



Parish Newsletter - January 29th 2017

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Parish Priest – Fr Gary Jones gary.jones@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Parish Administration: Mrs Leah Monaghan

St Michael's Parish Primary School- Principal: Mr Ethan Corfee

St. Joseph's Church Blampied

Lay Led Assembly (2nd Sunday of the Month) 9.00am

Vigil Mass Sat 6.00pm (4th Sunday of the Month)

Diocesan Website: www.ballarat.catholic.org.au

Scripture Commentary by Brendan Byrne SJ



The Gospel for today (Matt 5:1-12) introduces the great Sermon (Sermon on the Mount, 5:1-7:29) which is the real beginning of Jesus' public ministry in the Gospel according to Matthew. As we have noted from the start, of all four evangelists, Matthew is the one most concerned to relate the Christian community to its Jewish heritage. Central to that heritage is Israel's possession of the Law or Torah of Moses. For Matthew, Jesus does not sweep away the Torah but 'brings it to fulfilment' (5:17). With an authority far in excess of that of Moses, he does this by giving it an authoritative interpretation valid for the time of the Kingdom of Heaven that he proclaims. As the Jewish community has in the Law of Moses, the Torah, that shapes its life, so the Christian community should find in the Sermon the Torah that is to shape and characterise its life.

For this reason it is important to note the context in which Jesus gives the Sermon. If we look back to the concluding verses of the previous chapter, we shall see that Jesus addresses his disciples in the presence of 'all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics and paralytics, ... great crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan' (4:24-25). 'Seeing the crowds' (5:1a), Jesus ascends the mountain, sits down and his disciples come to him – as to a Teacher – for instruction. He is going to tell them who they must be and how they should live, not just for themselves, but for the sake of that burdened mass of humanity that is down there on the plain waiting for his – and ultimately their – ministry.

This is the essential context for the Beatitudes with which the Sermon begins (vv 2-12). The Beatitudes are not commandments bluntly instructing the disciples about how they should live. They are rather invitations to adopt certain attitudes and live out certain values in the light of a particular vision of God. Those who choose to live in this way may seem to place themselves at a disadvantage here and now in terms of values prized by the world. But, in the light of God's faithfulness, they are really placing themselves in the most advantageous and fruitful position of all. The biblical sense of 'blessed those who ...' lying behind the Beatitudes is basically that of 'Congratulations!' – the sort of thing we say to someone who has won the lottery. We are not commending them for being virtuous. We are acknowledging their good fortune and sharing their joy; we're saying, 'You're in a good place!'

Other things being equal, the attitudes and situations that Jesus here commends are not in themselves a recipe for getting on in the world. All cohere around the core idea of living in a non-competitive, non-grasping way. To be poor in spirit (as well as being actually poor); to be gentle and unselfish, rather than on the make; to be prepared to weep alongside the unfortunate rather than avoid them; to work for justice and peace; to exercise mercy and be single-minded in pursuit of the good ('pure in heart'); to be ready to endure persecution and calumny for the sake of the gospel: all these things make one vulnerable here and now, entailing much loss. But then we have to note the second clause in each beatitude, stating the reason for the 'blessedness' in each case. All those passives: 'shall be comforted', 'shall be satisfied', 'shall have mercy shown to them', and so forth, indicate, in biblical parlance, the action of God. To live in this way, according to these values, makes supreme sense if God truly is as Jesus reveals God to be. It is only in the context of faith in such a God that living according to the Beatitudes makes sense and is, in fact, the supreme wisdom. Now it may involve vulnerability and loss; in the perspective of faith and the hope for the Kingdom of Heaven that faith holds out, it is simply hard-headed common sense. That is why those who, following Jesus, adopt this way of life, as to be 'congratulated', why they are 'Blessed'.

*Please join us today for a cuppa after Mass in
the Parish Centre.*

*Coffee Morning
Everyone Welcome*





Last Week's Collections: *Two collections are presented after the Prayers of the Faithful. The 1st Collection is cash toward the Presbytery for the sustenance of our Priest – with a contribution of 13% to provide support for our retired priests and the Diocese. The 2nd Collection is the Planned Giving (envelopes) or cash for the administration of the Parish & general running costs:*

1st Collection \$348.10 2nd Collection \$388.70

RECENT DEATHS:

Ida Leslie,

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH: Monica Abikhair, Anne Butler, Katherine Connors, Des Leonard, Jock McAdam, Gladys Rigby, Joan Haylen



Parish Dates:

**St Michael's School Resumes - Thursday
February 2nd**

**St Peter's Parish Picnic—Sunday February
5th @ Glenlyon** All welcome. This Please bring a salad/sweet to share. Cold meats, tea and coffee provided.

**St Michael's Opening School Mass - Friday
February 10th 10am @ St Peter's**

**Parent Meeting - Sacrament of Penance
February 22nd 4pm @ St Michael's**

Shrove Tuesday - February 28th

Ash Wednesday - March 1st 12pm

Funeral Ministry Team

The Funeral Ministry Team of our Parish- exists to support parishioners and friends who lose loved ones through death. We seek to provide comfort, consolation and support to family members during these difficult times.

Upon being informed of the death of a parishioner or former parishioner, the Funeral Ministry coordinator contacts the deceased's nearest of kin or family representative. The grieving family are assisted in the planning of the funeral liturgy, The Mass of Christian Burial. Appropriate Scripture readings and liturgical songs are suggested. Our goal is to help make this significant liturgy as personal as possible for the mourners. We work within the guidelines and directives of the Diocese of Ballarat concerning Funeral Liturgies. From Fr Gary.



World Day of Prayer



The **World Day of Prayer** is an international ecumenical Christian laywomen's initiative. It is run under the motto “Informed **Prayer** and Prayerful Action,” and is celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday in March.

In 2017, St Peter's will be hosting the World Day of Prayer on Friday March 3rd. This years theme is “Am I being unfair to you?” Anyone wishing to help, please contact Brenda Arnell who has kindly offered to organise this year.

Roster - Sunday 5th February

Reader: Marie Righetti **Commentator:** Maureen Yanner **Ministers:** Trish Tinetti, Maree Phypers, M Coffey **Offertory:** Bolton Family **Sacristan:** Carol

Counters: Feb 5th (Team 1) L & M Righetti Feb 12th (Team 2) J Egan, C Collins

Weekday Mass

Tuesday 31st January Creswick 10am **Thursday 2nd & Friday 3rd February** Daylesford 10am

New Thanksgiving envelopes for 2017 are available from the Parish Centre.