



St Michael's Parish, Nowra

Incorporating the Catholic Communities of St Michael's, Nowra – St. Patrick's, Berry – Sacred Heart, Bomaderry - Help of Christians, Culburra – St Joseph's, Kangaroo Valley – Holy Spirit, Vincentia.

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Bookings for Weekend Masses, please see notice inside bulletin

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

15th November 2020

CREATING AND HOLDING SPACE FOR OUR BROKENNESS

Ron Rolheiser OMI

Some years ago I went on a weekend retreat given by a woman who made no secret about the fact that not being able to have children constituted a deep wound in her life. So she offered retreats on the pain of being unable to have children. Being a celibate and not having my own children, I went on one of these retreats, the only man to venture there. The rest of the participants were women, mostly in their 40s and 50s, who had not borne children of their own.

Our leader, using scripture, biography, poetry, and psychology, examined the issue of barrenness from many points of view. The retreat came to a head on Saturday evening with a ritual in chapel in which various participants went up a huge cross and spoke out their pain for Jesus and everyone else to hear. That was followed by us watching, together, the British movie, *Secrets and Lies*, within which one woman's heartache at being unable to conceive a child is powerfully highlighted. Afterwards there was a lot of honest sharing of feelings – and lots and lots of tears! But after that painful sharing of pain and the over-generous tears which accompanied it, the entire atmosphere changed, as if some dark storm had just done its thing but left us still intact. There was relief, and plenty of laughter and light heartedness. A storm had indeed passed us over and we were safe.

All pain can be borne if it can be shared. Art Schopenhauer is credited with saying that, but, irrespective of who said it first, it captures what happened at that retreat. A deep pain was made easier to bear not because it was taken away but because it was shared, and shared in a "sacramental" way. Yes, there are sacraments that don't take place in a church, but still have sacramental power. And we need more of these.

For example, Rachel Held Evans writes: "Often I hear from readers who have left their churches because they had no songs for them to sing after the miscarriage, the shooting, the earthquake, the divorce, the diagnosis, the attack, the bankruptcy. The American tendency toward triumphalism, of optimism rooted in success, money, and privilege, will infect and sap of substance any faith community that has lost its capacity for *holding space for those in grief.*"

She's right. Our churches aren't creating enough space for holding grief. In essence: In the everyday, practical spirituality of community, prayer, liturgy, and Eucharist within our churches we don't lean sufficiently on the fact that Christ is both a dying and a rising reality. We generally don't take the dying part of Christ as seriously as we should. What are the consequences?

Among other things, it means that we don't create enough communal, ritual celebrations in our churches within which people can feel free to own and express their brokenness and grief communally and in a "sacramental" way. Granted our churches do have funeral rites, sacraments of the sick, reconciliation services, special prayer services after a tragedy within a community, and other rituals and gatherings that are powerful spaces for holding grief and brokenness. However (with the exception of the sacrament of reconciliation which though is generally a private, one-to-one ritual) these are generally tied to a special, singular circumstance such as a death, a serious sickness, or an episodic tragedy within a community. What we lack are regular ecclesially- based, communal rituals, analogous to an *Alcoholics Anonymous* meetings, around which people can come, share their brokenness, and experience a grace that can only come from community.

We need various kinds of "sacramental" celebrations in our churches within which, to use Rachel Held Evans' terminology, we can create and hold space for those who are grieving a broken heart, a miscarriage, an abortion, a dire medical diagnosis, a bankruptcy, the loss of a job, a divorce, a forced retirement, a rejection in love, the death of a cherished dream, the movement into assisted living, the adjustment to an empty nest within a marriage, barrenness, and frustrations of every kind.

What will these rituals look like? Mostly they don't exist yet so it is up to us to invent them. Charles Taylor suggests that the religious struggle today is not so much a struggle of faith but a struggle of the imagination. Nobody has ever lived in this kind of world before. We need some new rituals. We're pioneers in new territory, and pioneers have to improvise. Admittedly, pain and brokenness have always been with us, but past generations had communal ways of creating space for holding grief. Families, communities, and churches then had less of a struggle with the kind individualism that today leaves us mostly alone to deal with our brokenness. Today there's no longer a sufficient communal and ecclesial structure to help us accept that, here in this life, we live "mourning and weeping in a valley of tears."

We need to imagine some new, sacramental rituals within which to help hold our grief.

WELCOME to

Cameron Lennie + Michael Hardy + Sarah Sansom

who will be received into the Catholic Church at the 5.00 pm Mass this Sunday 15th Nov.

Having completed an extended course of study and prayer, they have asked for full initiation in the Catholic Church, through St. Michael's Parish.

Let us keep them in our prayers.



CONGRATULATIONS to the 75 children from the parish, who receive

Holy Eucharist for the first time

at special Masses, on Sat/Sun 21st & 22nd November.

We appreciate the support and encouragement of their parents. A special thank you to our teachers and catechists who have prepared the children with such diligence, during these difficult times.

Please keep these children and their families in our prayers.



BAPTISMS THIS WEEKEND



Indiana and Amelia Apps

Arke Struber

George Konzen

The Culburra Beach Family Group will meet at Greenwell Point Park on **Wednesday 18th November** at 11.45 for a picnic (fish and chips).

Please contact Margaret if coming, also if transport is needed (444 64117 or 0456 688 621).

CWL Nowra Branch will be holding their annual Christmas Raffle this weekend and next weekend at all Mass centres.



1st and 2nd prize a beautiful Christmas hamper. Tickets \$2 each or 3 for \$5.

We appreciate your support as (like every other group in the parish) we have been unable to hold any functions to raise funds this year due to COVID, so the raffle is it!!! Thank you

Holy Hour

The NET Team are hosting Holy Hour in-person! Every Wednesday from 6:30pm at St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong. Please join us for adoration, music (sadly, we cannot sing), prayer, and Jesus! See you there!

FOUND IN CHURCH:
A lovely gold brooch was found in the Church, following the Remembrance Mass on Monday 2nd November.
If the brooch belongs to you, please call the Parish Office – 4423 1712.

Annual Collection for the Holy Land

For 800 years, the Holy Land Franciscans have served in the land made holy by the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus.

The annual Holy Land Collection, usually taken up on Good Friday, will this year be held in the diocese as an online collection on 15 November 2020 (World Day of the Poor).

To make a donation please visit dow.sh/HolyLand2020 **OR call the Diocesan Community Relations Officer on 4222 2446.**

Your support helps the church minister in parishes, provide Catholic schools and offer religious education. The wars, unrest and instability have been especially hard on Christians. In these times of crisis, the Holy Land Collection provides humanitarian aid to refugees. The Holy Land Collection also helps to preserve the sacred shrines. When you contribute to the Holy Land Collection, you become an instrument of peace and join with Catholics around the world in solidarity with the Church in the Holy Land.

Registering for weekend Masses:

For Nowra, Culburra, Berry and Bomaderry - call **0477 427 396** (Mon to Fri between 10am & 3pm)

For Mass at Kangaroo Valley, please email ronankangaroo1@gmail.com

For Mass at Vincentia - call **0435 862 156** or email holyspiritvincentia@gmail.com

*** PLEASE CALL TO CANCEL YOUR BOOKING
IF YOU HAVE REGISTERED FOR MASS AND ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND***

Saturday Vigils		Sunday Mass Times									
Nowra	5:00pm	Nowra	8:00 am	9:30am	5:00 pm	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	
Culburra	5:00pm	Berry	8:00 am			Nowra	8:00 am	8:00 am	8:00 am	8:00 am	
Vincentia	5:00pm 6:15pm	Bomaderry	9:30 am					5:30 pm		11:30 am	
		Vincentia	9:00 am	10:15		Berry	5:30 pm				
		Kangaroo Valley	11:00 am			Culburra			5:30 pm		
						Bomaderry				5:30 pm	
						Vincentia	8:00 am	5:30 pm	5:30 pm	8:00am	8:00 am
						Kangaroo Valley		9:00 am	9:00 am	9:00 am	

Confessions / Reconciliation

Nowra: Saturday: 9.30 – 10.30am

Culburra: Saturday prior to Vigil Mass at 5.00pm

Vincentia: Saturday 4pm

Berry: Tuesday following 5.30pm Mass

Bomaderry: Friday following 5.30pm Mass

Children's Liturgy Worksheets can be downloaded from the parish website -

<http://nowraparish.org.au/faithresources>



Advent Books - The Diocesan Advent & Christmas Daily Reflections booklet – **Adore** – are available at all Churches.

In line with COVID restrictions, the **attendance monitors** will be selling the booklets, **after Mass**. \$2 per copy. (correct money would be appreciated, as no change can be given).

We prayerfully remember the recently deceased **Marie Paton** (Owen Paton's mother) and all those whose anniversaries occur at this time especially **Do Tuyet Mai**. We pray also for all who have died from Covid-19 in Australia and worldwide. May they rest in peace.



November – A month when we remember our deceased loved-ones.

These envelopes are available in the porches of all our churches or can be picked up from the Parish Office.

When you have written the names of your deceased family or friends on the outside of the envelopes, place your offering inside the envelopes and return to the collection boxes in the church in the "First Collection" side, or hand in to the office or one of the priests. The Masses will be said throughout the month of November.

UPDATE ON COVID RESTRICTIONS

Although the NSW Government has eased restrictions on the number of people for religious gatherings and places of worship (excluding weddings and funerals),...

HOWEVER: Due to the size of all the Churches in the parish, the maximum number of people we can accommodate does **NOT change**. Parishioners are reminded to register for ALL weekend Masses. You are respectfully asked to sit observing the distancing rules of 1.5² m.

If you are asked to move seats, by the attendance monitor, **Please be mindful**, we are all following the same rules and we thank you for your patience and understanding.

Entrance Antiphon - Jer 29:11,12,14

The Lord said: I think thoughts of peace and not of affliction. You will call upon me, and I will answer you, and I will lead back your captives from every place.

First Reading - Prv 31:10-13. 19-20. 30-31

A perfect wife – who can find her? She is far beyond the price of pearls. Her husband’s heart has confidence in her, from her he will derive no little profit. Advantage and not hurt she brings him all the days of her life. She is always busy with wool and with flax, she does her work with eager hands. She sets her hands to the distaff, her fingers grasp the spindle. She holds out her hand to the poor, she opens her arms to the needy. Charm is deceitful, and beauty empty; the woman who is wise is the one to praise. Give her a share in what her hands have worked for, and let her works tell her praises at the city gates.

Responsorial Psalm - Ps 127:1-5. R. v.1

Response Happy are those who fear the Lord.

1. O blessed are those who fear the Lord
and walk in his ways!

By the labour of your hands you shall eat.
You will be happy and prosper. (R.)

2. Your wife like a fruitful vine
in the heart of your house;
your children like shoots of the olive, around your
around your table. (R.)

3. Indeed thus shall be blessed
the man who fears the Lord.

May the Lord bless you from Zion
in a happy Jerusalem
all the days of your life. (R.)

Second Reading - 1 Thes 5:1-6

You will not be expecting us to write anything to you, brothers, about ‘times and seasons’, since you know very well that the Day of the Lord is going to come like a thief in the night. It is when people are saying, ‘How quiet and peaceful it is’ that the worst suddenly happens, as suddenly as labour pains come on a pregnant woman; and there will be no way for anybody to evade it. But it is not as if you live in the dark, my brothers, for that Day to overtake you like a thief. No, you are all sons of light and sons of the day: we do not belong to the night or to darkness, so we should not go on sleeping, as everyone else does, but stay wide awake and sober.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

Live in me and let me live in you, says the Lord; my branches bear much fruit.

Alleluia!

Gospel - Mt 25:14-15. 19-21



Jesus spoke this parable to his disciples: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a man on his way abroad who summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third one; each in proportion to his ability. Then he set out. Now a long time after, the master of those servants came back and went through his accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents came forward bringing five more. “Sir”, he said “you entrusted me with five talents; here are five more that I have made.” His master said to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master’s happiness.”’

Communion Antiphon - Ps 72:28

To be near God is my happiness, to place my hope in God the Lord.