



Easter greetings to all members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on this Fourth Sunday of Easter!

1. **LITURGY BRISBANE**, from our own archdiocese continues to provide Sunday Readings for home reflection. Click on the link below for today's texts.

The first document contains the Sunday readings with associated commentaries and prayers. It is suggested that families gather to read the Scriptures aloud together:

<https://litedliturgybrisbane.weebly.com/sunday-readings-at-home.html/>

The second resource is designed for families with young children. An extract from the Sunday gospel is provided, along with some reflection questions, a family activity and a worksheet for children:

<https://litedliturgybrisbane.weebly.com/family-prayer-week-by-week.html/>



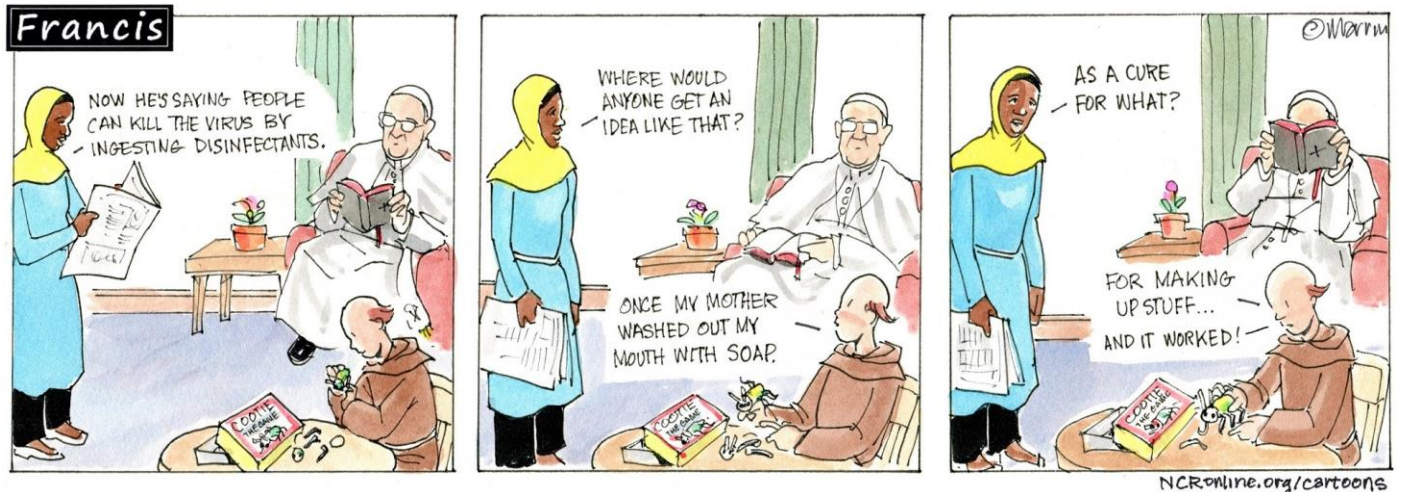
Last Sunday I included a scripture reflection from Br Julian McDonald an Aussie religious who is working in Rome. More than a few readers sent positive messages onto me so I include his reflection for today: *What am I doing with my abundant life!*

<https://www.catholicreligious.org.au/gospel-reflections/2020/5/1/what-am-i-doing-with-my-abundant-life>



*On a return  
trip from Lake  
Moogerah  
2 May 2020*

## 2. FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP by Pat Marrin.



28th April 2020



30th April 2020

3. We pray with and for those who are sick in our parish and beyond: all across the globe infected with COVID-19; former pastor of Boonah parish Fr. Ellis Clifford, Chris Healy, Bill Castley, Paul White, Thyrlene Devin, Bridget Muller, Liliana Toohill, Libby Shields, Jonathon Hancock, Pio Artesi, Marko Babic, Dermot Peters, Max Gardiner, Nicole Wimmer, Bernice Lippiatt, Pat Toohill, Trish Merlehan, Kath Pascoe, Suzy Collyer, Pat Shannon, and Paul Maschio.

*O God, strengthen these your servants.*

4. Let's continue to pray for those across the world who have entered into eternal life because of COVID-19 infection. The sheer number continue to stagger so many of us and there appears to be little relief in sight for so many communities. This week, I was touched by a short clip of a doctor who spoke of the immense sadness he is experiencing in an English hospital.

5. May God give eternal peace to Donal Dwyer who has died (Kathleen McKenzie's brother), Richie Lutvey (Wynnum) who was buried this week, and Pat Treacy (formerly of the Coolum Catholic community) who died one week ago. I will join the Treacy family for Pat's Funeral Mass this week in Redcliffe parish having celebrated her husband Kevin's funeral in the last twelve months.



6. My sincere thanks to parishioners who are able to continue their weekly giving to the parish at this time. Some people are calling in to the parish house and contributing their envelopes – thanks! A large box with the new sets of envelopes for the next year arrived this week at the local post office. This means that those of us who give this way will be needing a new set soon. I will get on to this asap.

7. Last Saturday at 0600 a small group of seven locals stood on the corner of Church and John Streets, Boonah, and remembered. Our picture was added to a montage of photos from across SEQ. Here is a short message from Auxiliary Bishop Ken Howell:

*We've been asked to share the [wonderful images \(click here\)](#) posted on social media last week of colleagues across the Archdiocese standing in their driveways to remember those who served and sacrificed. Thank you everyone for sending in your photos – we received almost 80 images.*

8. **FREE!** Sign up here <https://bit.ly/2ShdcSZ> to receive **THE CATHOLIC LEADER** digital edition delivered free to your inbox every Thursday morning. A free subscription is available while Masses are suspended across the Archdiocese of Brisbane due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The editor and his team hopes this offer gives us all a sense of connection, inspiration and renewal in the faith, at a time when living the faith has changed.

9. This morning our **PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE** met at the parish house. Thanks to David, Angela and John for gathering together.

Our PPC's main initiative in April was to *reach out to many parishioners who are on our books*. Each parish councillor was assigned a random group of ten or so households and we were asked to phone them over the last month.

Our pastoral outreach was well received by all. Many parishioners have said it was grand to receive a call and to have a chat especially as so many of us have stayed inside as requested by our civic leaders. I will follow up some people in the community who are unwell or perhaps wanting a little bit of contact.

Our local Federal member for Wright, Scott Buchholz MP, also conveyed his well-wishes to us for our outreach and practical concern for others in and around our parish.

Through this exercise, we have also been put in touch with some members of our parish who are not on our books. We have also made contact with some who are usually in Brisbane but are currently here in this parish in order to avoid potential COVID-19 infection in the city.

Close to 9:00pm on Thursday night Bishop Ken Howell phoned me. Why? To touch base, see how I was and to see how the parish is faring. I learned that both Bishop Ken and Archbishop Mark are phoning the group of clergy who serve our parishes. It was nice to be on the receiving end of some pastoral interest. *Thanks + Ken and + Mark!*

10. A little while back some local people were having trouble contacting SVDP for emergency relief. This was rectified and local calls are now being responded to locally as per usual. In the next month or so we will send out a call to help restock the local SVDP Pantry. The shelves are pretty bare!

11. Some parishioners are not on email and are hearing the bulletin is being sent to those who have email. A good suggestion has been made to leave a dozen or so copies of this Sunday's bulletin at the church on a small table near the sacristy door. I will set this up from Tuesday morning.

12. *What is happening with preparation for and the celebration of Confirmation and First Holy Communion in 2020?*

Karen Douglas and I spoke about this reality during the week. The parish can't play its role in preparing candidates at the moment – that is obvious. However, we did discuss the possibility of celebrating **both** Confirmation and First Communion in one Sunday Eucharist this year.

This would mean that **all** candidates for the sacraments in 2020 – candidates for Confirmation *and* candidates for First Communion - celebrate these sacraments of Christian initiation at the *one* 9:30am Sunday Mass. So this would mean that candidates for Confirmation would be confirmed after the homily. Then later in the same Mass, the First Communion candidates would receive holy communion for the first time within the Communion Rite.

All could then move to the parish community centre (the hall) for a sit-down celebration with all the candidates – like the First Communion Breakfast of yore!

13. **NOT DIRGES, BUT SONGS OF HOPE:** On Friday afternoons at 5:30pm during this Easter season, there is a live-streamed celebration of Easter joy at our own Cathedral of St. Stephen. It is called **SONGS OF EASTER HOPE**. Archbishop Coleridge presides and music is sung by members of the Cathedral schola. Here is a recent link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHz6Z3Z9M\\_w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHz6Z3Z9M_w)

14. During the week, I was touched by this prayer in America, the weekly Catholic magazine published by the Jesuits, composed by Leo Donovan SJ:

### **A prayer for first responders during the coronavirus pandemic**

Loving God, in the midst of our world's – your world's – coronavirus crisis,  
we beg to bring before you the brave women and men  
who are closest to the sick and suffering.

So many are nameless to the public but not for the fellow human beings they are caring  
for: doctors and nurses, orderlies, chaplains and ambulance drivers,  
the police keeping order at hospitals,  
health aids in refugee camps and slums everywhere,  
scientists not directly on the scene of contagion  
but searching ardently, exhaustingly, for a cure.

We give thanks for these men and women and all  
who prepare and deliver their food,  
clean their workplaces and ensure their safe transport home.

Loving God, in the midst of our world's – your world's – coronavirus crisis,  
we beg to bring before you the brave women and men  
who are closest to the sick and suffering.

In earlier times, such bravery appeared in direct service by saints –  
the young Jesuit Aloysius Gonzaga  
contracting the plague from the poor of Rome and dying with them at 23,  
the Belgian missionary Damian of Molokai  
becoming a leper to live and die with lepers over 16 long years of being theirs for Christ.

Today the tools of science – medicine and surgery and, yes, ventilators –  
have changed the scene but not its anguished human face.

The fear, the anxiety, the dreadful uncertainty of the bravest among us at bedsides  
yield to trust that is sublime, sacrificial, and to the surrender of self –  
your own Son's experience at Calvary.

How can our hearts not ache for these men and women on the front lines of the crisis?  
But how can we not also feel ennobled just to learn of their commitment?

Help us to see how entrusting them to your own boundless care  
must be accompanied by our own need to care in some way, too.

Help us to see in their courage  
our own fragile faith's call to be with them in whatever way we can.

Oh great fellow sufferer who understands,  
let our amazement at the bravery of our first responders  
be an active one, a faith not only of solidarity in soul but in service. Amen.

*Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J., is president emeritus of Georgetown University and director of mission at  
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA*

<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2020/04/24/coronavirus-prayer-first-responders-pandemic-covid>

15. A hot-off-the -press interview from *National Catholic Reporter* with Bishop Vincent Long, bishop of the Church of Parramatta, NSW. + Vincent is the first Asian-born bishop of Australia and came here as a refugee fleeing the communist regime in Vietnam.

## **An Australian bishop speaks about a national church 'fraught with division'**

### **Q & A with Bishop Vincent Long of the Parramatta Diocese**

*by Joshua J. McElwee*

Like many Catholics in Australia, Bishop Vincent Long speaks about the upcoming plenary council as something of a final chance for the national church to show it has both reformed on clergy sexual abuse and can still be culturally relevant in the 21st century.

In an emailed NCR interview focused on how the quashing of Cardinal George Pell's convictions might affect the gathering, which has been in preparation for two years, Long called the assembly "the last throw of the dice."

"We cannot go on the way we have," said the bishop, who leads the diocese of Parramatta, a suburb about 15 miles west of Sydney on Australia's eastern coast. "We must humbly and boldly address the biggest challenge of our time and build a healthier church for future generations."

This is NCR's full interview with Long, a conventual Franciscan who fled Vietnam with his family in 1979 and is Australia's first Asian-born bishop.

**NCR: How have you been experiencing the atmosphere around the quashing of Cardinal Pell's convictions? How do you see it affecting Australian Catholics' views of the church?**

*Long:* Like many Catholics in Australia, I was relieved that the legal process has run its course and Cardinal George Pell has had his conviction overturned by the High Court of Australia. It has been a long and painful saga for him.

For over a year, he was imprisoned and had his appeal rejected by a Court of Appeal in Victoria where he had been convicted of crimes he had steadfastly denied. Now, he is free at last and is entitled to live his life in peace and dignity.

I acknowledge, however, that it has been an intense and painful time for many others, especially those involved in this case. They feel hurt, distressed and even betrayed by the verdict of the court as well as the judgements of others. Having known many survivors, their families and supporters, I can only imagine how intensely they feel their pain as wounds are reopened and memories revisited.

Thus, the atmosphere around the quashing of Cardinal Pell's conviction is fraught with division both in the Catholic community and the society at large. While some rejoice at his acquittal, others are less enthused. It's

certainly not a time to do victory laps for anybody. Instead, the Catholic Church in Australia faces the monumental task of rebuilding from the ground up after the devastation of the clerical sexual abuse crisis.

The Royal Commission, coupled with the dramatic incarceration of Cardinal George Pell created something like "ground zero" for us. Even now his acquittal has not acquitted the Catholic Church in this country from its moral responsibility of confronting its shameful history. It has made sure that we cannot go on the way we have. We must humbly and boldly address the biggest challenge of our time and build a healthier church for future generations.

**How do you imagine this kind of atmosphere might affect people's opinions about the plenary council process?**

Despite a degree of cynicism, Australian Catholics have responded favourably to the Plenary Council process. With near 18,000 individual and group submissions in a country of approximately five million nominal Catholics, it is a remarkable sign of hope and trust they have invested in this synodal exercise.

We cannot underestimate the desire for positive and fundamental reforms in the church in Australia post-Royal Commission period. In many ways, perhaps, it is the last throw of the dice and we cannot afford to betray the hopes and dreams for a better church that they aspire to.

Like it or not, the release and public rehabilitation of Cardinal Pell will affect the Plenary Council process. Many will be emboldened to promote his vision for the church in Australia, while others believe that his vision falls short of much needed deep and fundamental reforms for the way ahead.

**Are there any particular steps you think church leaders should take now (post the quashing of the convictions) in order to foster a more productive atmosphere for the plenary council?**

We are almost on the home stretch now as far as the Plenary Council process is concerned. There are those who advocate for radical reforms but equally there is a vocal movement which seeks to resist change and maintain the status quo.

I believe we cannot afford to let the momentum for cultural and structural change in the church to fizzle out. It is for the sake of a healthier church that all the baptized participate in its functioning and bring their gifts to bear on its transformation.

For my part, I am seeking to keep the fire burning by way of encouraging and facilitating the voices of the *sensus fidelium* via various channels such as listening circles, pastoral councils and other forums.

**Knowing that everything is in suspense now (with the first assembly of the council postponed), what are your biggest hopes for what the council might achieve when the assembly is eventually able to meet?**

My biggest hopes for the Plenary Council are that it will be a genuine exercise in synodality, even if it is circumscribed by the strictures of Canon Law and existing clerical culture and mind-set.

Even Pope Francis has often warned against an elitist process, stacked in favour of the ordained and their like-minded faithful. Against the tendency towards clerical dominance, he states that "the flock has an instinctive ability to discern new ways that the Lord is revealing to the Church."

The convocation is itself an act of faith and hope in the God of history who accompanies his people and does new things.

I hope this will be an opportunity for the church here to rise from the ashes, to listen to the Spirit, especially through the lay faithful and women, and move into a new and promising future.

[Joshua J. McElwee ([jmcclwee@ncronline.org](mailto:jmcclwee@ncronline.org)) is NCR Vatican correspondent. Follow him on Twitter: @joshjmac.]

16. Enjoy *Abundant Life* and *On the Journey to Emmaus* by liturgical composer Marty Haugen:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLZoFjqoFbk> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2h-wlsGDnUE>

17. This is a beautiful personal reflection on living in Sydney during these recent and weeks: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/print/41175>

18. I really enjoyed this clip of a competitive quartet: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKezUd\\_xw20](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKezUd_xw20)

May the peace of the Risen One be with you during these Easter days.

John

*pastor*

*Boonah Catholic community*