



*A discovery was made in the "Burnt Church" in Hippos, an archaeological site on a mountain a mile east of the Sea of Galilee. The church was built around 1,500 years ago and destroyed by fire in the early 7th century AD.*

*Partially exposed a decade ago, the church has now been fully excavated by a team from the University of Haifa. The tiles uncovered in the apse show two fish and five loaves, matching the New Testament story of Jesus feeding the 5,000.*

*Michael Eisenberg, a co-leader of the excavation, told CNN: "As far as I know, this is the best view from a Byzantine church from one of the cities or settlements or villages around the Sea of Galilee.*

*As well as the two fish and five loaves in the apse, the mosaic in the nave details two rows of three differently sized fish. There are also baskets of pomegranates, apples and flowers.*

<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/ancient-mosaic-jesus-galilee-intl-scli/index.html>

*Sunday greetings to the members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on the 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.*

1. **LITURGY BRISBANE** provides the Sunday Readings for home reflection. Click on the link below for today's texts.

The first link 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 several reflection questions, a family activity and a worksheet for children:

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



2. **REFLECTIONS ON THE SUNDAY WORD.** We share two reflections on the Sunday scriptures our church selects for this Sunday.

The first Sunday preaching is offered by Casey Stanton, M.Div. the Minister of Social Action and Discipleship at Immaculate Conception Parish in Durham, North Carolina.

Casey spent a decade working in the field of faith-based and labour organizing where she witnessed the power of collective action to bend decision makers towards justice.

She hopes to be part of nudging the church towards a more radical embodiment of inclusive leadership, hospitality, social action, and mutual care. A Boston native, Casey is proud to make a home in Durham with Felipe, and their two children, Micaela and Teddy. She loves reading poetry out loud and seeing her favourite band, *Hardworker*, perform live. You can find her occasionally blogging at *Women in Theology*.



<https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/08022020>



The second reflection on the readings for today is offered by Julian McDonald CFC, an Aussie based in Rome. It is titled: *How can I be eucharist for others today?*

*As evening drew on, the disciples came to Jesus with a suggestion: "This is a deserted place and it's already late. Dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy some food for themselves." Jesus said to them: "There is no need for them to disperse. Give them something to eat yourselves."*  
Matthew 14, 13-21

Jewish people have acquired a reputation for being blunt and direct in what they have to say. Perhaps this comes from their history of struggle, persecution and tragedy. They find little time for wasting words on trivial niceties.

Today's first reading from Exodus gives us a glimpse of them at their bluntest best. When Moses and Aaron assured them that God would save them from starvation by providing both quail and manna, there were no complaints about the flocks of quail that landed in their camp, but they certainly questioned the manna's suitability for consumption: "Man-hu, what on earth is this stuff you're expecting us to gather and eat?"



Researchers now tell us that it was probably a mixture of glucose and protein contained in the cocoons of beetles/grubs, but could not be stored because it attracted flies and quickly became fly-blown. In retrospect they came to appreciate that the provision of the manna was an example of God's providence in their history. Over time, they explained to the younger generations how they had survived very difficult times and circumstances, how they had done it tough in the wilderness, and how God had cared for them. But, when things were at their worst, they were not slow to complain. In turn, their leaders were not slow in urging them to draw on their own resilience, and to make the most of the small mercies that came their way.

There are important messages implied in this story. While the people find all the quail they need and have an adequate supply of manna (even though they are mystified by it), the God who comes to their assistance does not spoon-feed them. They are clearly expected to work together to gather what they need to survive, and quickly discover that the manna has to be carefully handled. Growing into freedom calls for both responsibility and accountability. These wandering people have been pushed into learning what is required to build themselves into a community. Isn't it true that all communities are built by people rolling up their sleeves and involving themselves, from the start, even in the very ordinary activities of subsistence-living. In the isolation of the wilderness, these former slaves

learned the first steps in the process of reinventing themselves into a people who would be responsible for themselves, to one another and to the God they were coming to know.

Today's gospel-reading contains another set of lessons in responsibility and accountability for those who would be disciples of Jesus. Having been involved with his disciples in a demanding schedule of teaching and preaching, and having just heard the news of John the Baptist's execution, Jesus saw the need for time out for himself



and his disciples to grieve, to reflect and to rest. His plans were defeated by an ever-demanding crowd. Then, when his disciples wanted to get rid of the crowd, Jesus challenged them to act responsibly and draw on their own resources. Mark's Gospel has a parallel account of "the first miracle of the loaves". It is preceded by a brief description of the disciples reporting to Jesus on all they had done and taught during their own first excursion into ministry. Jesus' response was not to congratulate them. He

simply said: "Come by yourselves to an out-of-the-way place and rest a little" (Mark 6, 31). Mark, too, records how the demanding crowd interrupted their plans. There are lessons in all this for us.

Many of us have allowed ourselves to be seduced, by employers and by the organisations to which we belong, into over-performing. While both Matthew and Mark report that Jesus did show compassion for the crowd, we would do well to take notice of Jesus' plans to take time out. Real rest. - not "time-out" about which we feel guilty. - is a



necessity that is built on trust. We all have to learn to trust that our colleagues actually can manage what we temporarily step aside from. We all need personal, family and community time and space, but sometimes fear prevents us from taking such. Still, these two stories from Matthew and Mark do remind us that our decisions to take a break are important and, in fact, might enhance the effectiveness of our efforts when we return. I certainly don't subscribe to the view that God wants us to wear ourselves out. Daring to take a

break is a reminder to ourselves that we are not indispensable, and that, ultimately, God is in charge.

The story of the "miracle of the loaves" occurs in all four Gospel, twice in both Mark and Matthew and once in each of Luke and John. In all except John, these stories are preceded by reference to Jesus' compassion and care for the vast crowd in front of him. Mark, Matthew and Luke all refer to Jesus' giving of himself to the point of exhaustion. - a forerunner to his total self-giving at the Last Supper. So, all these "miracle of the loaves" stories are pointers to what Eucharist is, and what it means in our day-to-day life as followers of Jesus. Mark, Matthew and Luke all integrate the importance of service in the way they tell the story. John integrates the importance of service with the symbolism of the dish and towel when he describes how Jesus washed the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper.

Integral to the message of today's gospel-reading is the challenge Jesus puts to the disciples when they want to send away the crowd: "There is no need for them to disperse. Give them something to eat yourselves" (Matthew 14, 16). An essential dimension of Eucharist is that all people are our sisters and brothers, and that living out Eucharist in practice involves offering nourishment in word and action to everyone we encounter, especially those who, because of

the circumstances of their lives, are unable to feed and nourish themselves. Jesus effectively tells his disciples that, if they want to be part of his enterprise, they have to reach out to others and take responsibility for their welfare. Hospitality is an integral part of living Eucharist credibly. What we participate in when, as community, we celebrate Eucharist must flow over into our daily living.



We all have the capacity to reach out in welcome and acceptance to friend and stranger, to everyone in the crowd; to those with whom we are comfortable, as well as to those who look different, and who are different because of their circumstances, their culture, their country of birth, their religion. An essential dimension of Eucharist is hospitality, in reference to which St Paul wrote: "Make hospitality your special care" (Romans 12, 13). Let's not forget that hospitality is first and foremost an attitude of heart, but it requires practice. Perhaps we can make a habit of it by asking ourselves at the start of each day: "How can I be eucharist - bread broken and given for others, today?".

3. For those of us unable to gather for Sunday eucharist today, you may wish to prayerfully watch live-recordings of communities celebrating eucharist especially in our Cathedral of St. Stephen, Brisbane. This link takes you to the live-streaming page:

<https://www.cathedralofststephen.org.au/mass-times.html>

Live-streamed daily eucharist continues at Lavender Bay, Sydney . . . prayerful and uplifting. Start time is 0730 Mon-Fri:

<https://www.northsydneycatholics.com/spirituality/liturgy/mass-on-demand>

4. 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, Marko Babic, Dermot Peters, Max Gardiner, Nicole Wimmer, Bernice Lippiatt, Pat Toohill, Trish Merlehan, Suzy Collyer, Clare Conway, Pat Shannon, and sick members of parish families.

*Jesus had compassion on them and cured their sick (Matthew 13: 14ff)*





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## 6. *Boonah Parish happenings . . .*

- ♦ A few weeks ago I shared with parishioners that our parish school was moving forward with regular celebrations of class liturgy.

The latest news is that each class – seven in all - has locked in a date for this term, Term 3. Liturgy preparation has now begun with a few of the teachers. I had two short discussions with three of our teaching staff last week. We are looking forward to each celebration in what continues to be an up-and-down year.

I thank our parish school teaching staff for their enthusiasm in renewing the liturgical life of the parish school. Each class will celebrate a liturgy this term and next. We are not sure about ‘all-school’ liturgies at the moment . . . for obvious reasons.

- ♦ Last Sunday we carried news of the death of Fr. Noel Connolly, a Columban priest from SEQ. As the week progressed, it was great to hear several stories from parishioners and beyond of Noel and his family. Noel came from Gympie. May he rest in peace.

- ♦ Our Boonah parish Pastoral Council meets tomorrow, Monday evening. We look forward to getting stuck into some short and long term parish planning . . . 3, 6 and 12 months respectively. We will start off by looking at a few of the themes in the newly released Vatican instruction on parishes – a short summary and commentary was included in last Sunday’s bulletin. I thank the executive of the PPC for preparing our gathering.

The themes and foci are:

**THE PARISH IS MISSION;**

**THE EUCHARIST AND THE POOR SHOULD BE CENTRAL TO PARISH LIFE;**

**PARISH BOUNDARIES MATTER BUT CAN’T BE A LIMIT;**

**STRUCTURES ARE FOR MISSION;**

**THE PARISH MISSION IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL AND EACH HAS A ROLE;**

**THE PARISH IS A FAMILY OF GOD THAT WALKS THROUGH HISTORY WITH OUTGOING DYNAMISM.**



- ♦ We started celebrating Sunday eucharist again a month ago. I suggested that once we were up and running we would look at the celebration of weekday eucharist. More news on the weekday eucharist schedule next Sunday.

- ♦ One of the joys of ministry is to also serve the liturgical apostolate of the Church of Brisbane. At the invitation of Bishop Ken Howell, I am meeting weekly with several priests from India who have arrived recently in Australia to support their work as presiding priests in our local Church. Our new clergy come from Kerala, India, and are priests of the Syro-Malabar Rite. Their rite is one of 23 Catholic rites in the Catholic communion of Churches. They are Eastern rite presbyters; I am a Western/Latin rite presbyter (ordained priest). Together we are exploring the ministry of presiding at all the liturgical rites celebrated in parishes: eucharist; baptism; penance – rites for reconciliation 1 and 2; marriage; and funeral rituals. Please remember these clergy who serve the People of God in faith communities like ours.

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





8. **THE CATHOLIC LEADER** digital edition is still being delivered free to your inbox every Thursday morning while the pandemic is still raging. Sign up on <https://bit.ly/2ShdcSZ>. 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. There is a highly recommended podcast series by Archbishop Mark Coleridge. It is on St. Paul: *As we enter a change of era it is opportune to reflect on St Paul's role during a previous change of era and reflect on learnings that may help the church blaze a trail into new territory.* Thanks Archbishop Coleridge!

Episodes available now:

1. Getting to know St Paul;
2. Paul and the persecution of Christians; and
3. The Road to Damascus.

<https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/articles/podcast-series-on-st-paul-the-birth-of-the-church-why-the-loser-won/>

10. Marty Haugen composed a beautiful rousing hymn called *Neither Death Nor Life*. It is inspired by the second reading for today. It is from his 2001 collection *Child of God*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfySOEtBMxI>

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



30th July 2020

#### 12. **Hobson's choice or a new beginning** - Sr Joan Chittister, 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020

The British tell a story that has a surprisingly contemporary insight. In the 17th century, they understood the problem: the fact that nobody has it all. We, on the other hand, seem to have forgotten that and expect it all.

In 17th century England, they tell us, Thomas Hobson kept a livery stable of 40 horses that he rented out for the ride

between Cambridge and London. The size of the stable itself implied that there would be high-quality horses for travellers to choose from for the 64-mile ride. But no.



Hobson insisted that renters had one choice and one choice only: they could have the horse nearest the stable door. Otherwise, his best horses would be overworked and overrun.

It was a "take it or leave it" proposition. To find oneself confronted with one decision in what seemed to offer a plethora of options came over the years to be called a "Hobson's choice."

That story came back to me again last week as I began to realize how close we are to a national election in which our political choices are a little like the one Hobson allowed. We start out with a legion of possible candidates and by the time the primaries are over, we are faced with one choice from each party: the candidates with the highest number of votes. One and one only.

And therein lies the difficulty of the choice we're facing: Frankly, it has little or nothing to do with the horse now. That's been decided.

The choice now — my choice — really depends as much on what I am, what my values are, as it does with the candidates we're left with for the years to come. It's my decision that will determine the future now. The horses have been identified. The only question at this point is which of the decisions I'm allowed to make is most likely to carry me to the America I want us most to be. Slow but steady? Experienced but unruly? Predictable but plodding? It's our criteria; it's what we think we ourselves most need now that counts.

The question is what criteria is there inside of us that will determine which of two candidates brings the qualities that are best for the country, for now, for what we really want America to be. And where will we go to find any criteria that we know are tried and true? Which values can possibly bring us back from the brink?

Well, we could start by comparing ourselves to what leadership looked like 15 centuries ago — 1,500 straight years ago — in an institution that is still guided by the same qualities its leaders aspired to then and are asked to embody now. What would it look like if we expected our present political leaders to use those same approaches to national leadership now? In this time?

Chapter Two of the sixth century Rule of Benedict — "On the Qualities of the Abbot" — has guided the Benedictine Order around the world for more than 1,500 years.

*In an authoritarian world, it brought listening.*

*In a divided world, it brought community.*

*In a classist society, it brought equality.*

*In an imperial world, it relied on the example of the leader rather than the whims of royalty.*

*In a world that rested on brute force, it brought education, understanding and personal growth.*

*In a world of slaves, it brought personal care and responsibility.*

"On the Qualities of the Abbot," puts on the shoulders of the abbot or prioress the central obligation for themselves being what the community says it is about.

And therein lies the revolution, the one which, without it, revolution after revolution takes place as members seek a model of who and what they are to be as a community.

Think about it: The major obligation for demonstrating what the group says it is about lies on the shoulders of the abbot or prioress, not on the shoulders of the members.

And so, the leadership criteria of a way of life that is over 1,500 years old is a simple one:

**Accountability: "Let the Abbot always bear in mind that he must give an account of his teaching."** Imagine what the United States might be today if the teachings on how to deal with a pandemic had been acknowledged by the president himself and become the standards of the country when they were first reported to the White House.

**Example: Anyone who goes by the name of "abbot or prioress must teach the good by a living example and if Abbot or Prioress teaches the community that something is not to be done, then neither must he do it."** Imagine what it would have meant to people desperate for food, shelter and work had they have been given it rather than turned away at the border, cast out in the dark, called insulting names and labelled rapists, murderers and thieves by the very person vested in being the best example we have of American values and generosity.

**Equality: The Rule is clear: "The abbot should avoid all favouritism in the monastery. He is not to love one more than another. He is not to give higher rank than those who are born poor. He is to remember that we are all one and ... show equal love and discipline to all."** Imagine the glow in the hearts, the commitment in the minds of those who came to America to find Americanism and saw the children of DACA, the refugee women from Africa and the Muslim victims of war and dislocation welcomed with open arms rather than hunted down by ICE, terrified by detention centres and split from their families before they could even get a chance to show how decent they themselves would be if they got a chance to prove it here.

**Adaptation: In his teaching, the Rule explains, "the abbot should ... use argument, appeal, reproof and vary with the circumstances, threatening and coaxing by turns. With the undisciplined use firm argument, with the disdainful ... use reproof, with the docile and patient appeal for greater virtue."** Imagine what it would be like now as peaceful protesters walk down our streets together after 400 years of rejection if we had punished those "who cannot be corrected by words" but treated tenderly those who needed help both when they got here and how devoted to this country they would be by now. How proud to be American. How integrated into the heart of it.

**Personal care: The abbot and prioress, the Rule says again, must know that "anyone undertaking the care of souls must be ready to account for them. ... Let him realize that on judgment day he will surely have to submit a reckoning to God for their souls ... and so he achieves the amendment of his own faults."**

Accountability, example, equality, adaptation, care and a personal sense of responsibility direct the leader's leadership style.

They're not the values taught in business schools maybe. But they make human beings of us all.

No insults. No taunts. No disdain. It worked for centuries. It works still if we'll just give it a try again.

From where I stand, from the perspective of the Marshall Plan that rebuilt the countries we had pummelled to the ground during World War II — both Axis countries and Allies alike — we didn't need to "make America great again." We just kept getting greater and greater in the eyes of those who remembered the kindness, the justice, the open-heartedness of the American people.

Now, after 400 years of disdain for the descendants of Africa, after having brought them here for free labour that enabled us to flourish as a people, after we ignored the consequences of our action, we need to do right for them yet and for the New Americans now knocking at the gate, as well.

It will be the mark of this generation. It will be the launch of our new flourishing, our real greatness — or it will be our downfall by our own hands. The choice is ours. The problem is that it's a "Hobson's choice." It means that we have to figure out how to make the best we can out of what's in front of us so. Then, perhaps, the rest of what we have within us — equality, community, accountability and care — can grow in the values of the Constitution and our greatness be saved by the ongoing commitment of this population to defend them.

Source:

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/where-i-stand/hobsons-choice-or-new-beginning>





13. We must seek God in error and forgetfulness and foolishness.

Meister Eckhart (German Dominican theologian and mystic - 1260-1327)

*John*

*pastor, Boonah Catholic community*