

Reflection on the Gospel-5th Sunday of Easter Year B
(John 15:1-8)

-Veronica Lawson RSM

Again and again, life's experiences teach us that, as members of the Earth community, we cannot make it on our own. We need one another, other living beings, the sun, the soil, the water and everything else that formed from exploding stars in the distant past. The gospel reading reminds us that as baptised Christians we are not just intimately interlinked but that the source of our unity is the Risen Christ. As limbs and leaves and sap of the same vine, we simply cannot survive in isolation.

The vine image picks up one of the most potent biblical images for God's relationship to the people of Israel. It is an image of life and growth, of colour and vibrancy. It holds the promise of a life-sustaining grape harvest that is ultimately transformed into wine, the biblical symbol for joy. God brought Israel "the vine" out of Egypt (Psalm 80:9). For the prophet Isaiah, Israel is also a vineyard planted and nurtured by God (5:1-7; 27:3). For Jeremiah, Israel is the choice vine "of fully tested stock" planted by God (2:21).

The Johannine Jesus makes the claim: "I am the true vine/vineyard" and God is the "vinegrower". He goes further: "I am the vine/vineyard and you are the branches". The potency of this image resides in the fact that a vine without branches is inconceivable. It draws us into the mystery of the mutual interchange of life between us and the risen Christ, into the mystery of God. It also invites us to acknowledge our interconnection with the whole of the Earth community, to nurture the wonderful biodiversity of our planet, and to accept the inevitability of "pruning" if we are to "bear fruit" and "become disciples".

"Pruning" can take various forms. A chance encounter, a sudden inspiration, a word from a friend, an unexpected illness, a confronting story: any such experience can bring us to our senses and serve as a "pruning" device. The first reading for today recounts the story of Saul of Tarsus who is "pruned" quite dramatically through his encounter with the Risen Christ on the road to Damascus. He is transformed from persecutor to defender of Christ and Christ's followers. Saul becomes a disciple and "bears much fruit". The Greek-speaking Christian Jews are suspicious, even murderous, when he tries to preach the gospel among them. Peace ensues, however, and the movement takes hold in the regions where Jesus had first preached the gospel. It is worth reflecting on the cultural diversity that characterised earliest Christianity and the tensions that had to be resolved between different language groups or groups of different ethnic origin for the gospel to flourish and bear fruit. John's gospel is written against the backdrop of such "pruning" within the early communities. Sometimes the requisite "pruning" is hearing respectfully a point of view that differs from one's own.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER—YEAR B



ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST

Including St Peter & Paul's, Buninyong

Parish Address: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East. 3350

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MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING
MONDAY, 30TH APRIL 2018

MONDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church followed by Talk
TUESDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church followed by Talk 10.30 am Funeral Mass in Parish Church 5.00 pm Mass at Mercy Centre
WEDNESDAY:	10.30 am Funeral Prayers in Parish Church
THURSDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church followed by Reflection/Prayer
FRIDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church followed by Prayer

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

ST. ALIPIUS	SAT	6.00 PM
	SUN	9.00 AM
BUNINYONG	SUN	10.30 AM

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER—YEAR B

READINGS	First: Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48
	Second: 1 John 4:7-10
	Gospel: John 15:9-17

RECENT DEATHS: Sr Paula Fleming SJG, Sr Dominic Foley RSJ, Eileen Dooley, Frances Masterson, Mary De Graaff (Mary Reus' mother).

ANNIVERSARIES: Jack Barnett, Lena Clohesy, Michael Clohesy, Mary Murphy, Helen Ronan, Brian Walsh, Molly Walsh,

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Nathan Cambell, Denise Learmonth, Cath Wheelahan, Terry McGarry, Kevin Walsh, Peter Clohesy, Frank Nolan (Buninyong), Mary Barnett, Fiona Dickinson, Carmel Doherty, Pauline Murphy, Maria Wilson, Aurora Ferrer, Patricia Harman, Leonie Sinnott, John Darroch.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: Team 12: K. Bevelander ©, M. Liston, G. Maguire.

Next Week: Team 1: L. Noonan ©, G. Clarkson, L. Mullane.

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$ 841.20
	Loose:	\$ 150.00
	Direct Debits:	\$ 175.00
		\$ 1,166.20
PRESBYTERY:		\$ 950.25



Vacancy St Alipius Parish Coordinator

St Alipius Parish Ballarat East invites applications for the part-time position (16 hours per week) of *Parish Coordinator*. A Position Description and Application Form can be accessed via the Parish website <http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au> - Look under *Our Parish* then click on links.

CARING GROUP

The next meeting of the Caring Group will be held at 10.00 am on Friday, 4th May in St Alipius Hall.

MOTHER'S DAY MASS—MAY 13TH

We celebrate Mother's Day this year on May 13. On this day our parish 10.30 am Mass will, as usual, recognize and prayerfully thank all Mothers—those among us and those who live with God.

This year, we are planning to respectfully acknowledge in a more focused way the sufferings and strengths of the Mothers of our parish, past and present, especially those whose children were abused in this parish. In preparation, we will hold two short gatherings of Mothers where we will share thoughts, and plan prayers for this Mass over a cup of tea. We warmly invite all Mothers to assist us in planning this Mass. If you would like to be involved in the planning for this acknowledgment, please phone Karen on 0407 820 622. There will be volunteer drivers who are very happy to pick you up and take you home afterwards. Please spread the word to other Mothers and families who no longer have contact with the parish.

PLENARY COUNCIL 2020

Everyone is invited to reflect on the question: "*What do you think God is asking of us in Australia?*" www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au.

To begin our preparation for this time of dialogue and discernment amongst all members of the Church in Australia, the Diocese of Ballarat will commence by *Praying Towards 2020* (April 21st—May 6th). In Ballarat City there will be events during the week of April 29th-May 5th to which all parishioners are invited. Four Redemptorist Priests will be available for Mass, talks and visitations in our parish from Monday, April 30 to Friday, May 6. See schedule below:

Mon, April 30	9.30 am Mass in Parish Church followed by Talk on Prayer 2.00—3.30 pm Prayer at St Peter & Paul's Buninyong
Tue, May 1	9.30 am Mass in Parish Church followed by Talk 2.00—3.30 pm Talk/Prayer at St Peter & Paul's Buninyong
Wed, May 2	10.00 am and 7.00 pm Gathering at Cathedral Hall for Plenary Council discussion.
Thu, May 3	9.30 am Mass in Parish Church followed by Reflection and Prayer
Fri, May 4	9.30 am Mass in Parish Church followed by Prayer

If you would like a house visit - chat and blessing – from our visiting priests, please place your name, phone number and address on the sheet at the back of the Church.

Prayer for Plenary Council: Please pick up a Prayer card at the back of the Church.

JOY SPREADING—SOCIAL GATHERING FOR YOUNG ADULTS

New from Ballarat Diocese Youth and Young Adult Ministry, *Joy Spreading* is a social gathering for young adults 18-30 years old. The gathering includes a short presentation from a guest speaker, Q&A, informal conversation and socialising—meal available if you wish. Next gathering is on Friday, May 25 from 6pm onwards at the Lake View Hotel, Ballarat. Free Entry. More information www.ballarat.catholic.org or ring 5337 7160.

ONE MILLION ROSARIES FOR UNBORN BABIES

The 2018 One Million Rosaries for Unborn Babies is scheduled for 4, 5 and 6 May. Persons participating in this multinational pro-life prayer event will pray at least one Rosary for an end to abortion. For details and to register go to: <http://www.saintmichaelthearchangelorganization.org>.