

Reflection on the Gospel-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

(Matthew 5:17-37) - Veronica Lawson RSM

We sometimes forget that Jesus was a faithful Jew who observed the Law handed down within Israel from generation to generation. Today's gospel brings us the continuation of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus, the faithful Jewish teacher, addresses his Jewish disciples and the Jewish crowds gathered to hear his words.

The mission of Jesus is to fulfill the law, not to do away with it, and fulfilling the law is a question of "righteousness". The righteousness of the official teachers of the Law, the scribes and Pharisees, their manner of relating to others and their notions of justice, are judged to be quite inadequate for those who are part of God's reign, "the kingdom of heaven" in Matthew's terminology. The righteousness of Jesus' followers is to "exceed" such minimalist interpretations and expressions of the Law.

Jesus, authentic teacher and interpreter of the Law, offers six examples of the righteousness that "fulfils" the Law. Four of these examples are included in today's reading. What was heard "of old" is contrasted with what Jesus wants to say to them. In the first instance, they all know that the Law forbids murder. They may not have considered the connection between unrestrained anger or murderous thoughts and murder itself. In a series of cascading sentences, Jesus presents a charter for reconciliation and forgiveness. He reminds his audience that true worship demands a forgiving heart expressed in action. He includes a fairly pragmatic reason for settling out of court: you may actually find yourself in prison. There may be an implicit criticism here of the increasingly punitive legal system of the time.

The second example puts "lustful looking" on a par with adultery. In an age of easy access to internet pornography, this example has a particular resonance. Such activities make a travesty of gospel righteousness. The third example on divorce is complicated by the exceptive clause, "except in the case of *porneia*". *Porneia* referred to any illicit sexual activity. Here it probably means marriages within degrees of kinship prohibited by Jews but not by Gentiles. The question seems to have arisen as to whether couples in such unions could stay together on becoming Christian. While Jesus presents the ideal, we have to put this teaching into a broader context. Writing to the people of Corinth on this subject, Paul allows for exceptions. The fourth example is about swearing on oath. Righteousness calls for honesty and transparency in every day dealings. If the words we use are congruent with the intentions of our heart, we should not have to invoke God as a witness to the veracity of our claims.

BULLETIN FOR THE 6th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A



ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST

Including St Peter & Paul's, Buninyong

Parish Address: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East. 3350

Telephone: 5332 6611

Fax: 5332 3303

Email: ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING MONDAY, 13th FEBRUARY 2017

MONDAY:	No Mass
TUESDAY:	No Mass
WEDNESDAY:	No Mass
THURSDAY:	9.45 am Opening Year Mass - Emmaus Catholic Primary School
FRIDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

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

7th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A

READINGS -	First:	Leviticus 19:1-2.17-18
	Second:	1 Corinthians 3:16-23
	Gospel:	Matthew 5:38-48

ANNIVERSARIES: Tom Shannon

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Nathan Cambell, Denise Learmonth, Cath Wheelahan, Barbara Keirl, Mick Kent, Terry McGarry, Kevin Walsh, Peter McDonald (Ocean Grove), Peter Clohesy, Frank Nolan (Buninyong), Mary Barnett, Pat Molloy, Fiona Dickinson.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: **Team 6:** M. Stewart ©, M. Anderson, R. Reynolds.

Next Week: **Team 7:** K. Cummins ©, J. O'Meara, B. Hood, G Duck.

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$ 2,629.50
	Loose money:	\$ 300.00
	Direct debits:	\$ <u>1,245.00</u>
		\$ 4,174.50
PRESBYTERY:		\$ 790.00



A BIG THANK YOU

To our wonderful Caring Group and supporters for their great work in providing refreshments following last Saturday night's Vigil Mass to welcome Fr Peter and Bishop Paul.

LAST CHANCE

A reminder that the Commemorative Books will not be available after this weekend.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS—DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Diocese of Ballarat is calling for nominations for the 2017 Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC). The DPC is a consultative and advisory body to the Bishop. More information is on the diocesan website www.ballarat.catholic.au under Services & Agencies, or phone Amanda in the Diocesan Office on 5337 7125.

MEDITATION

"In contemplative prayer we seek to become the person we are called to be, not by thinking of God but by being with God. Simply to be with God is to be drawn into the person God calls us to be". John Main, OSB

Check out "Mindfulness Meditation...Smiling Mind".

For those busy on the computer it might be a way to begin. It's five minutes of the Basics.

"Only the still pool reflects the stars" Anon'

AINARO TIMOR-LESTE FUNDRAISING BUSH DANCE

Saturday, 25th March at Donegan's Farm, Gordon from 6.30—11.00 pm

Proceeds to Health Student Scholarship Fund.

Enquiries to: Desley 0429 075 173 or Barry 0409 458 053.

See Notice Board for further information.

FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING IN THE COMTEMPORARY WORLD

Venue: Mercy Gathering Room, Gent Street, Ballarat East. Dates: 16th March; 27th April; 18th May; 22nd June; 20th July.

Sr Veronica Lawson and Fr Barry Ryan invite parishioners to sign up for five two-hour sessions on the meaning of faith commitment in the contemporary world. Simply contact Sr Veronica by email (veronica.lawson@mercy.org.au) or by phone (0408 392 297) before 20th February. Kindly provide contact details and indicate whether you wish to enrol in the afternoon sessions (1.00-3.00 pm) or the evening sessions (7.00-9.00 pm). Donation to cover costs is \$20. Note that this is a new course, not a repeat of either the 2015 or the 2016 sessions.

POP UP SHOP FOR THE HOMELESS AND THOSE IN NEED

Thank you to everyone who has popped something in the tub over the last 8 months. Initially the tub was going to be there for a month as there was a desperate need for socks and undies.

There has been something in it every week...except one so I think it is worth keeping.

We have given out socks, undies, food hampers and toiletries.

Although the **Pop up Shop** only sets up as a "shop" a few times a year it is a very active group.

At the moment we are assisting many families who have been in the situation involving family violence.

Referrals come from other Ballarat organisations...including St Vincent de Paul.

We rely on donations and everything is given free.

People often ask what is needed. There are some suggestions with the tub. This week a small group has sorted toiletries into individual packs for men, women and families.

We have a shortage of toothbrushes, toothpaste and deodorant to complete these packs. Family sized shampoo/conditioner is always in short supply. Even one more item added to your shopping trolley would help.

Once again..."Thank you".

If you would like more information please contact Colleen on 0419 504 029.

CHILDREN BECOMING CATHOLIC

Families of children aged 7 and older seeking for their child to be either baptised or received into the Catholic Church may express their interest in taking part in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Children (RCIC) by phoning the Parish Office on 5332 6611 by Monday, 13th February, 2017.