

Reflection - The Fear Factor

The Gospel story is pretty simple. A wealthy man leaves his goods for each of three servants to care for while he is gone. He doesn't give them instructions, at least none that we are told of. When he returns, he sees that two of the three servants have invested the money and got back twice the amount. He is delighted.

So at this point the moral of the story would be: "Make the most of what you have."

But we miss the most interesting part of all if we look just at the successful servants (as does the shortened version of the Gospel in the lectionary!!!). We miss the fascinating and puzzling story of the third servant. This poor soul did not invest the money at all. He buried it. Quite simply, he was afraid of investing it and losing it.

He was right to be afraid, given the owner's attitude. He listened to the fearful servant's story and then had the man thrown into "the darkness outside," where there would be "wailing and grinding of teeth." Quite an overreaction, it seems. The poor guy just wanted to keep the owner's money safe!

Maybe the proprietor was simply a "demanding person," as the parable says. Dark spirited. But there is much more to it. The monetary unit "talent" in Jesus' time was not a small amount. Even one talent could be worth more than a labourer would earn in a lifetime. And the owner entrusted a lot more than just money to the servants—he left them all his possessions, everything he had. He took a great risk and he wanted them to do the same, not leave the investment mouldering around somewhere.

Ok, now make the switch. Assume that the parable is about God. Maybe God entrusts an even greater amount to you and me! Life, abilities, the gift of love, the living breathing human beings around us, and every so often, real and open acts of unselfish love. God gives all this free of charge, gives to us our own lives with all their rewards and catastrophes, and he says to us, *dive in*. Have your life. Make whatever you will with it because you are my own beloved.

It is wonderful. But then an awful question arises. Does God curse those who are afraid and who bury what they are given? Jesus at least seems to say so.

To everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. (Gospel)

Ouch. That hurts. Except that, in the realm of spirituality, there is one thing I know of that will go away if it is buried, but which gets greater if you use it.

Love.

If fear closes the door tightly against love, guess where the loveless one will be. In the darkness outside the door, wailing and gnashing those teeth. Without love.

Get this:

We are all frightened, and God always has compassion upon us. God waits for ages to see if we will not accept just a bit of the love he offers, and if we will even find just enough courage to invest some of it in other people. God is often disappointed in this risk he takes, and I'm sure he says, "oh no, not again" when we fail.

But this is the disappointment of someone who loves us very well.

Let love in.

Love casts out fear.

J. Foley S.J.

A parishioner's reflection on Fratelli Tutti "Brothers and Sisters all"

This is Pope Francis' 3rd encyclical following Lumen Fidei (2013) and Laudato Si (2015). Released in early October 2020 it is really a comprehensive reorganisation of his previous teachings rather than something dramatically novel.

In 8 chapters (with 287 paragraphs), Pope Francis' teachings, insights and challenges are communicated in user-friendly language drawing on examples which are contemporary, comprehensive and relevant world-wide.

My personal reflection is dominated by 3 realities:

1. Pope Francis readily acknowledges that his dialogue with Grand Iman Ahmad Al Tayyeb in Cairo 2019 inspired this encyclical. He also draws from the example of Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Mahatma Gandhi, St Francis of Assisi and Blessed Charles de Foucauld. I was also impressed that he quotes from the Social Justice Statements of national Bishops' conferences, including Australia. In this context, Fratelli Tutti is a truly catholic encyclical.

2. Chapter 2 is a guided reflection on the *Good Samaritan* and Pope Francis invites us to journey with him and to use this parable to shape our perspective on the world. Recalling that Jesus told this parable to answer the question 'Who is our neighbour?' we are invited to broaden the reality of fraternity beyond our immediate geography and relationships - with technology and communication the whole world is our neighbourhood! Pope Francis asks us to identify with a character from the original drama - am I a perpetrator, a victim, a detached passer-by, a responsible citizen, a hospitable innkeeper? How can I respond to the struggles, injustices, social ills, environmental degradations, inequalities, abuses or poverty affecting our neighbours in the world community?

To be continued next week.....

(Copy of Fratelli Tutti is currently available for loan in Parish Office)

St Thomas Aquinas Parish Bulletin

168 Hawkesbury Road, Springwood, NSW, 2777

PO Box 4410, Winmalee, NSW, 2777

Phone: 02 4754 1052

Email: sta@internode.on.net / springwood@parracatholic.org



Parish Website: www.stachurchspringwood.org.au

Parish Facebook Page: St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community Springwood

Parish Priest: Fr Paul Slyney - 4754 1052 *Emergency ONLY:* 0418 461 316

Assistant Priest: Fr Michael Gathuku - 4754 1052 *Emergency ONLY:* 0474 272 605

Parish Pastoral Council: Email - springwoodppc@gmail.com

Parish Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm

Weekend Masses: Saturday Vigil Mass 5.00 pm, Sunday 8.00 am and 9.30 am

Weekday Mass: Tuesday - Saturday 9.30 am

Rosary & Devotions: Tuesday - Saturday 9.00 am

Adoration, Rosary & Chapelet: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 7.30 - 8.30 pm

Intercession & Adoration: None until further notice

Baptisms: 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month - 10.30am and by appointment

Reconciliation: By appointment

Weddings: By appointment - restricted numbers

Funerals: By appointment - restricted numbers

THE GOSPEL

Matthew 25:14-30

*A man going on a journey called in his servants
and entrusted his possessions to them.*

Father,
of the Universe,
you have entrusted this planet to us.
Now let us use all the talents
you have given us
to bring it to its
fullness.

No shirking.
No burying the talents.

Let each and every one of us do our part to
bring healing, and sow beauty
in all creation and so
share in
your joy.

Anne M. Osdieck

Today's Readings: Prov 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; 1 Thess 5:1-6; Mt 25:14-30

Entrance Antiphon: *The Lord said:* I think thoughts of peace and not of affliction. You will call upon me, and I will answer you, and I will lead back your captives from every place.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 127:1-5. R. v. 1

R. Happy are those who fear the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, Alleluia! Live in me and let me live in you, says the Lord; my branches bear much fruit. Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon: To be near God is my happiness, to place my hope in God the Lord.

Next Week: Ezek 34:11-12, 15-17; 1 Cor 15:20-26, 28; Mt 25:31-46



Sick: Victor Gresser (aged 2), Kay Bonomini, Michael Mercieca, Diana Donnelly, Pamela Pereira, Melissa Baxter, Mary Ellen Schell, Sue Downes, Joan Eastwood, Gwen Daly, Kerry Aitken, Anthony O'Connell, Wal & Anne Knoke, Angela Brown, Lea Dardenne, Francisco Robles, Teresita Robles, Susie Ziino, Patricia Duffy, Sarah Walke, Jackie Davies, Kimberly Cusack, Margaret Healy, Colleen Lusty, Lorna Lyons, Christopher Coombs, Lucinda Goodwin, Angela Coombs, Leila Baker, Mary Coombs, Slawcia Pisarska, Luca Hurley, Joan Lohrey, Sarah & Thomas McGoram, Frances Hinder, Shirley Anderson, Peter Doherty, Val Hardy, Carmel Chetcuti, Emile Amine, Janice Glassington, Helen Meville, Susan Solomon, Thomas Glavas, and all Private Intentions.

Due to the strict privacy laws, names of the deceased and sick can only be included in the Bulletin with the express permission of the immediate family. Thank you.

**Please join us to farewell
Fr Michael Gathuku on
Sunday, 29th November
after 9.30am Mass.**

*Please keep in mind our
COVID-19 Safety Restrictions
and social distancing.*

Schools in our Parish



St Thomas Aquinas Primary School

Principal - Ms Marina Hardy 4723 3800

ST COLUMBA'S
CATHOLIC COLLEGE



St Columba's Catholic College

Principal - Mr Paul Ryan 4754 8900

DECEASED FAMILY and FRIENDS ANNUAL MASS - 18th November, 7.00pm

Remembering our Loved Ones

"May perpetual light shine upon them."

NOVEMBER - Remembering the Dead:

November is the month of the year that we remember the dead. During this time we continue to pray for those who have gone before us in faith and that they will be embraced by God.

If you would like to place the name of your loved one in to the BOOK OF SAINTS please print their name clearly on to an envelope and place in to the collection box at the back of the church.

Deceased Family and Friends Annual Mass - Wednesday, 18th November:

All parishioners are invited to attend a Mass which will be celebrated to the **Repose of the Souls** of family members commencing at 7.00pm on Wednesday, 18th November.

A framed photo of your loved one could be placed on the sanctuary before the commencement of Mass (prior to 7pm).

If any parishioner requires transport, please contact Molly Hurley on 4751 2167 or Liz Farrer on 4751 7096.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES 2020:

	Springwood	Lawson (OLN)
Christmas Eve, Thurs 24th Dec	5.00pm Children's Mass 8.00pm VIGIL	5.00pm Children's Mass 8.00pm VIGIL
Christmas Day, Fri 25th Dec	TBA	TBA
Boxing Day, Sat 26 Dec	No Mass	No Mass
Sun 27th December	8.00am, 9.30am	8.30am
Tues 29th, Wed 30th Dec	9.30am	5.00pm
Thurs 31st Dec	9.30am	9.00am
Fri 1st January	9.30am	

**WE ARE WAITING FOR GOVERNMENT INSTRUCTIONS
REGARDING MASS NUMBERS**

Houses to Homes

St Thomas Aquinas Parish Christmas Appeal



In partnership with **CatholicCare** we are appealing to our Parishioners to help support young mothers and babies through the Houses to Home program.

This amazing service is for pregnant girls or parenting young women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The demand for this program has grown and we would like to be able to present Houses to Homes with practical gifts i.e. nappies, wipes, baby clothes, small children's toys (please not used toys due to COVID-19 regulations), toiletry items for women etc.

Please place your items under the Christmas Tree from Advent. Thank you.



St Vincent de Paul Society NSW
Support Services *good works*

This is the time of year when the **St. Vincent de Paul Society** members ask Parishioners to support families in need by providing Christmas Hampers or

cash to purchase fruit and vegetable vouchers. We are aware that our Mass attendee numbers are well down, and that everyone has in some way been affected by COVID-19, so conference members have decided that this year our main area of support will be **vouchers for food, fruit, vegetables and meat or fish**. Envelopes for your donations are available on the table near Our Lady's statue at the entrance to our church and conference members will be at all Masses on the weekends of 28th / 29th November, 5th / 6th and 12th / 13th December to accept all donations.

If your family feels able to provide a hamper that would be wonderful. Please make it suitable for a family of 2 adults and 2 children. We have a priority list of families which, with your support, we will endeavour to fill.

Many thanks for your ongoing support to Vinnies and the people we support. Any inquiries may be made to Margaret on 4753 1031.