



ONE MISSION, TWO PARISHES

Saint Timothy's & Saint Luke the Evangelist
Catholic Parishes, Forest Hill & Blackburn South

Parish Office for both Parishes: 17 Stevens Road Forest Hill Vic 3133

Parish Office tel: 03 9412 8499; Presbytery tel: 03 9877 2292

Email: foresthill@cam.org.au | Web: sttimothys.org.au

Email: blackburnsouth@cam.org.au | Web: blackburnsouth.org.au

WEEKLY BULLETIN: SUNDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2023

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - YEAR A

BEING THE GOOD NEWS ... BY PROMOTING GOD'S HOSPITALITY



Readings this week: Ezek 33:7 - 9; Ps 94; Rom 13:8 – 10; Mt 18:15 - 20.

Gospel Reflection ~ Greg Sunter

This week's gospel provides us with a lesson that could be well heeded in our contemporary world. Matthew relates a discourse on dealing with a grievance or sin between two 'brothers' – community members; fellow disciples. Matthew advises his audience that the first step is to try to resolve the matter privately between the offender and the one offended. This is a practice that seems to have almost disappeared today. When one person feels offended or hurt by another, it seems the last thing they do is to go and speak to the person, confront them with the hurt and try to resolve it. Soap operas and TV sitcoms promote avoidance of issues. The sub-text of so many TV shows is about lying to cover up a mistake; seeking revenge for some perceived (usually incorrect) insult; or working through others to try to deal with some hurt. If characters on these TV shows were to confront one another with a perceived hurt and seek to resolve the difference between them, then there would be no 'drama' to play out in the show. Admittedly, it doesn't make for great television, but it does make for much better relationships! Matthew advises his community that only after a failed attempt to address an issue face to face should other members of the community become involved to further confront the offender through witnessing to their fault. The third step is to bring the person before the church community to be confronted with their actions and only after these three attempts to challenge the person fail should they be shunned. There is a very strong message of reconciliation that comes through this process. The person is given every chance to face their error and to seek amends with the one they have hurt. The whole process works towards bringing the community back together in harmony, not to seek revenge and punishment.

Historical Context – Tell the Church: The idea of bringing a 'sinner' or offender before the church community to be confronted is one that the early Christians borrowed from the Jewish culture out of which they were formed. In Jewish society, the local synagogue was effectively a community centre. It was a gathering place, not only for worship and education, but also for meeting, debating and seeking solutions to problems. The synagogue community took on the role of mediator, witness, jury, judge and, if needed, punisher. The role of the scribes in Jewish society was to interpret the Law – the Torah – in resolving everyday situations. **Scriptural context – A Scriptural Sandwich:** The placement of this discourse about confronting your brother within the gospel of Matthew helps to shed light on its meaning. Immediately preceding this passage is the parable of the Lost Sheep, about leaving the 99 to go out in search of the one lost sheep. Immediately following this week's passage is the parable of the unmerciful or unforgiving servant who, despite receiving forgiveness of his own debt from his master, throws a fellow servant in debtors prison for failing to pay back money owed. The three passages together give a detailed discourse on forgiveness and reconciliation – dealing with those who have sinned, even against you personally and the powerful call to compassion and mercy.

Living the Gospel – Facing the issue: It can be very difficult when we feel that someone has hurt us to actually go and speak to them about how we are feeling. It is so much easier to revel in our hurt or seek payback for the hurt. Sometimes we feel that we might ruin a friendship by speaking to our friend about a way in which they have hurt us. But a hurt that goes unaddressed will continue to hurt and will probably be repeated. This week's gospel reminds us of the need to challenge our friends when they hurt us but it also reminds us that when we have hurt others we need to be challenged about it and called to account for our actions.

BEING THE GOOD NEWS

Whitehorse Deanery
Eastern Region
Archdiocese of Melbourne
Rev Father Gerard
Parish Priest

Sonya O'Farrell

Part-time Parish Secretary
Wednesdays,

Thursdays & Fridays
10.00am – 2.00pm

SUNDAY MASS

ST: & SL: Saturday Vigil @ 6.00pm

Sunday ST: @ 9.00am Australian
Vietnamese – 5.00pm

& SL: @ 8.30am & 10.30am

WEEKDAY MASS & SL: ROSARY

ST: Weds. & Thurs. @ 9.15am
Fri. @ 10.00am

1st Wednesday of the month
@ 10.00am Mass of Anointing.

SL: Tues. @ 5.00pm

Weds., Thurs. & Fri. @ 9.30am
Sat. @ 9.00am

RECONCILIATION

SL: Saturday 9.30am – 10.00am &
5.30pm – 5.50pm

SL: EXPOSITION & BENEDICTION
The Blessed Sacrament is exposed
for Adoration Wednesday
Start: 7.00pm | End: 8.00pm

MACS Catholic Primary School
21 Stevens Road, Vermont, 3133 Vic
Tel: (03) 9878 4188

Ms. Anne Maree Jones **Principal**

Email: principal@sttims.catholic.edu.au

Website: <https://sttims.catholic.edu.au/>

MACS Catholic Primary School

46 Orchard Grove,

Blackburn South Vic 3130

Tel: (03) 9877 4023

Mrs. Clare Ryan: **Principal**

Email: principal@slblackburnst.catholic.edu.au

Website: slblackburnst.catholic.edu.au

Prayer to Saint Timothy

O God, who adorned Saint Timothy
with apostolic virtues, grant,
through his intercession that, living
justly and devoutly in this present
age, we may merit to reach our
heavenly homeland. Through our
Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who
lives and reigns with you in the
unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for
ever and ever. Amen.

*Patron Saint of stomach and
intestinal disorders.*

Prayer to Saint Luke the Evangelist

O St. Luke, you were chosen to
reveal in preaching and writing
God's love for the poor. Moved by
the heavenly Spirit of Love, you
detailed the life of Jesus, showing
His divinity and His genuine
compassion for all human beings.
Help those who already glory in
God's name to persevere in one
heart and one mind and inspire all
people that they may hear the Good
News of Salvation. Amen

*Patron Saint of artists, physicians,
surgeons, students and butchers.*

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER this weekend all who are sick,
Terry Wells, Caratha McKerrow, Tony Keaney, Kathryn Holmes,
Therese O'Donoghue, Stewart Davis, Trevor Stowe, Jerry Donoghue, Veronica
and all those Parishioners unable to be among us this weekend. For all who
have died recently, for those who have died in the war in Ukraine and for those
whose anniversaries occur about this time especially Kath Tobias,
Stella Hammett, Francis Tyrrell, Eileen Mayo, Audrey Barry, Annie Calleja,
Sir Michael Curtain, Ken West, Jeffrey Lawrence, Maria Salinas, Robert Mead,
William Searle, Edward McGrath, Kathleen Williams, Henry Gleeson,
Michael White and Eileen Leach. May they rest in peace.

LITURGICAL CALENDAR THIS WEEK: **Ordinary Time ~ Tuesday:** The Most
Holy Name of Mary; **Wednesday:** St John Chrysostom, bishop, martyr. **Thursday:** The
Exaltation of the Holy Cross; **Friday:** Our Lady of Sorrows; **Saturday:** Sts Cornelius,
pope, martyr, and Cyprian, bishop, martyr. **Masses this weekend:** Preface VI of The
Sundays in Ordinary Time, Eucharistic Prayer III, Eucharistic Acclamation I.

ANNUAL PRF FATHER'S DAY APPEAL LAST WEEKEND: Thankyou to all
Parishioners who supported this Annual Appeal. From ST's \$1086.40 and from
SL's \$1248.30 has been dispatched this past week as our contribution this year.

SL WE WELCOME THIS WEEKEND the St V de P State President, Deputy
State President, CEO, the Ringwood Regional Council President & the next
Eastern Central Council President to Commission Presidents, Conference
Members, Associate Members and Volunteers of the Region and Staff from
Gerald Ward House.

POPE FRANCIS 2020 ~ 'FRATELLI TUTTI': 8. 'It is my desire that, in this our
time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to
the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity. Fraternity between all men and
women. "Here we have a splendid secret that shows us how to dream and to turn
our life into a wonderful adventure. No one can face life in isolation... We need a
community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep
looking ahead. How important it is to dream together... By ourselves, we risk seeing
mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together".
[6] Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the
same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us
bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her
own voice, brothers and sisters all'.

SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY 2023 THIS WEEKEND: The Catholic Church in
Australia marks Safeguarding Sunday (formerly Child Protection Sunday) on the
second Sunday of September each year at the conclusion of National Child
Protection Week. In 2023, Safeguarding Sunday falls on September 10.
Safeguarding Sunday seeks to acknowledge the immense damage caused by
the sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults within Catholic contexts. It
makes [a commitment to practices and protocols](#) that create and maintain safe
environments for all people. It invites people to pray for those harmed by
abuse, both directly and indirectly.

SL 'WELCOMERS' AND 'PROCESSION OF THE GIFTS' ROSTERS: These
are available this weekend and Parishioners are invited to record their **names**
and **contact details** on the respective clipboards in our Church Foyer/Narthex
so our these Parish Rosters can be prepared and distributed **asap**.

MELBOURNE CATHOLIC: [Meet our new Director of Safeguarding](#)

A VOCATION VIEW: How much would the world be changed if everyone
were completely forgiving? Probably totally! Jesus' stories of forgiveness are so
loved because they are so needed. Re-tell them! Re-live them!

STEWARDSHIP CORNER: "You, son of man, I have appointed watchman
for the house of Israel..." Ezekiel 33:7 Many of us are generous with our gifts.
However, many of us are not generous in proportion to the gifts we have been
given. How often do we give at the minimum level required? Remember, the
Lord calls us to nurture and develop our gifts and to give back with increase.
He calls us to be generous with all the gifts, especially the one that means the
most to us. (**ST:** Weekly First Collection Presbytery Envelopes: \$174; Thanksgiving
Stewardship Envelopes this week: \$185; Vietnamese Donation: \$330.45; **SL:** Last
week's Church Stewardship Envelopes: \$583; Last week's Presbytery Stewardship
Envelopes: \$377).

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS who have walked
upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the
continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of
Reconciliation.

WEEKEND PARISH MINISTRY ROSTER

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

SATURDAY **6:00 PM SL**
6:00 PM ST
SUNDAY **8:30 AM SL**
9:00 AM ST
10:30 AM SL
5.00PM ST

9 AND 10 SEPTEMBER

Shirley Prabha
 Rachel Greal
 Peter McKeown
 Stephen Fan & Mai Le
 Steve Kilroe-Smith
 Mai Le & Dieu Nguyen

16 AND 17 SEPTEMBER

Olive Hammill
 Maria Deayton
 Darren McLean
 Martin Harris & Joelle Rousetty
 Dale Dixon
 Youth Group

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

SATURDAY **6:00 PM SL**
6:00 PM ST
SUNDAY **8:30 AM SL**
9:00 AM ST
10:30 AM SL
5.00PM ST

9 AND 10 SEPTEMBER

Melina Barcellona
 Owen Greal
 Ian Holmes
 Pat Kawalevski
 Lynda Kilroe-Smith
 Hoang Nguyen

16 AND 17 SEPTEMBER

Sonya O'Farrell
 Peter Naughtin
 Megan McLean
 Laura Cigana
 Margaret Gearon
 Youth Group

SLIDE OPERATORS

SATURDAY **6:00 PM SL**
6:00 PM ST
SUNDAY **8:30 AM SL**
9:00 AM ST
10:30 AM SL
5.00PM ST

9 AND 10 SEPTEMBER

Choir
 Michelle Chen
 Rosemary Donaldson
 Lee Min Yee
 Manny Gonzalez
 Toan Tran

16 AND 17 SEPTEMBER

David Prabha
 Michelle Chen
 Rosemary Donaldson
 Lee Min Yee
 Manny Gonzalez
 Theresa Nguyen

SL WELCOMERS 9/10 SEPT

6:00 PM Volunteer
8:30 AM Volunteer
10:30 AM Volunteer

HOSPITALITY **THE BASIC LITURGICAL MINISTRY**

SL WELCOMERS 16/17 SEPT

6:00 PM John Ryan
9:30 AM Joe Brogno
10:30 AM Margaret Gearon

SL CHURCH CLEANING

16th Sept. – Maree's Team
 Maree Moss, Allen Leung,
 Serena Ng & Lynda Kilroe-Smith

ST CHURCH CLEANING

23rd Sept @ 10am
 Hoang Nguyen, Anico Yee
 & Dzung Vu

SL CHURCH FLOWERS

9th Sept – Jo Adams
 16th Sept – Joan McHugh

ST CHURCH FLOWERS

Parishioners
 This week Team 3:
 Peter Deayton & Kelvin Chen
 Next week Team 4:
 Mary Choy & Eileen Tam

ON THE JOURNEY THIS WEEK: Fr Mike Delaney says we must reflect before responding to issues in the community. It's not my belief or position that I need to defend, but it's the gospel that must be defended. Plus: Mother Hilda says the next time things feel as though life suddenly got cold for you, be of good cheer, it's only God telling you that he's there. Fr Tony Percy says that the Gospel is a call to profound prayer and spirituality in our communities, something we need in this age of great secularization. Robert Falzon on raising great fathers. Byron and Francine Pirola with Smart Loving, and more great music!

ACBC OFFICE FOR JUSTICE, ECOLOGY AND PEACE: [Social Justice Trends | September 2023](#)

MAJELLAN FAMILY MEDIA: [Winning is everything... Isn't it?](#)

ACBC OFFICE FOR JUSTICE, ECOLOGY AND PEACE: [Social Justice Trends | September 2023](#)

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING LTD: [ACSL Newsletter Vol. 6, Ed. 7. September 2023](#)

CITY OF WHITEHORSE: [Partnerships & Community Engagement](#) ~ a collaboration between 4 Neighbourhood Houses in the City of Whitehorse. As you may be aware, we provide short-term, government subsidised courses, called Learn Local courses. These courses are aimed at adults in the community that are wanting to upskill as a pathway to further training, education and employment.

HEART OF LIFE: **Waiting at the Well - 4x Thu, 5, 12, 19 & 26 Oct, 10am – 12.30pm** (in-person event) with Carole Carmody rsm & Julie Adam. This series offers an opportunity for those waiting to have their thirst quenched at the Well of Life to explore the depths of wisdom in their own heart, to recognise wisdom in the encounter with another, and to dwell in the Heart of Contemplation. Places limited. Bookings via <https://www.heartoflife.melbourne/events/waiting-at-the-well-series/> or email info@heartoflife.melbourne. Cost \$100 for the series or \$30 per session.

SAFETY STATEMENT: We are committed to a safe and nurturing culture for all children and vulnerable persons in our Church. Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish Blackburn South holds the care, safety, wellbeing of children and vulnerable persons as central and fundamental responsibilities of the Church. This commitment is drawn from and inherent to the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the Gospel.

by Promoting God's Hospitality

Parish Groups & Contacts

Lectors, Registrars, Collectors,
 Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist,
 Slide Projector Operator & Rosters

ST: Corrie Quimbo 9412 8499

SL: Margaret Gearon 0409 807 135

Baptism Preparation

ST: Mary Italiano 9412 8499

Vietnamese Community

Hoang Nguyen 0422 400 116

Andy Tran 0422 382 109

Vietnamese Youth

John Dinh 0448 977 037

Parish Collection Preparers

ST: Barry Silvester &

Michael Kawalevski

Stewardship Counters

SL: Dale Dixon - 0433 885 087

Steve Kilroe-Smith - 0404 864 232

Parish Pastoral Council

ST: T.B.A.

SL: T.B.A.

Parishes Safeguarding Committee

Theresa Nguyen, Mary Italiano,
 Darren McLean - 0417 774 504

Janette Clark - 9877 2292

Fr Gerard - 9877 2292

Parish History

SL: Margaret Gearon - 0409 807 135

Whitehorse Deanery - Fr Gerard

Finance Committee

Bernard Negline

Parish Accountant

SL: Hall Hire

Sonya O'Farrell @ the
 Parish Office - 9877 2292

Church Sacristan

ST: Margaret King & Hoang Nguyen

SL: Greg Grant - 0401 644 474

Church Housekeeping

ST: Margaret King 9412 8499

Church Cleaning & Flowers

SL: Megan McLean - 0419 347 693

Church Linen

SL: Beryl Kanagalinggam

Parish Garden Maintenance

ST: Des Connors, Leo Watson,

Anico Yee & Vietnamese Community

SL: Darren McLean - 0417 774 504

Holy Communion to the housebound - Fr Gerard

Emmaus College School Advisory

Council Parish Rep.:

SL: Bernard O'Malley

Parish Choirs

ST: Mary Italiano & Theresa Nguyen

SL: Lina & Maria Mafi

0411 136 043

Parish & School Fete Committee

SL: Mrs. Clare Ryan - 9877 4023

School Advisory Council

ST: Ms. Anne Maree Jones 9878 4188

SL: Mrs. Clare Ryan - 9877 4023

School Parents' Association

ST: Ms. Anne Maree Jones 9878 4188

SL: Mrs. Clare Ryan - 9877 4023

St Vincent de Paul Conference

For Assistance: 1800 305 330

(Freecall: Monday to Friday 10am-3pm)

Parish Contacts:

ST: John McCoy

SL: Tony Lobo &

Steve Kilroe-Smith

Raise your voices ... Entrance Antiphon: You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right; treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

Response to the Psalm: O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! God was in Christ, to reconcile the world to himself; and the Good News of reconciliation he has entrusted to us. Alleluia!

Eucharistic Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

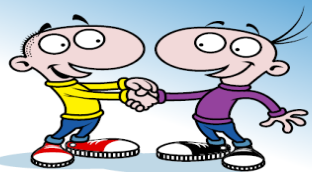
Communion Antiphon: Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God; my soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

ADULT FORMATION - EVANGELISATION BRISBANE: [Advent Resource 2023](#)

MARCH FOR THE BABIES: Come and show your support for the unborn Join the March for the Babies on 7th October, 2023 at 12.30pm in the Treasury Gardens, Cnr Spring & Wellington Pde. Wear blue or pink.

SL: 60TH ANNIVERSARY WINES FOR OUR PARISH: Please contact the Parish Office at your convenience. Bottle \$15, 2 Bottles \$25, 6 Bottles \$75, 12 Bottles \$140; (Will mix, red/white).

SL: MARGARET GEARON'S HISTORY OF THE PARISH & SCHOOL PART II is now available for @ \$15 each.



Talk to those who do wrong by you

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Jesus wants us to be peacemakers

When someone does wrong things against me, I can be a peacemaker by....

When I do wrong things against someone, I can be a peacemaker by....



How did Jesus treat sinners?

Matthew was a tax collector and was disliked by many people. Jesus shared a meal with him and other sinners. Matthew became a disciple of Jesus. *Mt 9:9-13*

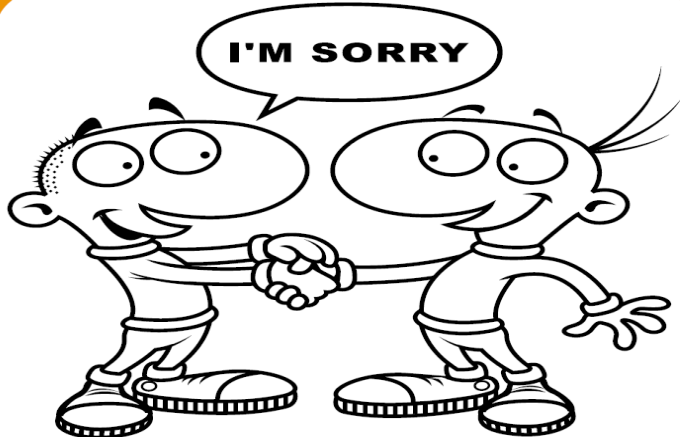
Draw Jesus sharing a meal with Matthew and his friends

A woman who had sinned was brought before Jesus. The pharisees wanted Jesus to condemn her, but instead Jesus forgave her sins. *Jn 8:2-11*

Write a short prayer asking God to forgive our sins

Dear Lord, _____

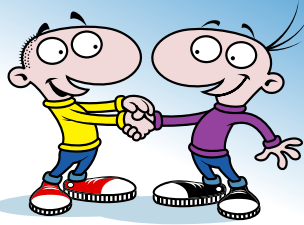
_____ Amen.



If someone sins against you, speak to them and tell them what was wrong. If they listen to you, you will have won them back.

A rich man named Zaccheus climbed a tree to get a better view of Jesus. People became upset when Jesus decided to be a guest at Zaccheus' house, but Zaccheus was so happy he gave half his possessions to the poor. *Lk 19:1-10*

Draw Zaccheus in the sycamore tree



Talk to those who do wrong by you

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Jesus wants us to be peacemakers

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When I do wrong things against someone, I can be a peacemaker by....



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Draw Jesus sharing a meal with Matthew and his friends

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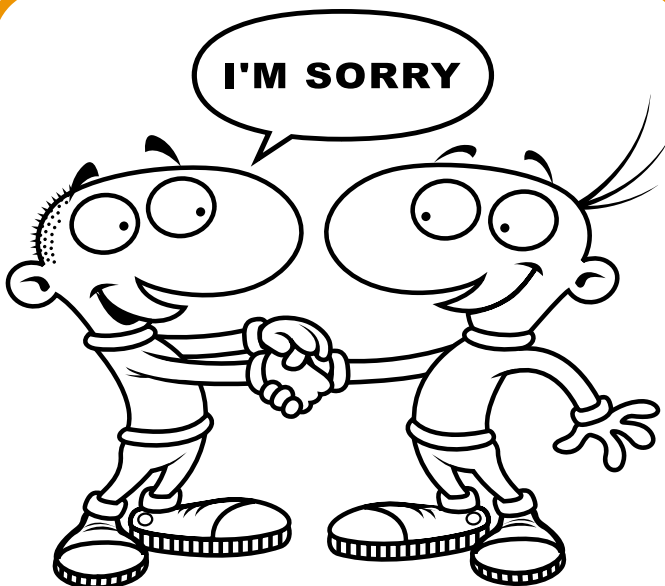
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_____ Amen.

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Draw Zaccheus in the sycamore tree



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SUNDAY READINGS

READ AT HOME

Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A

10 September 2023



Collect

O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption,
look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters,
that those who believe in Christ
may receive true freedom
and an everlasting inheritance.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Readings and Commentaries

Pope Francis issued his encyclical, *Fratelli tutti* (On Fraternity and Social Friendship), on the eve of his namesake's feast in October 2020. It's a lengthy exposition of the neighbourly love about which Paul reminds the Romans today. Here's an introductory paragraph (#8):

"It is my desire that, in this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity. Fraternity between all men and women. Here we have a splendid secret that shows us how to dream and to turn our life into a wonderful adventure. No one can face life in isolation... We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. How important it is to dream together... By ourselves, we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together. Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all".

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel 33:7–9

The word of the Lord was addressed to me as follows, 'Son of man, I have appointed you as sentry to the House of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth, warn them in my name. If I say to a wicked man: Wicked wretch, you are to die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked man to renounce his ways, then he shall die for his sin, but I will hold you responsible for his death. If, however, you do warn a wicked man to renounce his ways and repent, and he does not repent, then he shall die for his sin, but you yourself will have saved your life.'

Responsorial Psalm Ps 94:1–2, 6–9

R. O that today you would listen to his voice!
Harden not your hearts.

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;
hail the rock who saves us.
Let us come before him, giving thanks,
with songs let us hail the Lord. **R.**

Come in; let us bow and bend low;
let us kneel before the God who made us
for he is our God and we
the people who belong to his pasture,
the flock that is led by his hand. **R.**

O that today you would listen to his voice!
'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as on that day at Massah in the desert
when your fathers put me to the test;
when they tried me, though they saw my work.' **R.**

First Reading

Today's reading from the prophet Ezekiel echoes a passage heard much earlier in the book (3:16-21). It spells out his role and responsibilities as a prophet and also raises the question of individuals' moral responsibility. Ezekiel's mission is likened to that of a sentry. This image has connotations of being on the lookout for danger. The sentry's task is to watch out for the approach of enemies and to sound the alarm. In that sense it has rather negative connotations. It suggests that Ezekiel's mission is to warn of the dangerous consequences of infidelity to the covenant.

In the first place this puts the onus on Ezekiel to be faithful to his prophetic vocation. If he fails to warn a wicked person of God's judgement, and that person dies unrepentant, he himself will be counted responsible. If, on the other hand, he does alert someone to their wicked ways and that person refuses to repent, then only the sinner will suffer, not the prophet.

On the face of it, this is a sobering rather than an encouraging text. It raises, but does not resolve, issues such as the relationship between God's will and human freedom and between personal and collective responsibility. It also poses the difficult question of our responsibility to call wrong-doers to account, a thorny issue taken up in today's gospel.

This rather downbeat reading may not have immediate appeal, but readers must be faithful to its serious tone. The NRSV lectionary presents it in inclusive language.

Responsorial Psalm

Right from the start, the response to the psalm picks up the prophetic warning conveyed in the first reading. It lays down the gauntlet in no uncertain terms. It yokes together an appeal and a command. The psalmist summons everyone to heed God's voice and not harden their hearts.

This means there are awkward transitions in the praying of the responsorial psalm. The sombre response contrasts sharply with the summons to joyful praise and thanks with which Psalm 94/95 begins. The language suggests the psalm may have been a processional chant for entry to the place of worship. God is to be hailed as saviour, creator and shepherd. The unqualified festive tone of these opening verses is as sunny as the response is overcast.

Only the third stanza, a pleading lament, matches the response. The people's historic complaints on their way through the desert are recalled via the place names, Meribah and Massah (Ex 17:1-7). Nonetheless, this chastening memory does forge a link with the earlier verses, because it was at Massah that God proved to be "the rock who saves us". When the people, tormented by thirst, complained to Moses, he was instructed by God to strike the rock with his staff and water flowed from it.

Leaving that point of continuity aside, a likely explanation for the change of tone within the original psalm is that, once the people had happily entered the sanctuary, they were issued a stern warning to prepare them to listen to God's word. This supposition gives coherence to the psalm. Nonetheless, readers should respect the contrasting moods within the psalm and not smooth out the differences.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

13:8–10

Avoid getting into debt, except the debt of mutual love. If you love your fellow men you have carried out your obligations. All the commandments: You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and so on, are summed up in this single command: You must love your neighbour as yourself. Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour; that is why it is the answer to every one of the commandments.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

18:15–20

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain any charge. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community; and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a pagan or a tax collector.

'I tell you solemnly, whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.

'I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them.'

Second Reading

It seems a pity that the lectionary omits the remainder of Romans 12. There Paul spells out what he means by "offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice". It's a beautiful sketch of the Christian life, akin to what he had written earlier to the Corinthian community. Also skipped over is the opening section of chapter 13, on obedience to civil authorities, including the obligation to pay taxes (13:7). Readers are recommended to read all this and ponder Paul's advice.

What we do have is a selection from things Jesus said when he was asked about the "first of all the commandments" (cf. Mk 12:28-34) and about what good deeds one must do to have eternal life (cf. Mt 19:16-22). The difference here is that Paul's focus is exclusively on love for one's neighbour. That is why the commandments he cites are those dealing with behaviour towards others, not those directed to God.

The reading covers familiar territory, but this should not tempt the reader into hurrying through the proclamation. The content may be well-known, but it remains core teaching for Christian believers and indeed for all who uphold the Golden Rule: treat others as you want them to treat you.

Gospel

The gospel writers, especially Mark, are unsparing of the faults and failures of Jesus' chosen disciples, not least in the hour of Jesus' greatest need. Luke is keen to highlight the transformation worked in them by the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost Day. He depicts the life of the first Jerusalem community in idyllic terms. But even he has to acknowledge breaches of these inspired ideals. Today's passage from Matthew testifies to the fact that early Christian communities had to develop procedures to deal with conflict and moral failure.

The three-step process – personal conversation with the offender, small group intervention and community engagement – is not peculiar to the Christian tradition. It has parallels in Greek philosophical writings and in the Essene community at Qumran. Notable, however, in this reading is the extension of the authority given to Peter (16:19) to the whole community. It's ironic that the final stage of the process, when all else fails, is to treat the person concerned "like a pagan or a tax collector" – after Jesus had gone out of his way to welcome tax collectors, and pagans had come to faith in Christ. Clearly the phrase is used in a conventional sense.

The final affirmation of Jesus' abiding presence seems to have no necessary connection with what precedes it, but it accords with Matthew's framing of his gospel in terms of Emmanuel, God-with-us (1:23 and 28:20). The reading may be divided into four sections – the disciplinary process, the authority of the community, the heavenly validation of petition, and the final assertion of Jesus' abiding presence. Each of these should be clearly distinguished in the proclamation.

Concluding Blessing

May almighty God bless us in his kindness
and pour out saving wisdom upon us.

Amen.

May he nourish us always with the teachings of the faith
and make us persevere in holy deeds.

Amen.

May he turn our steps towards himself
and show us the path of charity and peace.

Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
come down on us and remain with us for ever.

Amen.

(Adapted from the Solemn Blessing for Ordinary Time II, Roman Missal p 715.)



Supporting Safe Communities

SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY 2023
10 SEPTEMBER



catholic.au/s/article/safeguardingsunday2023

Supporting Safe Communities

SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY 2023
10 SEPTEMBER



Prayer

Gracious God,
you love and care for all of your children,
especially the smallest and most vulnerable.
We entrust to you the lives of children and adults at risk
who have been abused, neglected or exploited
and whose trust and innocence have been destroyed.

Help us to hear their cries of pain
and to take responsibility for those whose lives have been broken.
Help us to recognise the hurt felt by those wounded by abuse,
and the failure to be heard.

We pray that with the help of your grace
communities and families will find understanding and support,
so that now and in the future
their wounds may be healed
and they may find lasting peace.

Let your grace and love fall gently now upon our children and adults at risk,
giving them the inner strength, peace and resilience
to seek out assistance when required.

We ask this prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.
Amen

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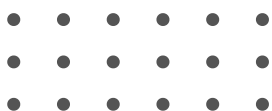
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