

**Reflection on the Gospel-21st Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B
(John 6:60-69)**

-Veronica M. Lawson RSM

If we have trouble understanding and coming to terms with the teachings of Jesus in the gospel, then we can take some comfort from the reaction of the disciples in John's community some decades after the death of Jesus. It seems that it was not only the members of the Jewish synagogue who were offended by his teaching, but also those Jews who had accepted Jesus as Messiah or Christ and had joined the community of believers. "This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?" they complain. They are referring to his teaching on the "bread" that he will give them. Once again, Jesus' response introduces new teaching, teaching that can only raise more questions in their minds. He links "spirit" with "life". Having used the term "flesh" of his body and of the life that he offers to those who eat of his flesh, he now introduces an element of doubt: flesh is now "useless"! We must be careful not to interpret this literally. It is typical of John to use the same word in a variety of ways. Here "flesh" is used negatively and metaphorically to refer to human weakness and sinfulness in contrast with "spirit" which evokes the creative spirit of God that moved over the waters at creation and the spirit of God that informed the word of the prophets.

The Johannine Jesus lays the ground for offering progressively deeper insights into his identity and destiny and into the meaning of the Christian life. The reference to his "ascending" recalls the earlier part to the gospel where he is presented as the pre-existent one, the one who comes from God and has already ascended to God (John 3:13). Once again, we are confronted with an ancient cosmology that places God in the heavens above. After his death, Jesus will tell Mary Magdalene that he has not yet ascended and instructs her to tell the disciples that he is ascending to God (20:17). It seems that John wants to keep emphasising the origins of Jesus as the eternal Word and the Wisdom of God.

There are many who refuse to grapple with the complexities and implications of his teaching and they turn away. Jesus asks his closest followers if they too will desert. Peter speaks for himself and his companions when he declares their undying allegiance: *"To whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life."* Eternal life is the Johannine equivalent of the "kin-dom of God" or "of the heavens" of the other gospels. Most of us have wanted to abandon our commitment at some time or another. Peter's declaration is a sobering one for us in times of doubt and an encouragement for those of us who seek to understand more deeply and to keep believing despite the challenges.

21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME — YEAR B



ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST

Including St Peter & Paul's, Buninyong
(The Parish of St Alipius, the communities of Ballarat East and Buninyong are committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and vulnerable adults.)

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 9.30 am—1.30 pm
Parish Address: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East 3350
Telephone: 5332 6611
Email: ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au
Parish Website: <http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au>

**MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING
MONDAY, 27th AUGUST 2018**

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

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

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

22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME—YEAR B

READINGS First: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8
Second: James 1:17-18, 21-22, 27
Gospel: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

RECENT DEATHS: Cory Panozzo.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK:

Nathan Cambell, Denise Learmonth, Cath Wheelahan, Kevin Walsh, Peter Clohesy, Frank Nolan (Buninyong), Fiona Dickinson, Carmel Doherty, Aurora Ferrer, Patricia Harman, Leonie Sinnott, John Darroch, Maggie Brown, Margaret Meerbach, Eleanor Keating

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: Team 5: J. Moran©, B. Forbes.
Next Week: Team 6: M. Stewart©, M. Anderson, R. Reynolds.

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$	961.70
	Loose:	\$	150.00
	Direct Debits:	\$	<u>490.00</u>
		\$	1,601.70
PRESBYTERY:		\$	729.00



FR. PETER STUDY LEAVE AND HOLIDAY

Next week Peter is travelling with 12 of our diocesan education personnel on a three week study intensive at the Catholic University of Leuven's faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, Belgium. The course content focus is on the *Enhancing Catholic School Identity (ECSI) Project*, a combined project between the university and the diocese of Victoria and all our Catholic schools.

The ECSI project is a tool for enhancing Catholic identity in schools within an increasingly secular and pluralist global society. The programs draw deeply from the Catholic theological tradition and provide learning opportunities to support Catholic schools in understanding, assessing, and enhancing their Catholic identity. The group leaves Saturday 1st September through to 23rd September.

Peter will be taking the usual 3 week holiday break after this doing some travel on the way home through Asia.

We are fortunate to have the services of Bishop Peter, Fr Kevin Arundell and Fr Tom Brophy in Peter's absence.

PLENARY COUNCIL—QUESTIONS

1. What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?
2. What questions do you have about the future of the Church for the Plenary Council to consider in 2020?

Parishioners will be encouraged to reflect on these questions and give their answers at this weekend Masses.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Will be available this weekend at the Saturday Vigil Mass. Toddlers welcome with appropriate supervision.

DAMASCUS COLLEGE INFORMATION 2020 ENROLMENT

Interested families and students are warmly invited to attend information evenings on Wednesday 5th September at 5pm, or Thursday 25th October at 6.30pm. Open Mornings with tours will be held on Thursday 13th September, 9am – 10.30am, and Thursday 1st November, 9am -10.30am. Please register your attendance online via the Damascus College website www.damascus.vic.edu.au. Enrolment applications for Year 7 2020 close on Friday 15th February 2019.

SEASON OF CREATION 1 SEP—4 OCT

Catholic Earthcare Ballarat Diocese is reminding all that the *Season of Creation* September 1st to October 4th (Feast of St Francis of Assisi) is an annual global Christian celebration of prayer and action to protect the environment. You are invited to join with us at the ecumenical service celebrating the start of the 2018 season being held at St Mathews Anglican Church, Wendouree (Corner of Howitt and Forest Street) on Sunday 2nd September at 2pm. Light refreshments to follow.

BCSF ANNUAL APPEAL

A reminder that the Ballarat Clergy Support Fund Annual Appeal will be held as usual on the first Sunday of September. The BCSF Committee is very grateful for the support given each year to the promotion of this appeal, and requests your assistance again this year.

MIGRANT & REFUGEE SUNDAY—AUGUST 26

Sunday is the anniversary of the Tampa. The Tampa incident was a turning point in Australia's history and law, and the introduction of the "Pacific Solution".

You are invited to join RAR Ballarat, Grandmothers against the detention of refugee children for a rally starting at 11 am on Monday, 27th August outside MP Catherine King's Office, Lydiard St.

The Refugee Council of Australia also invites you to sign their petition to add your voice for the call to get **KidsOffNauru**. To do so go to <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au>

CHILD PROTECTION SUNDAY - SEPTEMBER 9

Each year the Australian Catholic Church dedicates the Sunday at the end of Child Protection Week as *Child Protection Sunday*. In 2018 the Australian Catholic Church marks Child Safeguarding Sunday on 9 September. Uniquely this year Child Protection Sunday follows on the heels of the formal response of the Australian Catholic Church to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the release of the advice provided to Church Leaders by its Truth Justice and Healing Council.

Child Protection Sunday affords an Opportunity for Dioceses, Eparchies, Religious Institutes and Ministerial PJPs to complement that National Catholic Response with factual information on how individual church entities are themselves active participants in the protection/safeguarding of minors and vulnerable adults. When the Australian Prime Minister offers the response of the Commonwealth Government in Parliament on 22 October we pray it may bring a further sense of how we, both as a Church and as a Nation have faced the terrible truth that we failed our children, but also as a church and as a nation we have now embarked on a new path.

JOY SPREADING IN BALLARAT

Stacey Atkins is the guest speaker at the next *Joy Spreading* event for young adults (18-30 yo) on Friday, September 14, 2018 from 6.30pm – 9.00pm at the Lake View Hotel, Ballarat. An opportunity for young Catholic adults to share ideas and views in a friendly environment. Free event. More info at www.ballarat.catholic.org.au or phone 5337 7125.