

THE VOICE



ORDINARY TIME

27th Sunday in
ORDINARY TIME

Year A

8th October 2017

Psalter Week 3

OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF

- **Recently deceased:**
Marion Luff, Fr. Paul Coleman, S.J.
- **Anniversaries:**
Frank Schmidt, Noelle Davidovic,
Dorn Schumacher, Sharyn Gapps.
- **Remembrances:**
Mary Justic, Bruno de Souza,
Holy Souls in Purgatory.
- **And the sick:**
Maryanne Diorio, Pat Burgmann,
Margarita Gomez, June Towson, Therese
Corner, Audrey Barsenbach, Margaret
Davin, Helen Taylor,
Patricia Dwyer, Roy Beverage,
Brian Finlayson, Laura Krauss,
Nola McKeowen, Mary Drinan,
Marylou Tafilagi, Matilda Tawake,
Mick Nino, Kevin Houghton,
Nellie Brown, Ken Thorson
Ian Wilks, Janet Dean,
Bobby Sutherland, Dianne Briemer,
Grace Wellins, Courtney Wellins,
Tom Thorton, Olive Brittliff,
Audrey Kirkman.

Good Wine requires Hard Work

Our Lord Jesus Christ loved a good wine. In fact, in one of the Gospels his opponents call him 'a drunkard and a glutton'. Of course, it was malicious defamation but our Lord certainly loved gathering around the table with his followers and those who were despised by the elites of his time.

He would eat well and drink wine – and enjoy it. Why?

Firstly, Jesus was a shrewd judge of human character. He knew that a good wine makes people happy, loosens them up, helps sociability, encourages companionship. Our Lord wants us to be happy, not sour-faced killjoys.

Secondly, Jesus had a theatrical bent. One of his favourite images of Heaven was of a great wedding banquet, and every banquet or feast needs a good wine. (Think of Cana.) So, the meals he shared with people were like street theatre, little rehearsals of the great wedding feast of Heaven, a foretaste of Heaven where He will be our Divine Companion.

To have a good wine, one needs a well tended vineyard.

And that is what today's Gospel is about. In the Jewish scripture, Israel is spoken of as the Vineyard of God.

We can say that now the Church is the vineyard of God. God is the Landlord, we are the tenants. The vineyard is not ours to do with as we will. It is our job to faithfully tend it and make sure it bears good fruit, the fruit that God intends.

If we are unfaithful, then, as is said in today's Gospel, God *will* find other people to carry on his plan, other tenants to tend his vineyard.

Certainly, we see that within the Universal Church. With the decline of the Eurocentric church, who has God turned to to be new tenants for his vineyard?

Look at the surging numbers of Catholics in sub-Sahara Africa, Nigeria, and in Asia. Pope Francis recently visited the seven million Catholics in Korea. The persecuted Church in Vietnam and China is surviving and growing despite the severity of oppression.

I think we may agree that the vineyard of the Church in Australia is not as fruitful as it could be. But I am not totally pessimistic about the situation.

The tradition of the Catholic Church is being transmitted generation to generation, but more weakly than previously in our schools, and so depending to a large degree on faithful parents and on our parishes which need to become more missionary in approach to our own lapsed, disaffected and alienated, and to seekers after spiritual truth.

So, the challenge is to become effective workers in our own local vineyard. At every Mass the priest recites these words: 'Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine *and work of human hands*. It will become our spiritual drink.'

Our Lord Jesus Christ wants to give himself totally to us under the appearance of wine, but that depends not only on the grape but on the work of human hands, i.e. collaboration between the creative power of God and human beings in their various exertions in the service of the Kingdom. In anticipation, He gives us a real foretaste of the great banquet, which is Heaven.

Take up that privilege and duty to work in the vineyard of the Church. Help prepare for the satisfaction, the slaking of the thirst, of all the thirsts, of the whole of humanity.

© Fr Michael Tate

Psalms Response

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Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! I call you friends, says the Lord, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. *Alleluia!*



Around the Parish

Baptisms: We welcome into our Faith community and pray for Matthew Greenwood, Ezekiel Havea and Zamira Lewis who were baptized last Sunday.

Sympathy: St. John the Baptist Parish Family wish to extend sympathy to the family of Marion Luff who was buried from our Church the past week.

Cuppa and a Chat: A group of Seniors meet every third Monday in the Leo Mahon room due next Monday, 15th October, 11.30am-3pm. If you

would like to join us phone Bernard 4341 6343, Transport provided.

Children's Liturgy Roster 15/10/17: Joanna Baxter, Marian Bowyer, Mimi Lambert.

Volunteer Church Cleaning 13/10/17: Tom French, Cate O'Connor, Bill Cantley, Christine French.

Ministry to the Sick: Please ring the Parish Office if you know of a member of your family, a friend or a parishioner wanting to receive the Sacrament of the Sick, Reconciliation or the Blessed Eucharist at home.

Hospital Admission: If someone is being admitted to hospital, please notify the Parish Office for a priest to visit as due to Hospital Privacy Policy, the clergy are not automatically notified.

Bus Trip to Toukley & Surrounding Areas, including a visit to Fr Stephen & stopoff at Sara Lea. Leaving Wednesday, 11th October, 8.50am. Cost for trip \$20. Enquiries: Susie Casey 0403 417 639.

Of Grace and Faith Study Group meeting Thursday, 12th October, 11am in the Leo Mahon room.

The Just Word

World Mental Health Day – 10th October:

- Mental Health is more than the absence of mental disorders.
- Mental health is an integral part of health; there is no health without mental health.
- Mental health is determined by a range of socioeconomic, biological and environmental factors.
- Cost-effective public health and intersectoral strategies and interventions exist to promote, protect and restore mental health.

Mental health is an integral and essential component of health. The WHO constitution states: 'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the

absence of disease or infirmity.' An important implication of this definition is that mental health is more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities. Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

Source: World Health Organisation fact sheet: 'strengthening our response'. www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs220/en/

Where to go to find help: For information on mental health services in Australia: <http://mhsa.aihw.gov.au/>

home
Beyondblue - information and referral for depression and anxiety related matters:
Phone: 1300 22 46 36.

<http://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support>
Black Dog Institute—a world leader in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mood disorders: <http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/public/gettinghelp/overview.cfm>

Headspace – the National Youth Mental Health Foundation: <http://www.headspace.org.au>
Source: Mental Health Australia fact sheet 'Where can I go for more information about mental illness?'

From the Diocese and beyond

Cerdon College Merrylands 40th Year Reunion Saturday, 14th October. Pyrmont Bridge Hotel. See Facebook Page: Cerdon College Class of 72-77. Facebook Event: Event 40th Reunion Class of 75/77. Email: cerdonclass72.77@gmail.com or call Carmen on 0411 706 226.

Central Coast NSW Lutheran Ecumenical Prayer Service: St. John the Baptist Catholic Church parish members are cordially invited to attend this special Ecumenical Commemorative Prayer Service of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation featuring messages including Fr. Barry Nobbs.

The commemoration will feature a presentation of the J.S. Bach—Church Cantatas BWV 80. *Come dwell in my heart.* You are welcome to join us after the service at West Gosford RSL Club. Sunday 15th October, 9.30am. St. Matthew's Lutheran

Church, 8 Jumbuck Crescent, Woy Woy. RSVP: Monday 9th October. Contact 0477 057 637.secretary.stmatthews.gosford@gmail.com
See notice board for more detail.

Mount St. Benedict Centre—Children's Meditation Workshop: This fun workshop is for children aged 5-12 years, and aims to build a healthy body and mind. By teaching a variety of simple meditation techniques using breath and visualization, creating mandalas and moving the body in a conscious way, children are encouraged to find that centre of stillness inside. This can help with anxiety, building confidence and understanding emotions.

Saturday 28th October 1.30pm-4.30pm. Cost: \$30 BYO Afternoon tea. Reserve your place by email mtstbenedict@goodsams.org.au

or phone 9484 6208.
449D Pennant Hills Road, Entrance off Hull Road.

In the Footsteps of Mary MacKillop 2017 National Pilgrimage: The Sisters of St. Joseph invite you to join the National Pilgrimage, giving you the opportunity to journey to significant places in Australia made holy by St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop. Commence Melbourne 8 November, travel through Victoria and Sth Australia, conclude in Sydney 18 November. Cost ex Sydney: \$3050.00 (all inclusive: airfares, accommodation, coach travel, admission fees and meals). Single Supplement: \$610. Further information or a Pilgrimage brochure, please contact Sr. Therese Leydon on 02 8912 4845 or Sr. Annie Bond 02 8912 4818 or at MMP.NationalPilgrimage@sosj.org.au

Scripture Commentary

by Brendan Byrne SJ

Aside from the second reading, all elements of today's scriptural offerings cohere around the image of the vineyard. But the First Reading, the Responsorial Psalm and the Gospel take up the image in rather different ways, even if in all three cases it is clear that the vineyard represents Israel.

The First Reading, from Isaiah 5:1-7, seems to record a 'song' or poem the prophet has composed for a close friend who has had a very disappointing experience with a vineyard. (Then, as now, growing wine seems to have been a risky commercial enterprise!) The prophet then uses his friend's experience with the vineyard as an allegory of God's experience with Israel, imaged, as so often, as the Lord's 'vineyard'.

The landowner's love for his vineyard and his eager anticipation of enjoying its fruits is shown by all the measures taken to ensure its productivity: located on a fertile hillside (rich soil and good drainage); cleared of stones; planted with the choicest vines; guarded by a watchtower and protective wall; a winepress ready to process its produce as soon as it should appear. How unexpected, then, the appearance of sour grapes as its yield. How understandable the disappointment of the owner and the destructive measures he then takes, in such contrast to the love and care that had gone before.

The application of the 'song' to Israel – in both positive and negative respects – is obvious and telling. Israel has received from God all the love and protection suggested by the landowner's activity in regard to his vineyard. God has looked, then, to receiving a rich return on all these labours. But instead of 'justice' and 'integrity' as its produce, only 'bloodshed' and 'a cry of distress' has resulted.

Remarkable here is the way in which the image serves the prophetic concern that the faithfulness and love Israel has received from God should have been reproduced as social justice in all its forms. Instead, what has resulted is the 'sour grapes' of violence against the vulnerable and cries from the poor who have been wronged. In this way, the reading gives a response and explanation to the question uttered in the Responsorial Psalm (Ps 79 [80]): 'Why have you broken down its walls?' It is not external forces that have ravaged the vineyard (now, more specifically 'the vine') but corruption – lack of social justice – within.

The parable that makes up almost all the Gospel, Mt 21:33-43, clearly picks up several features of Isaiah's 'song' of his friend's vineyard. Once again, the 'vineyard' is Israel but how, exactly, Jesus meant the parable to be understood and how we should interpret and explain it today are matters of considerable delicacy. This is one of four or five texts in the Gospels most open to anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish readings and proclamation.

While it is not all that easy to discern the exact shape of the parable as told by Jesus, we can be pretty certain that he told it against the religious leadership in Jerusalem in his day. Because they had resisted the prophetic messengers sent by God, the last of whom was himself, they have shown themselves to be usurpers, attempting to control and retain for themselves the vineyard (Israel) and its produce (the life of the people), the arrival of the Kingdom (or Rule) of God would mean for them dispossession and retribution.

Subsequently, the early Church retold the parable in the light of its knowledge about the death and resurrection of Jesus and its belief in his status (God's Son). Strongly colouring its understanding is its bitter awareness of the 'No' given to the Gospel by the great bulk of Israel and its keen sense of itself, made up of both Jewish and Gentile believers, as the community (literally, 'nation') to whom the Kingdom is now being given (v 43). Through the continuing presence of the risen Lord ('Emmanuel') to the end of the age (1:23; 28:20), they can and ought produce the 'fruits' that God desires from the 'vineyard'.

Today, we can move on from the early community's preoccupation with the 'No' of Israel and concentrate, as the First Reading suggests, upon the 'fruits' that God looks to see produced within a new vineyard. The parable gives no grounds for Christian triumphalism at Jewish expense. God has made the 'rejected' stone, the crucified and risen Lord, the cornerstone of the 'building' (the 'vineyard' image changes to an architectural one) that is the community of the Church. The question for us is whether the 'song' (Is 5:1) sung over the vineyard is one of delight or disappointment. Inevitably, a bit of both. But, in either case, it will always be a song of the Friend's love for the vineyard.

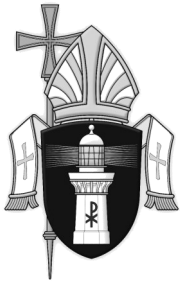


In the Gospel today, the owner of the vineyard sent messengers to collect his share of the harvest from the tenant farmers, but there was not a single good steward on the property! God is the owner, we are the tenants. What sort of stewards are we?



Catholic Parish of Woy Woy Peninsula

Woy Woy,



Woy Woy South, Umina, Umina Beach, Ettalong, Ettalong Beach, Koolewong, Blackwall, Booker Bay,

St Hubert's Island, Empire Bay, Horsfield Bay, Pearl Beach, Patonga, Woy Woy Bay, Daley's Point, Phegan's Bay and Wondabyne.

St John the Baptist Church,
Cnr Blackwall and Victoria Roads,
Woy Woy

Parish Office Ethel Cox Parish Centre
P.O. Box 264 100 Blackwall Road.
54 Victoria Road
WOY WOY N.S.W. 2256

Phone: (02) 4341 1073
Fax: (02) 4341 0214
Email: parish@woywoycatholic.org.au
Website: www.woywoycatholic.org.au
Out of hours **medical emergency**
0438 631 327.

"He must increase, I must decrease"

Administrator: Fr. Timothy Raj. M.S.F.S.

Assistant Priest: Fr. Philip Thottam. M.S.F.S.

Office Staff: Helen Cameron, Raelene Spithill.

Office Hours:

9.30 a.m.—4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday

Deadline for The Voice:

3.30 p.m. Wednesday

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Vigil Saturday 5pm; Sunday 7.30am, 9.15am, 6pm.

WEEKDAY MASS TIMES

Monday-Friday 7.45am (Monday & Tuesday with Lauds);

Saturday and Public Holidays 9am; First Friday 4pm (with Anointing of the Sick).

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Friday after morning Mass; First Friday 3.30pm; Saturday 11.30am & 4.30pm; Sunday 7.00am.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

1st & 3rd Sundays, 11am; (5th Sunday during 9.15am Mass by arrangement only). Godparents are examples of faith to the child. They must be confirmed and practising Catholics, at least sixteen years old. If there is at least one godparent, a non-Catholic may act as a Christian witness. Parents and godparents must attend a pre-baptismal instruction, held on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month at 9.30am.

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Every Saturday after 9am Mass until 10am; every Monday until 9am (Public Holidays 10.15am). Every Thursday 7.30pm-8.30pm for the needs of the Parish.

MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION . Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Every Thursday night, 7.30pm-8.30 pm.

PARISH CHOIR - Practice Wednesday nights in the church, 7pm. Enquiries: 4341 3367.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL,

21a Dulkara Rd South Woy Woy 2256. p 024341 0884 www.sjbwoywoy.org.au

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST YOUTH GROUP Held once a fortnight during school terms for high school students (Years 7-12), in the Leo Mahon Room. . For more information, contact Matthew French on 0411 792 587.

CATECHISTS conduct special religious education classes at the four Primary State Schools in our Parish. Experience isn't necessary—but Volunteers are always needed—to teach and help. Details: Susie 0411 566 622 without any obligation.

CATHOLIC CARE Counselling and Family Relationships 4356 2600.

MARY MAC'S PLACE Volunteers provide nutritious, freshly cooked meals and information and referrals to appropriate community services. Open Monday to Friday, 11am-1pm, at the Ethel Cox Parish Centre. For more information, please contact Christine on 4341 0584.

ST VINCENT de PAUL SOCIETY on the Peninsula assist and give a hand up to people in need. We have two Conferences with volunteers sharing the visiting or office work. We always welcome new Volunteers to our Conference. Please ring Peter 0425 358 376 or Joan 0422 272 339.

CASH HOUSIE every Saturday night at Peninsula Community Centre, Cnr Ocean Beach Rd & McMasters Rd, Woy Woy.

Games start at 7.30pm and finish 10.20pm, cash prizes.

Ticket sales from 6pm. Proceeds benefit Parish. Enquiries Rob: 0427 990 818.

God's Word

by Lisa-Marie Calderone-Stewart

A major theme of the Scripture readings is 'How is the harvest?'

Vines and vineyards wind their way through most of today's readings as we learn how our farmer God cares for people.

Isaiah sings a story song about a friend with high hopes for a new vineyard. The friend did all the planning, picked the right spot, weeded and turned over the soil. No expense was spared. The vineyard owner planted only the best vines and built a wine press and watchtower in anticipation of the choicest grapes and wine. But only wild grapes grew on the land. They were not even good for eating. So the friend abandoned the land to the weeds and thorns and grazing animals. Isaiah tells the story to warn Israel that while they were chosen as God's vines in God's vineyard, they are not bringing forth good fruit.

The psalm continues Isaiah's theme. The people of Israel are the vine carried safely from Egypt and planted in a new land. The Israelites did a lousy job

of taking care of the vineyard. The psalmist asks God to give Israel another chance. God is asked to continue caring for and nurturing the people.

The last part of Paul's Letter to the Philippians comforts the people in times of anxiety. All their troubles can be brought to God in prayer, and they will receive a peace and a sense of quiet that are too wonderful to even try to understand. Paul urges the people to keep their eye on what is good and right, to live by Jesus' example.

Jesus' vineyard parable, found in today's Gospel reading, is much like the first reading, and it has much the same meaning. Jesus tells the parable to warn the chief priests and elders that they have mismanaged the Kingdom of God. They haven't listened to the prophets, and they do not listen to him. The Kingdom of God awaits those who lovingly care for it and bear a rich harvest of faith.