

Emma Varga, *Rage #2 & Revival #2*, 2021, Pate de Verre

“Usually I first have a vision of the finished object and then I look for the specific method necessary, though the way that I create *pâte de verre* elements leads to both providing and expressing the narrative. There is something magical involved with making thousands of small elements – even just piling them on the table bursts my imagination and leads to creating ‘stories.’ We do this work, we learn this craft, we push, we integrate, we branch out and narrow in, and once in a while, there is a piece that stands up and matters. For me, «Rage and Revival» has that punch and cathartic, healing life force. Bushfires RAGE in Australia, destroying the landscape, but forces of nature bring the REVIVAL. Hence the inseparable duo of objects, offering hope after destruction.”

- Emma Varga 2021

*Sunday greetings to the members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on the Fourth Sunday of Lent.*

## 1. REFLECTIONS ON THE SUNDAY WORD.

The **first** reflection for this Sunday is from the *Catholic WomenPreach* website and the preacher is Alyssa Perez.

Alyssa works as a Resident Minister and the Assistant Director of Alternative Breaks and Advocacy at Loyola Marymount University (LMU) in Los Angeles, CA.



She received her Master of Nonprofit Administration degree at the University of San Francisco, and her Bachelor of Arts in Theology and Political Science at LMU. She served as a Jesuit Volunteer in Belize City, Belize ('15-'17) where she worked as a reading instructor and librarian at St. Martin De Porres Primary School.

Alyssa serves on the Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice Steering Committee, is a facilitator for Ignatian Solidarity Network's (ISN) Arrupe Leader Summit, and is a contributing author for ISN's Rise Up Lenten Series.

<https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/03142021>



The **second reflection** is from Br. Julian McDonald, an Australian Christian Brother ministering in Rome, and is titled: **Timeless Christian message of hope and love**

*This is how much God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have whole and lasting life. God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. Jesus came to help, to put the world right again.*

John 3: 14-16, 19-23

Today's gospel-reading contains a generous sample of the opposing contrasts that John uses throughout his Gospel. – light and darkness, truth and falsehood, doubt and belief. Had our reading included the first part of chapter 3 of John, we might have ended up as confused as poor Nicodemus, who simply could not grasp what Jesus was talking about. He even went as far as asking Jesus to explain himself: "What do you mean? How can a grown man be born again? What do you mean by this 'born-from-above' talk?" (John 3, 4) Jesus and Nicodemus are on different wave-lengths. It is important, however, to note that John introduced his audience to Nicodemus as "a leading Jew who had come to Jesus by night" - under the cover of darkness so as not to be seen by his colleagues, and out of the darkness of ignorance.

In digging into this gospel-reading, we have to bear with the symbolism that John uses. For many people, darkness is or has been something to fear - the darkness of the unknown, the darkness of ignorance and secrecy (illustrated by remarks like “The politicians have kept us in the dark!”), the darkness which hides real or imaginary dangers. We can all probably recall childhood memories of being afraid of the dark. There was a time, for instance, when there was no such thing as indoor toilets and, afraid of the bogeyman or some other beast lying in wait to grab us, we would dash to the outhouse and lock ourselves in.

The American poet, Kenneth Patchen wrote a poem about the terrors of the dark called *All the Roary Night* in which he writes: *All around us, the footprints of the beast...of something above, something that doesn't know we exist* (Selected Poems of Kenneth Patchen, A New Directions Paperback, N.Y., 1936). Patchen's poem might well be relevant to us in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of us were afraid of COVID-19 until it was explained. Now, there are some among us whose remarks about the risk of the various vaccines are elevating the fear levels of many in the community. Somehow or other, the fear of potential terror and disaster comes to gnaw away at the human psyche. Today's readings combine to reassure us that we have a God whose relentless love reaches out to all of us human beings who are lost in the darkness of fear, doubt, uncertainty and ignorance. Today's gospel-reading proclaims that God's love for the world is personified in Jesus who came to be one of us as our brother. But that won't chase COVID-19 away.



Today's first reading from Chronicles makes reference to a different pandemic - a pandemic of evil which has not only infected the minds and hearts of the Jewish priests and leaders, but which has filtered down to the people themselves, who have adopted the abominations of their pagan neighbours. Yet, despite their sinful history, despite the destruction of the holy city of Jerusalem and the consequent deportation of the Chosen people into exile, God did not give up on them. Moreover, God chose the most unlikely rescuer for these people in the person of Cyrus, the pagan king of Persia: *From Cyrus king of Persia a proclamation: "God, the God of the heavens, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has also assigned me to build a Temple of worship at Jerusalem, in Judah. All who belong to God's people are urged to return. - and may your God be with you!" Move forward!* (Chronicles 36: 23). God can and does work in surprising and unexpected ways.

In the second reading from Ephesians, Paul launches into a flight of high emotion, describing himself, his community in Ephesus, and, indeed, all of humanity as “God's work of art” (2:9). In making that enthusiastic and confident claim, Paul emphasises that this is the gift of God's measureless love and mercy, not something that we could ever earn. God loves us and all of creation unconditionally. Therein lies an invitation to us to stop, take in and appreciate all the rest of God's works of art with whom we live and work, and the created world that surrounds us.

In the exchange between Jesus and Nicodemus (from which Nicodemus disappears without explanation), Jesus refers obliquely to his forthcoming death by crucifixion: “the Son of man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert” (John 3:14). In John’s Gospel, Jesus makes two other references to being lifted up (on the Cross). In speaking to the Jews he says: “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He” (one with God the Father, the Christ of God - John 8:28). The third is recorded in John 12:32 - *And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will attract everyone to me and gather them around me.*

In making these statements, Jesus is encouraging anyone who will hear him to come to appreciate that his death on the Cross will be the ultimate expression of God’s love for the world. In his self-offering Jesus reveals God’s relentless love for humanity. Despite the fact that humanity, down through the centuries, has turned its back on God’s love, God does not stop offering it. Maybe, we will come eventually to realise what God is offering us, and come to accept it.

In alluding to the Exodus story of Moses being directed by God to fashion a bronze serpent for the people to gaze upon after they had been bitten by venomous snakes, Jesus was making the point that we humans only come to understand evil (symbolised by the bronze serpent) when we take



time to look it in the face, reflect on it, and take steps to expel it from our lives, individually and collectively. By looking at the Cross of Jesus, we can come to comprehend the evil that put him there but also come to appreciate the immensity of his love for humanity that allowed him to let his executioners have their way.

“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but have eternal life” is a statement that has captured the attention of countless Christians and given them hope. However, it has to be considered in the context of what Jesus had shared with Nicodemus both before and after he made that statement. In that long conversation, Jesus makes reference to darkness and light, judgement and salvation, death and life, doubt and belief, but these are not simply insulated opposites. They ebb and flow in and out of one another. We all have experiences of doubt and belief, of light and darkness and so on. Nicodemus, despite being educated, respected and comfortable, didn’t have all the answers. He needed to be exposed to Jesus’ bewildering talk. So do we. And isn’t it appropriate that, after talking about a world that struggled with light and darkness, Jesus sent his disciples out into that world where they encountered the Samaritan woman. Isn’t that a clear indication that God’s love is for the whole world, without exception? But we have to welcome and embrace that love.

2. For those of us unable to gather for Sunday eucharist, 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://brisbanecatholic.org.au/multimedia/on-demand-web-casts/>



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>



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, Paul White, Arthur Devin, Liliana Toohill, Libby Shields, Marko Babic, Dermot Peters, Max Gardiner, Bernice Lippiatt, Pat Toohill, Trish Merlehan, Pat Shannon, Bernadette Pinchin, Simon

Greatrex, Neil O'Connor, Cate Mitten and sick members of parish families and those beyond our parish boundaries.



4. The funeral liturgy for one our retired priests, Fr. Peter Gillam, was celebrated on Wednesday night and Thursday morning last week. Peter served in and around Brisbane most of his life.

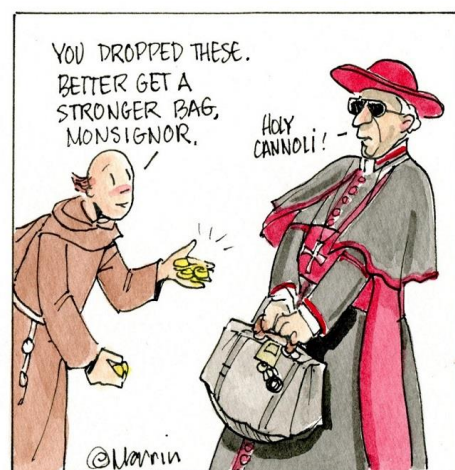
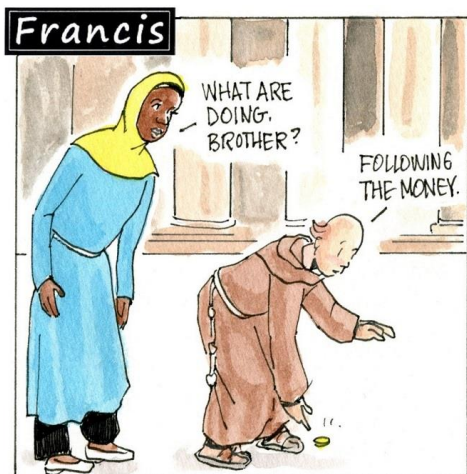
There is a link to a visual memorial:

<https://www.qualitymemorial.services/frpetergillam>

We also remember Peter Hender, father of Erica Gardner from Peak Crossing, whose funeral is celebrated on Monday at All Saints church, Albany Creek. We extend our prayerful condolences to Erica and her family.

*May they both rest in peace.*

5. FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP by Pat Marrin – 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.



NCRonline.org/cartoons

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

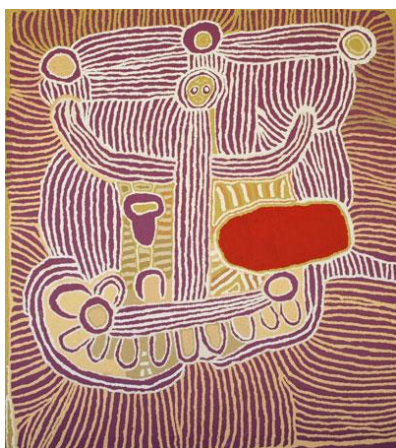
. . .

from commands to invitations,  
from laws to ideals,  
from threats to persuasion,  
from coercion to conscience,  
from monologue to conversation,  
from ruling to serving,  
from withdrawn to integrated,  
from vertical and top-down to horizontal,  
from exclusion to inclusion,  
from hostility to friendship,  
from static to changing,  
from passive acceptance to active engagement,  
from prescriptive to principled,  
from defined to open-ended,  
from behaviour-modification to conversion of heart,  
from the dictates of law to the dictates of conscience,  
from external conformity to the joyful pursuit of holiness.

When these elements are taken in the aggregate, they indicate a model of spirituality. This, they say, is what good Catholics should look like and this is how they should behave. That means the elements indicate what the Church should look like and how it should behave. This is a significant model-shift. This is a teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

- Fr. John O'Malley SJ, 2006

Our **SUNDAY EUCHARIST** schedule is:



*Desert Eucharist by Linda Syddick Napaltjarri (b. 1937)*

*Saturday*

**5.00pm (Boonah church)**

*Sunday*

**7.30am (Harrisville church)**

**9.30am (Boonah church)**

Our **WEEKDAY EUCHARIST** schedule for this week, 4th Week of Lent, is:

**Monday**      15<sup>th</sup> March    5.30pm, **Boonah church**

**Wednesday**    17<sup>th</sup> March    6.00pm, **Peak Crossing church** followed by meal at *Peak Pub*

**Thursday**      18<sup>th</sup> March    8.00am, **Boonah church**

**Friday**      19<sup>th</sup> March      8.00am, **Boonah** church - *Solemnity of St Joseph*

*Please note we will celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph this Friday as Pope Francis has declared 2021 Year of St. Joseph.*

Francis wrote a lovely apostolic letter *Patris Corde (With a Father's Heart)* on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the proclamation of St. Joseph as patron of the universal church:

[http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap\\_20201208\\_patris-corde.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20201208_patris-corde.html)

It also provides an opportunity for us in Australia to pray for the Josephite Sisters and their associate members here in this land and beyond.



<https://www.sculpturebytps.com/miniature-sculptures/christian-collection/a-quiet-moment/>



♦ *Advance notice!* Archbishop Coleridge has invited the presbyterate and clergy to the 2021 Clergy Convocation in Brisbane City over two full days the week before Palm Sunday.

The dates are Wednesday 24th and Thursday 25th March culminating the Chrism Mass on Thursday night.

I will be participating in the convocation.



*Dear All Saints Church,*

The Moogerah Passion Play is a non-for-profit volunteer run organisation which performs the Easter Story every year on the beautiful shores of Lake Moogerah in the Scenic Rim region, Queensland.

Unfortunately COVID-19, like it did with many other organisations, churches included, has changed the way our play operates and we are therefore an entirely ticketed but still 100% free event. We would therefore love greatly if you could spread the word and encourage your congregation to attend over this year's Easter period, as it's a great opportunity for the whole family to experience the word of the Lord through the use of drama.

I do hope this piques your interest and that we will see you all at our upcoming performances. The dates have been provided in the attached poster.

If you have any more questions about ticket purchases, etc., you can contact The Moogerah Passion Play Association President, Chris Young on 04 992 777 63.

Once again, we hope to see you during this year's performance season.

Kind Regards,

Gwen Behrendorff | MPPA Publicity Manager



7. FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP by Pat Marrin – 11th March 2021.



8. During the 40 days of Lent, I am offering three articles or visual reflections each Sunday of Lent for our reflection.

8a. The first by Fr. Tom Elich and is titled: “Celebrating St. Joseph in the liturgy”.

Each time we celebrate the Eucharist this year we can remember Saint Joseph. His name was introduced into the first Eucharistic Prayer at the time of the Second Vatican Council, and then also into the second, third and fourth Eucharistic Prayers in 2013. When we use other Eucharistic Prayers, we can take this lead and mention St Joseph together with the patron saint of our church.



This year might be an opportunity to learn a hymn which honours St Joseph. The Catholic Worship Book II has a good hymn to quite a well-known tune which would be worth including in the parish repertoire this year: Lord, Hear the Praises (CWBII 428).

Extracts from the Pope’s document, *Patris Corde*, can be used in homilies during the year or included in the parish newsletter.

If your church has a statue or picture of St Joseph, it would be helpful to give it some prominence this year, to decorate it regularly with flowers, and to prepare some prayer cards to leave near the shrine. If you worship in a St Joseph church or belong to a St Joseph parish, you might lead the way in your diocese. A St Joseph school will have special incentive to celebrate and honour their patron saint.

### *The Solemn Feast – 19 March*

Saint Joseph figures prominently in the stories of Christmas which we read from the Gospels of Luke and Matthew. However a feast day of his own was a long time coming. It appears first in a liturgical calendar of about 800AD against the date 19 March: Joseph, Spouse of Mary. It progressively becomes more common in calendars over the next 600 years but really only

becomes an important feast in the fifteenth century. In due course, it becomes a fixed date in the general Roman calendar, and then devotion to St Joseph flourishes in the nineteenth century.

The date 19 March is just six days before the feast of the Annunciation of the Lord which, naturally enough, is nine months before Christ is born at Christmas. No doubt these two solemn feasts, celebrated in white, both occurring towards the end of violet Lent, are meant to be taken together. St Joseph can only be understood in relation to the Virgin Mary and the mystery of the Incarnation. The Collect of the feast expresses this beautifully.

*Grant, we pray, almighty God,  
that by Saint Joseph's intercession  
your Church may constantly watch over  
the unfolding of the mysteries of human salvation,  
whose beginnings you entrusted to his faithful care.*



The Lectionary for the feast offers a choice of two gospels: Joseph's acceptance of Mary as his wife (Mt 1) or the finding in the temple (Lk 2). I prefer the first. It is true that the finding in the temple shows Mary and Joseph together, worried about their missing son; but the listener might get the impression that Jesus brushes aside his earthly father in favour of being busy with his heavenly 'Father's affairs'. The first choice speaks to me of Joseph's courage and daring in discerning God's will and doing it. It notes, first of all, that he is a man of honour and does not want to humiliate the pregnant Mary. Then, prompted in a dream, he is directed by God to take Mary home as his wife. And he does!



This same honesty and humility appears throughout the infancy narratives. There is a census, and he courageously takes his pregnant wife on a long journey. When the accommodation in Bethlehem is booked out, he resourcefully finds a place to bed down. Then, when his wife and child are in danger from Herod, he takes them off to Egypt. When Herod dies, they return but, because of a persistent danger, Joseph takes his family north to Nazareth. Young, bold, humbly God-fearing and fiercely protective of his family: this is the Joseph we see in the Gospels. The preface portrays Joseph in this way as a 'just man' given as 'spouse to the Virgin Mother of God and set as a wise and faithful servant in charge of [the] household'.

It is only a fourth century story written in Egypt that presents Joseph as an old man who marries the young Virgin Mary. Unfortunately, it is this image which has been popularised in paintings through the centuries.

The Prayer of the Faithful on this day could well focus on our fathers and families, interceding for peace, harmony and respect; many today are challenged by unemployment, mental health issues, violence and substance abuse.



### *St Joseph, the Worker – 1 May*

This commemoration is optional in the liturgical calendar, but should be marked in the Year of St Joseph. In the Church's teachings on social justice, Joseph the Carpenter has been invoked as the patron of workers and of the labour movement which seeks to assure the dignity of work and a just income for all. The economic, social and spiritual challenges brought by unemployment would be a key focus of our prayers on this day. It is also a day to broaden our vision and to recognise in prayer the many places where human beings, even children, are exploited in their labour.



The prayers of the day encourage us to use our labours to build up the reign of God in the world. Our work is seen as a participation in God's work of creation. O God, Creator of all things... grant that by the example of St Joseph and under his patronage, we may complete the works you set us to do...

Unusually for an optional memorial, St Joseph the Worker has an assigned proper Gospel. It is the passage from Mt 13 where Jesus goes to his home town and is called 'the carpenter's son'.



### *Solemn feast of Mary MacKillop, Josephite, - 8 August.*

This year's celebration of our patronal feast of St Mary MacKillop is another opportunity to recognise the Year of St Joseph. From her earliest days as a teacher, when she first donned her black dress, she adopted the patronage of St Joseph for herself and her companions.

Mary always stressed the value of St Joseph's hidden humble life and his obedience to God's will: this was precisely the vocation to which the sisters were likewise called. In 1870, she wrote: This humility is something wonderfully beautiful in itself. My sisters, this was a quiet humility... grounded on submission to the adorable will of his God. It was a humility of heart, not of words... a silent not a noisy humility.

When Mary met opposition in her ministry, she affirmed her trust in St Joseph and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Should our poor schools be taken from us, should our Institute even be suppressed, ah no, our calm trust in the Sacred Heart would only grow stronger, for we would know that when the storm had passed away, St Joseph would again assemble his children to work once more... (1870).

Her regular St Joseph's Day messages emphasised kindness and charity, humility and obedience: We know that St Joseph was humble and hidden. Does it become a child of his to desire worldly notice? Does it become her to talk much of herself, or make noise about any little thing God deigns to accept at her hands? Yet are we always as humble, as retiring, as modest as a child of the lowly St Joseph should be? (1893).

St Mary was conscious of St Joseph's loving care for the child Jesus and sought the same protection for her sisters. May our loved patron and father, St Joseph, she wrote in 1898, watch over us and obtain for us the spirit he wishes to see in his children. She often finished her letters with the words: In St Joseph's care, I leave you.



### *Fathers' Day - Sunday 5 September 2021*

Finally, if the preaching, parish newsletter or Prayers of the Faithful on this day refer to Father's Day, it might be helpful to propose St Joseph as a model.

*Rev Dr Tom Elich, Director Liturgy Brisbane*

#### **8b. Fast and Feast Together.**

A bachelor friend calls me to ask, "May I come for breakfast? Nothing fancy — just oatmeal." Then he adds, "With a candle in it." How we eat satisfies more than what we eat. Eating together — and fasting together — is to recognize our need for each other, and not just for food.

Examine your eating habits and change them if you eat impulsively, constantly, alone, too fast, unconsciously or without savoring your food, without care or dignity. Try these simple exercises: Eat only when seated at a table. Try not to eat alone: Find someone to share your meal with. "Companion" means "the one you share your bread with." Invite the lonely. Bring a meal to someone who is homebound. Volunteer in a kitchen for people who are homeless and hungry.

A hymn by Percy Dearmer sings: "All our meals and all our living make us sacraments of you/ That by caring, helping, giving, we may be disciples true." Return a sense of the sacramental to mealtime in your household. Present all meals with dignity. Take at least forty-five minutes to eat your dinner. (The average American family eats a whole meal in five minutes!)

As much as you are able to, eat together and fast together.



## 8c. The TABLET WEBINARS

### *Discerning the future of the Church in Australia.*

Please join us for a discussion with Christopher Lamb and Archbishops Timothy Costelloe and Mark Coleridge on Australia's landmark plenary council, the highest form of gathering for a local Church. hear about the hopes and dreams for the future of the Church in Australia, and the

**WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH 2021 09:00 AM LONDON  
(08.00 PM AEDT – 7.00PM BRISBANE TIME)**

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/events/83/discerning-the-future-of-the-church-in-australia>

There is a cost but some of us may be willing to pay the ticket price. The proceeds from this event will go to The Tablet's Development Fund: <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/developmentfund>

### 9. FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP by Pat Marrin – 4th March 2021.



**10. Did you know?** The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference decreed more than 35 years ago that Fridays other than Good Friday are not obligatory days of abstinence from meat, provided an alternative form of penance is practised:

*Abstinence for meat, and fasting, are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. On all other Fridays of the year the law of the common practice of penance is fulfilled by performing any one of the following:*

- (a) prayer – as for example, mass attendance; family prayer; a visit to a church or chapel; reading the Bible; making the stations of the cross; praying the rosary; or in other ways;*
- (b) self-denial – v.g. not eating meat; not eating sweets or dessert; giving up entertainment to spend time with the family; limiting food and drink so as to give to the poor of one's own country and elsewhere; or in other ways;*
- (c) helping others – v.g. special attention to someone who is poor, sick, elderly, lonely or overburdened, or in other ways.*

ACR LXII, 4, October 1985

John pastor, Boonah Catholic community.