

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

FIRST READING *1 Kings 3:5,7-12*

A Reading from the first book of kings.

The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, 'Ask what you would like me to give you.' Solomon replied, 'O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in succession to David my father. But I am a very young man, unskilled in leadership. Your servant finds himself in the midst of this people of yours that you have chosen, a people so many its number cannot be counted or reckoned. Give your servant a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil, for who could govern this people of yours that is so great?' It pleased the Lord that Solomon should have asked for this. 'Since you have asked for this' the Lord said 'and not asked for long life for yourself or riches or the lives of your enemies, but have asked for a discerning judgement for

yourself, here and now I do what you ask. I give you a heart wise and shrewd as none before you has had and none will have after you.'

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 118(119):57,72,76-77,127-130

R. Lord, I love your commands.

1. My part, I have resolved, O Lord, is to obey your word.
The law from your mouth means more to me than silver and gold.
R.
2. Let your love be ready to console me by your promise to your servant.
Let your love come to me and I shall live for your law is my delight. *R.*
3. That is why I love your commands more than finest gold,
That is why I rule my life by your precepts: I hate false ways. *R.*
4. Your will is wonderful indeed; therefore I obey it.
The unfolding of your word gives light and teaches the simple. *R.*

SECOND READING *Rom 8:28-30*

A Reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans.

We know that by turning everything to their good, God co-operates with all those who love him, with all those he has called according to his purpose. They are the ones he chose specially long ago and intended to become true images of his Son, so that his Son might be the eldest of many brothers. He called those he intended for this; those he called he justified, and with those he justified he shared his glory.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *Mt 11:25*

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL *Mt 13:44-46*

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus said to the crowds: 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field.
'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

CREED

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son,
our Lord,
(All bow during these two lines)
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again
from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

GOSPEL REFLECTION: The full Gospel for today features the final three parables in Matthew 13, together with a concluding summary (vv. 51-52).

Once again, there is much to be said, as the Lectionary allows, for taking simply the two short parables, that of the Treasure in the Field (v. 44) and the Pearl of Great Value (vv. 45-46).

Seeing them as a pair allows a common pattern to emerge. Two persons from different situations (a day labourer? a merchant with professional expertise?) both come upon something which they dearly desire to possess. For both, however, immediate possession is not possible. There is a time gap between finding and possessing. Both have to sell all they have in order to finally obtain ('buy') what they so desire. But the mere sight of what they dearly long for so relativises the value of everything else as to render them free to make the sacrifice with joy.

THE FUTURE

The parables address a central feature concerning the kingdom of God (for Matthew 'kingdom of heaven'). The kingdom is essentially future; it is not yet something one can 'possess'. People who really catch a glimpse of it from Jesus' preaching know they have come on a treasure that will fulfil lifelong desires and aspirations. He cannot yet 'deliver' it to them or place them within it but the glimpse of it that he communicates fills them with such joy that they have the freedom to 'sell all' in order, one day, to gain it.

The parables are essentially descriptive. They are not about what one 'ought' to do; they simply describe what happens in the life of people who have caught a glimpse of the kingdom. While not yet within their grasp, it is already bringing joy, freedom and hope to human lives.

The outstanding historical example of such transformation would be St Francis of Assisi. His commitment to radical poverty did not come to him as a hard moral demand. It flowed in complete freedom from the 'treasure' of divine love that he had come upon in such high degree.

ESSENCE OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

The two brief parables encapsulate the essence of Christian spirituality. Christian life requires a measure of detachment. It requires freedom from being completely absorbed and immersed in the attractions, pleasures and concerns of this world – not because these are bad in themselves but because we have been 'captured' by a sense of God's love and God's future for us that relativises all these things and puts them in their place. We do not yet possess the treasure but the prospect of it, unseen but grasped in faith, is already working transformation.

The **First Reading**, 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12, comes in here in the sense that what Solomon prayed for – and received – was a discerning heart, a heart that, amid all the wealth and opportunity with which he was surrounded, could tell what was of true and lasting value.

The parable of the Dragnet in itself (vv. 47-48; that is, less the negative interpretation about the 'end of time' [vv. 49-50]), aptly holds together two further truths about the kingdom: God's grace is a great 'net' thrown over all – good and bad alike; you don't have to be good to be grasped by the kingdom. Once grasped, however, conversion, is required: those who do not over time respond positively to God's generosity will find themselves cast out.

FOCUS ON GOD'S GRACE

To this simple but most effective image the Matthean community, perhaps in its concern for growing laxity, has added a warning that focuses simply on the negative in tones heavily imbued with Jewish apocalyptic eschatology. It would be a pity to let the warning entirely 'swamp' the original parable. Without some caution against taking such imagery literally, inevitably all attention will focus on the negative warning to the detriment of the image of God and God's action Jesus seeks to promote.

The concluding statement about the scribe 'discipled for the kingdom of heaven' (v. 52) is often regarded, with some justification, as a 'cameo' description of the Evangelist himself within the narrative. Note how 'new' comes before 'old' in the things brought out of the storeroom: what has come about in Christ transforms older ways of seeing

The short **Second Reading**, Rom 8:28-30, conveys Paul's case for hope deriving from his belief that we (believers) are all caught up within an inexorably unfolding divine plan that is already well under way.

The goal of this plan is that human beings become images of the risen Christ, who is himself the image of God (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15). This will occur when believers fully share his risen life through their own resurrection (Rom 8:9-11). At that time, Christ will not only be the unique Son of God, but the 'eldest' of many brothers (and sisters) within the one family of God.

Brendan Byrne, SJ

ST PAUL'S PARISH

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St Paul's Parish strives to create an environment where children are safe, respected and cared for.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS:

Mon - Friday: 10.30am to 3.30 pm.

MASSES:

Weekends: Saturday: 6:00 pm (vigil),
8.00pm (Neo Catechumenate)

Sunday: 9:00am, 10.30am (Italian),

Weekdays: Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri: 10.00 am.

CONFESSIONS: Saturdays - 11am and 6.45pm

CHILDREN'S LITURGY: 1st & 3rd Sunday of month-9am Mass

ADORATION: First Friday of the month: 10.30 am to 12pm

BAPTISMS: Sundays at 12.00 pm.

BAPTISM PREPERATION MEETINGS: Once Monthly

MARRIAGE PREP MEETINGS: Wed 8pm or Sat 4pm

WEDDING REHEARSALS: Mon or Fri – 8pm

COMMUNION TO THE HOUSEBOUND: Thurs & Fri.

COMMUNION TO SICK at Bupa & Northern Gardens:
every 2nd & 4th Thursdays of the month.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK: 2 times a year (Lent & Advent).

SUNDAY SCHOOL: 10am

YOUTH & KIDS GROUP: 4th Friday of the month.

ITALIAN PRAYER GROUP: Wednesdays at 10.30 am

Legion of Mary: Monday mornings at 10.30 am.

Knights of the Southern Cross: Monday mornings.

ANNUAL ITALIAN FEASTS 2020:

St Joseph: Sun 15th March at 2pm.

Way of the Cross: Good Friday at 7pm.

St Anthony: Sun 14th June at 10.30am

St Gregory: Sun 15th Nov at 10.30 am.

Our Lady of Mt Carmel: Sun 29th Nov at 2pm.

JOKE OF THE WEEK:

A police officer jumps into his squad car and calls the station.

"I have an interesting case here," he says. "A woman shot her husband for stepping on the floor she just mopped."

"Have you arrested her?" asks the sergeant.

"No, not yet. The floor's still wet."

THANKSGIVING – DIRECT DEPOSIT BANK DETAILS

BSB: 083-347

Account Number: 67541 0884

Account Name: St Paul's Catholic Church.

Thanks for your support in these challenging times.

THE WEEK'S PRAYER FOCUS:

Presider: Dear friends, in story after story Jesus made known the mystery of God's dream for the world. Let us pray for the whole of creation to welcome God's rule.

Reader.

1. We pray for people of faith, that they will hold fast to the insights and forms of prayer that have discovered in the course of the pandemic. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.

2. We pray for all whose lives are aimless and empty, that the Spirit of God will stir them to search for the treasure that is the reign of God. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.

3. We pray for the multitude of displaced persons in makeshift refugee camps around the world, and for those detained in Australia, that their welfare be given just priority in global recovery plans. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.

4. We pray for the children, women and men who are victims of human trafficking, that they will be set free from their bondage. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.

5. We pray for all who are working for world-wide access to drinking water and healthy sanitation, that they will receive full support from the international community. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.

6. We pray for all who have been called to do extraordinary things to keep our community safe, that their generosity, creativity and courage will be fully appreciated. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.

7. We give thanks for those whose family life, partnerships or friendships have been enriched in the course of the pandemic, and pray for their continued flourishing. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.

8. We pray for the recently deceased, . . . , and for those whose anniversary of death occurs around this time, that they will inherit the glory of the children of God. (Pause for silent prayer) Lord, hear us.

Presider: God of eternal love, you have set your heart on us and called us to glory. Keep us true to the love you have shown us in Jesus your Son. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

WE PRAY FOR

We pray for those in our local community who are **sick** and vulnerable: may they see in us the followers of a God who heals and serves.

Let us pray for those who have died, and those whose anniversaries we remember at this time, that they may enter the peace of God.

STEWARDSHIP:

"We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." - ROMANS 8:28

Do you really trust God? Do you believe that all things work for good? Faith is a challenge for everyone at times. Putting our trust in God, in everything we do, means that God's plan for our lives may be different than our plan. When one door closes, another one opens. Trust in God, His plan is always better.

REFLECTION: SORTING IT OUT

"The Kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collects fish of every kind. When it is full they haul it ashore and sit down to put what is good into buckets."
Matthew 13:47-48

On days when the weather kept us indoors, my sisters, brother and I would comb through the family's penny jar. (Yes, this is what kids did before the Internet!) We'd set aside any pennies that had our birth years, but the greatest finds were the ones that had two stalks of wheat instead of the Lincoln Memorial on the back. We'd shine them up good and put them in a special place. The rest of the pennies were ours to split up and spend. What kind of penny is your life today? The special kind that reflects the love and devotion the Lord desires, or the everyday kind without value in eternity? It doesn't take a rare design on the back, and it's never too late to ask him for his distinctive polish. Start shining today.

Lord, help me to reflect your goodness in this life so that I may join you in the next.
Melanie Rigney

PRAYER OF THE WEEK

That we learn to put our trust in God in everything we do.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK – Realistic Expectations

Growth begins when we start to accept our own weakness.
Jean Vanier

VOCATION VIEW

We pray that young people may answer the call to be priests, deacons, religious brothers, sisters, and consecrated people. We pray also for those serving our Church through Ordained and Consecrated Life.

"Heart of Life." 'Treasuring our Later Years' (via Zoom until face-to-face permitted), 6 x Tuesdays, 1pm-3pm, 4 Aug to 8 Sep 2020. Facilitated by Nicole Rotaru rsm, this series offers participants the opportunity to explore new possibilities that ageing offers daily., eg Spirituality...deepest dimension of our life; What is giving my life meaning?; At its core, life is about relationships; etc. Cost \$115 for the series, or \$20 per session. Bookings and payment via Trybooking at <https://www.trybooking.com/BKLUH> . For more information, contact holsc@bigpond.com or tel 9890 1101.

NEWS IN THE ARCHDIOCESE

AN INVITATION TO THOSE INVOLVED IN MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUR PARISH.

The **Proclaim: Office for Mission Renewal** and the **Professional Standards Unit** are pleased to invite you to an introductory information session designed to promote connection with children and young people in an online environment. With the reinstatement of Stage 3 Restrictions, returning to "normal", sadly seems a little further away! As a result, this is an opportune time to turn our attention to developing a longer term approach within our parishes for connecting with children and young people online.

Whilst some parishes have embraced this brave new world, we know that many parishes are still thinking about ways to stay connected with children and young people in their parish.

"Why is this important?" you wonder.

"Help" you say.

"Where do we start?" you ask.

"How do we do this safely?" you ponder.

Webinar outcomes. This introductory session aims to:

- Highlight the importance of parish "connection" and "belonging" for children and young people
- Help your parish to start planning how to deliver your programs and activities online
- Provide an overview of some key e-safety considerations
- Provide some examples of parish engagement with children and young people

Who should come? The session is recommended for those involved in conducting parish programs for children and young people including:

- Parish priests
- Youth group leaders
- Children's Liturgy Leaders
- Sacramental preparation leaders
- Altar server leaders
- Pastoral associates

Registration. Please, register through this Eventbrite [Link](#) by Monday 3rd of August 2020.

The webinar will be conducted via the Zoom meeting platform – the link and a password to the meeting will be emailed to you on Tuesday 4th of August 2020 (the day before the session).

We welcome your attendance and ask that you submit any specific questions that you might have prior to the session to linda.franco@cam.org.au

Kind regards

Linda Franco

Senior Policy Advisor

Professional Standards Unit

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

