



The Voice

20th September 2015 Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B Psalter Week 1



OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

- **Recently deceased:**
Rae Campbell, Eileen Robinson, Yvonne Mullins.
- **Anniversaries:**
Fr. John Conway, Leonard Owen, Louise Panos, Leonora (Lea) Esposito, Nell Nouwens, Elaine Heath, Arthur Andrews, Thelma King.
- **And the sick:**
Sara Selim, Peter Wellins, Frances Sara, Neil Cameron, June Ferry, Kate Tinson, Janelle Darson, Pat Bombell, Kevin Houghton, Beryl Allen, Lola Proctor, Jack Moulds, Charles Knowles, Irene Beck, Mark Taylor, Bruce Spence, Fr. Brian Rowland, Carol Cross, Fr. Bill Meacham, Arnold Diorio, Alan Harland, Marianne Diorio, Mary Dolan, Roy Beveridge, Grace Williams, James Leary, Rita and John Webb, Audrey Winsbury, Greg Glanz, Marsha Bursynski, Peter Harrison, Sandy Sirrell, John Mortimore, Tony O'Neil.

It's hard to see what the disciples don't get when Jesus tells them in fairly plain language that because of the way he lives and what he says he will be put to death by the power barons of his day. The disciples seem to think the Passion is going to be an event out of *Boy's Own Annual*, where the ensuing campaign will see greatness thrust upon them. In this context, Jesus takes the smallest and most vulnerable of people in their society and teaches the disciples that greatness comes through care of the least.

This is a powerful lesson. Greatness in the world - power, connections, wealth, influence, reputation and learning - only counts for something in the Kingdom of God when put at the service of the most vulnerable of our society. Greed, riches and pride are so alluring, so seductive for us in the Church, as much as for those outside it, that we need to regularly examine our consciences to assess the motivations and results of what we are doing, and why we are doing it. When I read today's Gospel, however, I also feel sad. I cannot help but reflect on how unintentionally prophetic Mark was being in linking the prediction of Jesus' passion with the status of a child.

The safeguards now needed in response to the criminal and scandalous behaviour of a very few leaders in the Church, means that many bishops, priests, religious and teachers can no longer follow Jesus' example and take children in our arms. I fully understand why this is the case, but the fact that we have to be so careful about the care of our children and have strict protocols and legislation that covers such behaviour toward children is a necessary and, nonetheless, tragic moment. It's also a moment for us to

remember the passion of those who have had to endure the trauma of destructive behaviour. As the Jews say of the Holocaust, 'to forget is to commit the same mistake again'. At its most basic level the latter part of today's Gospel reveals what we would expect of Jesus - he likes children and they like him.

It's amazing how a couple of pieces of information can sometimes change the way a scriptural story is read, and its importance for our lives today. We know from other documents of the same period as the New Testament that children in first century Palestine had no rights. They were possessions of their fathers, and they could be bought and sold, exploited and even killed without any recourse to the religious or civil law.

One way in which a child was publicly claimed in this society was that only their immediate family could touch them. The story, then, of Jesus embracing the child in public was in itself a social challenge to accepted customs. But it's much more than that. In taking the children in his arms, Jesus declares that they are possessions of no one, but they belong to us all as gifts. In the family of God, children are accorded the dignity and respect we would give to God.

Today's Gospel tells us that those who deserve our attention and esteem are the ones who are the least, the most at risk or those who put their talents and gifts at their service by making the world a better place for them. Just as he did in the market place of Galilee when he took the children in his arms, Jesus has a habit of turning our world's values upside down.

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Psalm Response

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Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! God has called us with the gospel to share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Alleluia!*

Around the Parish

Two letters from our Bishop Peter: The sheet enclosed with this weeks newsletter has copies of two letters from the Bishop which he asks that you read.

Sympathy: St. John the Baptist Parish Family extends its prayerful sympathy to family, relatives and friends of Eileen Robinson who was buried from our church last week.

Liturgy Team meeting Thursday, 24th September, 7.30pm in the Parish office.

Catechists: There will be no monthly meeting for September. Instead, the bi-annual Classroom Management interactive workshop will be held Wednesday, September 23 commencing at 7pm in the Leo Mahon room. Be prepared to have a very enjoyable evening! This course is a requirement for your 2016 authorisation. See you on the 23rd. Susie.

Children's Liturgy Roster 27/9/15: Geraldine Baxter, Joanna Baxter.

Volunteer Church Cleaning Roster 25/9/15: Rano Spiteri, Philomena Curtis, Julie Vanderputt.

St. Vincent de Paul Members and Volunteers monthly Mass 9am Saturday, 26th September. The Society assists many people on the Peninsula. If you would like to learn about this work or to join as a volunteer, please contact Ken Hall on 4341 2769 or Joan Murphy on 4341 0248.

Morning Tea Roster 27/9/15 will be our Pastoral Council.

Living Faith Booklets \$2 ea. **Columban Calendars** \$9 ea. now available in the Piety Stall.

100 game Bingo Marathon will be held on Saturday, 3rd October 2015 (October long weekend). Games start 2.30pm and go to 5.30pm, then we have a break including a free BBQ and catering, then more games from 7.30pm-10.30pm. We operate it as 2 X 50 game sessions and sell the tickets for each session separately, pens and pads available. It's a great day out and something not to be missed and of course if you can't make part of the Marathon, you can join in at any stage as we sell books separately. Cost for 6 tickets all day is \$96. Peninsula Community Centre, 93 McMasters Rd. Woy Woy.

Rosary Group: Come and join us in making rosary beads and scapulars for the Missions. We meet every Tuesday from 9am-12md in the Walter Baker Hall. All welcome!

The Just Word

FOR THOSE WHO COME
ACROSS THE SEAS:

The Australian Catholic Bishops Statement for 2015-2016 challenges us to face the reality of the terror and danger that people face around the world and to work to change Australia's response to people seeking asylum.

When we Australians support policies of cruelty and rejection, we close our ears to Christ's call and turn him away from our doors. We know that we are better than this. As Christians, we know that it is within us to hear the call of Jesus. As Australians we have shown ourselves willing to take the path of gener-

osity and leadership. We can do so again.

Pope Francis, in his words and actions at Lampedusa, cuts through the global indifference by making the issue personal. He shows us that, when we look into the face of the asylum seeker and really hear their story—each stage of their journey—they are no longer a stranger to be feared and we can no longer be indifferent to their need.

Social Justice Statement 2015-16
On your own or with others: read stories about asylum seekers and see a film, read a poem or a book. Go to: Refugee Council of Australia Fact Sheets and Resources: www.refugeecouncil.org.au

Edmund Rice Centre, Asylum Seekers and Refugees Education Resource: www.erc.org.au

Allow yourself to be touched by the stories of asylum seekers and refugees.

Has any one of us wept for these persons who were on the boat? For the young mothers carrying their babies? For these men looking for means of supporting their families? We are a society which has forgotten how to weep, how to experience compassion—'suffering with' others: the globalisation of indifference has taken from us the ability to weep!

Pope Francis at Lampedusa.

From the Diocese and beyond

Celebration of Blessed Junipero Serra: Serra celebrating canonisation of their patron at a special Mass and dinner commencing 6.30pm, Thurs. 24th September, Sacred Heart Church, 2 Richard Porter Way, Pymble. Bishop Emeritus David celebrant. Please pray daily for vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life and the perseverance of existing vocations and for all seminarians and novices. Ph: Terry Scanlan 0438 887 295 or email

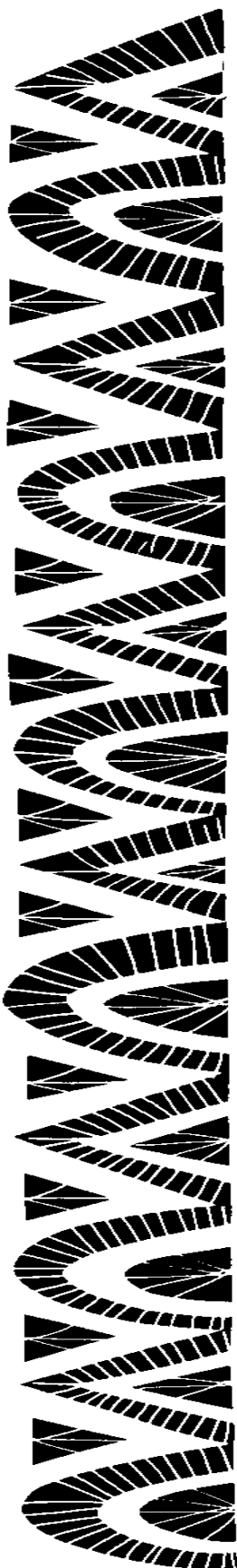
terry_scanlan@bigpond. Further details see notice board.

Parenting and Relationship Education: CatholicCare provides a range of parenting and relationship education programs including one-to-one and group programs to assist couples and parents increase their knowledge and skills in a range of areas. Contact the Central Coast family centre for more information—4356 2600.

The Journey Catholic Radio Programme: Tune to Rhema CC 94.9 at 1pm Sundays. Each week the show

provides a good formation (reflections and interviews with some of Australia's best Catholic presenters), family friendly Catholic/Christian music and positive stories about our Church designed to deepen our faith of practicing Catholics as well as reaching out to those who are disconnected from our faith communities.

Diocese of Broken Bay Annual Charity Race Day Thursday 29th October, The Entertainment Grounds, Central Coast. Please see notice board for full details.



Preaching to the Fragile-Hearted

Ron Raab

My jaw is often tight and sore. For years, I have sought help to ease the joints in my face. My bite has been realigned, and now my teeth fit precariously together. When I speak for long periods of time, I feel the strain in my mouth, shoulders, and head. Preaching is always a reminder of the Spirit's presence in the human and tender apparatus of my body.

Some years ago ministering in a suburban parish, I shared with a parishioner how difficult it was to preach at that point in my life. Preaching five times on the weekend, the stress of projecting my voice and the movements of my mouth resulted in much pain on Monday mornings. On his leaving that parish to move to a different city, he remembered my preaching dilemma and wrote a note saying, "Thank you for your preaching. You speak to us with a glass jaw that is fragile and graced. Does this mean that we all need to listen to the Gospel and to your preaching with glass hearts?"

His question remains with me as I reflect on liturgical preaching among God's glass-hearted people. Connecting the real message of the Spirit and the reality of life is a fragile endeavour in any parish community, a life-long art form of making both the gospel and life transparent and real.

For the past 10 years, I have preached among a different community of fragile hearts. These hearers of the gospel face daily battles of survival on the streets, and they struggle with staying sober, making ends meet, and medicating mental illness. Other people come to our small chapel from the suburbs because they are aware that their children are being raised with privilege and entitlement, and they are uncomfortable with the degree to which they may avoid facing the reality of other people's suffering. Some social workers and caregivers come to weekday Mass on their lunch hour to gain solace from their work among the marginalised. These believers, nestled in the dark pews in our chapel, teach me that life and Scripture must remain transparent and connected. The Word is still being made flesh in the lives of people surviving poverty, heartache, and loss.

I stand on the stained wood of our sanctuary, holding tightly to the Gospel book. I sink soul-deep into the message that rises from

the pages of the Scriptures. I hear the echoes of my voice through the speakers of the sound system above me. My finger slowly glides on the page to keep my place because sometimes my throat closes up with emotion and my eyes water with the desire to be an instrument of grace among the people standing on the concrete floor of the assembly. I learn here to root my soul in the message of Jesus because I cannot change people's experiences or find a deeper, lasting way to heal people besides the Spirit working in the sound of my voice.

I can only describe this moment of proclaiming the Gospel as profoundly lonely. These words that rise in the assembly like incense reveal to our people whether or not I have come to believe in God or remain in my own human ego. There is a moment of insight every time I proclaim the Gospel, a split-second decision to continue Jesus' love in the world or short-circuit that love with my own fragile conviction that my education and life is what people need.

The Gospel is proclaimed from my tight jaw. This is a profound reminder that I am not in control of the grace, challenge, or consolation of how the word makes a home among people. I feel in my emotionally naked body the first place where the word is real: in my own aching heart and gradually loosened tongue and jaw.

I walk with intention down the two steps of the wooden floor to the concrete floor of the assembly to offer a homily. I gaze into the eyes of the people with the grace of the Gospel proclaimed and the fact that I have come to know many of the stories of poverty that are carried in the faces before me. This intersection is where I long to speak, where I ache for human life to receive the miracles of divine love.

Last Ash Wednesday I welcomed people at our noon Mass into the safe shelter of our chapel. As I spoke with people and circled the aisles with greetings, I felt a profound pain in my body. There were three young men who do not know each other who each have attempted suicide several times. Each man has his own stories; each feels suffering



Today's second reading warns that a heart consumed with avarice and envy leads to jealousy, strife, conflicts, and disputes. A giving heart, in contrast, can sing instead with the psalmist, "Freely will I offer you sacrifice; I will praise your name, O Lord, for its goodness."

SEE PSALM 54



(Continued on page 4)

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
P.O. Box 264 Walter Baker Hall
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 M.S.F.S. Fr. Philip Thottam M.S.F.S.
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 7.30am, 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 02 4341 0884 f 02 4344 5049.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST YOUTH GROUP For information and events contact Sam French 0422 449 539.

CATHOLICCARE Counselling and Family Relationships. Ph: 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. 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.

Preaching to the Fragile-Hearted

(continued)

(Continued from page 3)

so profoundly that attempting suicide is the only way to get attention and ease the pain.

This is the place of suffering, the way to Christ crucified. This is the common ground for every assembly and every preacher, the place where we have the opportunity to present God as the divine healer. Our faith is a rich consolation. Our words must not be trite or flimsy or sarcastic. Our preaching must not degrade the liturgy. Our words may not alone heal. We desperately need to preach and practice what we believe.

I preach from my own glass heart, knowing I am also powerless over outcomes and voiceless over people who will never receive God's care or consolation. However, I speak anyway. I still offer what I know best: the mission of the divine longing to enter the hearts of the poor. My words can

be a rich source of blessing or put people down. My words can shame or lift up. My words combined with my ministry will either reveal that God cares about people or that the church may be worried only about doctrine, surviving scandal, or people who have money.

So many people are so emotionally broken that they will never be able to realise God's love. These are the stories that often stop me on the concrete floor and challenge my jaw to move beyond the pain. These stories reveal to me how to speak to people in need and how to get out of the way of grace.

(To be concluded)

Ronald Patrick Raab, CSC, serves as associate pastor at St. Andre Bessette Church in Portland, Ore. His latest books are *The Art of Christian Mission* (World Library Publications) and *At-Home Advent Retreat: The Unsheltered Heart (Cycle C)* (Ave Maria Press). From *Ministry & Liturgy*, copyright © Resource Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission under licence number 115216.

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



Diocese of
Broken Bay