

Getting to know the Readings

Scribes and Widows

In a public place and likely within earshot of his targets, Jesus hurls a scathing insult at the scribes by urging the crowd to be wary of them. The scribes of Jesus' day were experts in the Law of Moses, scholars to whom people turned for proper understanding of God's will as revealed in Scripture. They contributed to the development of rabbinism in the third century of the common era, the forerunner of modern-day Judaism.

Jesus publicly criticises their behaviour as a ceaseless grasping for honour. The Talmud notes that when two people meet in the marketplace, the one inferior in knowledge of the Law should greet the other first. Since no one knew the Law as well as the scribes, they sought out and basked in this recognition.

In the synagogue the scribes claimed the best seats which were those on a platform facing the people. People seated on these chairs rested their backs against the same wall that held the ark which contained the Torah scrolls.

At banquets, the best seats were reserved for people of importance like experts in the Law.

Jesus concludes his attack by accusing the scribes of "devouring widows' houses." No sooner has Jesus spoken than a widow comes along and places two of the smallest coins in first-century Palestine into the coffers, thus fulfilling her religious duty.

Jesus' comment on the widow's donation is not a word of praise but rather a word of lament: "Truly I say to you this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For they all contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, her whole living" (Mk 12:43-44).

The word for "widow" in Hebrew carries the meaning of one who is silent, who is unable to speak. Recall that all of Mediterranean culture is divided along gender lines. Men belong in the public sphere; women remain secluded with the children deep within the home. Men play the public role, and women do not speak on their own behalf.

A widow is already bereft of her husband, the male in whom she was embedded. If her eldest son was not yet married, she was even more disadvantaged. And if she had no sons at all, she might have to return to her family of origin (see Lev 22:13; Ruth 1:8) if that were still possible. As the Pastoral Epistles indicate, widows constituted a major concern in the early Christian community. Younger ones posed a special danger, and the author of those Epistles urged them to remarry (1 Tim 5:3-16, esp. v. 14).

Because widows were not included in Hebrew inheritance laws, their constant concern was simply living from day to day. Any resources this widow had were meagre, at best. In the Mediterranean world, the cultural obligation upon everybody is to maintain one's status and do nothing to jeopardise or lessen it. If, as Jesus observes, this woman has given to the Temple "all she had to live on," the woman has acted very shamefully. She has deliberately worsened her status.

Jesus does not praise but rather laments this woman's behaviour. She has been taught "sacrificial giving" by her religious leaders, and that is the pity. These authorities promised to redistribute Temple collections to the needy. In actuality, they spent the funds on conspicuous consumption instead: long robes and banquets. This is how they "devoured the estates of widows" (Mk 12:40).

John J. Pilch

John J. Pilch was a biblical scholar and facilitator of parish renewals and currently lectures at the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore

St Thomas Aquinas Parish Bulletin

168 Hawkesbury Road, Springwood, NSW, 2777
PO Box 4410, Winmalee, NSW 2777
Parish Office: 02 4754 1052

Parish Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm
Parish Email: 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 Shinto Francis - 4754 1052 *Emergency ONLY:* 0415 077 969

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

Rosary Devotion: Tuesday - Friday 9.00 am
Adoration, Rosary & Chaplet: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month, 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 request

Weddings: By appointment - restricted numbers
Funerals: By appointment - restricted numbers



**MASKS ARE
COMPULSORY**



GENEROSITY MATTERS

The message of this Gospel passage is ... an appeal to generosity. Generosity belongs to everyday life; it's something we should think: 'How can I be more generous, with the poor, the needy? ... How can I help more?' ... We can do miracles through generosity. Generosity in little things. Let us ask for this grace from the Lord, this generosity which broadens our hearts and leads us to magnanimity. We need to have a magnanimous heart, where all can enter. Those wealthy people who gave money were good; that elderly lady was a saint.

*Pope Francis reminds us that generosity matters
26th November, 2018*

Anne Osdieck

THE SECOND READING

Hebrews 9:24-28

But now once for all he has appeared at the end of the ages to take away sin by his sacrifice.

Christ offered himself on our behalf forever.

And he took away the sins of the world.

Deo Gratias.

Anne Osdieck

Today's Readings: 1 Kg 17:10-16; Heb 9:24-28; Mk 12:38-44

Entrance Antiphon: Let my prayer come into your presence. Incline your ear to my cry for help, O Lord.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 145:7-10

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Happy the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs! Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose, near restful waters he leads me.

Next Week: Dan 12:1-3; Heb 10:11-14, 18; Mk 13:24-32



Sick: Gerry Thistleton, Roshan Rupesinghe, Evelyn Robinson, 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

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.

DISPENSATION: As advised previously, Catholics from the Diocese of Parramatta are from 20 March 2020 dispensed from their Sunday Mass obligation until further notice (Canon 1248 §2 and Catechism 2181.) There is no change to this dispensation at this stage.

SYNOD OF BISHOPS: Catholics across Australia are invited to participate in a period of local consultation for the next international Synod of Bishops, which has the theme: "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission". The People of God are invited to use a guided, prayerful reflection method to consider a series of questions and make submissions via an online portal. Those submissions will help the Bishops develop a national report to support the global process leading to an international gathering in 2023. Find out more at: <http://www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch>

CATHOLIC ENGAGED ENCOUNTER WEEKEND: 13 – 14 November 2021, How prepared are you for marriage? Engaged Encounter provides you with deeper insights into each other and into married life. We give you a chance to spend time together to strengthen and enrich your relationship. The next Engaged Encounter Weekend will be held on 13 – 14 November. If COVID restrictions prevent a face-to-face seminar, it will be held via Zoom. For further information and to register, visit www.engagedencounter.org.au/

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE: We have the services of a Justice of the Peace available for our Parish community every Tuesday and Wednesday, 8.30-3.30pm in our Parish office.

POSITIONS VACANT: Digital Content Creator – Diocese of Parramatta; Human Resources Partner – Catholic Diocese of Parramatta Services Limited, Diocese of Parramatta. For further details, please visit parracatholic.org/employment

DIVINE RETREAT CENTRE ONE DAY PILGRIMAGE RETREAT: 28 November 2021, The Divine Retreat Centre in Somersby, NSW is hosting a one-day pilgrimage from 9am to 1pm on Sunday 28 November. All retreats are held with NSW COVID-Safe compliance and masks are mandatory. Bookings are required and limited numbers are available. Please call (02) 4372 1598 or email drcretreatrego@gmail.com to confirm attendance. Visit www.divineretreatcentre.org.au for more information.

CHARISMATIC HEALING MASS: Mass will be followed by a prayer for healing, led by Fr Tony Alex on Sunday, 21st November, 2.00pm at St Nicholas of Myra, Penrith. Everyone is welcome.

NOVEMBER MASS FOR DEPARTED SOULS

Wednesday, 24th November, 7.00pm
St Thomas Aquinas Church

ALL Parishioners are invited to attend Mass which will be celebrated for the Repose of the Souls of family members.

A candle ceremony will be part of the celebration of the Mass, so if you would like your loved one remembered by lighting a candle, which your family member will place on the Sanctuary, please contact the Parish Office no later than Tuesday, 23rd November.

*A framed photo of your loved one can be placed on the Sanctuary **before** the commencement of Mass.*

St Thomas Aquinas Parish Sacramental Program 2022

First Reconciliation

First Parent Meeting - Tuesday, 1st February 2022, 7pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church

Second Parent Meeting - Tuesday, 8th February 2022, 7pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church

Commitment of Candidates - Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th February 2022 at any of the weekend Masses

First Reconciliation - Tuesday 29th March, 5.30pm and 7.30pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church

First Holy Communion

First Parent Meeting - Tuesday, 10th May, 7pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church

First Holy Communion - Saturday, 18th June, 10am, St Thomas Aquinas Church

Confirmation

First Parent Meeting - Tuesday, 19th July, 7pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church

Second Parent Meeting - Tuesday, 26th July, 7pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church

Commitment of Candidates - Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th July at any of the weekend Masses

Confirmation - Tuesday, 30th August, 7pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church



Confirmation Candidates 2021

If your child is currently in Year 6, 2021 and they would like to be confirmed at Easter 2022, please contact the Parish office before the end of November so arrangements can be made.

CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE (SRE) REFLECTION DAY:

Caring for Self and Others in God's Love - Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Hall, 7 Grantham Rd, Seven Hills, Wednesday, 1st December 2021, Registration at 9.00am. Reflection begins at 9.30am through to 2.15pm. Please RSVP to Maree Collis at maree.collis@parracatholic.org by 26th November. **The Reflection Day:** Looks at the past year, what we have appreciated, how we have grown and how we can stay aware of this goodness. Draws upon the richness of Pope Francis' Let Us Dream, and Hugh McKay's The Kindness Revolution. Includes time for both small group sharing and individual reflection.

HSC Students 2021 - Good luck

We wish all of the students in our Parish community sitting their HSC exams the very, very best. Be kind to yourselves and do the very best you can do on the day.

To all the mums, dads, siblings and other family members which make up the village of supporting your HSC students, thank you and good luck.