



Parish Newsletter - September 3rd 2017

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Parish Priest – Fr Gary Jones gary.jones@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Parish Administration: Mrs Leah Monaghan

St Michael's Parish Primary School- Principal: Mr Ethan Corfee

St. Joseph's Church Blampied

No Masses at St Joseph's – at the moment

Diocesan Website: www.ballarat.catholic.org.au

RECENT DEATHS:

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH: John Lee, Louisa Horwath, John White, Veronica Melotte, Lionel Whitaker, Bill Shanahan, John Brodie, Paul DGLISH, Danielle Sartori

Prayers for Sick: Gary Eyles



REFLECTION by Greg Sunter

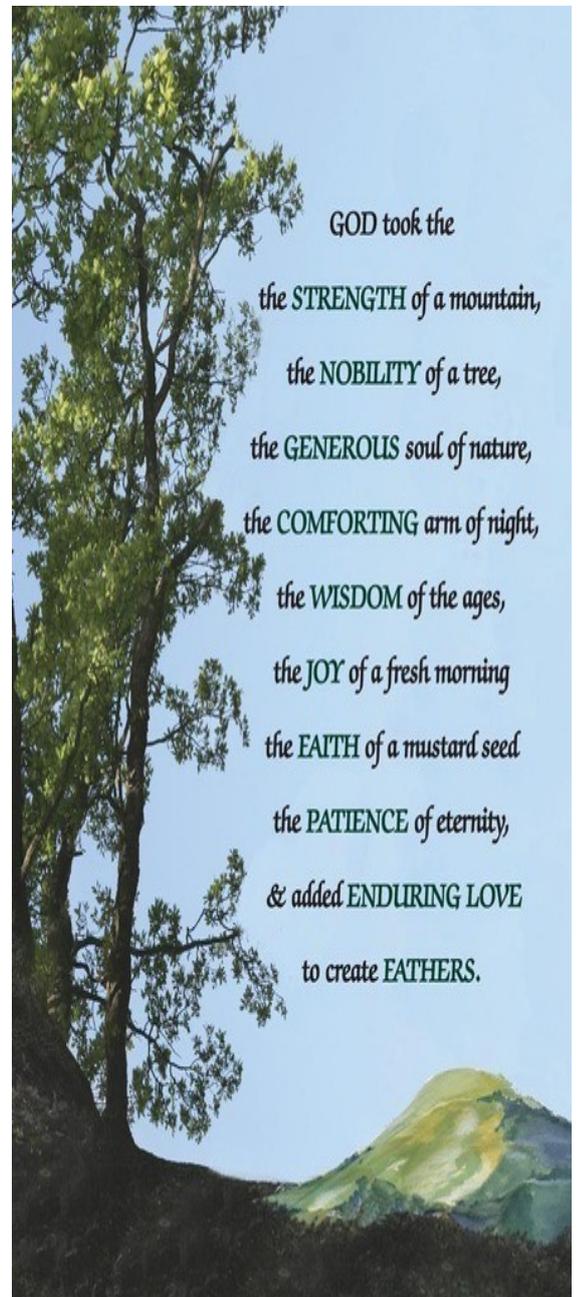
Gospel Reflection

This week's gospel is the first of three predictions of Jesus' death and resurrection in Matthew's gospel (see also Mark and Luke). Despite Peter's confession of faith that immediately precedes this passage (see last week's gospel), the disciples still do not have a very solid understanding of Jesus' purpose. They may regard him as the Messiah, but still do not fully understand what that means. In this passage, Jesus is beginning to prepare them for the events of the passion – his death and resurrection. He is trying to lead them to a greater understanding of his mission and message. But Peter abruptly 'rebukes' Jesus and tells him not to speak like that. One can almost hear Peter saying, 'Look, Jesus, you've got a good thing going here, don't spoil it by talking about dying!' However, Jesus responds to Peter very sharply, suggesting that his lack of understanding is inspired by evil and reflects human thought, not divine wisdom.

The passage then leads in to a description of the challenge of discipleship. To be a follower of Jesus means to 'deny' oneself, take up one's cross and follow Jesus. In the context of this passage, to 'deny' oneself means to not be concerned about 'I' but to be concerned about 'You' – to put others before self. To be a follower of Jesus means to be selfless, not self-centred. In the ultimate example of this, Jesus tells his disciples that whoever wishes to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Jesus' sake will find it. To 'save' your life is to hold back from giving yourself fully to the message of Jesus – to be 'half-hearted' in your faith. But to 'lose' yourself in the message of Jesus is to fully give yourself over to living the reign of God and through 'losing' yourself in this way, Jesus tells us, is how to truly find life.

Historical Context. Whoever loses his life for my sake...

At the time of the writing of Matthew's gospel (around 75-80 CE), Christians were being persecuted and put to death for their beliefs. They were literally giving up their lives for their faith. These persecuted Christians saw Jesus' triumph over death as a sign of great hope and trust in the future for themselves. Jesus' words in the gospel – 'whoever loses his life for my sake will find it' – would give hope to those under persecution that ultimately they too would triumph and that the deaths of their friends were not in vain.



GOD took the

the STRENGTH of a mountain,

the NOBILITY of a tree,

the GENEROUS soul of nature,

the COMFORTING arm of night,

the WISDOM of the ages,

the JOY of a fresh morning

the FAITH of a mustard seed

the PATIENCE of eternity,

& added ENDURING LOVE

to create FATHERS.

