

Reflection on the Gospel-16th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year A (Matthew 13:24-43) Veronica Lawson RSM

Some time back, my great-nephew met with an unwelcome refusal from his father. His response: "Dad, I am not impressed with what I'm hearing!" Like young Izaak, I suspect that most experienced gardeners and farmers and bakers would have something similar to say at Jesus' choice of images for God's empire of the heavens. They would be particularly unimpressed, I expect, by the methods of the farmer-gardener God presented in today's gospel reading. Leaving weeds to endanger the wheat crop seems none too smart. Mustard, known for its propensity to grow wild and threaten the life of every other plant in the garden, makes for an equally strange image. God's empire imaged as a baker woman taking yeast, a substance considered a corrupting influence in the first century Jewish world, and mixing it into twenty kilos of wheat flour, stretches the imagination in other directions.

These images cut across expectations quite dramatically. What do they tell us about God's kin-dom of the skies? In the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven, there is a movement from small to great that communicates something about the power of God to bring abundance of life from the most insignificant beginnings. They don't seem to fit with the parable of the wheat and the weeds until we look a little more closely. The element of danger to the life of the whole is common to all three parables. Maybe Matthew's Jesus is telling us that God is a God of risk, prepared to allow the weeds and endangering herbs and other dubious substances to "infect" God's field. Harvest-time will be time enough to divide the wheat from the weeds. In the meantime, the good seed must take hold.

In the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven, Jesus may be telling his hearers that their idea of infection or danger is different from his. At one level, he engages the more-than-human and talks about respect for the complexity of eco-systems. At another, he is talking about societal inclusion: the very people that many consider unclean or sinful or demon-possessed are not to be displaced from God's field or God's table. On the contrary, they may be the very ones who season the life of the whole. Life is messy after all and God is in the mess. It is worth noting that the leaven parable offers one of the few occasions in the gospel where God is imaged as female. While we are all aware that God is neither male nor female, most of us have been conditioned to use only male images for God. The parable of the woman kneading dough validates the potential of female experience to reflect the life and activity of God in our world.

BULLETIN FOR THE 16th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



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, 24th JULY 2017

MONDAY:	No Mass
TUESDAY:	5.00 pm in Mercy Centre
WEDNESDAY:	11.00 am in Mercy Centre
THURSDAY:	No Mass
FRIDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

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

17th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

READINGS	First: 1 Kings 3:5.7-12
	Second: Romans 8: 28-30
	Gospel: Matthew 13: 44-52

ANNIVERSARIES: Karen Hayes, Doreen Forbes, Judy Gleeson.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Nathan Cambell, Denise Learmonth, Cath Wheelahan, Terry McGarry, Kevin Walsh, Peter Clohesy, Frank Nolan (Buninyong), Mary Barnett, Fiona Dickinson, Carmel Doherty, Pauline Murphy, Luke Taylor.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: **Team 7:** K. Cummins ©, J. O'Meara, B.Hood, G.Duck.

Next Week: **Team 8:** B. McKeegan ©, M. Ridsdale, K. McKeegan.

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$ 1,582.00
	Loose:	\$ 300.00
	Credit Cards:	\$ 8,504.00
	Direct Debits:	\$ 280.00
		\$10,666.00

PRESBYTERY: \$ 640.00



SOCIAL AFTERNOON

Wednesday, 26th July at 2.00 pm in the Mercy Centre. Please enter via Gent Street.

NAZARETH HOUSE AUXILIARY

A coffee party will be held on Friday, 28th July at 1.30 pm. Spinning wheel, devonshire tea, entrance prize, fancy goods and produce stalls.

AN INVITATION

Is extended to parishioners to consider joining the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) Team which performs a valuable and significant ministry in the Parish.

The RCIA Team accompanies those who are interested in exploring the Catholic faith and seeking full initiation into the Catholic Church.

For further information please contact the Parish Office or Fr Peter on 5332 6611, or John Clonan on 0478 770 598.

GALAH

From the Adelaide Fringe Festival 2017. Written and directed by local playwright, John Bolger. Minerva Space, Mechanics Institute, 117 Strut Street, on Saturday, 5th August. All proceeds to assist asylum seekers and refugees in Ballarat. See notice board.

WELCOME AND CONGRATULATIONS

To the children celebrating and completing their initiation into the community of the Church as they receive the Eucharist. Also the children from Emmaus who will be celebrating their first Reconciliation. Please keep in your prayers all the children and families who are preparing for the sacrament of confirmation over the next few weeks.

SPECIAL MINISTERS

There will be a gathering of existing and new Special Ministers this Tuesday, 25th July at either 2.00 pm or 7.00 pm in St Alipius Hall. If you have not yet indicated your interest please do so by putting your name on the sheet in the St Alipius Church foyer or near the Piety Stall, or at Ss Peter & Paul's Church, Buninyong.

The response to date has been very encouraging.

COUNTING TEAMS

An invitation is extended to parishioners to join, or form, a Parish Counting Team. There are currently 11 teams responsible for counting the Stewardship collections from our weekend Masses. The commitment is for an hour or two on a Sunday or Monday, depending on your availability. We need more to spread the load. Please contact Jim at the Parish Office (Tuesday, Thursday or Friday) if you are interested.

CENTRALISED BAPTISM PREPARATION/ BAPTISM PARENT INFORMATION SESSIONS

Clergy, Staff and Baptism Coordinators from the Parishes of St Alipius Ballarat East, St Columba's Ballarat North, Our Lady Help of Christians Wendouree, St Patrick's Cathedral, St Aloysius Redan and St James' Sebastopol have been meeting to discuss the centralisation of the Baptism process. Commencing on Thursday, August 3 at 10.00am & 7.00 pm and monthly thereafter on the first Thursday of each month, all families wishing to have their children (under 7) baptised will be invited to attend these preparation sessions at St Patrick's Cathedral. For any enquiries please contact the Parish Office on 5332 6611 or email ballarateastpastoral@ballarat.catholic.org.au

ASYLUM SEEKER VIGIL

It was a very prayerful and solemn time when we marked the 4th anniversary of Detention. It was also a faith filled moment. Fr Peter affirms parishioners who are committed to and assisting the asylum seekers and their plight.

EUTHANASIA AND ASSISTED SUICIDE PROPOSALS

In April this year, the bishops of Victoria published a pastoral letter in response to proposals to introduce legislation allowing euthanasia and assisted suicide. As a follow-up to that letter, a group of lay people has prepared a flyer encouraging people to write to parliamentarians and express their opposition to such legislation. See flyers on the Notice Board and in the Church foyer.