

Spirituality of the Readings - Here is Food for You

The background: *Elijah had just come from a dangerous showdown with 450 prophets of a god called Baal, in the land ruled by Jezebel. The God of Israel had easily won this encounter, but Elijah had gone ahead and done great violence against the surviving prophets anyway. Queen Jezebel, understandably enraged, sent a message that she would do the same thing to Elijah and more within that same day.***

In our First Reading Elijah was frightened, exhausted and dispirited. He had come back to find the Israelites being unfaithful to the one true God. So he became miserable - in spite of his great triumph. He prayed to God to give immediate death to his worthless self. As despondent people will sometimes do, he went to sleep. He lay himself under a broom tree (a tall hedge that desert people used to shield themselves from the sun in the day and the wind at night).

God could have been harsh to Elijah as a result of this depressed prayer. But instead, a quiet touch from God's angel awakened the man. The angel whispered, "get up and eat." And, lo and behold, "there at his head was a hearth cake and a jug of water."

Elijah did eat and drink, but then settled right back to sleep again. The angel whispered tenderly, "Get up and eat, else the journey will be too long for you!" Elijah did and was strengthened.

We are witnessing a mother's care, giving food to the discouraged child (First Reading).

The other readings too are all about God's kindness, his goodness even in small things.

The Responsorial Psalm invites us to share in it: "Taste and see the goodness of the Lord. ... I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears."

In the Gospel, Jesus offers nourishment, and this time the provisions are for a very long journey indeed, the one to eternal life. The people listening (called by John "the Jews," but really just "the sensible people") will not have a bit of it. They argue among themselves, ridiculing his silly offer of miraculous food. They "murmur" that they knew his parents, which made him just a local boy acting crazy. Jesus ordered them to stop and listen. He made the same comparison that we saw last week, between manna that came down from heaven in the desert, and himself, who was "the living bread that came down from heaven."

Just concentrate on the deliberate kindness of God: feeding the people, giving them drink, pursuing them again and again in order to offer the greatest gift of all, God's sacrificial love for us.

God follows us quietly, gently.

How might we respond? To start with, how about receiving the living bread in Communion? Another way could be to pray on the mellowness of God. Also, simply slowing down, stopping the running away and instead letting the Lord find us. God's kind-hearted love, which is also tough, proves to be quite worth the struggle.

Here is how Paul puts it in the Second Reading:

Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma.

John Foley

Fr. John Foley, SJ, is a composer and scholar at Saint Louis University

****** *Elijah himself had arranged a contest between the god of Ahab, called Baal, and the one true God. He had the Baal prophets arrange a sacrifice for the burning of a young bull, but he would not allow them to light the fire. Baal himself should do this. They agreed and for much of the day they carried on with incantations, calling out to their god, hopping around, but nothing at all happened. "There was not a sound; no one answered, and no one was listening" (1 Kings 18:29).*

Elijah taunted them with the famous lines, "Call louder, for he is a god and may be meditating, or may have retired, or may be on a journey. Perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." Elijah then arranged an exactly similar sacrifice, this time to the God of Israel. He was so sure of God that he doused the wood with jar after jar of water. Then, after his short prayer, the wood burst into flames (1 Kings 18:21-40). The Baalite people threw themselves to the ground and worshipped the God of Israel.

St Thomas Aquinas Parish Bulletin



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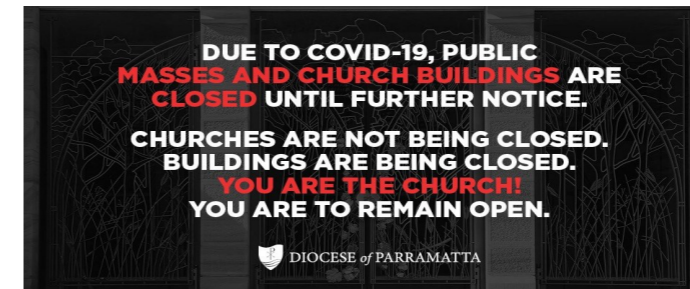
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A Poem to Sit With Jesus Speaks

I make
Everything
you see

I make
Everything
you hear

I make
Everything
you touch
and taste
and smell

to surprise you.

J. Janda

THE SECOND READING Ephesians 4:30-5:2

Live in love, as Christ loved us.

Holy Spirit,

Help us repair all the wrongs
wherever we find them.
In our ecosystems,
discrimination,
and neglect of the poor.

As Christ loved us, let us love one other.

Let us "be kind to each other,
and compassionate,
forgiving one another

as God has
forgiven
us in Christ."

Anne Osdieck

Today's Readings: *St Mary of the Cross MacKillop 1 Kg 17:8-16; Col 3:12-17; Mt 6:25-34*

Entrance Antiphon: Come, you blessed of my Father, says the Lord: I was sick, and you visited me. Amen, I say to you: whatever you did for one of the least of my brethren, you did for me.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 62:1-8

R. My soul clings to you; your right hand holds me fast.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Many women were there by the cross, watching from a distance, the same women who had followed Jesus and looked after him. Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon: This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another, says the Lord.

Next Week: The ASSUMPTION of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Vigil: 1 Chr 15:3-4, 15-16, 16:1-2; 1 Cor 15:54-57; Lk 11:27-28 **Day:** Apoc 11:19, 12:1-6, 10; 1 Cor 15:20-26; Lk 1:39-56



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

STA CONFIRMATION PROGRAM: Our 2021 Confirmation Program is cancelled for this year. If you would like your child to be part of our Confirmation Program for 2022 you have an option of joining our Parish over Easter, (Easter Vigil) and also during term 3, 2022. If you would like your child to undertake this Sacrament during the Easter Vigil, please contact the Parish office in November to confirm details.



NSW COVID SAFE CHECK-IN: St Thomas Aquinas Parish has registered with the NSW Government for our Check-in QR Code. **The QR Code is now on the front doors of our Church. We will provide further information when we are able to resume.**



ST THOMAS AQUINAS RECORDED MASS: Fr Paul would be honoured if you could join him each week - Every week since March 2020, Fr Paul has recorded Mass at Lawson and it is uploaded onto our Website and Facebook pages every Saturday morning. You are able to view at any time. **Web:** www.stchurchspringwood.org.au or **Facebook:** St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community Springwood.

ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL LIVESTREAMED MASS: Mass will be livestreamed daily from St Patrick's Cathedral via their Facebook page and YouTube channel. Copy the link to join on YouTube. <https://tinyurl.com/stpatsyoutube>. Livestreamed Mass Times: Monday to Friday 6.30am and 12.30pm, Saturday 6.00pm and Sunday 11.00am.

MASS FOR YOU AT HOME: Many people who are isolated, in hospital or do not have the internet, rely on Mass For You at Home. The Catholic Mass is broadcast free-to-air each Sunday morning on Channel 10 and WIN at 6.00am. Find some familiar faces from the Diocese of Parramatta celebrating Mass over the coming weeks. Find out more at www.massforyou.com.au.

ST MARY'S TOWERS RETREAT CENTRE: St Mary's Towers Retreat Centre in Douglas Park, NSW, is offering a series of online live retreats throughout the month of August. All retreats, ranging from a single day to 5 days, start at 9am on the first date and conclude at 5pm on the final date and will be presented using Microsoft Teams. For further information or to register for any of the retreats, email contact@towersretreat.org.au or visit <https://towersretreat.org.au/>

Deanery Council News

We gathered via Zoom on the 31st July and we would like to update you on some of our discussion.

- Not surprisingly, we decided to postpone our September Gathering of Talents. Having said that, we were buoyed by the interest we received via the surveys returned after the concept was launched in late June. From STA we received 30 replies and people were interested in all the proposed workshops with 13 keen to explore initiatives for **Outreach/Pastoral Care**. Other areas averaged 8/9 apart from Ecumenism with 5. Significantly, 6 parishioners nominated themselves to facilitate workshops on the day. You can all be assured we will try to transform your interest into action when some normality returns to our church and community.
- Specifically, from our meeting we are heralding two initiatives and are asking if parishioners from **EACH parish** might take some responsibility for:
 - The Epiphany pilgrimage** held each January, whereby pilgrims walk from Emu Plains to Bell. We know individuals already volunteer to provide hospitality at STA but the organisers are inviting like-minded people to join them in promoting, refining and discerning the future of this powerful experience.
 - The Australian Bishops' Social Justice statement "**Cry of the Poor, Cry of the Earth**" was launched on the 5th August. This document contains profound challenges and invites real responsibility from each of us. The deanery vision is for **a network of animators** across the deanery to bring this document to **life in the Mountains**. Given that our Diocese now has a "Peace, Justice and Ecology" team and that 17 of our parishioners self-nominated for either the Social Justice or Laudate Si workshops it seems that the Spirit is calling us to put the theory into practice.

If you feel called to take an active role in either of these initiatives please email the parish office.
Thanks Kim Crawford & Vic O'Callaghan (STA reps)

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop was an educator, a pioneer and a leader, someone who had compassion for others regardless of their situation or race. Galvanised by her belief in the value of education as the foundation for a fulfilling life, Mary's motto was **'never see a need without doing something about it'**.

Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop - Pope Benedict XVI visits Mary MacKillop Memorial Chapel

(In June 1995, Mary MacKillop was beautified by Pope John Paul II).

On the 17th July 2008, Pope Benedict XVI visited the Mary MacKillop Memorial Chapel at Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney. Pope Benedict XVI announced on the 19th February 2010 that Mary MacKillop would become Australia's first canonised saint.



Two years later on the 17th October 2010, Mary MacKillop was canonised.

Photo: Pope Benedict XVI with former Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart Sr Anne Derwin with a statue of Saint Mary MacKillop



Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop 12.6.1875

"May God grant you courage and true wisdom in all you do and say."

Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop 21.5.1877

"God understands us better than we understand ourselves or each other."

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Prayer

*Ever generous God,
You inspired Saint Mary MacKillop
To live her life faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and constant in
bringing hope and encouragement
to those who were disheartened, lonely or needy.
With confidence in your generous providence and through the
intercession of Saint Mary MacKillop
We ask that you grant our request (insert your request).
We ask that our faith and hope be fired afresh by the Holy Spirit
so that we too, like Mary MacKillop, may live with courage, trust and openness.
Ever generous God hear our prayer.
We ask this through Jesus Christ.
Amen.*

Mary MacKillop pray for us.