

In Exile - Parental Pains

There is a real difference between the idea of faith and its reality. Too often we confuse these.

Daniel Berrigan was once asked: "Where does your faith reside, where's its real seat?" His answer is wonderful, both in colour and insight: "Your faith is rarely where your head is at and rarely where your heart is at. Your faith is where your backside is at! Inside what commitments are you sitting? Within what reality do you anchor yourself?"

Faith, in his view, is not anchored in the head or the heart. But how is that possible? If it isn't in the head or the heart, where is it?

From Aristotle, through Thomas Aquinas, through contemporary philosophy and psychology, analysts have generally agreed that, as human beings, we have three major spiritual faculties: **head, heart, and gut**, each with a special function. In our **heads**, we think. In our **hearts**, we feel. What happens in the gut? In the **gut**, we know, just simply know, in a way beyond thoughts and feelings. The gut has to do with intuition, it lets us know what we "have to do." It's there that we experience the categorical imperatives within our lives.

With that as a background, we can begin to understand the wisdom of Berrigan's answer: to use just one example: there are times when each of us in the most important commitments within our lives (faith, family, church, morality) find ourselves in a situation where our heads aren't in it, our hearts aren't in it, but we are in it! Against the more spontaneous wisdom of our heads and against the more natural feelings of our hearts, we are anchored by another kind of thought and feeling which perhaps we can't explain to anyone, even to ourselves, but which keeps us sitting, standing, and walking solidly inside of a certain commitment. We are doing what "we have to do" because at some deep level we simply "know" that this is what we need to do, that this is what is right. That's faith.

Faith is manifest in our decisions, our commitments, and our life-choices, more than in any intellectual beliefs or passionate feelings. It shows itself in decisions, in choosing certain commitments and in remaining within them. It's helpful to know this.

How do I know whether my faith is weak or strong? By checking where my backside is at! Why am I inside certain commitments? Why am I remaining there? That, ultimately, is the criterion. The same holds true for assessment of others' faith. What's to be said of those among our own children, siblings, neighbours, and friends, who no longer go to church and seem, on the surface at least, to be rather cavalier about the faith?

How we assess their faith may not be based upon where their heads and hearts are at, but rather upon where they are at. Do they radiate charity, graciousness, respect, hospitality, honesty, generosity, moral integrity, concern for justice? To what are they giving their lives? What commitments are they sitting and walking within and why? **Faith** is judged by these things, not only by how someone thinks, feels, or expresses herself explicitly in the area of faith.

God, as Jesus makes clear, is a self-emptying God, and we live in the wonder and grace of that kenosis. God, it seems, is self-secure enough so as to not need to be always the centre of conscious attention, the acknowledged life of the party.

We see then that there is a real difference between the idea of faith and its reality. Too often we confuse these.

Faith is also an idea and that idea can sometimes be very stimulating intellectually. As well, the idea of faith can stir and inflame the heart. The reverse is also true. As a notion, faith can sometimes seem intellectually stifling and can feel emotionally crippling. Feelings and thoughts run a wide gamut and so we must be careful to not mistake how we think and feel about God on any given day for the reality of faith. Thoughts and feelings about God are not necessarily faith, as we all-too-quickly learn when our faith is challenged; either by the distractions of everyday life, by personal tragedy, the loss of health through aging, and other irreversible losses. It's then that we find out, only too quickly, that the idea of faith, as distinct from the reality of faith, lacks the substance to truly let us believe in a deeper life than what the world can give us now.

C S Lewis, in recounting his own journey to faith, tells us that it was not, in the end, his thoughts or feelings that led him to faith. Rather it was God's grip on him, an inchoate brand in his soul that wouldn't go away, a nagging burn in his gut. As he puts it: "the hardness of God is softer than the kindness of men and God's compulsion is our liberation." (Collected Letters, Volume I)

Fr Ron Rolheiser

Currently, Father Rolheiser is serving as President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio Texas

When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind not with it.

Henry Ford.

St Thomas Aquinas Parish Bulletin



Parish Website:

Parish Facebook Page:

Parish Priest:

Assistant Priest:

Parish Pastoral Council:

Parish Office Hours:

Weekend Masses:

Weekday Mass:

Rosary & Devotions:

Adoration, Rosary & Chaplet:

Intercession & Adoration:

Baptisms:

Reconciliation:

Weddings:

Funerals:

Saturday Vigil Mass 5.00 pm, Sunday 8.00 am and 9.30 am

Tuesday - Saturday 9.30 am

Tuesday - Saturday 9.00 am

2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month, 7.30 - 8.30 pm

None until further notice

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

By request

By appointment - restricted numbers

By appointment - restricted numbers

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St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community Springwood

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

Fr Shinto Francis - 4754 1052 **Emergency ONLY:** 0415 077 969

Email - springwoodppc@gmail.com

Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm

A Poem to Sit With

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

"At Mass

Christ

is hidden

in bread

on the

street

he hides

in the

neighbour

helpless

alone afraid

he is all

around us

we must

attend him"

she says

J.Janda

COVID-19 UPDATE

Wearing of Masks now COMPULSORY

NSW Health has revised the COVID-19 guidelines for face mask use at indoor venues which also includes places of worship.

Effective from Tuesday 22nd June 2021, face masks are mandatory at all indoor venues (including places of worship) for the **NEXT SEVEN DAYS** across Greater Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

There has been no change to the number of people allowed at places of worship (for St Thomas Aquinas that remains at 170) but you must still book in for our weekend Masses.



Today's Readings: Wis 1:13-15, 2:23-24; 2 Cor 8:7, 9, 13-15; Mk 5:21-43

Entrance Antiphon: All peoples, clap your hands. Cry to God with shouts of joy!

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 29:2, 4-6, 11-13

R. I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Our Saviour Jesus Christ has done away with death and brought us life through his gospel. Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all within me, his holy name.

Next Week: Ezek 2:2-5; 2 Cor 12:7-10; Mk 6:1-6



Recently Deceased: Margaret Mare, Joan Lohrey

Sick: Lisa Vaughan, Susie Ziino, James Wallace, Mischa Damaguc and family, Margaret Day, Adam McCully, Christopher Coombs, Kate Moore, Luca Hurley 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.

Parish and Local Community News

HOUSE OF WELCOME (HOW) REFUGEE FOOD DRIVE: This food drive, which directly benefits refugees through the HoW, will end on the weekend of the **3rd and 4th July**. It would be sincerely appreciated if you could please deliver your donations to the Parish office prior to that date or at any of the Masses on that weekend. The HoW's vision is to uphold the intrinsic dignity of each person by providing support and advocacy to empower the most disadvantaged and marginalised within our community. *Thank you for your generous support.*

CLERGY SUPPORT FOUNDATION DONATIONS: It is not too late to make a **tax-deductable donation** to the Clergy Support Foundation of the Diocese of Parramatta, which supports retired priests in the diocese. Please make donations via credit card at <https://parracatholic.org/csf> or transfer directly to BSB 067950 Account No 00001691 Name CSF No 1 with names as reference and send email to csf@parracatholic.org with your details for receipt to be sent.

BIBLICAL STUDIES AT ST FINBARS: Thursdays - August 5th & 19th; September 2nd & 18th, always at 7pm. The Prophets in the Old Testament: Messengers or Whistle-Blowers? For the modern person, the word prophet falls almost entirely within the realm of prognostication. Names like Nostradamus and Jeanne Dixon, among others, come to mind - folk who claim (or the claim is made by others) that they can foresee the future. Prophets in the Bible do not fit neatly into this narrow category. To be sure, they made predictions, many of them quite striking. Nonetheless, their material was so diverse and wide-ranging that prognostication is too confining a term. During the four weeks, we will examine the prophetic books of the Old Testaments and study their cultural, historical, and theological contents. All are welcome. Gold Coin donation. For registration, please contact Julian Knouf at secretary@stfinbars.org.au.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING: The Parish Council next meets on Tuesday, 6th July, 7.30pm. If you wish to contact the Parish Council, please send any correspondence to springwoodppc@gmail.com.



Over the last couple of weeks during Mass, our Parish Acolytes have been talking about their personal journey in this ministry.

If you are 18 years and over (*male or female*) and would be interested in this ministry, please contact the parish office or see an Acolyte after Mass.

*Postscript: On the 10th January 2021, Pope Francis issued an Apostolic Letter titled *Spiritus Domini*, which modified the Code of Canon Law to allow women, as well as men, to be installed in the Ministry of Acolyte.*

CONFIRMATION 2021



We invite you and your child to be part of the Confirmation Program in our parish this year. Children in Year 6 or older, who have not yet received Confirmation, and have received Reconciliation and First Communion, are invited to participate.

Confirmation will take place on **Tuesday 31st August at 7.00pm**.

The preparation for this sacrament is centered at home where parents, with the aid of a booklet and notes, help their child to come to know the Lord. At the same time there will be weekly meetings (maximum 45 - 60 minutes duration undertaken via ZOOM) where parents and children come together in small groups to share their experiences. These meetings are led by a member of the group. The program will run for a period of 4 weeks from the week starting 25th July 2021.

We will only be undertaking this year's Sacramental Program via ZOOM as next year we anticipate being back to normal.

If you feel that either you or your child are not ready to make this step, please feel free to delay it to a later date. If, however, you wish to participate in the program, you are required to attend two meetings: **the first compulsory Parent Meeting is on Tuesday 13th July at 7pm AND the second compulsory meeting on Tuesday 20th July at 7pm, both in the Church.**

GATHERING THE TALENTS - Sunday, 19th September 2021

The Deanery Pastoral Council, in conjunction with Parish Pastoral Councils, are planning an event where we can share various talents with the whole Catholic community in the Blue Mountains.

Time: 1-4 pm
Where: Bishop Manning Learning Centre (STA Primary School Hall)

You are invited to participate in this Gathering in the following ways:

- ◆ Having a voice in determining which areas of Church life will be focused on during the afternoon by indicating three preferences on the survey form (available via our website and the back of the church).
- ◆ Attending the Gathering to share your thoughts, experiences and talents.
- ◆ Participating in the planning and/or presentation of workshops

Registration for this event will be available closer to the date. For further information, please refer to the below link on our website: <https://stachurchspringwood.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Gathering-the-Talents-19-September-2021.pdf>

Please complete your surveys and return to the back of the church as soon as possible. Thank you.

For your reflection the Plenary Council Agenda below was released last week:

Conversion

- How might we better accompany one another on the journey of personal and communal conversion which mission in Australia requires?
- How might we heal the wounds of abuse, coming to see through the eyes of those who have been abused?
- How might the Church in Australia open in new ways to Indigenous ways of being Christian in spirituality, theology, liturgy, and missionary discipleship? How might we learn from the First Nations peoples?
- How might the Church in Australia meet the needs of the most vulnerable, go to the peripheries, be missionary in places that may be overlooked or left behind in contemporary Australia? How might we partner with others (Christians, people of other faiths, neighbourhood community groups, government) to do this?
- How might the Church in Australia respond to the call to 'ecological conversion'? How can we express and promote a commitment to an 'integral ecology of life' in all its dimensions, with particular attention to the more vulnerable people and environments in our country and region?

Prayer

- How might we become a more contemplative people, committing more deeply to prayer as a way of life, and celebrating the liturgy of the Church as an encounter with Christ who sends us out to "make disciples of all the nations"?
- How might we better embrace the diverse liturgical traditions of the Churches which make up the Catholic Church and the cultural gifts of immigrant communities to enrich the spirituality and worship of the Church in Australia?

Formation

- How might we better form leaders for mission – adults, children and families, couples and single people?
- How might we better equip ordained ministers to be enablers of missionary discipleship: the Church becoming more a "priestly people" served by the ordained ministry?
- How might formation, both pre- and postordination, better foster the development of bishops, priests and deacons as enablers of the universal Christian vocation to holiness lived in missionary discipleship?

Structures

- How might parishes better become local centres for the formation and animation of missionary disciples?
- How might the Church in Australia be better structured for mission, considering the parish, the diocese, religious orders, the PJs and new communities?

Institutions

- How might we better see the future of Catholic education (primary, secondary and tertiary) through a missionary lens?
- How might we better see the future of Catholic social services, agencies and health and aged care ministries as key missionary and evangelising agencies?

