



*Vincent van Gogh, Wheat Field with Sheaves, 1888*

*Sunday greetings to the members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on the Fifth 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 Grace Salceanu.

Grace is the Director of the *Ignatian Spiritual Life Center* in San Francisco.

Grace has been steeped in Ignatian Spirituality her whole adult life, and is currently training to be a spiritual director for the 19th Annotation, the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

Prior to her position at the Ignatian Spiritual Life Center, Grace was co-director of Casa Bayanihan, the University of San Francisco's alternative study abroad program in Manila, Philippines, for over six years.

She has experience teaching at the Nativity Schools of San Jose, and holds degrees in Theology and Anthropology from Fordham University and her Master's degree in Interdisciplinary Education from Santa Clara University.

Grace is the mother of a vibrant 4-year-old daughter and happily partnered with her husband, Alex.

Part of her homily includes:

God has this magnetizing love that will not rest until we are completely wrapped in him: all of our hopes and all of our sorrows, too. A couple of years ago, my cousin and godson, Tommy, was killed in a tragic accident. He was only 8 years old. Every year in November, my family and I remember Tommy and celebrate his life. We pull out his photos, tell stories and vow to cherish each other a little more. This past year, my daughter, who is four-years-old, asked me: "Mommy, where do we go when we die?" "Oh Sofia," I told her, and I shared with her something I believe deep in my soul: "when we die, God takes us back home into his heart."

This Lent, we are asked to take the long view with Jesus. Who would we become if we were at home in God's generous and reckless love? How would we use our time? Our lives?

<https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/03212021>

The [second reflection](#) is from Laurie Woods, an Australian scripture scholar.



Today's readings draw particular attention to the importance of relationship, that personal connection we have with the Living Presence and with all other persons and creatures in our world. We are aware that everything in Scripture is about these relationships, but today the focus on the ties that give force and meaning to our lives stands out.

**Jeremiah 31:31-34** Today's reading contains the most frequently quoted passage in Jeremiah with its reference to a new covenant between the Living Presence and the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. A covenant is an agreement between two parties, usually where the superior party binds itself to take care of the lesser party. The lesser party is obligated to follow the instructions and guidelines issued by the superior covenant party.

The major difference here is that God is not proposing a new arrangement, like the ones made with Israel in the times of Moses, Joshua, Samuel and Hezekiah. In this case God is proposing not so much a change of attitudes or behaviour but a complete transformation of the heart. The metaphor used by the prophet is God saying, 'I will set my instructions, my expectations in their very inner being and I will write them, not on stone or in a law-book, but on the hearts of the people, and I will be their God and they will be my people.' The upshot is that these will not be written statutes or laws but will be the outcome and expression of a deep relationship of love and loyalty with the ultimate Goodness, the infinite Presence who is.

### **Not just a change of heart or behaviour, but a complete transformation**

This, in fact, is what all the prophets dedicated themselves to bring about – not just a change of heart or behaviour, but a complete transformation in the people of Israel from the leaders down to the simplest of peasants. Jeremiah is essentially saying,

'You can't continue to let the "God stuff" be carried out by the priests, or imagine that sacrifices and rituals are the key to a healthy relationship with God. No, a complete transformation of attitudes, values and priorities will mean that each individual will commit to a personal spirituality characterised by a devotion to living according to God's way.'

If this is how a whole society lives then there would be no need for teaching about God. The Hebrew actually says, 'A man will no longer teach his neighbour or a man his brother to say, "Know God".' The point here is that an inner spiritual transformation will bring about, not a head or book knowledge of God, but a relationship through experience. The Hebrew verb *yada* means 'to know' through personal contact and experience, not just because I heard about something or read it, but because I saw it or felt it so that I was personally impacted by it. Children will pick up justice and sound values from good parents. Examples of goodness will transform the social order of human communities into a haven of justice, respect and compassion. Jeremiah declares that such people will truly 'know' God at that personal experiential level. And their intimate knowledge of the ultimate Goodness will direct their thinking, their values and all their other relationships.



**Psalm 50/51** This is one of those classic well-known songs of contrition where the psalmist prays for cleansing and restoration. Our translation has, 'Have mercy, God, in your kindness.' The Hebrew reads, 'Be gracious to me, O God, in your unfailing kindness'. While *chesed* (חסד) means kindness it has clear overtones of a compassionate kindness that is enduring, loyal and unfailing. An air of complete trust, therefore, comes out in this very first line.

The line beginning, 'wash me...' places great emphasis, in Hebrew, on 'me' the sinner with all four words ending in 'i', which is the first person indicator at the end of Hebrew words. This sets up a stark literary contrast with the group of second person endings on words two verses along, that refer to the one offended. We miss these poetic gems in English translations.

**Hebrews 5:7-9** The Letter to the Hebrews was given this title sometime in the 2nd century, and at that time it was attributed to Paul. It does not exactly read like a letter and it certainly was not written by Paul. It contains almost nothing of the key themes found in the Pauline letters and the style and vocabulary different from Paul's. This work is anonymous whereas all Paul's letters identify the author.

It is clear from the issues contained in Hebrews that the community were undergoing persecution for their Christian faith. The majority scholarly opinion is that the Hebrews were Jewish Christians who were now tempted to return to their Judaism. The writer, however, presents arguments designed to persuade the community that the Jewish covenants of the past have been replaced by the new covenant in Jesus Christ. He points out that whereas there were generations of priests offering sacrifices in the Jerusalem temple, we now have one perfect High Priest in Jesus who offered the single supreme sacrifice of himself on the cross; thereby putting an end to animal sacrifices.

The writer begins by alluding to the agony of Jesus at Gethsemane and shows how his obedience to God resulted in our salvation, that is, our rescue from the force of evil. As the ultimate go-between from us to God, Jesus becomes the perfect High Priest acting on our behalf.

**John 12:20-33** Today's reading is part of the introduction in John's gospel of the arrival of Jesus' hour. His time has come to be glorified and vindicated. It is also time to give the first hints of the acceptance of Gentiles into the Jesus community. Some Greek-speaking Gentiles have approached and asked Philip, with a Greek name, to see Jesus. In fact, we never learn if their request was granted. In typical Johannine fashion this gives Jesus the opportunity to give a short discourse on authentic life, his death and discipleship.

His major point is that those who believe they own their lives and are intent on living for personal satisfaction will lose the best of a fulfilled life. Those who lose their life in the service of others will gain the best of what life has to offer on a level much higher than personal satisfaction or the quest for riches. Jesus is talking about a scale of values and priorities that is determined by the spiritual ideals of the reign of God. We can be easily put off by Jesus' use of Semitic opposites like love and hate. These extreme opposites are simply stylistic hyperbole used to add emphasis to the contrast. Jesus is not suggesting that we place no value on life, but that allegiance to him is a higher aspiration than personal success on a human plane.

The passage ends with the Johannine meaning of Christ's death, that is, the prince of this world, the master of evil is to be overthrown by the generous sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. The writer plays on the notion of Jesus being lifted up – lifted up on the cross and lifted up in resurrection and ultimate exaltation.

## **We have to take part in the total transformation that Jeremiah wrote about**

For us Christians the death and exaltation of Jesus put the fulfilling touches on the new covenant, which, unlike the Jewish covenants, has a universal reach that goes beyond ethnic identities and is open to people of all times, places and cultures. To be fully committed signatories to the covenant of Jesus we have to take part in the total transformation that Jeremiah wrote about and that Jesus spelt out in his life and words.

In the context of today's talk of change in the church it is easy to address structural changes or changes in attitudes, rituals and procedures. But the risk is that such an enterprise will merely jet-ski across the surface and will suffer for not bringing about the kind of thinking and imaginative inspiration that will write '**complete transformation**' on the hearts of all of us. Wholehearted living out of the values of Jesus doesn't leave room for the kind of spineless mediocrity that wants to cling to power, privilege and untouched comfort zones.

John immersed people in the Jordan to bring home to them that superficial changes were not enough. In his terms a true metanoia went way beyond repentance. Both he and Jesus advocated a complete transformation that would enable individuals to enter into a new covenant with their God.

**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. Peter Hender's Funeral Mass was celebrated on Monday at All Saints church, Albany Creek. Peter was the father of Erica Gardner from Peak Crossing. It was good that five of us were able to be there to support Erica and her extended family. It was also good to join the parishioners of Albany Creek as they fare-welled one of their own. Thanks to Fr. Josekutty for making us very welcome. *May he rest in peace.*

5. **FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP** by Pat Marrin – 16th March 2021.



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

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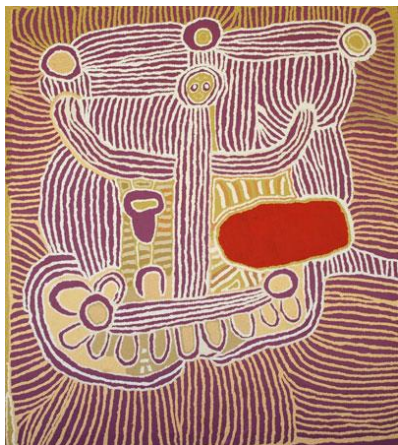
from commands to invitations,  
 from laws to ideals,  
 from threats to persuasion,  
 from coercion to conscience,  
 from monologue to conversation,  
 from ruling to serving,  
 from withdrawn to integrated,  
 from vertical and top-down to horizontal,  
 from exclusion to inclusion,  
 from hostility 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:



**Saturday**  
5.00pm (Boonah church)

**Sunday**  
7.30am (Harrisville church)  
9.30am (Boonah church)

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

Our **WEEKDAY EUCHARIST** schedule for this week, 5th Week of Lent, is:

**Monday**      22nd March   5.30pm, **Boonah** church

**Tuesday**      23rd March   8.00am, **Boonah** church

*The Archbishop is convening the annual Clergy Convocation in Brisbane from Wednesday to Thursday evening inclusive, culminating in the Chrism Mass on Thursday night 7.00pm.*

*As mentioned over the last few Sundays, I will be participating in the convocation.*

Admission Free

Book your tickets online now  
Tickets are required for entry

# THE MOOGERAH PASSION PLAY

Follow us on:

# 2021

Live at the Lake Theatre, Moogerah Dam

**MARCH 27TH & 28TH | APRIL 2ND & 3RD**  
**PERFORMANCES START AT 5PM**

<https://moogerahpassionplay.org.au>

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

♦ **Liturgy Preparation for the Three days of Easter** (*the Paschal Triduum*)

On Tuesday morning at 9.00am in the parish hall, we will prepare the public liturgies for the approaching three days of Easter: *Holy Thursday night through to Easter Sunday*.

We have a small liturgy preparation team meeting for the first time.

However, I would also like to open this time of preparation to parishioners who may like to explore the structure, prayers and rhythm of our three days of celebration. It is an essential part of liturgy preparation to understand the basics in the Missal, reflect upon the local ways of celebrating Easter and then make decisions for the coming Easter feasts. Newer parishioners to the parish may like to bring along their memories of their experience in previous parishes.

I really like this description of the heart of our Church year:

**We begin as Holy Thursday ends.**

Thursday evening we enter into this Triduum together. After listening to the scriptures, we witness the washing of the feet. The priest celebrant goes down on his knees with a pitcher of water, a basin, and towels. Jesus gave us this image of what the Church is supposed to look like, feel like, act like.

Next we take up a collection, but not the usual collection (which is for the Church and the poor). The liturgy makes it clear that tonight's collection is only for the poor. So bring the money you have saved with Lenten fasting. Like the washing of feet, this is a rehearsal for Christian life. Then we celebrate the Eucharist. The evening liturgy has no ending: Whether we stay to pray awhile or leave, we are now in the quiet and peace and glory of the Triduum.





# TRIDUUM

Hungry now and full of excitement, the Church gathers in the darkness and lights a new fire and a great candle that will make this night bright for us. We listen to some of the most powerful scriptures in our Bible: stories of creation, Abraham and Isaac, Moses and Miriam and the crossing of the sea, poems of promise and rejoicing, the Gospel of the Resurrection.

Then we pray to all our saints to stand with us and we go to the font and bless the waters. There the elect renounce evil, profess the faith of the Church, are baptized, and anointed. All of us renew our Baptismal promises. For us, these are the moments when death and life meet, when we reject evil and give our promises to God. All of this is in the communion we call the Church. So together we go to the table and celebrate the Easter Eucharist. Easter day begins and we are ready for Fifty Days of rejoicing.

**And then on Easter Sunday Alleluia is our Song.**

*The Three Days to Save ©1991, 2009 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 3949 South Racine Avenue, Chicago IL 60609. Web site: [www.LTP.org](http://www.LTP.org). Adapted from original text written by Gabe Huck.*

**All are welcome on Tuesday morning at 9.00am.**

**And we continue through Good Friday and Holy Saturday.**

We gather quietly on Days of rejoicing. Friday and listen to Scripture, including the Passion from the Gospel according to John. We pray at length for all the world's needs.

Then there is another once-a-year event: The holy cross is held up in our midst and we come forward one by one to do reverence . . . All the while we sing, not only of sorrow but of the glory of the cross.

We continue in fasting and prayer and vigil, in rest and quiet through Saturday. This Saturday for us is like God's rest at the end of creation. It is Christ's repose in the tomb.

**Until the night between Saturday and Sunday.**

**9. 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

**7. FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP by Pat Marrin – 18th March 2021.**



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



**8a.** Last Sunday Sr. Elizabeth Johnson CSJ gave a short talk (just under forty minutes) entitled 'Enfolded with Affection: Imagining "Us" in Creation Theology'.

Her talk was recorded and is able to be seen on YouTube:

<https://learn.ctu.edu/sundays-at-ctu-enfolded-with-affection-imagining-us-in-creation-theology/> Enjoy!



### 8b. Not only Food.

Besides forgoing food and otherwise eating more simply and more consciously, consider other ways of fasting. We ask ourselves: What does my baptism cost me? Surely it requires that we fast from wasteful behaviors. Here are a few suggestions:

Fast from guzzling petrol. Drive the speed limit. Take public transportation. Ride a bicycle or walk when you can.

Fast from compulsive consumerism. Check your closets, cupboards, storage rooms and garage. How many items have you collected that you thought you needed — until you brought them home and had “buyer’s remorse”? In reparation, choose some of these areas in your house to clean out. Fix, clean and deliver these items to those who need them more than you do.

Examine the ways in which you consume — and perhaps waste — nature’s resources. Shorten your showers; save the warm-up water for your garden or houseplants. Recycle religiously. Refuse to use plastic. Use your own fabric shopping sack, or at least reuse paper bags until they are about to fall apart. Write on both sides of a piece of paper; recycle paper used on one side into a scratch pad. Lower the temperature setting on your air conditioner; add or subtract clothing in layers to keep comfortable.

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8c. Eureka Street carried an interesting article in early February by Benedict Coleridge. It is titled: "Pragmatism: obscuring ideology in Australian politics".

His conclusion sounds the gospel imperative of hope:

. . . we ought now not to speak of 'common sense' without an articulated sense of the common good. In Australia, a broadly shared sense of the common good has generally been communicated via one resonant but nebulous term — a 'fair go'. Without further qualification, 'a fair go' is an empty signifier; it's an ideal that flags down our ethical sensibilities only to be filled with whatever content or meaning suits the moment. But 2020 brought into sharp relief the centrality of social goods that we have reason to value — goods such *our equal dignity as citizens, community, solidarity, stability of employment* (my emphasis). We should now strive to make such goods the defining language of our political common sense. As this harsh year fades and we look to rebuild, it is precisely the time to recognise that true pragmatism means a critical search for our values.

<https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article/pragmatism--obscuring-ideology-in-australian-politics>

*John*  
pastor,  
Boonah Catholic community.