



Holy Family Parish Northeast Mallee

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Incorporating the Communities of St Mary's Sea Lake, Sacred Heart Culgoa, St Joseph's Nandaly, S's Peter & Paul Quambatook & St Mary's Swan Hill as well as the Lake Boga Families & Faith Group



25TH AUGUST 2024: 21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

"GIVE WAY TO ONE ANOTHER IN OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST..."

I must admit, I had been focusing on the Gospel passage when looking ahead at the readings. I hadn't noticed we were reading from Ephesians 5 until the last minute, which is every preacher's nightmare because it includes the line sometimes translated as 'wives obey your husbands.' Let's be honest, if read superficially or hastily without proper care or reflection, the passage seems very dated, and perhaps even problematic or offensive. It would take more than just one homily to properly walk through what Paul is trying to teach us, but for now I think it is important to make two basic points about what he is *not* saying, before pointing to the greater mystery he is trying to open up for us.

So firstly, we must not read any sense of inequality here. As always, scripture has to be read in its wider context. We know from the very beginning of Creation, God made us in his image, male and female, fundamentally equal in dignity. In marriage, the two become one flesh, equal partners to one another. And it is also important to note that the word Paul is using, in Greek '*hypotassomai*', does not itself necessarily carry any sense of inequality. Literally meaning 'to place oneself under', he uses the same word at the beginning of the passage which is translated as 'give way to one another', clearly on terms of equal dignity. Elsewhere he also uses it in reference to Christ being subject to the Father. It is also an active word; the person placing themselves under is the one taking the initiative. My preferred translation of the word is 'to entrust', because it points to the proper context of a loving relationship and mutuality and retains the true sense of agency and freedom. To be able to entrust ourselves to the care or guidance of someone else does not make us less human, in fact it is essential to our experience of being fully human, whether male or female.

Secondly, we must make it clear that any husband who has ever used these words against his wife is a blasphemer. I need to stress that again; if a husband ever tries to use this passage to justify forcing his will over his wife or for making her needs or wishes second to his own, he has twisted the words and put himself over God. Because the words meant for the husband are abundantly clear; 'Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her.' The husband is called to place his wife's good above his own, sacrificing his own body out of consideration for hers. That is the true measure of the man; how ready he is to place the good of others over that of his own. That is the way Christ showed us on the Cross. According to Christ's example, to be fully human means to embrace a life of sacrificial or self-giving love, and again that is true for both male and female.

Finally, a brief word on what Paul is trying to teach us in a positive sense. He is trying to open up for us the great mystery of Christ's loving covenant with the Church and of how marriage is a living sign or analogy for it. To do this, he has picked up and adapted the structure of a 'household code' common in his day. That means the passage carries the strongly hierarchical world-view of the time, and that can maybe throw us off the scent a bit. But while taking up the contemporary order of things as his starting point, Paul also introduces something radically new; the idea of self-giving and faithful love. The comparison with Christ and the Church also means that in trying to bring the analogy into the light, Paul simply attributes the Church side of the analogy to the wife and the Christ side to the husband, and that perhaps comes off a bit clunkily. The relationship between Christ and the Church is overwhelmingly one sided; we are entirely reliant on his grace. A marriage however is clearly not so one sided. At different moments, each partner will need to rely more heavily on the other's help. Both are constantly called to entrust themselves to the other's care, and both are called to self-giving love. And in living that example, a married couple embody Christ's love for his Church in a unique and profound way. And here then is the crux of the great mystery; as a living sign of Christ's love for his Church, *a sacramental marriage also shares in the Victory of Christ's love on the Cross*. The powerful grace of Christ's all conquering love is available to the couple, so that when there may be patches of hurt, coldness or even death in their relationship, Christ can breathe new life. The Cross is the ultimate sign that love always conquers over death. Marriage is called and empowered to be the living embodiment of that same awesome Mystery.

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Parish Priest

Fr James Kerr

Parish Office:

Glenda Klabbers & Mary Kennedy

Child Protection Officers:

Tony and Joelle Whiting

Child Safe Church

Here in the Parish of Holy Family North East Mallee we follow the Child Safe Standards outlined by the Victorian Government and we also implement procedures and standards as directed by the Ballarat Diocesan Office.



PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS
RECENT DEATHS+
 Vincenzo Massara
 Gina Colombo (Italy)

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Madi Kozma Colombo, Paul Castelli
 Catherine Feeny, Raymond Mortensen
 Luigi Dutto, Brian "Megs" O'Sullivan, Bruce McDonald
 Rosa Tarascio, Mary Grace Toledo, Mick Mangiameli
 Vincent Byrne, Rona Bookham, Kevin McDonald
 Rosaria Pastore, Vince Rovere, Bernie Magee
 Elizabeth Burns, Lila Moar, Salva Marotta
 Antonino Miceli, Thomas Barry, Cathy Charleson

SICK LIST

Pat Croft, Yvonne Richardson, Paul Donohue,
 Jayden Williams, Margaret Foott,
 Jarrod Crimmins, Michael Bourke, Jack Donohue,
 Jude Lewis, Susan, Yvonne Annan,
 Bridget Phyland, Carmel Ryan, Peter Amezdroz

THIS WEEKEND 24/25TH AUGUST
21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill
 Sunday 8.30am Quambatook
 Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

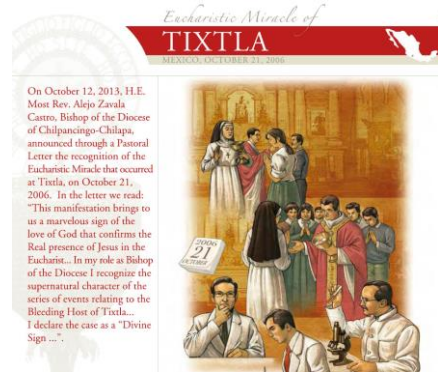
WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

Tuesday: 5.30pm
 Wednesday: 10am
 Thursday: Confessions 5pm, 5.30pm Mass, Adoration
 Friday: **10.30am** Requiem Mass for Vincenzo Massara

NEXT WEEKEND 1ST SEPTEMBER
22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Sat 6pm Swan Hill
 Sunday 8.30am Sea Lake
 Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

NOTICES



EUCCHARISTIC MIRACLES OF THE WORLD DISPLAY
– DESIGNED AND CREATED
BY BLESSED CARLO ACUTIS

An awesome miracle occurs at every Catholic Mass- Jesus gives us his Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Eucharist. For the most part, this awesome reality remains hidden from our physical senses- and trusting in Jesus and his words, we accept with the eyes of faith. But sometimes the veil into the invisible is lifted and we are given a glimpse of the hidden reality. These occasions may help to reaffirm and strengthen our faith in God's great gift of love to us- Jesus in the Eucharist.

And so you are invited to read about some of these 'Eucharistic Miracles' on display at the front of the Swan Hill church. Designed and created by Blessed Carlo Acutis to share his great love for Jesus in the Eucharist, may they deepen your awe, faith and love of Jesus in the Eucharist and help you open your heart to encounter him more powerfully there.

You can also visit miracolieucaistici.org for the full exhibition given in 19 different languages.

There are also some 'Eucharistic Stations' set up around the Church, praying with different moments of the biblical story that each bring something of the Mystery of the Eucharist to light. Perhaps you might also like to pray through these.

SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY TODAY

Today is Social Justice Sunday. The Australian Bishops' have launched the 2024-2025 Social Justice Statement "Truth and Peace: A Gospel Word in a Violent World." Every year, the bishops seek to make a substantive comment on a key social issue and this

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year the focus is on the promotion of peace and the need for truth in public life. Bishop Paul has released a video message in relation to the current Social Justice Statement. To watch Bishop Paul's video and to access the statement and liturgy resources, go to the diocesan website

<https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/services-agencies-2/welfare/social-justice/social-justice-statement/>

You can also download a text copy of Bishop Paul's message from this webpage.

BALLARAT CLERGY SUPPORT FUND ANNUAL APPEAL – NEXT WEEKEND

The BCSF Collection for Retired Priests will be held next weekend. Creating a secure retirement future for the priests of the diocese is a duty and care in which we can all participate. Seventeen retired priests are currently supported by this Fund. Some live privately, some are retired in units in Ballarat or elsewhere, others live in supported accommodation. A credit card facility is available for your convenience and contributions over \$2.00 are tax-deductible.

Caring for those who cared for us - the Church community's responsibility.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

How do you think Jesus felt when his audience rejected what he'd been saying?

What did Jesus mean when he said, 'The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life'?

Why do you think so many followers left Jesus after this event?

When have you learnt something important from an unlikely source?

In what ways do your words and actions convey Jesus' message?

LIVING THE GOSPEL – MESSAGE AND MEDIUM

We live in a world that is saturated by advertising and marketers trying to persuade us to think certain things, want certain things and even act in certain ways. At times the message and the medium of the message blur and it's not always clear where one stops and the other begins. For Christian people the medium – the person – IS the message (or at least should be!). We are called to live what we believe. That can be tough at times, especially in our modern world, but the challenge comes from the example Jesus gave.

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY

by Mary Coloe PBVM

JESUS, THE NEW MOSES (CONCLUSION)

'What about you, do you want to go away too?'

Today concludes John chapter 6 where Jesus feeds the crowd as ancient Israel was fed with manna, and then explains the deeper meaning of this miracle in the long, 'Bread of Life' discourse. The Gospel last week finished with Jesus' words on the Eucharist where he spoke about eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man. To those outside the experience of Eucharist this sounds like cannibalism and many of the crowd reject him, even some of his disciples. 'Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?"' The Gospel puts this question firstly to the Johannine community; will you follow Jesus or remain a follower of Moses and your Jewish traditions? This is the time in the early Church where believers were faced with this clear decision – Moses or Jesus, with no room for sitting on the fence. Make a choice.

Aware of the disciples' difficulties, Jesus suggests that they may be looking for further support for his claim to be the definitive revelation of God. Jesus' unanswered question, 'What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending where he was before' (v. 62), is high rhetoric. Understood is the conclusion: 'would that satisfy your doubts?' The question presupposes all that has been said so far about the Son of Man, but especially Jesus' words in 3:13: 'No one has ascended into heaven but one has descended from heaven, the Son of Man.'



READINGS NEXT WEEK:

22nd Sunday in Ordinary time

First Reading: Deuteronomy 4:1-2. 6-8

Second Reading: James 1:17-18, 21-22, 27

Gospel: Mark 7:1-8. 14-15. 21-23

FIRST READING *Joshua 24:1-2. 15-18*

A reading from the book of Joshua

We will serve the Lord God, because he is our God.

Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel together at Shechem; then he called the elders, leaders, judges and scribes of Israel, and they presented themselves before God. Then Joshua said to all the people: 'If you will not serve the Lord, choose today whom you wish to serve, whether the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are now living. As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord.'

The people answered, 'We have no intention of deserting the Lord and serving other gods! Was it not the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors out of the land of Egypt, the house of slavery, who worked those great wonders before our eyes and preserved us all along the way we travelled and among all the peoples through whom we journeyed. We too will serve the Lord, for he is our God.'

The Word of the Lord. ALL: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Ps 33:2-3. 16-23. R. v.9*

(R.) Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad.

The Lord turns his face against the wicked
to destroy their remembrance from the earth.
The Lord turns his eyes to the just
and his ears to their appeal.

They call and the Lord hears
and rescues them in all their distress.
The Lord is close to the broken-hearted;
those whose spirit is crushed he will save.

Many are the trials of the just man
but from them all the Lord will rescue him.
He will keep guard over all his bones,
not one of his bones shall be broken.

Evil brings death to the wicked;
those who hate the good are doomed.
The Lord ransoms the souls of his servants.
Those who hide in him shall not be condemned. **(R.)**

SECOND READING *Ephesians 5:21-32*

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

This is the great mystery, it applies to Christ and the Church.

Give way to one another in obedience to Christ. Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord, since as Christ is head of the Church and saves the whole body, so is a husband the head of his wife; and as the

Church submits to Christ, so should wives to their husbands, in everything. Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy. He made her clean by washing her in water with a form of words, so that when he took her to himself she would be glorious, with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless. In the same way, husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies; for a man to love his wife is for him to love himself. A man never hates his own body, but he feeds it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the Church, because it is his body – and we are its living parts. For this reason, a man must leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one body. This mystery has many implications; but I am saying it applies to Christ and the Church.

The Word of the Lord. ALL: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *See John 6:63. 68*

Alleluia, alleluia!

Your words, Lord, are spirit and life:
you have the words of everlasting life.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL *John 6:60-69*

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
Lord, whom shall we go to? You have the words of
everlasting life.*

After hearing his doctrine many of the followers of Jesus said, 'This is intolerable language. How could anyone accept it?' Jesus was aware that his followers were complaining about it and said, 'Does this upset you? What if you should see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before?'

'It is the spirit that gives life,
the flesh has nothing to offer.

The words I have spoken to you are spirit
and they are life.

'But there are some of you who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the outset those who did not believe, and who it was that would betray him. He went on, 'This is why I told you that no one could come to me unless the Father allows him.' After this, many of his disciples left him and stopped going with him.

Then Jesus said to the Twelve, 'What about you, do you want to go away too?' Simon Peter answered, 'Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God.'

The Gospel of the Lord. ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

