

**Reflection on the Gospel-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A
(Matthew 5:13-16) - Sr Veronica Lawson**

In today's gospel, Jesus addresses two short parables to his disciples in the presence of the crowds. The crowds as well as the disciples hear what he has to say. Parables were intended to tease their hearers, inviting them to see things differently or from a new perspective, to see themselves in a new light. One of the difficulties for us is that Jesus told these parables in early first century Palestine with its particular symbol system, while we hear them through the multiple layers of our own twenty-first century contexts and symbol systems. "Salt" and "light" have slightly different resonances in different contexts, as do "earth" and "world". Exploring those resonances or nuances can bring us to a deeper appreciation of the text.

This short reflection allows for a focus only on "the salt of the earth" parable or metaphor. For Jesus' Palestinian audience, salt was used to preserve and season food. It also functioned as a cleansing or purifying agent. It could only lose its savour if contaminated by additives. We can resonate with all of that. For some of the Jewish rabbis, salt signified wisdom: a "salted" disciple was a "wise" disciple. In some parts of the ancient world, as in Pakistan today, salt was used in dyeing processes as a way of intensifying as well as preserving the colour of fabrics. Many Westerners are not aware of this practice. Farmers today are rightly concerned about high levels of salinity in overworked soil. That was certainly not the case for first-century Palestinians.

When we declare someone to be "the salt of the earth", we are generally referring to the sheer goodness of the person in question, her/his down-to-earth reliability, lack of pretentiousness and practical wisdom. To be salt of the earth is to season the earth community, to intensify its beauty, to be wise in one's judgments and just in all one's dealings. This parable, with its multi-layered symbolism, certainly teases the mind.

In the original Greek, the emphasis is on the first word in the sentence. Jesus is telling his hearers, disciples and crowds, that *they* are the salt of the earth. They do not have to *become* the salt of the earth; they *are* the salt of the earth. In short, he is affirming their worth. In its literary context, that assertion contrasts Jesus' followers with those who might persecute them. It affirms their capacity to stand strong in the face of opposition, "for the sake of justice". If they allow themselves to be overwhelmed or their commitment to be shaken, then the "salt" will be contaminated and the "earth" cannot be seasoned. As we reflect on the diverse metaphorical applications of salt and earth, we might take a moment to give thanks to God for the gift of the material realities that underlie these metaphors.

BULLETIN FOR THE 5th 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, 5th FEBRUARY 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 Opening Year Mass - St Francis Xavier School 12.00 pm Opening Year Mass - St Alipius School

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

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

6th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A

READINGS -	First:	Sirach 15:15-20
	Second:	1 Corinthians 2:6-10
	Gospel:	Matthew 5:17-37

RECENT DEATH: Patricia Gonzalez.

ANNIVERSARIES: Martin Moran, Margaret Ann Quinn.

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, Fiona Dickinson.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: **Team 5:** J. Moran ©, B. Forbes, C. Napoli.

Next Week: **Team 6:** M. Stewart, M. Anderson, R. Reynolds.



COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$	972.00
	Loose money:	\$	300.00
	Direct debits:	\$	465.00
		\$	1,737.00
PRESBYTERY:		\$	889.00

WELCOME

We welcome Bishop Paul Bird as our celebrant for our Vigil Mass this weekend. Bishop Paul will install Fr Peter Sherman as our Parish Priest. A cuppa will follow in the hall after Mass.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Barry & Barbara Keirl who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary this week.

COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET

A reminder that Commemorative Books are available in the churches for your signature and comment. They will remain for the next week or so.

SOCIAL AFTERNOON

Wednesday, 8th February in the Mercy Centre at 2.00 pm Please enter via Gent Street.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS—DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Diocese of Ballarat is calling for nominations for the 2017 Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC). The DPC is a consultative and advisory body to the Bishop. More information is on the diocesan website www.ballarat.catholic.au under Services & Agencies, or phone Amanda in the Diocesan Office on 5337 7125.

2018 INFORMATION

Please contact the following if you require 2018 enrolment/scholarship/tour information:
St Patrick's College - 5331 1688 or cbennett@stpats.vic.edu.au
Loreto College - www.loreto.vic.edu.au

FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING IN THE COMTEMPORARY WORLD
Venue: Mercy Gathering Room, Gent Street, Ballarat East. Dates: 16th March; 27th April; 18th May; 22nd June; 20th July.

Sr Veronica Lawson and Fr Barry Ryan invite parishioners to sign up for five two-hour sessions on the meaning of faith commitment in the contemporary world. Simply contact Sr Veronica by email (veronica.lawson@mercy.org.au) or by phone (0408 392 297) before 20th February. Kindly provide contact details and indicate whether you wish to enrol in the afternoon sessions (1.00-3.00 pm) or the evening sessions (7.00-9.00 pm). Donation to cover costs is \$20. Note that this is a new course, not a repeat of either the 2015 or the 2016 sessions.

COORDINATOR REQUIRED FOR ST ALIPIUS CHILDREN'S LITURGY—2017

Expressions of interest are invited for the position of voluntary coordinator of St Alipius Children's Liturgy Program for 2017. The program is run by parent volunteers who lead and/or act as support people for the sessions. Children's Liturgy presently takes place on about a fortnightly basis during vigil Masses at St Alipius Church on Saturdays at 6.00 pm

The program caters for kinder and school-aged children and operates throughout school terms. Children preparing for their Sacraments are most welcome to attend. The program follows the Liturgical Year. During liturgies. Children are invited to participate in prayer, reflect on the Gospel in their lives and share their reflections and participate in creative activities.

New volunteers will be provided with support including resource and guidelines, prior to the beginning of the program.

Parents and friends interested in volunteering for the program as a coordinator (this could be shared) leader or support person, can contact Kristen Murray on 5340 0286 or email kristenmurray1@optusnet.com.au

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

Meditation is a universal spiritual wisdom and a practice found at the core of all the great religious traditions, leading from the mind to the heart. It is a way of simplicity, silence and stillness. It can be practiced by anyone, wherever you are on life's journey. It is only necessary to be clear about the practice and then to begin—and to keep on beginning.

CHILDREN BECOMING CATHOLIC

Families of children aged 7 and older seeking for their child to be either baptised or received into the Catholic Church may express their interest in taking part in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Children (RCIC) by phoning the Parish Office on 5332 6611 by Monday, 13th February, 2017.