



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

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WEEKLY BULLETIN: SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2023

THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - YEAR A

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



Readings this week: Mal 1:14 – 2:2, 8 – 10; Ps 130; 1 Thess 2:7 – 9, 13; Mt 23:1 - 12.

Gospel Reflection ~ Greg Sunter

This week's gospel is a lesson on leadership. The gospel writer has Jesus offering a very strong criticism of the religious leadership of his day as exemplified by the scribes and Pharisees. He accuses them of not practising what they preach – a rather familiar criticism often levelled at politicians, teachers and church leaders in our own society today. When the criticism is used today it often implies that if the person fails to practise what they preach then what they have to say carries little weight. But rather than totally rejecting the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus cautions his listeners to take notice of what they have to say – as their teachings were always grounded in scripture and tradition – but not to follow their example of behaviour. Throughout Matthew's gospel we encounter criticisms of the scribes and Pharisees. This example is of the same nature: they were too caught up with rules and obligations and did not approach life with compassion and concern for the individual. The community for whom Matthew's gospel was intended was struggling with being both Jewish and Christian. They were coming to realise that to be followers of Jesus' way they needed to cast aside some of the attitudes and behaviours of their Jewish tradition. That applied particularly to the model of leadership that they had inherited from Jesus: a model of leadership through service, not power and authority. This gospel passage makes it very clear for that original community as well as ourselves that true leadership is provided through service to others and through humble action. Unlike the Pharisees of Jesus' time, Christian leaders are called to do away with the trappings of power and prestige and, instead, be of service to those whom they would lead. **Scriptural context – Laying down the Law:** Throughout Matthew's gospel Jesus is portrayed as the new law-giver, the new Moses. The five-part structure of the gospel reflects the five books of law that make up the Torah. This week's gospel is the beginning of an extended passage of criticism against the Pharisees (all of Ch 23). The sustained criticism is about how the Pharisees have actually 'got in the way' and made it more difficult for people to come to know God. Jesus, as the new law-giver, tells the people to put aside the distractions of the Pharisees and to recognise that God alone is the source of what is right and wrong; that the Christ is the only teacher. **Living the Gospel – Christian Leadership:** The Christian model of leadership often flies in the face of societal concepts of leadership. Many of the models of leadership we witness in society focus on exerting power *over* others. People are praised for showing 'strong' leadership when they manipulate situations, bully less powerful people and bulldoze their way through others' opinions. Whilst this model of leadership may have a certain effectiveness in the short term, there is certainly nothing 'Christian' about its operation and ultimately it forces a wedge between the leader and the led. Christian leadership focuses on empowering all parties and rather than power *over* others, it embraces power *through* and *with* others. **Gospel Focus – Contrasts:** Jesus' description of the Pharisees' behaviour offers a stark contrast to his own way of bringing about the Kingdom of God. By their actions, the Pharisees place burdens on the shoulders of others – burdens of guilt, shame, duty and punishment. Throughout his ministry, Jesus acted to lift such burdens from the shoulders of the downtrodden and marginalised. Jesus accuses the Pharisees of being motivated by drawing attention to themselves – the way they dress, the way they like to be addressed, even where they sit in the synagogues. In contrast, Jesus' ministry was typified by his humility and focus on others.

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: Weds. Thurs., & Fri. @ 9.30am

RECONCILIATION

SL: By appointment please

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@slblackburnstc.catholic.edu.au

Website: slblackburnstc.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, Mike Yore, John Fulton, 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 especially Margaret Fulton, for the casualties of war in Ukraine and for those whose anniversaries occur about this time especially Winston Wan, Paul Fung, Maurice Michael, Annie Hutchinson, Edgar Fernandes, Paul Curry, John Hicks, Frank Wattie, Anna Boccaccio, Stan Brown, Antonio Villani, Joseph Wong Fong, Mary Lui Sim, Lo Tak Hing, Ng Hon Shing, Val Lee, Adzel Turcido, Marijan Brysha, Augustine Rozario, Charles Van Haltren and Brendan Cleary. May they rest in peace.

LITURGICAL CALENDAR THIS WEEK: **Ordinary Time ~ Thursday:** The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica; **Friday:** St Leo the Great, pope, doctor; **Saturday:** St Martin of Tours, bishop.

SL CHRISTMAS CARDS & 2024 COLUMBAN CALENDARS are now available from the Counter in our Church Foyer/Narthex. Your donation towards their cost can be left in the St V de P Poor Box adjacent to where they are available.

ST CHRISTMAS CARDS & 2024 COLUMBAN CALENDARS are now on sale from the Piety Stall. St. Vincent de Paul Society cards are \$3.00 for a pack of 5, Magellan Cards are \$7.00 for a pack of 10 and the 2024 Columban calendars are \$ 9.00 each.

CARITAS AUSTRALIA'S GAZA CRISIS APPEAL An estimated 1 million people have been displaced in Gaza with immediate food, shelter, health, and psychosocial needs. You can donate online www.caritas.org.au/gaza or phone 1800 024 413

ADVENT WORKSHOP WITH FR ELIO CAPRA Do you struggle to read scripture? Using art, Fr Elio will lead us to discover a fresh perspective on the familiar Advent and Nativity Gospel stories. Monday November 20th, 7pm Coghlan Centre St John the Evangelist Parish 494 Whitehorse Rd, Mitcham. Bookings Online: <https://www.trybooking.com/CMODP> Parish office: 9401 6366 or mitcham@cam.org.au You are invited!

VISIT OF HIS EXCELLENCY MOST REV PAUL GALLAGHER Secretary for the Relations with States and International Organisations, Secretariat of State, Holy See. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Vatican, Archbishop Comensoli is pleased to welcome His Excellency Most Rev Paul Gallagher and the Apostolic Nuncio to Australia – His Excellency Most Rev Charles Balvo to Melbourne. Archbishops Comensoli, Gallagher and Balvo, together with clergy of the Archdiocese, will celebrate Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral on the Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica – Thursday 9 November, 5.30pm. All are welcome to attend.

AUSSIE BREAD TAGS FOR WHEELCHAIRS: A Parishioner has suggested we collect plastic bread tags. The tags are recycled locally, raising funds to buy [wheelchairs](#) for disadvantaged people, mainly in South Africa. Your contribution can be left in the Recycle Box in our Church foyer/narthex please.

A VOCATION VIEW: "Credibility" becomes a household word, not because there is so much of it, but because there is such a lack of it. The Church also needs people who not only practice what they preach but can also preach what they practice.

STEWARDSHIP CORNER: "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted." Matthew 23:12 The world celebrates people in the spotlight and those who have the most of everything. We think celebrity, money and possessions is the key to happiness. Yet, our world is filled with more loneliness, anxiety and depression than ever before. The key to a happy life is relationship. Relationship with God and each other. Trust is the foundation of any good relationship and humility is the seed of trust. (**ST:** Weekly First Collection Presbytery Envelopes: \$182; Thanksgiving Stewardship Envelopes this week: \$200; Vietnamese Donation: \$268; **SL:** Last week's Church Stewardship Envelopes: \$428; Last week's Presbytery Stewardship Envelopes: \$279).

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

4 AND 5 NOVEMBER

Shirley Prabha

Maria Deayton

Beryl Chelliah

A. Johny & V. Vinsonclero

Marg Yore

Mai Le & Tuyet Nguyen

11 AND 12 NOVEMBER

Mia Perang

Peggy D'Cruz

Kana Chelliah

Alfred Lee & Trevis Yee

Bernie Brennan

Ha Cao & Chi Nguyen

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

4 AND 5 NOVEMBER

Anne Lobo

Rachel Grealy

Kana Chelliah

Daphne Hickman

Lynda Kilroe-Smith

Hung Dinh

11 AND 12 NOVEMBER

Melina Barcellona

Susan Chen

Beryl Chelliah

Chin L Tay

Marg Yore

Hoang Nguyen

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

4 AND 5 NOVEMBER

Choir

Michelle Chen

Melina Barcellona

Lee Min Yee

Manny Gonzalez

Toan Tran

11 AND 12 NOVEMBER

Nigel Tauro

Michelle Chen

Rosemary Donaldson

Lee Min Yee

Manny Gonzalez

Toan Tran

SL WELCOMERS 4 / 5 NOV

6:00 PM Volunteer

8:30 AM Janette Clark

10:30 AM Volunteer

HOSPITALITY

THE BASIC LITURGICAL MINISTRY

SL WELCOMERS 11 / 12 NOV

6:00 PM John Ryan

9:30 AM Joe Brogno

10:30 AM Margaret Gearon

SL CHURCH CLEANING

11th Nov. – Megan's Team

Megan McLean, Janette Clark,

Rita Gibb & Nikhita Paul

ST CHURCH CLEANING

11th Nov. @ 2pm

Toan Tran, Dao Dinh,

Hieu Nguyen & Dieu Nguyen

SL CHURCH FLOWERS

4th Nov – Jo Adams

11th Nov – Joan McHugh

ST CHURCH FLOWERS

Parishioners

ST COUNTERS

This week Team 3:

Peter Deayton & Kelvin Chen

Next week Team 4:

Mary Choy & Eileen Tam

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

As we are one Mission now, it has been suggested that we require only one Chair?

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

STRIDE4STROKE One of our parishioners is participating in the Stroke Foundation's Stride4Stroke fundraising campaign. If you wish to support this worthy cause please feel free to use the following link:
<https://www.stride4stroke.org.au/fundraisers/StephenHarrington4615>

MELBOURNE CATHOLICS: The Call to be Saints

ON THE JOURNEY THIS WEEK: On the Journey this week: Fr Mike Delaney's Gospel reflection on the way we present ourselves to God and others, Mother Hilda's story about an ant hiding in a sugar bowl just like we try to hide from God. Fr Tony Percy on how to descend into the fertile valley of humility, Mark Raue explains the common good as a Christian principle and Trish McCarthy using food to renew energy levels. Plus, more great music!

FREE PIANO! The Parish Office has been made aware of a piano (which is originally English and in very good condition) being available for free to a good home. The current owners are moving house and can't take it with them. Please contact the parish office if you are interested.

2023 ADVENT PREPARATION RESOURCES:

- **The Sign: Daily Advent and Christmas Reflections 2023** - a captivating 80-page book containing spiritually rich, yet accessible, daily reflections from the beginning of Advent (3 December 2023) through to the Baptism of the Lord (8 January 2024). Order [here](#).
- **With Expectant Hearts** is a new 22-day reflection resource that can be used during Advent to help you sit with God and to trust Him to lead you forward. Each day's reflection is inspired by a short text of Scripture from the day's Gospel reading and concludes with a prayer and a thought or two to take away. Each week is introduced with a detailed look at the different parts of the Madonna of a Rose painting by Raphael, focusing on each member of the Holy Family and John the Baptist. Order [here](#)

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.

Raise your voices ... Entrance Antiphon: Forsake me not, O Lord, my God; be not far from me! Make haste and come to my help, O Lord, my strong salvation!

Response to the Psalm: In you, Lord, I have found my peace.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! You have one Father, your Father in heaven; you have one teacher: the Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia!

Eucharistic Acclamation: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

Communion Antiphon: Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me shall have life because of me, says the Lord.

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.



Be humble and you will be honoured



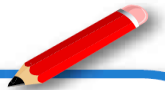
31st Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A



Jesus said that the greatest people are those who serve others. What can we do to be of service to others?



Tick the correct answers



A humble person is someone who...

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> respects others | <input type="checkbox"/> takes turns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> always tries to be first | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lets others go before them | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> boasts about how good they are | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> serves others | <input type="checkbox"/> pushes in |
| <input type="checkbox"/> always tries to help others | |

Complete the maze by making the right choices

Start out as a humble servant of others

You see a fellow student struggling to carry all their books. So you...

stop and offer to help carry the books

ignore them and walk on by

You come first in a school running race. So you...

tell everyone how good you were

encourage the others to run faster next time

Someone pays you a compliment for being clever. So you say...

"Of course I'm clever! Everyone knows that!"

"Thankyou."

You win a prize for a science project that a friend helped you with. So you...

acknowledge your friend's help and share the prize

take all the credit

Congratulations! You make a great leader



Be humble and you will be honoured



31st Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A



Jesus said that the greatest people are those who serve others. What can we do to be of service to others?



Tick the correct answers



A humble person is someone who...

- ☐ respects others
- ☐ takes turns
- ☐ always tries to be first
- ☐ lets others go before them
- ☐ boasts about how good they are
- ☐ serves others
- ☐ pushes in
- ☐ always tries to help others

Complete the maze by making the right choices

Start out as a humble servant of others

You see a fellow student struggling to carry all their books. So you...

- stop and offer to help carry the books
- ignore them and walk on by

You come first in a school running race. So you...

- tell everyone how good you were
- encourage the others to run faster next time

Someone pays you a compliment for being clever. So you say...

- "Of course I'm clever! Everyone knows that!"
- "Thankyou."

You win a prize for a science project that a friend helped you with. So you...

- acknowledge your friend's help and share the prize
- take all the credit

Congratulations! You make a great leader

SUNDAY READINGS

READ AT HOME

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A

5 November 2023



Collect

Almighty and merciful God,
by whose gift your faithful offer you
right and praiseworthy service,
grant, we pray,
that we may hasten without stumbling
to receive the things you have promised.
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

Commenting on Matthew 23, scripture scholar Brendan Byrne remarks: “No text in the New Testament contributed more to the creation in Christian and wider imagination of the stereotype of ‘the Pharisee’ as a byword for hypocrisy, a caricature that inevitably rebounds on Judaism as such” (*Lifting the Burden*, Sydney: St Paul’s, 2004, 169). He goes on to make four helpful points. One, there is no historical foundation for the depiction of the Pharisees as a class in this way. Two, highly polemical language like this was common in Jesus’ day, including within the Jewish community. Three, the hostility expressed in this episode reflects the struggle of the Christian and Jewish communities to define themselves towards the end of the first century. And fourthly, Jesus is warning Christian communities in every generation not to be like this (169-170). Four very useful keys to interpreting Jesus’ denunciation of the Jewish authorities.

I am a great king, says the Lord of hosts, and my name is feared throughout the nations. And now, priests, this warning is for you. If you do not listen, if you do not find it in your heart to glorify my name, says the Lord of hosts, I will send the curse on you and curse your very blessing. You have strayed from the way; you have caused many to stumble by your teaching. You have destroyed the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of hosts. And so I in my turn have made you contemptible and vile in the eyes of the whole people in repayment for the way you have not kept to my paths but have shown partiality in your administration.

Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why, then, do we break faith with one another, profaning the covenant of our ancestors?

In most Bibles the short book of the prophet Malachi appears as the last work of the Old Testament. This placement might suggest it was chronologically closest to the birth of Christ but that's not the case. It is generally agreed to have been written at the time the exiles had returned home from Babylon and were rebuilding Jerusalem, the temple and their identity. The prophet castigates both priests and people for their failure to be faithful to the covenant.

Today's reading comes from Malachi's diatribe against the priests. The whole passage, apart from the concluding verse, is spoken directly by "the Lord of hosts". It begins with the assertion that God is a great king "feared throughout the nations". This leads to the condemnation of the priests. The charges are severe: they haven't glorified God's name, they have strayed from the way and caused others to stumble, they have destroyed the covenant. As a result, they will be cursed and made "contemptible and vile". The reading ends on a plaintive note, as the prophet laments the community's loss of faith.

The bulk of the text reads like the address of a trial judge. The priest-defendants are in God's court, accused and threatened. Readers might be tempted to soften the force of the language, but that would do a disservice to Malachi and the assembly. The lament with which the reading ends, however, should communicate the heartbreak which the prophet feels as a result of the people's failure.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 130

Responsorial Psalm

R. In you, Lord, I have found my peace.

O Lord, my heart is not proud
nor haughty my eyes.

I have not gone after things too great
nor marvels beyond me. **R.**

Truly I have set my soul
in silence and peace.

A weaned child on its mother's breast,
even so is my soul. **R.**

O Israel, hope in the Lord
both now and for ever. **R.**

The responsorial psalm, comprising the whole of Psalm 130/131, introduces a complete change of mood. In place of God's angry condemnations of the whole community, the psalmist speaks personally of his child-like humility and trust in God. It is as if we have been through a tempest and suddenly arrived in still waters.

The first stanza establishes the psalmist's spiritual outlook in negative terms. He is not proud, haughty or over-ambitious. The second takes a more positive stance. Silence and peace are the secret, exemplified by the image of an infant resting trustfully in its mother's embrace. The short third stanza changes Malachi's final lament into an encouraging appeal.

Given the radical change of tone between reading and psalm, readers should ensure that the prayerful pause that follows the first reading be observed in full. The trustful intimacy expressed in the psalm should be mirrored in the way it is prayed – devoutly, slowly, and with full respect for the short poetic lines.

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians 2:7-9, 13

Like a mother feeding and looking after her own children, we felt so devoted and protective towards you, and had come to love you so much, that we were eager to hand over to you not only the Good News but our whole lives as well. Let me remind you, brothers, how hard we used to work, slaving night and day so as not to be a burden on any one of you while we were proclaiming God's Good news to you. Another reason why we constantly thank God for you is that as soon as you heard the message that we brought you as God's message, you accepted it for what it really is, God's message and not some human thinking; and it is still a living power among you who believe it.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 23:1-12

Addressing the people and his disciples Jesus said, 'The scribes and the Pharisees occupy the chair of Moses. You must therefore do what they tell you and listen to what they say; but do not be guided by what they do: since they do not practise what they preach. They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but will they lift a finger to move them? Not they! Everything they do is done to attract attention, like wearing broader phylacteries and longer tassels, like wanting to take the place of honour at banquets and the front seats in the synagogues, being greeted obsequiously in the market squares and having people call them Rabbi.

'You, however, must not allow yourselves to be called Rabbi, since you have only one Master, and you are all brothers. You must call no one on earth your father, since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor must you allow yourselves to be called teachers, for you have only one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant. Anyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be exalted.'

Second Reading

After the introduction and thanksgiving with which his first letter to the Thessalonians begins, Paul proceeds to reflect on his ministry among them. Today's reading is a short excerpt from this section of the letter. He presents himself in the appealing guise of a devoted and loving mother looking after her children. But whatever sentimental appeal this image may have had is immediately toughened by Paul's reminder of how hard he worked for them, "slaving night and day so as not to be a burden on any one of you". It was a particular concern of Paul to earn his own living and not be dependent on the financial support of the community.

Having made this point, Paul returns to thanksgiving. He's grateful that the Thessalonians accepted his preaching "as God's message" and not merely something Paul had invented on his own. Perhaps he's alluding here to the fact that the ancient world had its fair share of itinerant preachers making all sorts of idiosyncratic claims. Not only did the Thessalonians accept the gospel as God's word and not just an interesting idea, they let it become a dynamic force in their lives.

This is an attractive text which readers should enjoy proclaiming. They simply need to be mindful of the lengthy sentences, especially the third. Paul's thought here is not complicated, as it often can be, but it still results in a build-up of dependent clauses and explanatory phrases. Steady and sure proclamation will serve the assembly well.

Gospel

Jesus' scathing criticism of the Jewish religious authorities in Matthew 23 makes difficult reading. Scholars are generally agreed that the intensity of Jesus' attack reflects the later situation of Matthew's community when tensions between Jewish and Christian communities had grown extreme. It may also be influenced by the growing hostility towards Jesus that will soon culminate in his crucifixion. All this is helpful, but it makes Jesus' command that people should do what their leaders tell them quite puzzling, especially when he had asserted his own authority over the Law in the Sermon on the Mount.

Another approach is to step right back from the hostilities that Jesus and Matthew's community experienced from Jewish authorities, and apply Jesus' criticisms to all forms of religious leadership. All such leaders must practise what they preach, not seek worldly honour, and not let themselves be addressed with honorific titles. The irony of a titled minister of the gospel proclaiming this text is plain to see.

As it stands, this passage is pulsing with energy as Jesus confronts his antagonists. It may be tempting for readers to moderate its passion, but the text should be delivered as Matthew has recorded it. It's the role of the homilist to mediate its meaning.

Concluding Blessing

May the God of all consolation order our days in his peace
and grant us the gifts of his blessing.

Amen.

May he free us always from every distress
and confirm our hearts in his love.

Amen.

So that on this life's journey
we may be effective in good works,
rich in the gifts of hope, faith and charity,
and may come happily to eternal life.

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 IV, Roman Missal p. 716)





Using art to explore **THE ADVENT AND NATIVITY GOSPELS**



WITH FR ELIO CAPRA

Do you struggle to read scripture?

You are invited to join this interactive workshop and discover a fresh perspective on the Advent and Nativity Gospels through the works of artists through the ages.

**Monday 20th November
7pm - 9pm**

Coghlan Centre, St John the Evangelist Parish
494 Whitehorse Rd.
Mitcham.

Bookings:

Online: <https://www.trybooking.com/CMODP>
Parish office: 9401 6366 or mitcham@cam.org.au



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St. Luke's Fete *& 60th Anniversary*

60TH ANNIVERSARY ST LUKE'S WINE:

1 BOTTLE \$15

2 BOTTLES \$25

6 BOTTLES \$75

12 BOTTLES \$140

(WILL MIX, RED / WHITE)