

Reflection on the Gospel-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A (John 1:29-34)

-Veronica Lawson RSM

To provide a reference for someone is a serious responsibility as well as a privilege because, more often than not, a good deal depends on the testimony one provides. John the Baptist took it upon himself to be a referee for Jesus. His testimony reverberates across the centuries, offering an introduction to Jesus, year in year out, for those who seek to understand this Jewish prophet and teacher who was and is more than a prophet or teacher. John wants his disciples to understand that the whole purpose of his water baptism is that Jesus "might be revealed" to God's people. He wants them to know that Jesus is "of God". He is the "lamb of God", the "chosen one of God". He is the one on whom God's Spirit descends and remains. Jesus comes before the Baptist and so ranks before him.

Is the author of this gospel using the character of the Baptist as a vehicle for his particular Christology or presentation of Jesus? That's what many scholars think, although some of the images in the Baptist's testimony are firmly grounded in Jewish tradition and could well come from a prophetic figure like John the Baptist. Maybe the answer to the question is "yes, but not exclusively".

Whether the images have their origin with John the Baptist or John the gospel writer, we might reasonably wonder what it means to say that Jesus is "God's lamb". Does the expression refer to the Passover lamb whose blood signifies liberation or deliverance? The imagery in John's gospel relating to the death of Jesus might point in this direction. Is "God's lamb" the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 who takes on the sins of the many? Is it an image of the lamb that God provides for Abraham's sacrifice (Genesis 22)? Is it evoking the apocalyptic lamb of Jewish literature of the time, the powerful conquering lamb that destroys evil in the world? Is it intended to suggest vulnerability as in the prophecy of Jeremiah 11:19 ("I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter").

There is never a simple explanation when it comes to John's gospel, but it seems to me that the symbol of strength in vulnerability has potential for understanding the characterization of Jesus in this gospel. The Lamb of God of John 1:29 "takes away" the sinful condition of the world. Twenty-one centuries down the track there is still violence and hunger and exploitation on a massive scale. The work of the one strong enough to risk vulnerability so that others may have life, the work of God's Lamb, is never done. Witness to that is part of the gift that Pope Francis is offering to the world: despite opposition, even among those closest to him, he never wavers in his response to the distress of God's people, of God's Earth.

BULLETIN FOR THE 2nd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A



ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST

Including St Peter & Paul's, Buninyong

Parish Address: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East. 3350

Telephone: 5332 6611

Fax: 5332 3303

Email: ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING MONDAY, 16th JANUARY 2017

MONDAY:	No Mass
TUESDAY:	11.00 am in Mercy Centre
WEDNESDAY:	11.00 am in Mercy 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	10.30 AM
BUNINYONG	SUN	9.00 AM

3rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A

READINGS -	First:	Isaiah 8:23-9:3
	Second:	1 Corinthians 1:10-13.17
	Gospel:	Matthew 4:12-23

ANNIVERSARIES: Una Murphy, Marlene Dobbyn (Smythe), Bridget Curran, Michael Roach, Patrick Blood, Bridget Galvin, Jesus Dondoy, Michael Murphy, Margie Flanagan, Jane Shine.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Nathan Cambell, Denise Learmonth, Cath Wheelahan, Barbara Keirl, Mick Kent, Terry McGarry, Kevin Walsh, Peter McDonald (Ocean Grove), Peter Clohesy, Frank Nolan (Buninyong), Mary Barnett, Pat Molloy.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: **Team 2:**B. Perkins ©, F. Nolan, J. Lewis.

Next Week: **Team 3:** M. O'Donnell ©, L. O'Donnell, F. Colasante.

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$ 1,121.20
	Loose money:	\$ 300.00
	Direct debits:	\$ <u>360.00</u>
		\$ 1,781.20
PRESBYTERY:		\$ 802.00



CHILD SAFETY IN OUR PARISH

Notices, relating to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children in our care, are on display in the church foyers for your information.

DIOCESAN COMMUNICATIONS

Diocesan Website www.ballarat.catholic.org.au. The website contains current news and information on the diocese and parishes and also a section for members to access resources relevant to diocesan ministries.

e-News: e-News is available to all members of the diocese and those associated with an interest in the life of the diocese. It is published every two weeks and distributed via email. You can subscribe to receive e-News on the diocesan website www.ballarat.catholic.org.au or you are welcome to submit items for publication to enews@ballarat.catholic.org.au. News items submitted should have relevance to the life and activity of the parishes and schools of the diocese and include photos where possible.

Our Diocesan Community: ODC is published three times a year and delivered to parishes for distribution to those in the diocese. This magazine contains the good news stories of events and people in the diocese. You are welcome to submit items for publication to odc@ballarat.catholic.org.au and again, news items submitted should have relevance to the life and activity of parished and schools of the diocese and include photos where possible.

LAY PASTORAL MINISTRY PROGRAM—START IN 2017

The Ballarat Diocese Lay Pastoral Ministry Program offers low-cost opportunities for online study and formation for lay workers, both employees and volunteers. Details are on the diocesan website (link to Program on lower front page) email: amanda.smith@ballarat.catholic.org.au or phone 5337 7125.

KEEP THIS DAY FREE

Sunday, 22nd January 2017—a farewell for Fr Adrian in the Parish Hall at **midday** (following the 10.30 am Mass). Tea & coffee will be provided. Please bring a plate and any other refreshments you may require.

MERCY ASSOCIATES FUNDRAISER

A big thank you to the Sisters of Mercy, the Mercy Associates and parishioners who supported our recent Catherine's Cuppa Christmas Celebrations fundraiser event—held at the Mercy Convent, Victoria Street, Ballarat in December. We had a lovely evening and raised \$1,100 on the night, which we were very pleased with.

This money will be given to the Sisters of Mercy to provide funds for Mercy Works projects both locally and overseas.

Thank you very much to our Mercy Associate sponsors who donated prizes and gave generously of their time in organising this event—and also to Wen and Ware gift shop and UFS Dispensary (Bridge Mall).

Ursula Diamond-Keith (Mercy Associate)

2016 NATIONAL CHURCH LIFE SURVEY

If you have not already done so, will you please return your forms a.s.a.p.

MERCY CONNECT BALLARAT

Supporting refugee and asylum seeker students in local schools

Mercy Works is currently recruiting volunteers to support refugee and asylum seeker students in Ballarat schools through the Mercy Connect project. The volunteer commitment is for approximately three hours per week for four school terms. Experience working in an educational setting is preferred, but you will receive ongoing training and support. Initial training for new volunteers will be held in February 2017. Contact Paulene Barton—Mercy Connect Project Coordinator on 0417 624 330 or email mercyconnect@gmail.com for information and an application form. Applications close on 2nd February 2017.