

Reflection on the Gospel — 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A (Matthew 5:38-48)

-Veronica Lawson RSM

Today's gospel is a continuation of the Matthean Jesus' teaching on the sort of righteousness, the right relationship and justice, to which his followers are called in their living of the Law. The Law of Moses included a law of retaliation designed to make punishment for wrongdoing to persons or property proportionate to the offence (Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20 and Deuteronomy 19:21). This was quite enlightened legislation at that time. In a series of striking images, Jesus invites his followers to go far beyond the strict application of the law and to embrace a new way of thinking about and acting towards those who injured them or us.

Relinquishing your right to compensation is one thing. Giving more of your property to one who has stolen from you is quite another. Do we take this teaching literally or do we simply embrace the spirit of non-retaliation that seems to be at the heart of this teaching? A too-easy amnesty does not always bring justice. Last week's gospel reminded us that there is to be no place for uncontrolled anger or murderous thoughts in our hearts. Both that teaching and this seem to be about taking responsibility for how we live. Harboring anger can have disastrous consequences for oneself as well as for others. It tends to become a state of being and skew our capacity for right judgement. What happens to us may be beyond our control. What we do with what comes our way is for us to decide. Jesus makes it clear that we have choices in the face of life's struggles. The disciple is called to assume personal responsibility and to refuse the way of retaliation.

The final example or antithesis in the list of six that Jesus offers in the Sermon on the Mount is the most confronting of all: there are to be no limitations on love. Loving one's enemies is quite a challenge, on a personal as well as a global level. We learn the hard way that we cannot change others. We can only change our attitudes and our approaches to those who harm us in any way. Catherine McAuley, the first Sister of Mercy, wrote that her sisters "never let the sun go down on their anger". I used to wonder how they managed that. Over recent years I have found that praying quite deliberately for those who give us a hard time or cause us grief is by far the most effective way of retaining my own peace of mind and of expelling retaliatory thoughts. For me, it is a matter of gently bringing these people to mind, of breathing in the loving kindness or *chesed* of God that suffuses the universe and of breathing it out to them. Such prayer enables me to think of them in kindly ways and act towards them without rancour, even when these sentiments are not reciprocated.

ST ALIPIUS PARISH — BALLARAT EAST & BUNINYONG 7TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME — YEAR A, SUNDAY 23RD 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 Fiskens 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

26/2 Ash 9.30am **St Alipius' Church** (SFX primary)

Wednesday 12.00pm **St Alipius' Church** (SAP, Emmaus)

7.00pm **St Alipius' Church**

27/2 Thurs. 9.30am St Alipius' Church

11.00am Mercy Place (Corbett St)

28/2 Fri. 9.30am St Alipius' Church

Weekly Events

Choir Practice: Tues. 6.30pm
St Alipius' Church

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

Reconciliation: Fri. 11.00am &
Sat. 11.30am St Pat's Cathedral

Next Weekend's Masses

St Alipius' Church, Ballarat East Saturday, 29th February 6.00 pm

Sunday, 1st March 9.00 am

SS Peter & Paul's Church, Buninyong Sunday, 1st March 10.30 am

Readings: First Sunday of Lent — Year A

First: Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7

Second: Romans 5:12-19

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11

Baptisms: Oscar Bourke, Byron Toohey, Jude Toohey

Recent Death: Max Masterson

Anniversary: Jack Gittings

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

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.

Social Afternoon

Will be held in the in Mercy Centre at 2pm on Wednesday 26th February. Please enter via Gent St.

Sts Peter & Paul's, Buninyong: Wine, Cheese & Chat

A Wine & Cheese evening will be held on **Friday 27 March from around 5pm until around 7pm** in the church hall. All very welcome. Bring friends and family and enjoy socialising with fellow parishioners. Small charge of \$5 applies to cover costs. This is hopefully the first of a number of social functions to be held during the year.

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.

Mass of the Oils Participation

The Mass of the Oils will be celebrated at St Patrick's Cathedral, Monday 6th April at 6.30pm. Members of the St Alipius' Parish are invited to participate in the following ministries: Usher, Reader, Presentation of Oils, Presentation of Gifts, Musician, and Member of the Choir. Please fill out your interest on the form in the foyer by Sunday 8th March and place in the tray provided. Online forms available [here](#).

Counting Teams

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

Next Week: **Team 9:** P. Saunders ©, M. Saunders

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| Parish: | Envelopes: | \$ 631.20 | <i>Thank you to those who contributed to the collections last weekend</i> |
| | Loose: | \$ 300.00 | |
| | Direct Debits: | \$ 640.00 | |
| | Monthly Credit Cards | <u>\$ 2527.00</u> | |
| | | \$ 4098.20 | |

Presbytery: \$ 704.00

Plenary Council

Many thanks to John Clonan, Kristen Murray and Bernadette Tolan who facilitated our parish gatherings last week. The next parish sessions will be held on Monday March 23 from 7-9pm, and on Tuesday March 24 from 1-3pm. (Topic will be *Joyful, Hopefilled and Servant Community*). As a diocese we are currently focussing on the topic *Open to Conversion, Renewal and Reform*. Please visit www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au for further reading. Snapshot reports are available in the church foyers.

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.

Pastoral Care Position at Ballarat Health Services

Following the appointment of Tracy Sillekens to another position, the Cathedral Parish has a vacancy for the position of Pastoral Carer at Ballarat Health Services. The position is part time, 12 hours per week, with flexibility as to when these hours are worked. The successful applicant will offer pastoral care to the Catholic patients and their families at the Hospital. A position description is available from the Cathedral Parish Office — phone: 5331 2933, email: ballarat@ballarat.catholic.org.au. Applications close on Friday March 6th.

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 John's Primary School Dennington – Centenary Celebrations

Centenary celebrations for St John's Primary School Dennington will be held on 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.

Marriage Encounter Weekends

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>