

Reflection on the Gospel-6th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A (Matthew 5:17-37)

-Veronica Lawson RSM

We sometimes forget that Jesus was a faithful Jew who observed the Law handed down within Israel from generation to generation. Today's gospel is from Matthew's Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus, the faithful Jewish teacher, addresses his Jewish disciples and the Jewish crowds who gather to hear his words.

The mission of Jesus is to fulfill the law ("I have come to..."), not to do away with it, and fulfilling the law is a question of "righteousness". The Greek term for righteousness, *dikaïosunē*, translates both the Hebrew *sedeqah* meaning "right relationship" and *mishpat* meaning "justice". The righteousness of the official teachers of the Law, the scribes and Pharisees, their manner of relating to others and their notions of justice, are judged to be quite inadequate for those who are part of God's reign, the kin-dom "of heaven" in Matthew's terminology. The righteousness of Jesus' followers is to "exceed" such minimalist interpretations and expressions of the Law.

Jesus, authentic teacher and interpreter of the Law, offers six examples of the righteousness that "fulfils" the Law. Four of these examples are included in today's reading. What was heard "of old" is contrasted with what Jesus wants to say to his hearers. In the first instance, they all know that the Law forbids murder. They may not have considered the connection between unrestrained anger or murderous thoughts and murder itself. In a series of cascading sentences, Jesus presents a charter for reconciliation and forgiveness. He reminds his audience that true worship demands a forgiving heart expressed in action. He includes a fairly pragmatic reason for settling out of court: you may actually find yourself in prison. There may be an implicit criticism here of the increasingly punitive legal system of the time, a reminder to us of the futility of incarceration for minor crimes.

The second example puts "lustful looking" on a par with adultery. In an age of easy access to internet pornography, this example has a particular resonance: any form of sexual depravity is destructive of right relationship. The third example on divorce is complicated by the exceptive clause, "except in the case of *porneia*". *Porneia* referred to any illicit sexual activity. Here it probably means marriages within degrees of kinship prohibited by Jews but not prohibited by Gentiles. The question seems to have arisen as to whether couples in such unions could stay together on becoming Christian. While Jesus presents the ideal (no divorce), we have to put this teaching into a broader context. Writing to the people of Corinth on this subject, Paul allows for exceptions, since "God has called us to peace". The fourth example is about swearing on oath. Righteousness calls for honesty and transparency in every day dealings. If the words we use are congruent with the intentions of our heart, we should not have to invoke God as a witness to the veracity of our claims.

ST ALIPIUS PARISH — BALLARAT EAST & BUNINYONG 5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME — YEAR A, SUNDAY 16TH 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 Fisker 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

20/2 Thurs. 11.00am Mercy Place (Corbett St)

No weekday Masses in the parish church — priests
of the diocese on retreat this week

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, 22nd February 6.00 pm

Sunday, 23rd February 10.30 am

SS Peter & Paul's Church, Buninyong Sunday, 23rd February 9.00 am

Readings: 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time — Year A

First: Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18 **Second:** 1 Corinthians 3:16-23 **Gospel:** Matthew 5:38-48

Baptisms: Archie Nolan, Max Nolan, Toby Nolan

Recent Death: Brendan O'Loughlin

Anniversary: Michael Joseph Duck

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

Plenary Council 2020

Thank you to parishioners who attended our Plenary Council Discernment Gatherings later last year. Your interest and contributions were much appreciated.

Next Monday evening at 7.00pm and Tuesday afternoon at 1.00pm, parishioners of St Alipius parish are invited to gather to discern together how God is calling us to be a Christ-centred Church that is **Prayerful and Eucharistic**. Our gatherings will take place in St Alipius hall, will be facilitated by Bernadette Tolan, John Clonan and Kristen Murray and will include a cuppa. The Snapshot report for this theme is available in our church foyers or [online here](#). Reading and reflecting on the report would be valuable prior to attending a gathering. This is an opportunity to come along and help shape our future.

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.

Parish Finance Committee Meeting

Members please note this is scheduled for 6.00pm Tuesday, 25th February in the presbytery.

St Alipius' Community Choir Rehearsals

Practice 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

Ecological Theology Education Invitation

2020 Roundtable Conversations on Ecological Theology with Sr. Veronica Lawson and Fr Barry Ryan: Mercy Gathering Room, 16 Gent Street, Ballarat East (side entrance).

Wednesday Evening Series:

7-9pm, February 26, March 25, April 22, May 20, June 17, July 15;

Thursday Afternoon Series:

1-3pm, February 27, March 26, April 23, May 21, June 18, July 16.

Registration: email veronica.lawson@mercy.org.au (kindly include contact details). Donation (to cover expenses and to make a contribution to ecological justice): \$5 per session.

Counting Teams

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

Next Week: **Team 8:** J. Patton ©, B. Brisbane, J. O'Brien

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Parish:
Envelopes: \$ 773.50
Loose: \$ 300.00
Direct Debits: \$ 310.00
\$ 1383.50

Presbytery: \$ 724.00

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

Damascus College Bright Futures Fundraising Breakfast

All are invited to this fundraising breakfast which supports the scholarship fund to help at least one Year 7 student per year with identified need to be held on Thursday, March 12, 2020 from 7.00am - 8.45am at the Ballarat Golf Club, 1800 Sturt Street, Ballarat. Special guest is Judy Brewer OAM, Sacred Heart Class of 1979. Purchase your \$40 ticket at www.trybooking.com/BGZVS or call the College (03) 5337 2222.

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.

St Joseph's Church Nullawil Final Mass

All are welcome to attend the Final Mass at St Joseph's Church Nullawil on Sunday, April 5, 2020 at 12.30pm. A light luncheon will follow. Inquiries: Kaylene James, ph. 0428 935270.

Marriage Encounter Weekend

Invest in your most precious asset.....Your Marriage! Married couples, come and learn how to keep/rekindle the passion in your relationship and how to keep your love growing! The weekend is based around Catholic values but couples of all faiths are welcome. *Next weekend is on 17-19 April 2020 in Melbourne.* Other weekends on 17-19 July and 13-15 November 2020. Starts 7pm on Friday evening. Ends 5pm Sunday. Accommodation and all meals provided. Information/Bookings: Phone Mercy & James 0409 183 676 or Email: vicbookings@wwme.org.au Website: <http://www.wwme.org.au>

Pilgrimage Opportunity

16-day Eastern Europe pilgrimage led by Fr. Patrick Jackson departing on 8th August 2020. This pilgrimage features Warsaw, Krakow, Prague, Munich, and Oberammergau, and includes the famous Passion Play 2020 which takes place once per decade. For inquiries & bookings call **03 8839 6615** or email info@magiholidays.com.au. Flyer on notice-boards..