



The Voice

18th October 2015

Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Psalter Week 1



OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

- **Recently deceased:**
Lina Role, Moses Mifsud, Sara Selim.
- **Anniversaries:**
Thomas and Patrick Davin, Davina and Maureen Jackson, Jim McNamee, Brigid Boylan, Sharyn Gapps.
- **Remembrances:**
Essie Davin.
- **And the sick:**
Loretta Holt, Nathalie Rankin, Peter Wellins, Frances Sara, Neil Cameron, June Ferry, Kate Tinson, Beryl Allen, Lola Proctor, Jack Moulds, Maryanne Diorio, Carol Cross, Charles Knowles, Mary Dolan, Alan Harland, Bruce Spence, Mark Taylor, Connor Cole, Fr. Brian Rowland, Grace Williams, Sandy Sirrell, Rita and John Webb, Marsha Bursynski, Tony O'Neill, Peter Harrison, Anne Singleton, Vince Zappavigna.

One Sunday morning during Mass, the congregation was surprised to see two men enter, both covered from head to toe in black and carrying submachine guns. One of the men proclaimed, 'Anyone willing to take a bullet for Christ remain where you are!'

Immediately, the choir fled, altar servers fled, and most of the congregation fled. Within a few minutes, out of the two hundred strong congregation only ten people remained where they were. The man who had spoken took off his hood, looked at the priest and said, 'OK Father, I got rid of all the fence sitters, how about we make a start'.

It's nice to see the priest in the story remained in the Church! I would like to think that faced with such an extreme moment like this I would have the courage of my convictions, but I must admit I have my doubts.

Each Sunday by coming and celebrating the Eucharist we implicitly, and explicitly, state that we want to become like Christ. As the Gospels repeatedly tell us if we follow him in his saving love for the world then, like him, we must confront injustice, defend the rights of the poor and the oppressed to dignity, give and forgive, heal and reconcile. By saying this, we are clearly not looking for a smooth ride through life.

In concert with the whole Church what most of us have done is domesticate the hard edges of Jesus' teachings to suit our comfortable existences.

And then we get a Gospel like today's.

The sons of Zebedee want the best seats in the house without knowing what the admission price is going to cost. They want the glory without the gore.

Jesus teaches them, and later all the other apostles, that for his Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven, requires of us to drink a cup of suffering and be baptised in a river of sacrificial love. We can't dress this teaching up, or put a good spin on it. There is no resurrection without the cross. No gain without the pain.

For most of us this challenge means doing whatever we can politically and socially to bring the values of the Gospel to bear on our different spheres of influence. But Jesus also links this challenge to the act of service. And in this regard some leaders in the Church give us mixed messages and let us off the hook.

Whatever of the patrimony of the past, today's Gospel reminds us that bishops, priests and deacons should be excellent models of the humility of service. The leadership Jesus advocates is not monarchical or tyrannical, it is being the least, and being a servant.

The Second Vatican Council taught that leaders in the Church should be outstanding in humility, charity and simplicity of lifestyle. Some leaders are just this. Others have domesticated the hard edge of the Gospel.

Let's pray in this Eucharist that we recover a love for the hard teachings of Jesus, even though they demand so much of us, and that we have the courage to call our leaders to do likewise. These teachings are, after all, what makes us different from the Gentiles, and sort out who is actually sitting on the fence.

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Psalms Response

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Lord, let your mer-cy be u - pon us, as we place our trust in you.

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Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! The Son of Man came to serve and to give his life as a ransom for all. *Alleluia!*

Around the Parish

Catholic Missions Sunday: A special collection will be held today. The need is great and your generosity would be appreciated.

All Souls Memorial Mass: Parishioners are warmly invited to celebrate this special Mass Monday, 2nd November, 7.30pm. Together as a Parish community we will remember our deceased family and friends who have experienced the loss of a loved one this year.

Blessing of the Graves: Father Philip will bless the graves at Point Clare on Monday, 2nd November, 10.30am.

November Mass Envelopes are available in the gathering area.

The Book of the Names of the Dead will be in the church during November. You are invited to write the name of the faithful departed in it. A lamp will be lit at all Masses.

Children's Liturgy Roster 25/10/15: Brenda Sweet, Anne Tonkin, Jenny Fitzgerald.

Melbourne Cup Trifecta: Ladies of our Rosary Group will be selling Trifectas at all Masses this weekend. Tickets 50c.

Bus Trip: Mystery Trip North, 21st October, leaving 9am. Cost: \$15. Contact Susie. 0403 417 639 or 4344 1742.

Volunteer Church Cleaning Roster 23/10: Julie Vanderputt, Linda Potestas, Kevin Glacken.

Morning Tea Roster 25/10/15: Our Youth Group.

Sympathy: St. John the Baptist Parish family would like to extend its prayerful sympathy to the family, relatives and friends of Noelle Davidovic and Ivy Bartlett who were buried from our church last week. May they experience the fullness of Christ's peace.

Attention Catechists: Date of the Diocesan CCD Mass at the Cathedral in Hornsby has been changed to a Saturday (*not a Sunday*), 31st October at 11.30am. This change is to fit in with the availability of Bishop

Peter who wishes to celebrate this Mass.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will call parishioners to answer the desperate need we have for more volunteers. As things stand, we may not be able to provide teachers/helpers for all the children in 2016. Please consider this most worthy Parish role. Phone Susie 0411 566 622.

Catechists Meeting Thursday, 22nd October, 9am in the Leo Mahon room.

Lost and Found: A wristlet watch was found in the church grounds. Owner please contact the parish office.

Altar Flowers: Anyone wishing to donate towards the ongoing refreshing of flowers is kindly asked to make their donation at the parish office or via collection at Mass in an envelope clearly marked "Altar Flowers".

Liturgy Meeting has been cancelled for this month.

The Just Word

17 October – International Day for an Eradication of Poverty:

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty has been observed every year since 1993. The UN designated this day to promote awareness of the need to eradicate poverty and destitution in all countries, particularly in developing countries—a need that has become a development priority.

Where poverty holds sway, people are held back. Lives disfigured by poverty are cruel, mean and often short.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon.

From Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013):

198...I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei*, but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelised by them.

The new evangelisation is an invitation to acknowledge the saving power at work in their lives and to put them at the centre of the Church's pilgrim way. We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them.

202...The need to resolve the

structural causes of poverty cannot be delayed, not only for the pragmatic reason of its urgency for the good order of society, but because society needs to be cured of a sickness which is weakening and frustrating it, and which can only lead to new crises. Welfare projects, which meet certain urgent needs, should be considered merely contemporary responses. As long as the problems of the poor are not radically resolved by rejecting the absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation and by attacking structural causes of inequality, no solution will be found for the world's problems or, for that matter, to any problems. Inequality is the root of social ills.

From the Diocese and beyond

Domestic Violence—Not a private matter...it's a community matter: You are invited to be part of this community forum at Gosford Uniting Church, 129 Donnison St. Gosford. (opposite Kibble Park). Monday 26th October, 7.30pm. Enq: Jan 4328 3707. (Registration not required). Supper will be served. Parking available at rear of premises. Access driveway off Henry Parry Drive, behind Kensman

Building. See notice board for further details.

Staying Home Leaving Violence: CatholicCare Staying Home Leaving Violence program assist women and children on the Central Coast to remain in their homes and be protected from Family Violence. The program support ranges from new security measures, personal and financial problems and legal

support.. If someone you know is experiencing family violence please contact CatholicCare on 4356 2600.

Fashion Parade – Sarongs of Ettalong to be held at the Uniting Church Hall, Picnic Pde, Ettalong. Arranged by the Ladies Fellowship. Tuesday, 27th October, 10.30am. A light luncheon will follow. Cost \$10.

Readings for Today and next Sunday

18th October 2015

Old Testament Commentary by Mark O'Brien

Isaiah 53:10-11

For many modern readers and listeners the opening words of this reading from Isaiah may appear strange and disturbing - 'The Lord has been pleased to crush him with suffering.' An image of a sadistic God who likes beating people up comes to mind. We put human beings who do this in gaol. However, we need to remember that ancient peoples were just as appalled by the horrors of violence and suffering as we like to think we are and the author of this text would have been well aware that the statement could be interpreted this way. So, in spite of this, why did he or she write it and why did God inspire it, as we believe is the case?

Texts of any kind, whether written or oral, should be read in context and in order to get some purchase on our reading it is worth reading what precedes it and what follows. Most commentators would see our passage as part of a larger poem about a servant that runs from 52:13 through to 53:12 (a verse beyond where our reading ends). The poem commences with a speaker, presumably God, who prophesies or proclaims that 'my servant' shall triumph and shall shock many nations when they understand what the servant has done for them. The poem then recounts in prophetic form the fate of this servant who is either Israel or a representative of Israel, a faithful remnant, portrayed as an individual. Despite being persecuted and unjustly tried and executed, this servant does not respond to violence with violence and goes to his death 'like a lamb that is led to the slaughter'. Then comes our passage that makes the claim that all the servant undergoes is an integral part of God's saving plan - the text is a prophecy that will come to pass - which of course God delights in bringing about, despite the ongoing resistance of human beings. The purpose of this divinely ordained suffering is the salvation of the many (the nations). The servant, in obedience to God's will, takes 'their faults on himself'. In the final verse (53:12) the voice of God returns to proclaim that the servant will be greatly rewarded for this self sacrifice.

What this text adds is an important theological angle on our understanding of suffering. The traditional view was, and often still is, that it is a sign of punishment for sin and is God ensuring that the Act-Consequence connection applies (bad actions have bad consequences or results and should fall on the perpetrators, while good actions have good consequences). We all operate on this social version of the physical law of cause and effect to a greater or lesser degree but it cannot be proved in all instances. The book of Isaiah offers another view; suffering can be salvific, what looks powerless and horrible can be powerful and grace filled in healing sin and division. Once again of course, one cannot prove that this or that suffering is salvific or a sign of punishment. We believe it or don't believe it and either view should therefore be cautious about making judgments. Christians believe that Jesus' suffering was the fulfilment of this prophecy and salvific for all humanity, whereas a non-believer may see it as just another example of the way human beings persecute each other, with no salvific value at all.

Psalms 32:4-5, 18-20, 22

The Responsorial Psalm is a selection from a larger poem. The three stanzas provided can be read as follows. The first stanza is a faith proclamation or confession of the nature of God. The first two lines proclaim the utter reliability of God's word and deed - the two ways by which the Old Testament believed God manifested his will. The following two lines single out three attributes of the divinity that are manifested in God's word and deed - righteousness (right relationships), justice (the implementation of righteousness via word and action), and steadfast love/loyalty (God's unswerving commitment to the salvation of the world).

The second stanza focuses more on God's actions in relation to human beings. God is particularly attentive to those 'who revere him' and those 'who hope in his love'. This is an oblique way of referring to the faithful, perhaps gathered in the temple for a liturgy. How is God's attentiveness and love manifested to the faithful? Two areas are singled out - the way God delivers them when threatened by death (either by enemies or sickness), and the way God keeps them alive in famine (always a danger in Palestine which is prone to drought like Australia).

The third stanza focuses on the attitudes that the faithful should have towards their caring and attentive God. Again two are singled out, although they are probably not meant to be exclusive. The first is that one should trust and wait patiently on God because God knows our needs better than we do. This is formulated appropriately as a confession of faith, an expression of trust and confidence. The second is that one should always pray to God for the gift that matters above all else - God's unswerving steadfast love (the same term as at the end of the first stanza).

Next Sunday: 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time B.

Jeremiah 31:7-9

The reading from Jeremiah belongs to what commentators often label as 'the book/scroll of consolation', a section of the book of Jeremiah that proclaims salvation for Israel beyond the punishment of exile. The bulk of the first part of the book (chapters 1-25) is taken up with a prophetic critique of Israel and Judah (the two competing kingdoms) and the proclamation of God's response to their rebellions and failures, namely, conquest and exile at the hands of God's agents of punishment - the Babylonians. The book claims that what looks from a human point of view to be chaos or the triumph of Babylon's gods is all part of the Lord's sovereign rule over creation and history. A key component of the next section of the book (chapters 26-29) is Jeremiah's exposure of the false prophets of peace both in Jerusalem and in Babylon, the latter among with the first deportees into exile before Jerusalem and Judah finally fell. According to the logic of the book, this needs to be done before Jeremiah, the one true prophet, can proclaim the true message of consolation in chapters 30-32.

The proclamation of salvation in our reading re-



Good stewards must not argue about who is the most important. Today's Gospel says clearly that those who aspire to greatness must humbly serve the needs of all. Even Jesus came not to be served, but to serve.



(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 Readings

(Continued from page 3)

fers to Jacob who is the legendary ancestor Israel. Hence it is not quite clear whether the text is referring to the restoration of the northern kingdom that was also called Israel, or to all Israelites as the descendants of Jacob (hence both kingdoms). Another name for Jacob/Israel is Ephraim, one of Jacob's sons who, according to the Bible's storyline, became the dominant tribe in the northern kingdom. As God sent Israel into exile for its sins, so God will bring them back the 'remnant of Israel' once its period of punishment (seventy years according to Jeremiah 25:12) is complete. God is in charge of it all and God's power reaches the 'far ends of the earth' as much as it is present in Jerusalem. In typical Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern style, the speech is highly rhetorical, designed to bolster faith and hope. Hence, although Israel is only a 'remnant' it will return as 'a great company' and be hailed as the 'chief of the nations'. This description presumably does not mean Israel/Jacob will become a superpower but that it will resume its privileged mission to mediate God's blessing to the nations, something that it had failed to do according to the critique in the earlier part of the book. Moreover, no one will miss out; God's saving action embraces those who are often overlooked or abandoned in time of war and strife: 'the blind and the lame,

women with child, women in labour.'

As well as being replete with such rhetorical flourishes, the text alludes to other classic or treasured texts and sayings in the tradition. There is the reference to the 'remnant of Israel', a motif in the prophecy of Jeremiah's predecessor Isaiah; the rather vague reference to 'the land of the north' is used in other texts to evoke Israel's (believed) origins in north-west Mesopotamia; God's guidance 'to streams of water' reminds one of the famous psalm 22 [23]; and the reference to 'my first-born son' evokes the description of Israel in Exod 3:22-24 (freedom from Egyptian slavery).

Psalm 125

The responsorial psalm follows well after our reading, celebrating the deliverance or restoration of Zion/Jerusalem after the exile and the return of the deportees. What from the perspective of the superpowers of the day (Babylon, Persia, Egypt), and even of many Israelites look impossible, happened. However, the text could also have been composed on the occasion of other (earlier?) deliverances of Zion from enemy threat and was subsequently invoked to celebrate the end of the Babylonian exile. What is particularly noteworthy about this psalm is that it claims Zion's miraculous deliverance had or will have a transforming impact on the nations – presumably the ones who conquered Zion in the first place. They will confess 'what marvels the Lord has worked' and so, in a real

sense, will become one in faith with Israelites as they too proclaim Zion's deliverance in the same words 'What marvels the Lord has worked for us.'

On the basis of Zion's deliverance the speakers in the psalm pray to God to also restore the fertility of the land (another way of translating 'Deliver us O Lord, from our bondage' is 'Restore our fortunes O Lord', as in the NRSV). In confident anticipation that this prayer will be answered, the psalm envisages the farmers going out 'in tears' to plant their crops and returning in song with their arms full of the harvest. Like the reading from Jeremiah this is a highly rhetorical and imaginative piece. It's as if the harvest immediately follows the sowing – a 'marvel' like the miraculous deliverance of Zion. The reference to 'going out in tears' could refer to sorrow and repentance over what led to the enemy pillage of Jerusalem and the land, but it could also reflect a ritual that accompanied the planting of crops, an expression of complete dependence on God for a successful harvest as well as an acknowledgement (via tears) that one is unworthy of such divine beneficence.

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. Ph: 4341 0884. Fax: 02 43 44 5049.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST YOUTH GROUP For information and events contact Sam French 042 244 9539.

CATHOLICCARE Counselling and Family Relationships. Ph: 4356 2600.

MARY MAC'S PLACE Volunteers provide nutritious, freshly cook 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.m., cash prizes. Ticket sales from 6.00 p.m. Proceeds benefit Parish. Enquiries: Rob 0427 990 818.

