

**CATHOLIC PARISH OF HEALESVILLE, INCORPORATING HEALESVILLE (ST BRIGID'S),
YARRA GLEN (ST ALOYSIUS) & MARYSVILLE (OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS)**



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TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (Year A) 30th August 2020

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Commentary from Liturgy Brisbane liturgy@liturgybrisbane.net.au

Paul and Jesus conspire together today to present us with tough teaching. Paul counsels the Romans “not to model yourselves on the behaviour of the world . . . but let your behaviour change, modelled by your new mind”. Jesus rebukes Peter “because the way you think is not God’s way but man’s”. The choice is put before us. Do we allow ourselves to take the easy path of conformity with “the way of the world”, or do we choose the way of Jesus which he warns is a way of the cross? Paul and Jesus make it clear that we do not accomplish this by our own efforts. It is by letting go of the life we imagine we have, Jesus says, that we will find true life. And Paul speaks of our minds being renewed and remodelled from within. The question is whether we will take the risk of “letting go and letting God”. Few of us are likely to experience the anguish that the prophet Jeremiah suffered for the sake of the word, but the testimony of his courage echoes down through the ages, even to us.

First Reading: Jeremiah 20:7–9

You have seduced me, Lord, and I have let myself be seduced; you have overpowered me: you were the stronger. I am a daily laughing-stock, everybody’s butt. Each time I speak the word, I have to howl and proclaim: ‘Violence and ruin!’ The word of the Lord has meant for me insult, derision, all day long. I used to say, ‘I will not think about him, I will not speak in his name any more.’ Then there seemed to be a fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones. The effort to restrain it wearied me, I could not bear it.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 62:2–6, 8–9

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

O God, you are my God, for you I long;
for you my soul is thirsting.
My body pines for you

like a dry, weary land without water. R.

So I gaze on you in the sanctuary
to see your strength and your glory.
For your love is better than life,
my lips will speak your praise. R.

So I will bless you all my life,
in your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul shall be filled as with a banquet,
my mouth shall praise you with joy. R.

For you have been my help;
in the shadow of your wings I rejoice.
My soul clings to you;
your right hand holds me fast. R.

Second Reading: Romans 12:1–2

Think of God's mercy, my brothers, and worship him, I beg you, in a way that is worthy of thinking beings, by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God. Do not model yourselves on the behaviour of the world around you, but let your behaviour change, modelled by your new mind. This is the only way to discover the will of God and know what is good, what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation: Ephesians 1:17, 18

Alleluia, alleluia! May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our heart, that we might see how great is the hope to which we are called. Alleluia!

Gospel: Matthew 16:21–27

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus began to make it clear to his disciples that he was destined to go to Jerusalem and suffer grievously at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, to be put to death and to be raised up on the third day. Then, taking him aside, Peter started to remonstrate with him. 'Heaven preserve you, Lord,' he said. 'This must not happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my path, because the way you think is not God's way but man's.' Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. What, then, will a man gain if he wins the whole world and ruins his life? Or what has a man to offer in exchange for his life? 'For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and, when he does, he will reward each one according to his behaviour.'

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

FROM FR FRANCIS DENTON

Introduction to Prayer PART 2 – The Interior Life

“Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10)

In 2005 the documentary film “Into Great Silence” was released. If you missed it, that’s because it wasn’t a blockbuster. A film that goes for 2 hours and 49 minutes with no dialogue or music was always going to test its audience. It is more of an ‘experience’ than a ‘film’, as it follows a year in the life of the Carthusian monks from the Abbey of the Grande Chartreuse, nestled high in the French Alps. Considered among the most austere of all the enclosed religious orders, the Carthusian monks live a life of contemplation shrouded in silence. Every detail of the monk’s life is subordinated to the goal of union with Christ through prayer. The film does a good job of transporting the viewer into this strangely beautiful, foreign world. But here I’ll be honest: Sitting through three hours of silence pushes most people to their limit, and by the closing credits I felt greatly confirmed in my vocation to *not* be a Carthusian!

The modern world is not accustomed to silence. By silence I don’t mean merely the absence of sound, the artificial, noise-cancelling-headphone silence of the world. I mean the deep interior stillness of the soul that lives in the presence of God. Activism is one of the drugs of our times that betrays our addiction to stimuli. The fast pace of modern life has us constantly buzzing with fretful activity. Technology has revolutionised almost every aspect of how we live in the West according to the guiding principles of efficiency and comfort. This has transformed domestic life (think microwaves, washing machines, dish-washers, etc.), the workplace (cars, computers, internet, etc.), communication (smart phones, email, social media, etc.), recreation (air travel, TV, internet, etc.), and so on. With seemingly endless possibilities at our fingertips, we have become accustomed to cramming as many things as possible into our day. This perpetual restlessness has become such a normal state of life that many people struggle to be interiorly still. No sooner do we sit down then our phone starts buzzing alerting us to the next thing that demands our immediate attention. Prayer can even seem like we’re “wasting time” since we walk away from time in prayer with nothing material to show for it. Prayer can all too easily fall into the category of ‘things that I would like to do but just don’t have time for right now’. In this environment coming before God in prayer becomes almost impossible, if not practically then psychologically.

Notionally we know that God is “always with us.” I wonder if we sometimes use this idea that “God is always with us” as an excuse to ignore God right now, in the present. St Paul puts it more strikingly, saying that in God “we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). In other words, God is not simply ‘out there’, He sustains us in being at every moment of every day, and yet practically speaking God tends to take the back seat in our life. There is a confounding irony in all this. God has absolutely no need of us, and yet he loves us with an infinite love. We have a total need of God, and yet we treat God with indifference. God has nothing to gain by loving us yet he loves us all the same. We have everything to gain by loving God, yet we act as though God is an inconvenience or an obstacle to our happiness. It’s as though God ought to feel flattered on those rare occasions that we show him any interest. How many times have we dragged ourselves (or been dragged) to Mass as though it were some detestable chore. If only we knew the eager longing that God has for us to come to him and spend time with him in prayer, the opportunity to speak heart to heart, as a Father to his beloved child.

This week we celebrated the feast of St Augustine (28th August), one of my all-time favourite saints. If I had to compile a list of ten books that every Christian should read before they die St Augustine's *Confessions* would be ranked in the top five. For a book that is 1600 years old it is as fresh as though it were a blog-post from yesterday. Augustine's penetrating gift of introspection enables him to perform a forensic analysis of his soul in a manner that is virtually without equal, even by our naval-gazing Moderns, who have largely replaced spiritual insight with the contrived pseudo-insight of psychoanalysis. Curiously, the entire work of the *Confessions* is not addressed to the reader – it is a cry of the heart addressed directly to God, to which the reader is merely a privileged eaves-dropper. Augustine is among the most brilliant intellects in Church history yet the account of his conversion is anything but academic – it is full of the poetry of an impassioned lover:

“Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you... You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness. You flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness. You breathed your fragrance on me; I drew in breath and now I pant for you. I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more. You touched me, and I burned for your peace.” (St Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 10, Chapter 37)

What extraordinary words! This is the prayer of a soul who clearly knows the God to whom he is speaking, personally. It is a window into this saint's rich interior life. If St Augustine had had his way he would have retired to a life of contemplation. Fortunately (for us!) he was appointed the bishop of Hippo (in North Africa) and so the Church benefited from the veritable library of theological works he left behind. Even so his writings show that he sustained a deep interior life as the spiritual font from which the ink of his pen flowed.

Throughout the centuries many souls have been drawn to pursue the contemplative life of the monastery. St Anthony of Egypt (d.356AD) is considered the pioneer of the Desert Fathers (and Mothers!) who retreated into the desert in order to live a life of continuous prayer. Two centuries later St Benedict of Nursia (d.547AD) became the Father of Monasticism in the West spawning the Benedictines, Cistercians and Trappists. Together with the Carthusians, Carmelites and hosts of other enclosed Contemplative Orders for men and women, these Religious Orders show the attraction of the contemplative life throughout the centuries in spite of the difficulties. By the values of today's culture there is virtually nothing more counter-cultural than the contemplative life, and yet against all odds these Orders continue to attract vocations. These generous souls should inspire us to cultivate a deep interior life. When we come before the judgment seat of Christ we may have many regrets about how we've used our time, but the one thing we will never regret is having “wasted too much time in prayer.” Prayer prepares us for eternity with God, when we will see him face to face (cf. 1Cor 13:12).

In our over-stimulated world, the temptation to prioritise activity over contemplation is almost irresistible. Even as a priest I know how strong is the pull towards ‘getting things done’ over spending time in prayer. How much harder for those balancing the demands of work, family life and other commitments! Sometimes we need to be reminded that we are human *beings* not human *doings*. Amid all the important things we need to *do* for God, we should not forget to *be* for God – and to *be* present to Him. Let's use this time of lockdown to step back from the busyness of life and strive to invest in our prayer life. Only in silence can we hear the voice of the Lord: “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

WEEKLY MASSES ARE AVAILABLE ON OUR ST BRIGID'S YOU TUBE CHANNEL

A reminder that Fr Francis' Sunday Masses are recorded each weekend and are available on St Brigid's You Tube Channel each Sunday morning. Fr Francis records Masses from St Brigid's, St Patrick's and St Aloysius churches. The link is accessible through St Brigid's Healesville's website, or by searching St Brigid's Healesville on You Tube, or using the link: <https://bit.ly/StBsHville>

KEEPING US CONNECTED

Please email the office if you would like to participate in:

- **The Parish Grapevine** which advises of deaths, funerals or other parish news.
- **A regular Bible Study/Faith Reflection Group led by Fr Francis** via video chat on a phone, ipad or computer.

SOME THOUGHTS FROM DEBBIE

One of the most enjoyable aspects of my Pastoral duties is hearing about how our parishioners are managing to get through each day, as we live our complicated lives. One of the perks of my vocation! When I am ringing around and chatting to our many friends, I am hearing about all sorts of unforeseen challenges that pop up daily, now seriously complicated due to shut down. I hear about the joys, illnesses and worries that our friends are facing, locked away in lounge rooms with only the phone to keep them connected to those who are important to them. I hear of families home-schooling, enough said. I hear of those who spend their days waving at new acquaintances who pass by their homes, masked and distant, yet now strangely familiar, new friendships waiting to blossom when cuppas are allowed again. Somehow, we are getting through.

Thinking about our common human experiences inspires me to appreciate that Jesus, too, faced unexpected events and the twists and turns of daily living. He grew up in a loving family, hopefully as we do. During the 3 years of his public ministry, he was applauded and criticised, loved and hated, accepted and rejected. He cried at the death of his friend Lazarus, and the Gospels tell us that he let out a perturbed sigh as a reaction to some of the short-sightedness of his apostles, as they struggled to understand what he was trying to pass on to them. He was certainly frustrated and saddened at the hypocrisy of those in religious authority, who kept up the pretence of speaking in God's name, yet failed to practice what they preached. Literally thousands sat on the grass at his feet, hanging on his every word, and he was welcomed into Jerusalem as a potential king and warrior, shouts of 'hosanna' erupting from the crowds who lived in hope that he would lead some sort of political uprising and overthrow the Roman occupation of Israel. Yet he died on a shameful cross, stripped of all human dignity. Again and again, I marvel that Jesus, the Son, God of heaven and earth, of all things seen and unseen, is one who has suffered in every way that we suffer, and enjoyed life to the full, as we are encouraged to do.

Over the centuries, the Church has grappled with the balance between Jesus, the Son of God, and Jesus, human as we are human. Jesus' humanity and his divinity are not a fifty-fifty balance, but a 100%/100% reality. The false assertion that somehow Jesus was play acting his earthly life as a human being, in reality being God who was simply pretending to experience pain for our benefit and remaining untouched by the reality of agony, was condemned centuries

ago, labelled as heresy. There are many questions I can't answer, but I wrestle with them in some of those quiet moments. Did Jesus know he was God as a tiny unborn baby?? When he was 2, did he understand calculus and epidemiology?? What did *Jesus* think as raised Lazarus from the dead, and as he included his trusted friends in the experience of the Transfiguration, his glory shining through his humanity? I often tell the story of Daniel, about 9 years old, who played the role of Jesus in a role play of the Transfiguration in one of my classes. Other children oohed and aahed as Jesus became shiny and bright, and we interviewed them about their thoughts. Then, almost as an after-thought, I asked Daniel to tell me what he had thought about as he played the role of Jesus. I have often contemplated his edgy answer since. He simply said "what the hell was that???". Blunt but honest, funny but thought-provoking... A whole packet of Tim Tams and at least 3 coffees for this one.

GUARDIAN ANGELS OF KENYA

Please remember Fr Jason and his community in your prayers. Covid has hit them hard and daily life continues to bring great pastoral and financial challenges. For more information contact Paula or Sally.

TIME FOR A GIGGLE!

Examples of how *not* to word notices in a Church bulletin:

- This evening at 7 PM there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.
- The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the Congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.
- Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 pm. Please use the back door.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Yvonne Ewers!

PLEASE PRAY: FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY

Albert Slawinski, Maureen Fogarty, Bob Barclay

FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK

Babies Emmett, Noah Glen Christie, Tedi and Santi; Roman, Blake Smith, Trish Leahy, John Snell, Abby Sharp, Peter Munro, Megan, Bernie Jansen, Andrew Sharp, John, Glenn, Lyn Francis, Dorothy Barber, Fiona, Annie Preuss, Michelle Ryan, Damian, John, Alison, Heather, Julie Bates, Garry Dettman, Bradley Jordan, Jeanette Henkel, Richard Galbraith, Debbie Huby, Geoff Lucas, Sandra Donkin, Dorothy Fraser, Glen, Fred Bullas, Fred Coullas, Evie Gleeson, Indy Dawes, Rade Krstic, Megan Williams, Michael Wood, Bill Howie, Jennie, Michael, Margo & Stephen Youngberry, Marie Hammond, John Mulholland, Rhiannon Days, Val Savitt, Ron Garland, Jaz Nueber, James Cooney, Robert, Mary & Gerard Bariola, Tilly Van der Zee, Lydia, Joyce Slattery, Lawrie Field, Annie, Bob Ireland, Val & Michael Christie, Ted & Peter Bowling, Natasha, Mia, James, Richard Adams, Mitchell & Wynn Wilson, Carina Warton, Anne Bateman.

FOR THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES ARE IN AUGUST

Ann Maris (03.07.07), Julie Ann Ward (03.07.86), Nick Pitt (John McDonald (03.08.93), Patricia Newell (06.08.07), John Youngberry(07.08.79), Barbara Pollard (11.08.09), Andrew Sotko (14.08.07), Fr Loughnan (15.08.02), Bernadette Hanley (18.08.09), Mary Thomas (19.08.07), Douglas Ireland (21.08.79), Zandor Hunka (22.08.06), Alison Snell (25.08.02) Maria Slawinski (25.08.82), Gerald Slattery, Derek Beeby, Tilly Blackburn, Thea Humphries, Maggie Lloyd-Smith, Margaret Pomeroy (23.08.19), Rosemary Fries (10.08)