

Reflection on the Gospel-5th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A (Matthew 5:13-16)

-Veronica Lawson RSM

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 to 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. These days we are rightly concerned about high levels of salinity in overworked soil. That was certainly not so 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, to be just and compassionate in all of 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 allow 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 powerful metaphors.

ST ALIPIUS PARISH — BALLARAT EAST & BUNINYONG 5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME — YEAR A, SUNDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2020

*Our parish is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity
of all children and vulnerable adults.*

St Alipius' Parish Church

82 Victoria Street, BALLARAT EAST 3350

SS Peter & Paul's Church

701 Fisken St, BUNINYONG 3357

Contact Details

Parish Office & Presbytery: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East 3350

Hours: 9.30am - 1.30pm Tues, Thurs, Fri

Telephone: 5332 6611

Email: ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

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

SAP Liturgy website: www.sapliturgy.net.au

SAP Liturgy email: sapliturgy@gmail.com

Parish Priest: Fr. Jorge De Chavez OSJ

In Residence: Fr. Eladio Lizada OSJ

Parish Coordinator: Lucy O'Beirne

Finance Officer: Kerrie McTigue

Child Safety Officer: Roxanne Leed

Hall Caretaker: Gavin Maguire

Funeral Ministry: Carmel Flynn & Kathy Curran

Liturgy Coordinator: David Santamaria

Parish Finance Committee Members:

Brett Holloway (outgoing Chair), Kathy Curran, Arnoud Goossens, Tanya Hislop, Paul Jans, Gerard McCarty & John White

Masses This Week

13/2 Thurs. 9.30 am St Alipius' Church

13/2 Thurs. 11.00am Mercy Place (Corbett St)

14/2 Fri. 9.30 am St Alipius' Church

Weekly Events

Rosary: Thursdays 10.30am
Ss Peter & Paul's Chapel

Choir Practice: Tuesdays 6.30pm
St Alipius' Church

Next Weekend's Masses

St Alipius' Church, Ballarat East Saturday, 15th February 6.00 pm

Sunday, 16th February 9.00 am

SS Peter & Paul's Church, Buninyong Sunday, 16th February 10.30 am

Readings: 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time — Year A

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

Recent Death: Geoff Nicols

Anniversaries: Martin Moran

Unwell: We pray for Kateri Byrne, Carmel Doherty, Pat Hogan, Cathy Jones, Peter Martin, Letitia Simmons, Margie Wilmott and all who are unwell

Clergy Support

Whilst Fr Jorge is away, we are fortunate to have the support of Frs Barry Ryan and Tom Brophy celebrating our midweek Masses, with Bishop Paul Bird celebrating this weekend's Masses. From Monday 17th to Friday 21st February, all the priests of the diocese will be participating in their annual retreat and we offer our prayers and thanks for your ministry.

Thank you!

"To all parishioners who so generously gifted Christmas presents to our residents. They were gratefully received. Many thanks. Lifestyle Team & Residents, Kirralee Aged Care". Our parish also extends its gratitude to Margaret McCarty and Ruby Dean who generously coordinated the Giving Tree effort, thank you very much ladies.

Social Afternoon

In the Mercy Centre on Wednesday, February 12th at 2pm. Please enter via Gent St.

Next Parish Plenary Listening & Discernment Gatherings

Sessions will be held on Monday 17th Feb 7.00pm—9.00pm and Tuesday, 18th Feb 1.00pm—3.00pm in the St Alipius' Hall. The topic for reflection is *How God is calling us to be a Christ-centred Church that is Prayerful and Eucharistic*. Snapshot reports to support reflection are available in the church foyers.

Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

The next gathering for those discerning the model for a Parish Pastoral Council in St Alipius' Parish will be held Monday February 24th at 7.00pm with Loreto Sister, Rachel McLoughlin.

Commencement of Weekly Rosary

Rosary is now being offered weekly at 10.30am in the chapel of Ss Peter & Paul's, Buninyong, for the special intentions of Our Blessed Mother, for priests, and peace and harmony in the world. All welcome. Enquiries: Danny 0433 323 870 or Hugh 0419 755 752

St Alipius' Community Choir Rehearsals

Practise will occur every Tuesday from 6.30pm—7.30pm in the St Alipius' Church. New singers and musicians are welcome any time. All ages. Queries: David 0427 310 564

Counting Teams

This Week: **Team 6:** K. Cummins©, J. O'Meara, B. Hood, G. Duck

Next Week: **Team 7:** B. McKeegan©, M. Ridsdale, K. McKeegan

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Parish: Envelopes: \$ 571.20
Loose: \$ 300.00
Direct Debits: \$ 990.00
\$ 1861.20

Presbytery: \$ 696.00

*Thank you to those who
contributed to the
collections last weekend*

Follow-up on the Stewardship Groups and Ministries results 2019

Last category. This week we look at parishioner responses received for Maintenance:

- 5 Assist With Gardening
- 12 Grounds Working Bees
- 1 Maintenance of Buildings
- 2 Occasional Repair Jobs
- 0 Trade Skills

Damascus College Ballarat 2020 class reunion dates

Damascus College Alumni (including past students or staff from Sacred Heart College, St Paul's College and St Martin's in the Pines) are warmly invited:

50 yrs - Class of 1970 on Sunday, April 19; **40 yrs** - Class of 1980 on Saturday, April 18; **30 yrs** - Class of 1990 on Saturday, March 21; **20 yrs** - Class of 2000 on Sunday, May 3; & **10 yrs** - Class of 2010 on Friday, March 20.

It is our aim is to have as many of your exit year group as possible attend and participate, including those who may have left at other times but identify best with the above year group. For details please contact the Damascus Alumni Officer at k.hegert@damascus.vic.edu.au (03) 5337 2352. Website www.damascus.vic.edu.au

World Day of Prayer Friday 6th March — 2020 for Zimbabwe

You are welcome to join in this world-wide prayer effort at one of the following venues:

10.00am: One2One Church of Christ, 121 Gillies Street South, Alfredton;

2.00pm: St. Matthew's Anglican Church, 204 Howitt Street, Wendouree;

7.00pm: Baptist Church at the Uniting Church, Buninyong

7.00pm: St. Andrew's Uniting Church, 130 Ballarat Road, Creswick.

Advice on Coronavirus – from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

With regards to the coronavirus outbreak in China and some cases here in Australia, the Conference has not called for the suspension of any liturgical practices as health authorities state that the risk to the general public is very low, especially if no travel to China or contact with an infected person has occurred. It is noted, however, that people who are unwell should stay home if they are suffering from, or could be carrying, an infectious condition.

Bushfire Appeal – a message from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

Special collections at Masses across the country on the Australia Day weekend have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to support people and communities affected by the devastating bushfires. This is one part of a multi-dimensional response of the Catholic community across the nation to this situation. Catholic Emergency Relief Australia (CERA) is a new collaboration of national Catholic organisations that will help coordinate the Church's ongoing response to the bushfire crisis and future domestic natural disasters. Find out more at www.cera.catholic.org.au

St John's Primary School Dennington – Centenary Celebrations

Sunday, March 22, 2020 beginning with Mass at 10.00am and celebrations to follow. If you have any memorabilia or stories, please contact Sharon Easley by text on 0423 361 914 or email 100years@sjdennington.catholic.edu.au.