

Reflection on the Gospel-22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B (Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23)

-Veronica Lawson RSM

After our lengthy detour over the past six weeks into the gospel of John with its focus on Jesus as the Bread of Life and the Bread of Wisdom, we return to Mark's gospel and a legal dispute about ritual purity. The parties to the dispute are Jesus, the Pharisees, and some of the scribes or teachers of the law. [It is worth noting that Mark's non-Jewish readers, at a later time and in another place, need to be given detailed information about certain Jewish traditions].

At issue for the scribes and Pharisees in the story is the failure of Jesus' disciples to respect their oral tradition, in this instance to perform ritual washings before eating. From their perspective, the disciples are not "walking" according to the tradition of the elders. For the Markan Jesus, "the command of God" is paramount, not some distorted interpretation of it. He offers a hard-hitting counter-critique of their attitude to law. He calls them "hypocrites" and informs them that the condemnation of the prophet Isaiah was intended for them. They have so distorted God's law, substituting their own observances for the "commandment of God" that their prayer amounts to nothing more than lip-service. Their hearts are far from God, and their worship is worthless! For Jesus, there are criteria other than such observances for determining who is clean or unclean. He has already declared the leper clean (Mk. 1:41-45).

For Jesus and for all his people, the "heart" is the locus of purity and impurity, the seat of the intellect and of morality as well as of the emotions. In the kin-dom of God, therefore, one's thoughts, desires, and intentions render one clean or unclean rather than one's attention to hygiene. The latter is important, but is judged to be peripheral. Washing hands before eating is an entirely legitimate use of water, not because it is prescribed by some law, but because it has a cleansing effect where cleansing is desirable. It is worth applying the criteria provided at the end of the passage to discover whether or not our "hearts" are near or distant from our God in whatever we do.

The real-life Pharisees of the first century were the respected teachers of God's law. It is imperative that stories such as we find in today's gospel are not used to denigrate the Jews or to pit Christianity over against Judaism. We have to keep reminding ourselves that we are often dealing in the gospels with in-house debates between Jewish groups. This episode, with its attention to ritual washing, also raises the issue of the right use of water, that precious earth element without which there would be no life at all on our planet. We take water for drinking and washing. Let us not take it for granted.

BULLETIN FOR 22nd SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B



ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST

Including St Peter & Paul's, Buninyong

Parish Address: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East. 3350

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MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING MONDAY, 31st AUGUST 2015

MONDAY:	No Mass
TUESDAY:	No Mass
WEDNESDAY:	11.00 am in Marcy Centre
THURSDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church
FRIDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church
SATURDAY:	No Sacrament of Reconciliation

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

ST. ALIPIUS	SAT	6.00 PM
	SUN	9.00 AM
BUNINYONG	SUN	10.30 AM

READINGS - THE 23rd SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

First:	Isaiah 35:4-7
Second:	James 2:1-5
Gospel:	Mark 7:31-37

ANNIVERSARIES: Michael & Emily Thorpe.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Nell McGettigan, Pamela Hayes, Anthony Conroy, Nathan Cambell, Karen Hayes, Denise Learmonth, Mary-Rose McLaren, Mona Shillito, Cath Wheelahan, Marinna Lenkic, Barbara Keirl.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: .**Team 11:** P. Saunders ©, M. Saunders.

Next Week: .**Team 12:** E. Kennedy ©, C. Stewart.



COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$ 1,557.50
	Loose money:	\$ 300.00
	Direct debits:	\$ <u>664.00</u>
		\$ 2,521.50
PRESBYTERY:		\$ 850.00

EVENTS

- Friday, 4th September **Caring Group Meeting** in the hall at 10.00 am. All welcome.
- Wednesdays **Rosary** in the Chapel of Visitation at St. John of God Hospital at 12.45 pm. All welcome.
- Wednesday afternoons **Legion of Mary** meets at Nazareth House, Mill St. Ballarat, at 1.30 pm. Enquiries: 5332 8624 or 5332 7227.
- **Legion of Mary Prayers:** Prayers of Petition to Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help, will be held at St. Patrick's Cathedral from 11.15 am - 11.45 am on 1st & 3rd Thursdays.

SUGGESTION

A small group of families and people directly affected by sexual abuse in this parish met recently to discuss how we might mark an admission of the abuse and its effect, and seek to move forward. They suggested that we should consult the parish and ask for ideas. You are invited to make your suggestions via the **suggestion box** at the entrance to St. Alipius church, or by email: ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

DAMASCUS COLLEGE ENROLMENT INFORMATION

Damascus College warmly invites all families to attend our upcoming Information Evening. The Information Evening will include a tour of the College, activities for students and an information session for parents.

Information evening: Wednesday, 9th September 5.00 pm. Please arrive at 4.45 pm for registration.

STUDENTS OF ALL AGES ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

In response to our "Time and Talent" registrations which accompanied the recent Stewardship Program, those people who expressed an interest in becoming Ministers of the Eucharist have been asked to attend a formation night with Sr. Veronica Lawson. Veronica will discuss various scripture passages which refer to the Eucharist. **Because this will be such a good opportunity for deepening our own appreciation of Eucharist we have decided to open the evening to anyone who would like to join in.**

St. Alipius Hall, Wednesday, 2nd September 7.00 - 8.30 pm.

So that we might be prepared, please let us know on 5332 6611 or ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au if you will be present.

To date we have 9 acceptances.

AUXILIARY COFFEE PARTY

Where: Nazareth House Hall

When: Friday, 4th September 2015

Time: 1.30 pm

Admission: \$5.00

Details: Entrance Prize, Devonshire Tea, Raffle, Spinning Wheel, Produce and Fancy Goods Stall

SALE OF EAST TIMOR FABRICS

A representative of the Mercy Sisters will be selling traditional East Timorese fabrics at all Masses next weekend 5th and 6th September. They have been sent back to Australia by Sister Helen Nolen of this diocese who is establishing kindergartens in villages in East Timor. The village women who weave the fabrics use the proceeds of sale to pay for their children's education. The fabrics come in many sizes and can be used as scarves, table runners or wall hangers. Prices are negotiable. They would make spectacular Christmas presents.

RETREAT WITH FR. BRENDAN MURPHY SDB

Fr. Brendan Murphy SDB will conduct a Retreat at Nazareth House all day on Thursday and Friday and Saturday morning, September 24th, 25th and 26th. He will ask us to consider, "Who are we, Where are we going, and How will we get there?" More details later. To register interest please contact Maureen Van der Linden, ph: 0431 273 953 or email: mojo6163@hotmail.com Catholic Womens' League/ Anima Education.