



Sunday 20th February 2022

Parish Priest: Fr. Steven Rigo **Assistant Priests:** Fr. Tao Pham & Fr. Martin Tanti

Parish Pastoral Associates: Jacinta Bright & Sr. Margaret Sapsford

The Partnered Parishes of:

St. Mary's

204 Grimshaw St.,
Greensborough, 3088

Parish: 9435 1543 **Presbytery:** 7036 9329

Email: Greensborough@cam.org.au

Website: www.cam.org.au/greensborough

Secretaries: Francesca Olofsson & Sharon Prosser

Communication Officer: Denise Chang Faux

Mass Times

Tuesday to Friday: Mass 9.15am

Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.30pm

Sunday: Mass 8.00am, 10.00am & 5.00pm

Reconciliation Times

Saturday: By Appointment only please call the Parish Office

Parish School Principal

Mrs. Marisa Matthys **Ph:** 9433 4000 **or Email**
principal@smgreensborough.catholic.edu.au

Sacred Heart

25 Gipson Street,
Diamond Creek 3089

Parish: 9401 6361

Email: DiamondCreek@cam.org.au

Website: www.pol.org.au/diamondcreek

Secretary: Pat Guatta

Mass Times

Wednesday & Friday: Mass 9.15am

Saturday: 1st & 3rd Saturday 7.15pm at

St Peter's

Sunday: Mass 9.00am

Reconciliation Times

Friday: 9.45am to 10.15am

Parish School Principal

Mr. Jim O'Sullivan **Ph:** 9438 1590 **or Email**
principal@shdiamondcreek.catholic.edu.au

St. Thomas the Apostle

251 Diamond Creek Road,
Greensborough Nth 3088

Parish: 9434 7373

Email: greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au

Website: www.pol.org.au/greensboroughnorth

Secretary: Lisa Leahy

Mass Times

Tuesday & Thursday: Mass 9.15am

Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.00pm

Sunday: Mass 10.30am

Reconciliation Times

Saturday: 9.30am to 10.00am

Parish School Principal

Mr David Delaney **Ph:** 9434 4565 **or Email**
principal@stgreensboroughnth.catholic.edu.au

THE CELEBRATION OF MASS IN OUR PARISHES

Weekday Masses have resumed in our 3 Parishes.

Sacred Heart: 9.15am Wednesday & Friday. **St Mary's:** 9.15am Tuesday-Friday. **St Thomas:** 9.15am Tuesday & Thursday.

Mass is recorded each weekend and uploaded onto our Websites for you to view.

St Mary's: www.cam.1.org.au/greensborough Sacred Heart: www.pol.org.au/diamondcreek

St Thomas: www.pol.org.au/greensboroughnorth

Mass at Home: St Patrick's Cathedral: On Channel 31, 44 on Digital TV, for Sunday Mass at 11.00am

Mass for You at Home - Diocese of Wollongong: Sundays on Channel 10 at 6am, Foxtel Channel 173 at 10am, and online at
www.massforyou.com.au



The central theme of Sunday's Gospel is the radical command to 'love your enemies', with concrete illustrations on how that may look.

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C
20th February 2022
Fr Brendan Byrne SJ

Sacred Heart, St Mary's & St Thomas the Apostle are all members of the Diamond Valley Deanery.



www.diamondvalleydeanery.org.au

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

www.cam.org.au



Our Partnered Parishes respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the traditional custodians of this land and we pay respect to the Elders past and present.

PARTNERED PARISHES NEWS

ASH WEDNESDAY 2nd MARCH MASS TIMETABLE

Sacred Heart:	9.15am	7.30pm	(School children at 9.15am Service)
St Mary's:	9.15am	7.30pm	
St Thomas:	9.15am	12.30pm	(School children at both Services)



SECURITY/SCAM ALERT IF YOU RECEIVE EMAILS FROM FR. STEVEN OR JACINTA BRIGHT WHICH ARE NOT FROM THEIR CAM EMAIL ADDRESS, PLEASE DELETE THEM.



LAMP; LOVE & MENTAL PEACE:

A second session on spirituality and mental health will be conducted at St Mary's Parish, in the Gathering Space on Thursday March, 3rd, from 7.30pm until 9.00pm. You don't have to have attended the first session to join in this next one. The focus on mental ill health, taken up by St Mary's Parish, is being led by the St Mary's Parish Group Love, Acceptance and Mental Peace (LAMP). At this session Sr Ros Cairns MSC, will present the session and include a conversation with Rachel Garofolo, who will share her lived experience.

Ros is a member of St Mary's Parish and has worked in mental health for 27 years initially as pastoral care worker and coordinator with experience in hospital and community settings and then in management. As Manager of Mental Health within the Healthcare Chaplaincy Council of Victoria, Inc. Ros's responsibilities involved leadership, consultation, and education in the strategic development of spirituality, chaplaincy, and pastoral care in Victorian Mental Healthcare Services. Ros is semi-retired and maintains a particular interest in the relationship between spirituality and mental wellbeing and offers education and training in this area, in communities and at the University of Divinity. Her background is varied having worked in the areas of education, liturgy, counselling, and community development work in PNG. RSVP (by March 1st, indicating your preference to attend via Zoom or in person) and enquiries: Jacinta Bright Jacinta.bright@cam.org.au or 9435 1543.

MORNING TEA VIA ZOOM: Our Combined Parishes Morning Tea will meet on **Friday 25th February** from 10.30am-12.00 noon via zoom. All welcome! Please join us for laughter, catching up with a cuppa and giving a warm welcome to new members. If you are a first-timer, please contact Jacinta: Jacinta.Bright@cam.org.au who will add you to the contact list and send out a Zoom notification.



The Retreat in Daily Life – can be a life changing experience. What is your image of God? Does this image engage you in an intimate and loving relationship with God, or does God seem distant or even irrelevant to your life? Do you feel grounded in your life, or confused and wonder if your faith and spirituality can make a difference? Do you desire to deepen your relationship with God? Or, are you perhaps just curious? The Ignatian Spiritual Exercises are a life changing retreat and offer rich prayer material, different methods of discernment and the opportunity to discover the ways in which God is calling you at this particular time of your life.

The retreat will run from the 8th of March until early October, with retreatants having material with which to pray, at home, each day and time to gather as a group for sharing each week and regular one to one time with a spiritual director. The venue for the information and enquiry afternoon which is on March 8th at 1.00pm, as well as the future group sessions, is the Gathering Space of the church. The Ignatian spiritual directors leading this retreat are Terry Fanning and Jacinta Bright. Cost – by donation.

For enquiries prior to the introduction and enquiry afternoon, please contact Jacinta at the parish office, 9435 1543 or

Jacinta.bright@cam.org.au

A reminder to our Combined Parishes Group, Team and Committee Leaders/Representative of a meeting to be held on Tuesday 22 February commencing at 7.00pm. in the Gathering Space of St Mary's Church Greensborough conducted by the Safeguarding Committee. This is an important meeting for you to attend as we will be discussing our responsibility as a Parish community for the care, safety and wellbeing of our children and young people. You are encouraged to bring another member of your group or another parishioner to this meeting. **To assist with the organization for this meeting, could you please advise your Parish Office as soon as possible of your attendance.**

The Eucharist, the source and summit of Christian Spirituality.

- ♦ What is the meaning of the words and actions of the Eucharist?
- ♦ What are the links between the Eucharist and everyday life?

The St Mary's Scripture Study Group invites you to an engaging and informative presentation on

Why the Mass is Still Relevant in the 21ST Century.

Our guest speaker, the renowned Rev. Dr Elio Capra will explore these questions and much more.

Tuesday 1st March 2022 commencing 7.30pm at St Mary's church, Greensborough.

To register or for further information, please contact Michelle D'Souza on 0432 316 777 or Jo Giudice on 0411 045 572. There is no fee, but you can make a small voluntary contribution on the night itself, to help cover costs.

Rev. Dr Elio Capra is a member of the Department of Systematic Theology and Department of Pastoral and General Studies at Catholic Theological College and lectures in Liturgy and Sacramental Theology at CTC

For Catering purposes, please respond by Saturday 26th February.



RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION

We can at times cringe or even feel ashamed when we read what the media publicises about what the Catholic Church may do or state about matters, especially in the area of morals. I know many people have turned away from the Church because of the positions they understand the Church has adopted in various aspects of social life. Sometimes it is more embarrassing when the Catholic Church says nothing regarding important social issues where it could faithfully represent the compassionate and inclusive teachings of Jesus.

With the current Religious Discrimination Bill being debated by the Federal Government, it appears that the Catholic Church is just one among all Christians who are lobbying the Government to discriminate against homosexual and transgender people in its concern to end discrimination of religious organisations. But the strong Christian lobby does not represent all Christians, and maybe the Catholic Church needs to officially distance itself from this lobby.

I attach an article written by Fr. Bill Edebohls, the parish priest of Ivanhoe (and with his permission) that clearly articulates this issue and the Catholic Church's position on the matter.

RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

The current debate on the Religious Discrimination Bill, both inside and outside of Federal Parliament, has brought out the best and the worst of politicians, religious leaders and people of faith.

The worst of it is the Australian Christian Lobby, based in Canberra, who have many politicians in their thrall and wield such power that politicians are fearful of incurring their eternal wrath. Hence the amended Religious Discrimination Bill has been pulled from the parliament by the Prime Minister, not just because it has divided his own party but because the religious right (represented by the Australian Christian Lobby) has demanded it.

What is ugly about this is that the Australian Christian Lobby presumes to represent the Christians of Australia and the media and politicians are sucked in by this fallacy. They represent a small sector of right wing protestant and pentecostal fundamentalists who have little understanding of traditional Christianity as lived out by mainstream Christianity. They certainly don't represent the Catholic Faith in which I was raised as an Anglican and now practice as a Roman Catholic.

It is, of course, good that we strive to end religious discrimination but we don't do it by discriminating against others. If the Australian Christian Lobby and supposed Christian politicians were being true to the faith they profess and the gospel of Jesus, as exemplified in today's gospel (the Beatitudes), they ought be a lot less interested in passing self-interested laws about religious discrimination and spend more time lobbying for laws against this nation's discrimination against asylum seekers who arrive by boat instead of a plane. And as a nation we still have a long way to go in ending discrimination against our indigenous peoples, non-whites, the disabled, homosexual and transgender people, the homeless etc. etc. I have never heard the Australian Christian Lobby lobby for any of these vulnerable groups. Shamelessly, they lobby for themselves and their own restrictive, fundamentalist version of a faith that is unrecognizable to most Christians. Jesus would not be amused!

The most odious feature of the proposed bill enshrines the right of people of faith to discriminate against homosexual and transgender children in 'religious' schools. Under pressure from his own party the Prime Minister was forced to amend the bill so as to end discrimination on the grounds of sexuality but to maintain the right to discriminate against transgender children.

Sadly, on both the left and the right of politics, we are drowning under the ideology of 'rights' - my rights - my freedoms. Individual rights and freedoms are important but individual rights and freedoms do not give me the right to harass, vilify, ostracise, harm or discriminate against another. If we were less narcissistic we would care less about our rights and more about our responsibilities. Our responsibility towards society, towards the common good, towards the 'other', especially the most vulnerable and disparaged in our community.

In the midst of this debate over the effects of the proposed anti discrimination laws, the thing I am most proud of is our Catholic Schools who have a reputation of amazing pastoral care of children dealing with issues of sexuality and gender fluidity. During the past week ABC radio talk-back was alive with parents and students ringing in to commend their Catholic School for the support and encouragement they had received in dealing with issues of sexuality and gender that can be so confronting for our children when faced with discrimination and worse.

The Prime Minister's rush to introduce this long promised bill just before parliament rises in preparation for the coming federal election may in fact be less about trying to rush through an old election promise and more to do with wedging the Opposition and distracting voters from more important issues but we as a nation deserve better leadership. But not just political leadership! We need real leadership in the Church so that the joy of the Gospel and the teachings of Jesus can be proclaimed by real prophets who have the moral courage to speak truth to power rather than allowing a lobby group, espousing a dim and dark shadow of the Christian faith, to speak on our behalf.

Fr. Bill Edebohls

11 February 2022

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT SACRED HEART & ST PETER'S



Sacred Heart School: This weekend we welcome our First Eucharist candidates for their Commitment Mass.

Senior Moments: Wednesday 2nd March (Ash Wednesday) Fish and Chips 12pm in the Parish Centre.

March 16th Lunch and Games in Parish Centre.

World Day of Prayer: Join other Sacred Heart parishioners at 2022 World Day of Prayer on Friday 4th March at 10.30am at Diamond Creek Uniting Church, 32 Wensley Street, Diamond Creek. All welcome.

Thank you to the parishioners who recently donated their Tip Passes for the cleanup and gardening at Sacred Heart church and Mercy Cottage. Your generosity has saved the Parish substantial fees.

Corks: Parish Pastoral Council member Ann-Marie is saving corks for an event in the Marymede School Swimming Carnival. Please leave in the back of the Church or the Parish Office for the next two weeks.

Volunteer work: Diamond Creek St Vincent Paul are in need of a treasurer. Home visitations are not mandatory and attending monthly meetings would be appreciated if available. Please contact Ray on 0413185722 or by email ray.belli57@gmail.com

An Invitation: A second Synod of Bishops consultation will be held at Sacred Heart Parish on Saturday at 10.00 am. The Synod dimension of Participation will be explored. All are welcome.

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners and friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Mario Molinaro, Catherine Leonard, Peter Mejak, Joan Moran, Tony Ledda, Margaret Holland, Bridie Burke, Mary Rafferty, Thomas Keenan

We pray for those who have died and all those whose Anniversaries occur in the month of February, that they may enter Joyfully into God's Kingdom: Nese Roberts, Leanne Lynch, Ursula Morrissey, Judy Vincent, Mary Crothers

Roster for Weekend 27th February

Sunday Sacred Heart 9.00am:

Reader: Y. O'Brien

Eucharistic Minister: R. Padget, F. Ledda

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST THOMAS

Please pray for Sam, Gus Eabha, Oliver and Sofia who are being baptised in February

We look forward to welcoming these families into the St Thomas Parish community.



Sacrament Preparation for Children in Non Catholic Schools: St Thomas' Parish will be offering Sacrament preparation classes again this year, for children wishing to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation (Confession) and First Eucharist (First Communion).

Children preparing for Reconciliation need to be Year 2 or older and children preparing for First Eucharist need to be Year 3 or older. Classes will be held at 4pm on Thursday afternoons in St Thomas' church and may include Zoom classes if required.

Proof of Baptism is required for enrolment in the classes.

Please direct any enquiries to the Parish Secretary, Lisa Leahy on 9434 7373 or email greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au

Cleaner required: A parishioner is looking for recommendations for a cleaner to do 2-3 hours house cleaning once a fortnight. If you can recommend anyone please contact Edith on 0439 3522945

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners and friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Peg Wilcox, Dawn Ellis, Miran Kasalo,

We pray for those who have died and all those whose Anniversaries occur in the month of February that they may enter Joyfully into God's Kingdom:

Fr Peter Fulton, Mary Crothers, Francesca Serrao, Reginald Chircop,, Sanico de Carlo, Brian Kenny, Nick Buttifant, Giuseppe Piccolo, Eddie Scully, Leslie Lowe, Kevin Phin, Rosemary Schneider, Alfonso Nguyen, Maria Nguyen, Vito Zuccola

Rosters for Weekend 26th & 27th February

Saturday 6.00pm:

Reader: P. Carty

Commentator: D. Haesler

Eucharistic Ministers: J. Bohan, T. Holland, C. Leahy

Set Up: J. De Carlo

Sunday 10.30am:

Reader: F. Landy

Commentator: M. Kenny

Eucharistic Ministers: F. Landy, M. Tipping, C. O'Brien

Set Up: J. Kerr

Counters: D. Bonello, S. Bishop, B. Carr

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST MARY'S

Vision Statement "To be a vibrant Christian community engaging with the world"



PARISH OFFICE HOURS—Francesca and Sharon will provide for our secretarial needs on Mondays 9am-5pm and Thursdays and Fridays 10am-4pm and Jacinta's days will be Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9am-5pm.

Please continue to send any bulletin contributions to Francesca and Sharon at greensborough@cam.org.au by 2pm

St Mary's Prayer Shawl Group Gathering Space 10am - 12pm on Mondays. Enq: Maureen Leahy—0407 687 517; Anne Fleming—0409 234 326 .

Communion to the Sick at St. Mary's— If you or someone you know cannot attend Mass due to illness and would like to receive Communion, please contact the parish office on 9435 1543.

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SYNOD 2023: You may know that Pope Francis has asked all Catholics to participate in a global consultation. He is seeking feedback for what dream we have for the Church. Many of you participated in the Plenary discussions in 2018. That was an Australian initiative and we haven't yet heard the results of that project. Will you come and join in an evening of reflection so that we can respond to the Pope's call. The focus is Community, Participation and Mission. We really need to have raise our voices here. At present there have only been just over 250 responses Australia wide, and the project was launched in November. Unfortunately for us in the Southern Hemisphere, everything stops from mid December until January, when we are focussed on preparing for Christmas and then January is a very quiet month as people go on holidays. Sr Joan Chittester, a Benedictine sister says this of the need for all of us to speak up: "Don't be afraid to speak. Be afraid of what will happen to the whole truth if you don't." Please come along on **Thursday the 24th of February, where we will meet in the Gathering Space at 7.30.**

If you are not able to join us on Thursday night, you might like to send your response directly to Rome. The process is clearly outlined here <https://melbournecatholic.org/synodality>

HELP WITH TRANSPORT TO MASS: A parishioner who is unable to get to Mass would greatly appreciate if anyone would be available to take them to 10.00am Mass on Sundays. If you are able to help could you please contact the Parish Office 94351543.

PPC MEETING SUMMARY - 1ST FEBRUARY 2022

Report from Mission Committee regarding Take the Way of the Gospel process, progress and next steps.

PPC Formation day to be held at St Mary's on 12th February.

Safeguarding Committee report – requirement that PPC members provide copy of WWCC to the Parish Office and discussion regarding the meeting with Partnered Parishes' Safeguarding Committee at St Mary's on Tuesday 22 February 2022 at 7.00pm.

Finance Committee report suggests that Paywave option is popular for parishioners.

ChurchLife survey explained. PPC members asked to complete.

Discussion and feedback given from PPC members regarding the Sacramental Program in 2021.

ST MARY'S FUNERAL MINISTRY TEAM is urgently seeking new members capable of preparing and/or running the audio-visual presentations at funerals. Please contact the parish office for more information 9435 1543 or greensborough@cam.org.au

Thank you.

LADIES AUXILIARY: We are holding a Book and Toy Sale on the weekend of 26th/27th February in the Gathering Space after Masses. Enquiries to: Maureen 9435 5906 or Judy 9435 4506

SOCIAL JUSTICE GROUP NEWS—A busy week of Events is coming up. You may want to support these initiatives:

World Day of Prayer – Friday March 4 2022 - Countries featured this year are England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Local churches may have a prayerful event.

Clean Up Australia Day – Sunday March 6 2022 – perhaps put on your gloves and pick up rubbish in local parks, streets or at the beach.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ST MARY'S CONTINUED

SUNDAY CATECHIST CLASSES for primary school children attending Government Schools are now commencing at 9.00am in St Mary's School. Classes are for children from Grades 3 to 6, cover the Sacraments and are held during each term. We would like to have a class for Grades 1 and 2 but need a teacher. Would there be a Senior or University student who would like to help with the younger children - lesson plans and all support will be given. All enquiries, contact Geraldine after 6.00pm - 0438 148 896.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

Special Prayers are asked for Bridget and Glenn's baby during the pregnancy.

February Baptisms: Chase Orbien, Henry Shaw, Riley Tobayiwa, Louise Guzzi, Marcus Lazatin, Daithi Loughlin, Marli Disting, Dakota Ilsley

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners & friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

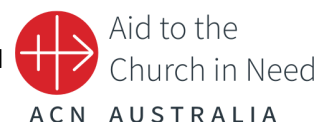
Peter Mejak, Pat Garrard, Michael Mc Aleer, Helen Sinnott, Stephen Exton (Snr)

Recently Deceased: Noel Coomber

We Pray for those whose Anniversaries occur this week, may they enter joyfully into God's Kingdom: Catherine Hamilton, Charles Fagan, Jim Exton, Maria Julia D'Souza, Peter Pacillo, Sr Veronica Mary LSP, Narciso Rico, Fr Paul Keenan SJ, Loretto Haines, Walter Pocock, Percy Barry, Louisa Barri, Hugh Davine, Margaret Profitt, Bernadette Jackson, Mervin Evans D.S.M., Robert Hall, Kath Crawford, Patrick Neeson, Fred Thornley, Harry Tippet, Ernest Davis, Moira Beck, Peter Toso, Peter Minogue, Warren Brennan, Julia D'Souza, Francoise Fabien, Charles Grech, Alfred Galea, John Williams Alexander, M.L. Beck, John Lobb, Giuseppe Saltalamacchia, L. Occhioni, Leonides Lagasca, Zita Walsh, Helen Parmansche, Wilfred Tellis, Guglielmo Di'Domenica, Catherine Allsopp, Terry Fitzpatrick, Noelle de Robillard, Georgett Arlando, Mary O'Connell, Beverley McConnell, Leonida Reyes, Giuseppa Cannizzo, Esme Bartholomeusz, John De Highden, Elizabeth Brennan, Cathrine Allsopp, Sheila Haberman, Charles Barber, Annie May, Jeannie Doupe, Phyllis McMahon, Margaret Todd, Carmela Cirillo, Maureen Lionnet, John Searle, Adrian Kavanagh, Francesca Agosta, Doris Cantania, Merlyn Fu, Marijan Cavar, George Shead, Vern Fahey, Dan Sheridan, Beryl Bennett, Guerino Dipietro, Maurice De Highden, Vic Zimitat, Vincent McColl, Joseph Waldron, Bill Scott, Fr William Shanahan, Baby Victoria Ryan

ARCHDIOCESE AND COMMUNITY NEWS

AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED : In many places throughout the world there is a shortage of priests and therefore religious sisters are the custodians of the faith. These sisters however often struggle to live and support the faithful, so across the course of a year ACN supports more than 18,000 religious sisters in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. Could you help support a religious sister?



Visit www.aidtochurch.org/sisters

HEART OF LIFE CENTRE FOR SPIRITUAL & PASTORAL FORMATION : Are you a Spiritual Leader? – The Spiritual Leaders Online Program is a one-year, part-time program held outside of business hours for those engaged in outreach ministries and various positions of leadership within their faith community, eg teachers, principals, pastoral care practitioners, priests, ministers, lay ecclesial ministers, members of religious Orders, community and spiritual leaders. The program begins on 26/3/22 via Zoom, and focuses on personal integration of the theory and practice of a contemplative, discerning approach to pastoral ministry. Previous participants have commented that this Program has been transformational in terms of their personal spirituality and their leadership skills. Apply to Heart of Life Centre for Spiritual & Pastoral Formation. Fee-Help is available to qualifying participants. Brochure and application form at www.heartoflife.melbourne or tel 03 9890 1101.

'Life Lessons from Lasso' via Zoom, 3 x Wed, 23 Feb, 2 & 9 Mar, 3.30pm-5pm. Explore the spirituality of the heart and qualities of leadership learned from an in-depth reflection on the unlikely leader and coach, Ted Lasso. Rediscover the ways in which Jesus led in faith, hope and love. Learn more about leadership and the power of positivity, trust and belief in yourself and others. The morning is led by Rita Malavisi rsj and Clare Shearman. No previous knowledge of Ted Lasso required! Cost \$60. Book and pay via website

www.heartoflife.melbourne email info@heartoflife.melbourne or tel 9890 1101.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE LOCAL (MELBOURNE) CHURCH?

www.melbournecatholic.org.au/news Subscribe or visit www.cathnews.com for Australian and International news.

www.vaticannews.va offers a weekly newsletter to its subscribers.





LECTIONARY ART AND REFLECTION BY JENNY CLOSE

'Love your enemies' is one of the most challenging teachings of Jesus. It seems an impossible ideal, but Jesus gave us a practical example in the way he faced the terror of the cross. The problem is that living this way is inherently risky – especially when violence and terrorism occur and revenge seems a more efficient solution than reconciliation. Reaching out in love is clearly the radical Christian way, however.

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

20 February 2022

First Reading 1 Sm 26:2. 7-9. 12-13. 22-23

The Lord has put you in my power, but I will not raise my hand against you.

Saul set off and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, accompanied by three thousand men chosen from Israel to search for David in the wilderness of Ziph.

So in the dark David and Abishai made their way towards the force, where they found Saul asleep inside the camp, his spear stuck in the ground beside his head, with Abner and the troops lying round him.

Then Abishai said to David, 'Today God has put your enemy in your power; so now let me pin him to the ground with his own spear. Just one stroke! I will not need to strike him twice. David answered Abishai, Do not kill him, for who can lift his hand against the Lord's anointed and be without guilt?' David took the spear and the pitcher of water from beside Saul's head, and they made off. No one saw, no one knew, no one woke up; they were all asleep, for a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen on them.

David crossed to the other side and halted on the top of the mountain a long way off; there was a wide space between them. David then called out, 'Here is the king's spear. Let one of the soldiers come across and take it. The Lord repays everyone for his uprightness and loyalty. Today the Lord put you in my power, but I would not raise my hand against the Lord's anointed.'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 102:1-4. 8. 10. 12-13. R. v.8

(R.) The Lord is kind and merciful.

1. My soul, give thanks to the Lord, all my being, bless his holy name. My soul, give thanks to the Lord and never forget all his blessings. *(R.)*
2. It is he who forgives all your guilt, who heals every one of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with love and compassion. *(R.)*
3. The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy. He does not treat us according to our sins nor repay us according to our faults. *(R.)*
4. As far as the east is from the west so far does he remove our sins. As a father has compassion on his sons, the Lord has pity on those who fear him. *(R.)*

Second Reading 1 Cor 15:45-49

Just as we have carried the earthly image, we must carry the heavenly image.

The first man, Adam, as scripture says, became a living soul; but the last Adam has become a life-giving spirit. That is, first the one with the soul, not the spirit, and after that, the one with the spirit. The first man, being from the earth, is earthly by nature; the second man is from heaven. As this earthly man was, so are we on earth; and as the heavenly man is, so are we in heaven. And we, who have been modelled on the earthly man, will be modelled on the heavenly man.

Gospel Acclamation Jn 13:34

Alleluia, alleluia!

I give you a new commandment; love one another as I have loved you. Alleluia!

Gospel Lk 6:27-38

Be merciful as your Father is merciful.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I say this to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly. To the man who slaps you on one cheek, present the other cheek too; to the man who takes your cloak from you, do not refuse your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask for your property back from the man who robs you. Treat others as you would like them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks can you expect? For even sinners do that much. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners lend to sinners to get back the same amount. Instead, love your enemies and do good, and lend without any hope of return. You will have a great reward, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.'

'Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge, and you will not be judged yourselves; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned yourselves; grant pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap; because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back.'



Reflection by Greg Sunter

The radical teaching that was begun in last week's gospel as the beatitudes and woes is continued in this week's challenge to be forgiving, compassionate and generous in the same way that God expresses abundant love. As with the blessings and curses of the Beatitudes passage, this teaching continues the challenge to act against cultural and social expectations. Who would be surprised if you were to express hatred for an enemy or for someone who hates you or treats you badly? But Jesus tells his disciples to love their enemies and to do good to those who hate them. His instruction is contrary to the 'normal' way of doing things – and that's exactly the message Jesus wanted to convey! Rather than a spiteful, vengeful God who keeps score and punishes wrongdoing, Jesus presents a compelling image of a God of unbounded compassion and abundant generosity.

In this passage we find one version of the Golden Rule that appears repeatedly throughout the gospels (as well as most other religious traditions): 'Treat others as you would like them to treat you.' It is followed up with a comment that it takes no effort to treat well people whom you like – anybody can do that. The challenge is to treat people you don't like as you would like to be treated yourself. In a society that had very strict rules about the way to treat different people and clearly established boundaries between different groups, this was a tough ask by Jesus. Bear in mind also that there was an occupying army in the country and Jesus was encouraging the people to treat even their enemies, the Romans, with love, compassion and forgiveness. This was a radical and challenging teaching!

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