

Reflection on the Gospel-33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B (Mark 13:24-32)

-Veronica Lawson RSM

In the opening lines of today's gospel reading, there are clear echoes of two passages from the prophecy of Isaiah. The first passage reads, "For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light" (Isaiah 13:10). These images from Isaiah read like an unravelling of God's work in creation. The second passage likewise predicts a scenario that seems to reverse the Genesis creation account: "All the host of heaven [the constellations] shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall wither like a leaf withering on a vine, or fruit withering on a fig tree" (Isaiah 34:4). The prophet is using powerful poetic imagery to speak of God's judgment on the people of Israel who have strayed from their covenant relationship.

The parallel images in Mark 13 are referenced to the aftermath of the "time of distress" associated with the destruction of Jerusalem, a time of intense suffering for the community of believers. Jesus tells his disciples that, after all their suffering, strange cosmic phenomena will signal his return in glory and usher in a new age for God's people when the faithful will be gathered in. The message is intended to give comfort and hope to Mark's persecuted community of the late sixties or early seventies of the first century. Just as the new leaves on the fig tree signal the approach of summer, so too will the strange signs in the heavens signal Christ's coming and the onset of a new era, an end to the "time of distress". The message is thus one of encouragement for the community as they face an uncertain future rather than one of judgment.

The strange apocalyptic imagery and the ancient cosmology that has Jesus returning on the clouds need not distract the modern and scientifically sophisticated reader from hearing the call to trust in God no matter what happens. This reading may remind some of us that the unravelling of God's work is more than a poetic image in our times. The freak storms, the cyclones, and other signs of global warming we have seen might well serve as reminders to attend more carefully to the preservation of planet Earth. We may also hear a call to pay closer attention to what the "other-than-human" Earth elements can tell us about God and God's ways.

Tim Winton's memoir, *Island Home*, offers a contemporary reminder of who we are as planetary beings, of what we have done to our planet and of how attentiveness to land and landscape is integral to being who we are. The wild fig or the black-flanked rock wallabies, for instance, may be more eloquent teachers than we had ever realised.

BULLETIN FOR 33rd 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, 16th NOVEMBER 2015

MONDAY:	No Mass
TUESDAY:	No Mass
WEDNESDAY:	11.00 am in Mercy Centre
THURSDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church
FRIDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church
SATURDAY:	Sacrament of Reconciliation at 10.00 am

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

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

READINGS - OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST the KING, YEAR B

First:	Dan 7:13-14
Second:	Apoc 1:5-8
Gospel:	Jn 18:33-37

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

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: .Team 10: J. Kennedy ©, P. Kennedy, L. Mullane.

Next Week: .Team 11: P. Saunders ©, M. Saunders.



COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$ 1,750.00
	Loose money:	\$ 300.00
	Direct debit:	\$ <u>987.00</u>
		\$ 3,037.00

PRESBYTERY: \$ 716.00

EVENTS

- Saturday, 21st November **Nazareth House Auxiliary Fete** at 10.00 am. See notice board.
- Wednesday, 25th November **Anointing Mass** at 2.00 pm.

CHRISTMAS GIVING

There are many people who are less fortunate than we are, especially at Christmas. We are seeking a person who may be prepared to co-ordinate gift giving to a number of the homes in our parish. If you wish to know more please contact Jim at the Parish Office on 5332 6611.

JUBILEE OF MERCY

Pope Francis has announced an Extraordinary Jubilee - Holy Year of Mercy to Commence on 8th December 2015, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and will conclude on Sunday, 20th November 2016, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. All are invited to attend the Opening of the Door of Mercy at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat by Bishop Paul Bird CSsR on Sunday, 13th December, 2015, at 10.30 am. Refreshments will follow the Mass.

MERCY CONNECT BALLARAT - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Mercy Works is currently recruiting volunteers to support refugee students in Ballarat Schools through their Mercy Connect Project. The volunteer commitment is for approximately three hours per week for four school terms (during 2016). Experience working in an educational setting is preferred. Training held in February 2016. Contact Paulene Barton - Mercy Connect Project Coordinator on 0417 624 330 or email: mercyconnectb@gmail.com for information and an application form.

ST. VINCENT de PAUL

SVdP is looking to recruit some interested volunteers to work as application interviewers for their No Interest Loans Scheme. The role required good interpersonal skills and basic computer skills. Training will be provided. The hours are probably 9.00 am till noon each Thursday. However, if sufficient volunteers apply there could be a roster so that attendance will not be required each week. These positions will be located at Ballarat Assistance Centre in Dawson Street. Any enquiries should be directed to Bernie Holloway on 0417 593 793.

ADVENT REFLECTION GROUP

Commencing 10.00 am, 26th November in the Meeting Room of St. Alipius Church.

GOSPEL IN THE GARDEN - SAVE THE DATE

2.00 pm, Saturday November 28th, Come and rock with Sweet Mona's Gospel Choir, West Papuan singers, U3A Ukelele players, drummers and others and help raise funds for local asylum seekers and refugees. Stalls and competitions, face painting and fun for all. Afternoon tea. Entry: \$15.00, children free. Enquiries to Carmel Kavanagh: 0401 175 045 or annekav123@yahoo.co.uk
See Notice Board for further information.

PARISH MEN'S WEEKEND www.menalive.org.au

menALIVE began by organising weekends for men in parishes - what better place to discover a supportive community of men than in your backyard? The experience of men gathering together at a menALIVE weekend is dynamic and powerful. Many men are inspired, encouraged and feel that they have a new sense of purpose and mission. menALIVE is a National Catholic Ministry for Men. The next weekend will be held at Our Lady Star of the Sea Primary School, Ocean Groove on November 28th & 29th 2015. For brochure and to register go to www.menalive.org.au