Spence, Maryanne Diorio,  
John Allen, Brian Moroney,  
Irene Beck, Alan Harland,  
Keith Oakes, Heather Joyce,  
Vince Zappavigna, Don Boland,  
Celeste Boonaerts,  
Louise Dunn, Jannelle Dawson,  
Nola Davies, Margaret Thoms,  
Baby Winter, Ian Wilks,  
Audrey Barsendich, Helen McKeon,  
Frank Schmidt, Nicola (Nick) Bubici,  
Lorna Russom, Margaret Jackson,  
Maureen Cowsls, Jason Wellin,

A farmer named Muldoon lived alone in the Irish countryside except for a pet dog he doted on. The dog finally died, and Muldoon went to the parish priest, saying, 'Father, the dog is dead. Could you possibly be saying a mass for the poor creature?' Father Kelly refused point blank, 'No, we can't have services for an animal in the church, but I'll tell you what, there's a new denomination down the road, and there is no telling what they believe in, maybe they'll do something for the animal.' Muldoon said, 'I'll go right now. By the way, do you think 10,000 pounds is enough to donate for the service?' to which Father replied, 'Now why didn't you tell me the dog was a Catholic!'

A cheap jibe regularly levelled at the Church is that while we preach about justice and development for all people, we are one of the world's wealthiest multinationals. Sometimes Catholics are stung by this criticism. There is something healthy about that because there is always more we can, and should, do about our detachment from materialism. At the same time, however, our accusers should be reminded of a few facts that spoil their good story.

In commercial terms the Church is asset rich and cash poor. Many established churches through good planning and generosity have a large plant on decent real estate, but I don't know a diocese, religious order, parish or Church agency that does not need to carefully look at its cash flow. We rely on your goodness to keep going each year. Our real estate is often our only collateral for our borrowing; always done to improve the services we can render the People of God.

The greatest thing going for the Catholic Church, however, is you, Christ's faithful people who witness day in and day out to the power of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. We are also asset rich in terms of the quality of the women and men – lay, professed and ordained – who selflessly serve the Church and the world.

When we are attacked for the land and buildings we have it's always good to remember some facts about our Catholic family's commitment to the poor: outside the United Nations and governments, Catholicism is the largest provider of education, health, welfare, personal assistance and Third World development in the world; we have the largest and lowest-paid charitable workforce of any international group; we have been trying to serve God, not money, for two thousand years; and from the earliest Christians to this very day, some Catholics have loved and served the poor so faithfully, that they die with them, and for them.

Where all of this is concerned, we are our own worst enemies. False humility has meant we have not sufficiently celebrated what Grace has done in and through us in regards to poverty and the world's poor.

None of this excuses us from the direct challenges in today's Gospel. We all know how seductive money is and how quickly greed can throw our moral and spiritual compasses off course. In moral theology, however, intention is critical and even money, seductive as it is, can be, and is, put to good service in Christ's kingdom. It's always a question of where the heart is.

By not publicly acknowledging the service done in our name and with our assistance, we do the Church and ourselves an injustice. When we fail to explain the number of times and places Christians clearly put Jesus ahead of money we allow the Church's critics to have the last word, as though it was the only word on the subject.

May this Eucharist, this meal of Christ's poor, assist us to be detached from anything that masters our deepest desires away from Christ and keeps us from serving his kingdom of justice, development and peace for all people everywhere.

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**Psalm Response**

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Praise the Lord: who rais - es up the poor.

**Gospel Acclamation**

*Alleluia, alleluia!* Jesus Christ was rich but he became poor, to make you rich out of his poverty. *Alleluia!*

## Around the Parish

**Sympathy:** Our prayerful condolences to family, relatives and friends of Kenneth McMorrow who was buried from our church last week.

**Baptism:** We welcome into our Faith community and pray for Layla Hanna who was baptised last Sunday.

**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 *this* Tuesday, 20th September, 10.30am-2.45pm. Full program of each session available in the gathering area as well as a list of names attending for catering purposes.

**Morning Tea Roster 25/9/16** will be our Prayer Group 'El Shaddai'.

**Children's Liturgy Roster 25/9/16:** Geraldine Baxter, Joanna Baxter, Rebecca Lalor.

**Amoris Laetitia "The Joy of Love":** Resulting from two synods on the Family in 2014 and 2015, Pope Francis' most recent apostolic exhortation 'Amoris Laetitia' was much

anticipated. A lengthy document, it speaks to the joy of marriage and family life, as well as recognising the lived experiences and challenges that families face. To break open this document, Pina Bernard from the Catholic Life & Faith Formation Team of the Office for Evangelisation will speak at 7.30am Mass & again **during morning tea after 9.15am Mass**, Sunday 30 October 2016. (\*details changed from last weeks notice). Length of talks: 10-12 minutes during the Mass and 30mins during morning tea (20mins talk and 10 mins Q&A). To read the document in preparation, a link can be found at [www.dbb.org.au](http://www.dbb.org.au)

## The Just Word

### World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation:

In 2015 Pope Francis proclaimed the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation to be celebrated by Catholics on 1st September, as the Orthodox Church has done for some time now. In announcing the day, the Pope described how the ecological crisis 'calls us to a profound spiritual conversion.' Christians are called to 'an ecological conversion whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in

their relationship with the world around them.' (Laudate Si,' 217). Thus, 'living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.' (ibid). The annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation offers...a precious opportunity to renew our personal participation in this vocation as custodians of creation, raising to God our thanks for the marvellous works He has entrusted to our care, invoking his help for

the protection of creation and his mercy for the sins committed against the world in which we live. The celebration of the Day on the same date as the Orthodox Church will be a valuable opportunity to bear witness to our growing communion with our Orthodox brothers. We live in a time where all Christians are faced with identical and important challenges and we must give common replies to these in order to appear more credible and effective.

## From the Diocese and beyond

**Monthly Holy Hour for Vocations** held the last Wednesday each month due Wednesday, 28th September, 7pm -9pm. St. Agatha Parish, 17 Trebor Rd. (enter through car park), Pennant Hills. Adoration, Reflection on Scripture, Evening Prayer of the Church. After prayer a social gathering will be held and meal provided. Booklets with prayers provided. Cost: Free.

**Social Justice Sunday 25th September:** This year, the Australian Bishops' Social Justice Statement is titled: "A Place at the Table: Social Justice in an ageing community. Further details about the Social Justice Statement, visit the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council website [www.socialjustice.catholicc.au](http://www.socialjustice.catholicc.au) or call 8306 3499.

**MenALIVE Weekend** St. Patrick's Parish, 76 York St. East Gosford, 22nd-23rd October. All men (dads/granddads/brothers/

uncles) are invited to this dynamic and powerful MenALIVE weekend gathering at St. Pat's as follows: Saturday 8am-9pm and Sunday 8.30am-1.30pm at St. Patrick's Hall, Victoria St. School Campus. Only \$50 or \$25 concession, which includes workshops, morning and afternoon teas and BBQ dinner on Saturday night. To book log on to [www.trybooking.com/LQJU](http://www.trybooking.com/LQJU) or contact Parish Office 4325 1042.

**Serra Vocations Mass and Dinner:** Fr. Vincent Trung Nguyen, Assistant Priest of the Hornsby Cathedral Parish will be celebrating Mass for Serra at Sacred Heart Church, 2 Richard Porter Way, Pymble on Thursday, 29th September. The evening will commence with Mass at 6.30pm followed by a light meal and a short meeting.

After dinner we will be showing a video of a talk by Fr. Morgan Batt, Vocations Director for the Archdiocese of Brisbane to the Serra International Convention held in Melbourne, 2015. His topic

"Christ the Light of the World".

Fr. Batt is a remarkable person. He entered the Seminary in Brisbane 1985 and was ordained November 1991. Later in the 1990's working in Tasmania, he was parish priest for Port Arthur when the massacre occurred in 1996. His whole communion class was executed that day and he lost a few parishioners as well. Since then, he has worked as a priest in the army/war zones and is an alpine mountaineer having climbed over 100 mountains worldwide including Mt. Everest. He celebrated Mass on the top of Mt. Everest.

Everyone is welcome to join us for a very interesting evening. Please remember to pray daily for vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life and for the perseverance of existing vocations, seminarians and novices. Ph: Terry Scanlan 0438 887 295 or email [terry\\_scanlan@bigpond.com](mailto:terry_scanlan@bigpond.com) if you would like to attend.

# Among dusty coins: preaching to the lost among us

Ron Raab

Several years ago, I preached a parish mission in another state. At the early Mass on Sunday morning, I noticed an attractive woman seemingly engaged in my homily. She was stately and well dressed, yet she was rather jittery, shuffling her body from side to side in the pew. Her face carried a deep sadness that I noticed across the many pews that separated us. Her facial expressions changed rapidly as she reacted to my words. She wore a large, oversized, navy turtleneck shirt. The neck of the shirt was unrolled high up to her chin.

She also attended the evening session of the mission. She wore a different colored turtleneck, jeans, and boots. She seemed even more attentive to my words, and I could tell even during the homily that she wanted to speak with me. After the session, she waited for people to leave. She approached me and began to open up about her story.

The woman had sold her body for sex as a youth. When she was 19 years old, a man strangled her with a wire and left her battered body in a dumpster. The trick assumed she was dead. She told me she wears turtleneck shirts to hide the scars. She was now 39 years old; she whispered to me that she had never cried about the experience of being tortured and raped in all of those 20 years — until after she heard me at Mass on the first morning. She had spent the afternoon weeping and sobbing about her past in the realization that God had brought her out from the dumpster and into a new life.

I carry her story in my heart like a holy card tucked in my Bible. She remains for me an icon of Jesus's search for the lost. I still see her in my mind during my homily preparations, reminding me that the lost are often sitting in plain sight and that the forgotten are assembled in our pews. I begin with her story as I reflect on this series of Gospels from the 24th to the 29th Sundays in Ordinary Time.

I hear again the ancient parables of the lost coin, the one sheep separated from the 99, and the two brothers trying to figure out their relationship with their father and battling over their inheritance. To preach is to search for the lost. I break open the word among people who have lost out on wealth, who have never had a decent home, and who have never had an inheritance to lose. These stories are not lost among ancient and unfamiliar times and places; these stories are alive and thriving in our pews, in all of our parish communities, in one form or another.

I straddle a great tension in preaching. I listen to the Scriptures say that God loves the poor, that Jesus' home and ministry were among the marginalized. I hear the psalmists speak of God's fidelity toward the weary. People who live in the depths of poverty in our day seldom

hear this message. Many people perceive the church as not caring for people beyond the sanctuary. Words alone do not pay for food or heal grief or purchase medications for mental illness. The words of preaching must come not only from the converted heart of the preacher but also from the work and ministry born in communities who extend themselves and who make love real in the world, in our day and time.

People who live in the shadows of society need to hear an invitation to the person of Christ Jesus directly from those of us who preach the Word-made-flesh. They want stories of redemption — grace among real people, moments, and situations in which love has been made real. People long to connect to the gospel, to discover an insight into God's relationship with us, to heal and mend the issues from the past that are tightly held in fearful hearts and hurting bodies.

People living in intense stress do not come to church simply looking for foolproof arguments for the existence of God. People do not want to know something else about God; they want an encounter with God. The lost will not be found by hearing only holy concepts, firm arguments, and historical ideas about why Jesus came to earth or how the early church formed itself. Today, the searching pilgrim discovers new grace in the message that people have found love, acceptance, and reassurance in a life of faith and dedication within the church. People need to be reassured that they will be accompanied in their suffering.

Along with Lazarus, many people are covered with sores, lying in the shame of the past. Preaching can bind wounds and heal sores. The presence of Christ in our words still carries people from dark pasts. Preaching still dusts off the past of the lost. The love of God still offers them a place to call home.

For our part, we also listen to the healed lepers. We walk with their encounter with Christ Jesus. From the depths of our wounds, abuses, sores, and disappointments, in our healing we return to God full of gratitude.

ML

Rev. Ronald Patrick Raab, CSC, serves as associate pastor at St. Andre Bessette Church in Old Town, Portland, Ore. He broadcasts *On the Margins*, a weekly Scripture commentary on radio KBVM.fm. Learn more at [www.ronaldraab.com](http://www.ronaldraab.com). From *Ministry & Liturgy*, copyright © Resource Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission under licence number 115216.




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The dishonest manager in today's parable knew how to manipulate money to his own advantage. But the Gospel warns that no one can serve both God and money. Which do I serve? Is my stewardship such that anyone can tell?

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# Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula



Diocese of  
Broken Bay

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 Ocean Beach Rd & McMasters Rd, Woy Woy. Games start at

## Reflection

We are creatures of this world. We are made of it and we are totally dependent upon it for our very existence. We require its air, its water, its food, its heat. We need it for covering and for shelter; we need it to stimulate our minds and our spirits. Therefore, our use of its phenomenal resources cannot in itself be immoral. What is questionable is the character of our use.

There are many circumstances that contribute to the complexity of these matters. The merchant in the passage from Amos is not faulted because he was prosperous. Nor is the steward in the gospel criticised for putting resources aside for future use. But how much does a person need when there are others who are really needy?

We live our lives on the horns of a dilemma. We have the right to use and to enjoy the marvels of our world, but we cannot do this free of responsibility to each other and to the world itself. We are not called to disown the world. It is impossible for us to do that, because of our total dependence upon it. But we are called to live in it gently, using what we need and sharing what we can. We must make decisions as trustworthy stewards of the household of God, not like the man in the gospel who was only concerned with his own well being. We must serve God, not mammon.