



*I am the vine,
you are the branches . . .*



*Photos from the grounds of the Boonah parish house taken 18th April 2020 . . .
the passionfruit vine was planted one year ago . . . JFH*

Easter greetings to the members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on the Fifth Sunday of Easter.

1. REFLECTIONS ON THE SUNDAY WORD.



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

Monique grew up in southern California as a first generation American whose parents immigrated from the Netherlands. Raised in a bilingual household, and a learner at heart, observation, language, and curiosity have become her favourite tools for discovery and are often expressed through her artwork. Aiming to join the Peace Corps after high school, she instead responded to a call to the religious life and ministered as a member of a catechetical community for almost 20 years. Surprising herself, Monique fell in love with teaching; her ministry has taken many forms: from dirt lot catechesis in the barrios of east Los Angeles to the beach cities of Orange Country, as well as year-round ministry at the community's retreat camp for teens and families in the pine covered mountains of Big Bear, California. Yet perhaps her favourite of all, Reno Nevada, where she has continued to make her home since departing religious life.

Monique has served in the Diocese of Reno as Director of Faith Formation for almost 20 years, accompanies seekers as a spiritual director, and contributes monthly to the Faith Forum column, where leaders of multiple faith traditions come together over a given topic, in the Reno Gazette Journal. She easily admits that she still relishes both the challenges and the joys of following the Spirit.

When trying to achieve balance, Monique loves to go for long walks, often around Lake Tahoe, throwing a book - or a sketchpad - in her backpack, finding deep interior renewal and solitude in creation out of doors.

She received her M.A. in Religious Education at Fordham University in New York and continues to be passionate about serving the People of God with her life. She has served in ministry to the church for over 40 years.

Her homily concludes:

Allowing God a freehand to respond to the longing which exists in our deepest heart, will certainly result in an abundance we never knew possible.

Growth and healing and wholeness beyond predictability, beyond expectation...beyond our ideas of "Wait!" of what's supposed to be, seem to be the deeper call of the readings for our weekend.

Here is the link to her homily:

<https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/05022021>

The second reflection is from Julian McDonald, a Christian Brother in Australia.

"I am the true vine and my Father is the vine-grower...Live on in me, as I do in you. No more than a branch can bear fruit of itself apart from the vine, can you bear fruit apart from me. I am the vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated from me, you can't produce anything." John 15:1-8



The renowned Romantic, English poet and social reformer, William Blake was the author of the poem Jerusalem, which many describe as the unofficial English national anthem. Set to music, it featured in the film Chariots of Fire and is sung annually at the famous British Prom Concerts in the Royal Albert Hall in London. The poem is based on an English legend that Jesus, as a young man, visited the shores of England (formerly called Albion). The opening verse of Jerusalem refers to that legend:

And did those feet in ancient time

Walk upon England's mountains green,

And was the holy Lamb of God

On England's pleasant pastures seen?

Blake was a deeply religious man and wrote a much longer poem, also entitled Jerusalem (some 100 pages of verse and illustrations). The opening lines of this long poem echo today's gospel-reading:

Of the Sleep of Ulro! and of the passage through

Eternal Death! and of wakening to Eternal Life.

This theme calls me in sleep night after night, & ev'ry morn

Awakes me at sun-rise, then I see the Saviour over me

Spreading his beams of love, & dictating the words of this mild song.

Awake! awake O sleeper of the land of shadows, wake! expand!

I am in you and you in me, mutual in love divine:

Fibres of love from man to man thro' Albion's pleasant land.

(Note: Ulro is an Anglo-Saxon word for the land of the living dead or hell.)

In yet another of his poems, *The Little Black Boy*, Blake describes what a young African lad learned about God from his mother. He attributes the following, profound words to the boy:

And we are put on earth, a little space,

That we may learn to bear the beams of love.

Today's reflection is not meant to be a lesson in the poetry of William Blake, but it is about the reminder which Jesus gave his disciples on the night before he died. - a reminder that in Jesus' love for us and for all humanity we are grafted not only to him but to one another in ways that we probably don't fully understand, and that, arguably, the central purpose of our lives is to "learn to bear the beams of love".

The predominant theme running through today's gospel-reading is that of love - God's love for Jesus shared by him with all of humanity. If there is one thing that none of us has to be taught is that we are made for love. We know that because we have all felt love welling up from the very depths of our being. What we have learned from others, especially from our parents and from looking at the life of Jesus (love incarnate, loved enfleshed), is how to go about expressing our love in the best possible way.

To get grips on today's gospel-reading, it is probably worth our while to give some attention to the context out of which it grew. We know that all four evangelists wrote their Gospels to instruct and encourage the communities to which they belonged. Their focus was not on providing a biography of Jesus or on giving an account of the day-to-day activities of his public ministry. Rather, they were offering stories and explanations as to who Jesus was and how his followers might go about embracing and living the message of love which he lived and proclaimed. John's way of doing this was to employ language that relied heavily on symbols and metaphors. The key to understanding John is in discovering the significance of the imagery he used and coming to appreciate that he attributed that imagery to Jesus. We also have to acknowledge that Jesus probably used metaphors and symbols with which his various audiences would have been familiar.

In this context, it is worth noting that the culture and civilisation from which Abraham emerged was that of Sumer. The nation of Sumer was made up of city states which formed an alliance with one another for the sake of protection against invaders. These city states were located on the fertile plains between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (now Southern Iraq) and the culture and civilisation they developed were the seeds of what we now understand as culture and civilisation. Grapes have been

cultivated in the Near and Middle East for thousands of years, and archaeologists have discovered the remains of a winery in Armenia that dates back 4000 years. In Sumerian culture, the symbol for life was the grape leaf. So, when Jesus used the symbol of the grapevine to describe himself, his listeners would have understood what he was talking about.

Today's gospel-reading from Chapter 15 of John is an extract from the discourse that John attributed to Jesus at the Lord's Supper on the evening before Jesus died. Moreover, it forms a key part of John's unfolding explanation of Eucharist. It goes all the way back to his account of the feeding of the 5000 in chapter 6. Immediately after that event, John has Jesus declare: "I am the bread of life" (John 6, 28-59) - the very first of those seven "I am" statements special to John's Gospel, and referred to in last week's reflection. And Jesus proceeds to say: "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them". Now, in our gospel-reading today from chapter 15, we hear Jesus declaring: "I am the true vine...those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing...As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you, abide in my love" (John 15, 1-8).

And let's not forget that the "you" in these passages refers to the eleven disciples and to us. It is in the plural, so we don't slip into thinking that Jesus is talking about some cosy, individualistic, personal relationship between himself and me. He is talking to a group of disciples as a community. John is using this part of his Gospel to address the community that he was leading, a community of believers that would grow into the early Church. In John's theology, the Word of God became enfleshed in the person of Jesus Christ, and will continue to become enfleshed in our world through us who gather as a community of believers around the person of Jesus in the meal we now call Eucharist. The abundance of love and life that flowed from God into Jesus continues to flow from Jesus Christ into us as we gather round him, participating in the Eucharistic meal. Through our connection to the vine of life, we, as community, are nourished with the creative, loving, compassionate energy of God, with the very same energy that flowed through Jesus, the Christ.

In commenting on this part of John's Gospel the mystic, Meister Eckhart wrote: "A plum tree brings forth plums not by an act of will, but because it is its nature to do so. In the same way, the community of the people of God, gathered around Christ in the Eucharist, allowing the energy of Christ to flow unimpeded into and through all its branches, produces what, by its nature, it must: the fruit of compassion, mercy, kindness, patience, wisdom and love.

Jesus (and subsequently, John) uses the image of the vine to illustrate and explain his continuing connectedness to his disciples and their connectedness to God through him and their connectedness (and ours) to one another and to everyone whom they and we encounter. The challenge for us is to live and love as though we really value that connectedness. Our lives are about learning to bear, appreciate and reflect the beams of love.

The [third reflection](#) for this Sunday is an Australian voice.

It is from the new series called *Australian Women Preach* which was launched on *International Women's Day*, 8th March 2021. It runs for thirty



weeks leading into the Plenary Council which starts in October 2021. This initiative is from “The Grail in Australia” and “Women and the Australian Church”.



The preacher for the Fifth Sunday of Easter is Trish Madigan OP.

Trish is a Dominican Sister who has ministered for many years in the Catholic Church in Australia in ecumenical and Interfaith relations.

She is preaching on the Gospel reading for the Fifth Sunday of Easter (John 15: 1- 8). The other readings are Acts 9: 26-31 and 1 John 3: 18-24. Listen to her homily on the podcast:

<https://soundcloud.com/andrea-dean/8-may-2-trish-madigan>

2. 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.



3. We pray for two parishioners who died last week: *Elvie Stenzel* and *Jay O’Neill*.

Elvie is a long-time parishioner and we extend our sympathy and condolences to her daughter, Mary Ellen Muller and her extended family. Her funeral will be celebrated on Tuesday this week, 4th April, at the Boonah church, 10.00am, followed by the Rite of Committal at the Kalbar cemetery.

Jay was the husband of Mary O’Neill. Mary is one of musicians at the Boonah church. Jay died unexpectedly and so we extend our deepest condolences to Mary and their two children. One of their sons is in the UK and will not be able to be present at the funeral as he would have liked. Jay’s funeral will be celebrated on Wednesday this week, 5th April, at the Boonah church, 10.30am.



May they both rest in peace.

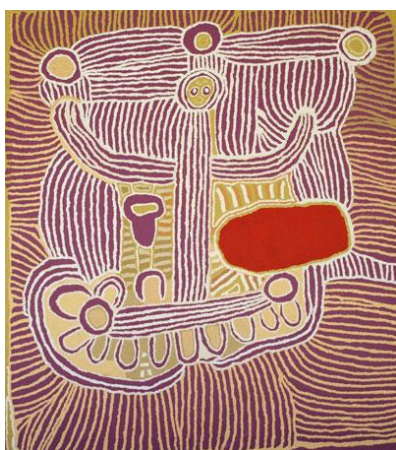
4. *Boonah Parish happenings . . .*

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 and LITURGY** schedule for this week, 5th week of Easter, is:

Monday	3 rd May	<i>Public holiday</i>
Tuesday	4 th May	10.00am, Boonah church: <i>Funeral Mass, Elvie Stenzel</i>
Wednesday	5 th May	10.30am, Boonah church: <i>Funeral, Jay O'Neill</i> 6.00pm, Peak Crossing church <i>followed by dinner at</i> <i>The Peak Pub</i>
Thursday	6 th May	8.00am, Boonah church

▪ **EVERY SUNDAY** when we gather for the Sunday eucharist, there are baskets (of some or another) at the entrances of our two churches.

We are invited to bring a gift of non-perishable food or goods for people seeking help from our local St. Vincent de Paul.

There is a great response each Sunday from the assembly at Harrisville. *Thanks!*

There is also an emerging and positive response from the two assemblies who gather at Boonah. *Thanks!*

I know the local conference very much appreciate our support.



*I was hungry and you fed me.
Matthew 25:35*

▪ **BOONAH ST. VINCENT DE PAUL NEEDS OUR HELP!**

There is an opportunity to help raise funds to support the work of our local conference within the Boonah and Fassifern district.

What is it? To provide **GATEKEEPERS** and assist with parking duties at the upcoming Boonah Show, Friday 28th May and Saturday 29th May.

What am I asked to do? Donate 2 or 3 hours of your time on Friday or Saturday, 28th and 29th May.

When? Between 5.00am and 8.00pm on either day as a team member.

Who? You, your relatives, your friends and neighbours.

John Greatrex would love to hear from you by SUNDAY 2nd MAY 2021:

07 5463 4100

0407 962 625

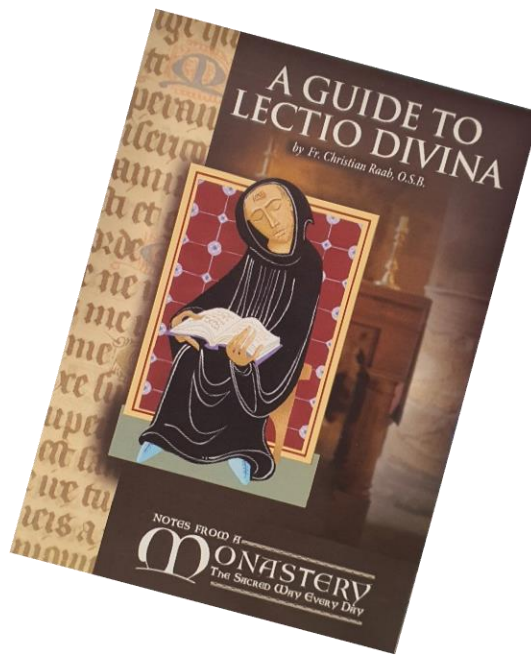
j.greatrex@bigpond.com



▪ **THANK YOU** to all who support the weekly Sunday collection. Your gifts enable the parish to meet its expenses and to function like an everyday household. If you would like to give weekly or monthly in a planned way, please see me.

▪ Our **Parish Pastoral Council** met on Monday 26th April last week in the Parish Centre. In the interest of transparency, I would like to share aspects of our deliberations and discussions from the draft Minutes.

• *Formation:* Councillors were given a small gift leaflet *A guide to Lectio Divina*. This is the style of prayer we are adopting at the start of our six-weekly Council gathering. Also, a short piece on 'Mystagogy - Reflecting on the Easter Experience' by Mark Searle was shared. We were encouraged to reflect on the mystery of Easter during the fifty days leading up to Pentecost and to recognise the practice of *mystagogy* in the early centuries of the Church. This process starts with experience of the liturgy and invites deep reflection on the symbols, words and actions within the liturgy for daily baptismal life.



• *Three Days of Easter 2021:* Despite the weather and lockdown/COVID requirements, Easter ran smoothly and prayerfully. A suggestion was made to exploring a cover/roof to the outside area beside the church (on the hall side) to protect against inclement weather.

• *Parish charter/vision:* This will be a continuing agenda item until done.

• *Parish newsletter - paper version:* There was wide ranging discussion. It was agreed to offer a monthly hard-copy newsletter in addition to the weekly electronically mailed Sunday bulletin. This newsletter will include relevant parish contact details, a list of those requiring prayers, Mass times and general parish news. The first edition is planned for **6th June**.

• *Hospitality:* COVID protocols have restricted gatherings of parishioners after Sunday Mass. It seems that 'hall cuppas' are out of the question for the foreseeable future. It was agreed to trial a picnic style, 'bring your own', gathering after the Boonah Mass on **Sunday 6th June**. It is proposed to take place under the shelter area of the parish school. We will double check to see if this plan is in accordance with COVID protocols.

• *Care and Concern:* A letter has been prepared for distribution to parishioners who have not provided an email address on the parish database. This will be followed up by a phone call and offers of a visit or a lift to Mass if needed. We need to ensure our Archdiocesan safeguarding protocols will be followed. A progress report on the activities of the Care and Concern group is to be included in a future Sunday bulletin.

- *Parish Finance Council:* Councillors were invited to suggest possible candidates for the renewed Parish Finance council. This Council will meet four times a year and comprise of up to five or so members. Parish Finance Councillors need to have the qualities of honesty and integrity, regularly attend the Sunday eucharist and display business acumen and experience in their professional and personal lives.
- *Review of planned giving:* One of the tasks of the Parish Finance Council is to oversee the annual/bi-annual renewal of giving. The Archdiocese through the Clergy Sustentation Fund subsidises clergy costs in this parish. This is necessary in order that we don't use savings for on-costs. We are aiming to be in a future position where we will not have to ask for this assistance. It is believed parishioners will respond positively and generously when the annual budget is explained. Our parish relies on the support of the Archdiocese and we are grateful for that support.
- *60th Anniversary of the Blessing of All Saints Church, Boonah:* Archbishop Mark Coleridge will preside at the celebration on Sunday 31st October. This will be an ideal opportunity for some parish renewal programs. There is also some exploration underway to restore and renew the original baptismal font.
- *Cleaning of Boonah church and maintenance of the grounds:* We will move to setup a roster of volunteers to clean the church and oversee the upkeep of the church grounds. Much has been done in recent times to enhance the grounds with new plantings. These have been gifted to the parish. Thank you. We hope that teams of two can be formed to initially clean the church every fortnight. It takes one reasonably fit person 1.5 hours to clean the church very well.
- *Alpha:* This will be reconsidered next meeting. It was on the agenda from the end of 2019 and into 2020 . . . then COVID-19 occurred.



The Parish Pastoral Council next meets 7th June.

- **THANK YOU** to those amongst us who, week by week, *send out* the FlockNote invites, *prepare* the churches for the celebration of Mass, *coordinate* the arrival and departure of the assembly especially on Sundays, *exercise* liturgical ministry in any necessary way (readers, sacristans, servers, organists, PowerPoint preparer and operators), and *clean* the churches after the celebration of the liturgy as we are required to do in this time of COVID-19.

- During this new week, many communities within the Catholic Church will remember the witness of Edmund Rice on 5th May. More than a few families in this parish were educated at St. Edmund's in Ipswich or at other Brisbane schools run by the Christian Brothers.

Australian composer and musician Peter Kearney was commissioned to write a song for an Edmund Rice staff day in 1999. You might enjoy listening to it. The back-story is on the link as well as the lyrics:

<https://peterkearney.bandcamp.com/track/73-where-to-now-edmund-2>

You might like to consider supporting the work of Peter. There are links to his music and products which make great gifts! Your purchase also supports a local musician!

- On Saturday of this weekend, we celebrated the Rite of Marriage between Edward Smith and Lucinda Wawrzyniak in the *White Chapel* at Kalbar. Ed and Lucinda hail from the Stafford parish. Thanks to Stafford parish for doing all the initial paperwork and first steps.

Lucinda is an artist and produced a painting to grace their celebration. I also thought it would look great on the leaflet!



*the celebration of marriage between
Edward Smith & Lucinda Wawrzyniak*

*White Chapel,
Kalbar.*

1st May 2021

- As well, during the Saturday evening Mass, we asked God's blessing upon two couples who celebrated their marriage anniversaries on 1st May.

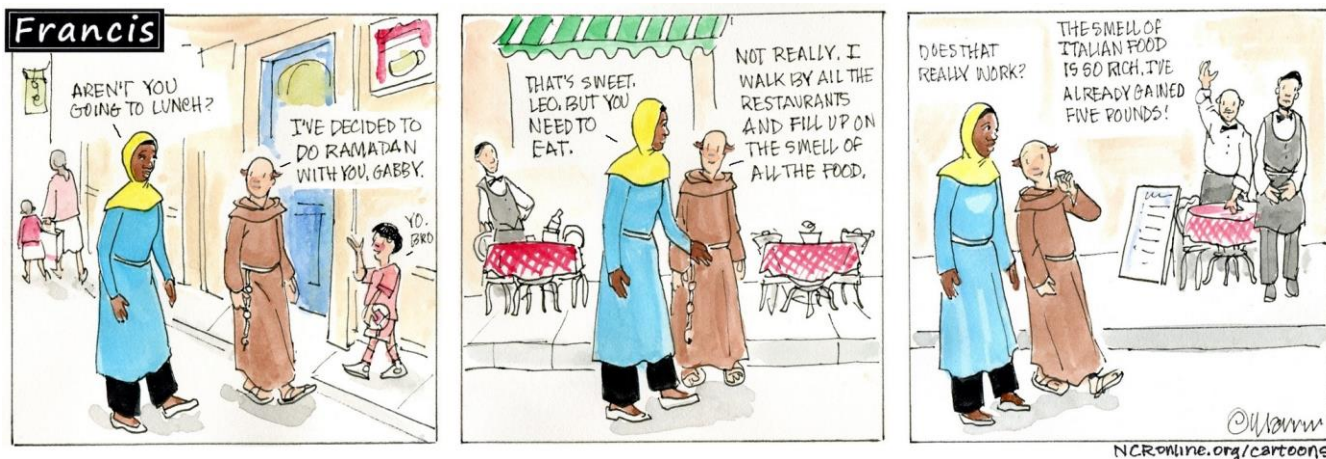
Yes! Both couples were married on the 1st May and both women are sisters: Jill O'Rourke nee Wickman and Janine Fiumara nee Wickman.

Jill and Kevin celebrated 50 years and Janine and Robert celebrated 28 years. *Congratulations!*

It was lovely to welcome their respective family and friends. It was even more wonderful to celebrate the new 'rite of blessing of a married couple on their anniversary' within the Communion Rite following The Lord's Prayer. It is one of the new options in the 2nd Rite of Marriage (2015).

Other couples celebrating significant anniversaries of marriage can also request a similar blessing. Please see me to arrange a date and time.

5. FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP by Pat Marrin – 29th April 2021.



6. Fr. Ron Rolheiser OMI is a well-known writer. He has a weekly reflection that draws from past and present reflections. This is his offering for this week taken from 12th February 2018:

OUR MOST COMMON SIN

Classically Christianity has listed seven sins as “deadly” sins, meaning that most everything else we do which is not virtuous somehow takes its root in one these congenital propensities. These are the infamous seven: pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth.

In spiritual literature the first three, pride, greed, and lust get most of the ink and attention. Pride is presented as the root of all sin, Lucifer’s primordial defiance of God as forever echoed in our own lives: I will not serve! Greed is seen as the basis for our selfishness and our blindness towards others and lust has often been given the ultimate notoriety, as if the Sixth Commandment were the only commandment.

Not to deny the importance of these, but I suspect that the sin which most commonly afflicts us and is not much mentioned in spiritual literature is wrath, that is, anger and hatred. I venture to say that most of us operate, however unconsciously, out of anger and this shows itself in our constant criticism of others, in our cynicism, in our jealousy of others, in our bitterness, and in our inability to praise others. And unlike most of our other sins, anger is easy to camouflage and rationalize as virtue.

At one level, anger often rationalizes itself as justified indignation over the foibles, stupidity, egotism, greed, and faults of others: How can I not be angry given what I see every day! Here anger shows itself in our constant irritation and in our quickness to correct, criticize, and make a cynical remark. Conversely we’re very slow to praise and affirm. Perfection then becomes the enemy of the good and since nothing and no one is perfect, we’re always in critical mode and we see this as a virtue rather than for what it in fact is, namely, an inchoate anger and unhappiness inside of ourselves.

But our unhappy cynicism isn’t the biggest problem here. More seriously, anger too often parades itself as Godly-virtue, as righteousness, as prophecy, as a healthy, divinely-inspired militancy for truth, for cause, for virtue, for God. And so we define ourselves as “holy warriors” and “vigilant defenders of truth”, taking justification in the popular (though false) conception that prophets are angry people, on passionate fire for God.

However, there’s a near infinite distance between true prophetic anger and the anger that today commonly parades itself as prophecy. Daniel Berrigan, in his criteria for prophecy, submits (and rightly) that a prophet is someone who takes a

vow of love, not of alienation. Prophecy is characterized by love aching for reconnection, not anger pushing for separation.

And love isn't generally what characterizes most so-called prophetic anger in our world today, especially as it pertains to God, religion, and defense of truth. You see this in its worst form in Islamic extremism where, in the name of God, every kind of hatred, violence, and random murder puts on God's cloak. Blaise Pascal captures this well in his *Pensees* where he writes: "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction." He's wrong on one thing; mostly we aren't doing it cheerfully but angrily. One only has to read the letters to the editor in our newspapers, listen to most talk-radio stations, or listen to any debate on politics, religion, or morality to see raw hatred and anger justifying themselves on moral and divine grounds.

There is such a thing as healthy prophetic anger, a fiery response when the poor of God, the word of God, or the truth of God are being slandered, abused, or neglected. There are important causes and boundaries to be defended. But prophetic anger is an anger that emanates out of love and empathy and always, regardless of the hatred it meets, still exhibits love and empathy, like a loving mother in the face of a belligerent child. Jesus on occasion exhibits this kind of anger, but his anger is antithetical to most of what masquerades as prophetic anger today, where love and empathy are so noticeably absent.

Someone once said that we spend the first half of life struggling with the Sixth Commandment, and then spend the second-half of life struggling with

the Fifth Commandment: Thou shalt not kill! We see this illustrated in the famous parable of the Prodigal Son, his Older Brother, and his Prodigal Father. The younger son is effectively out of his father's house through wrestling with the seductive energies of youth. The older brother is just as effectively outside his father's house, not through sin, but through wrestling with anger.

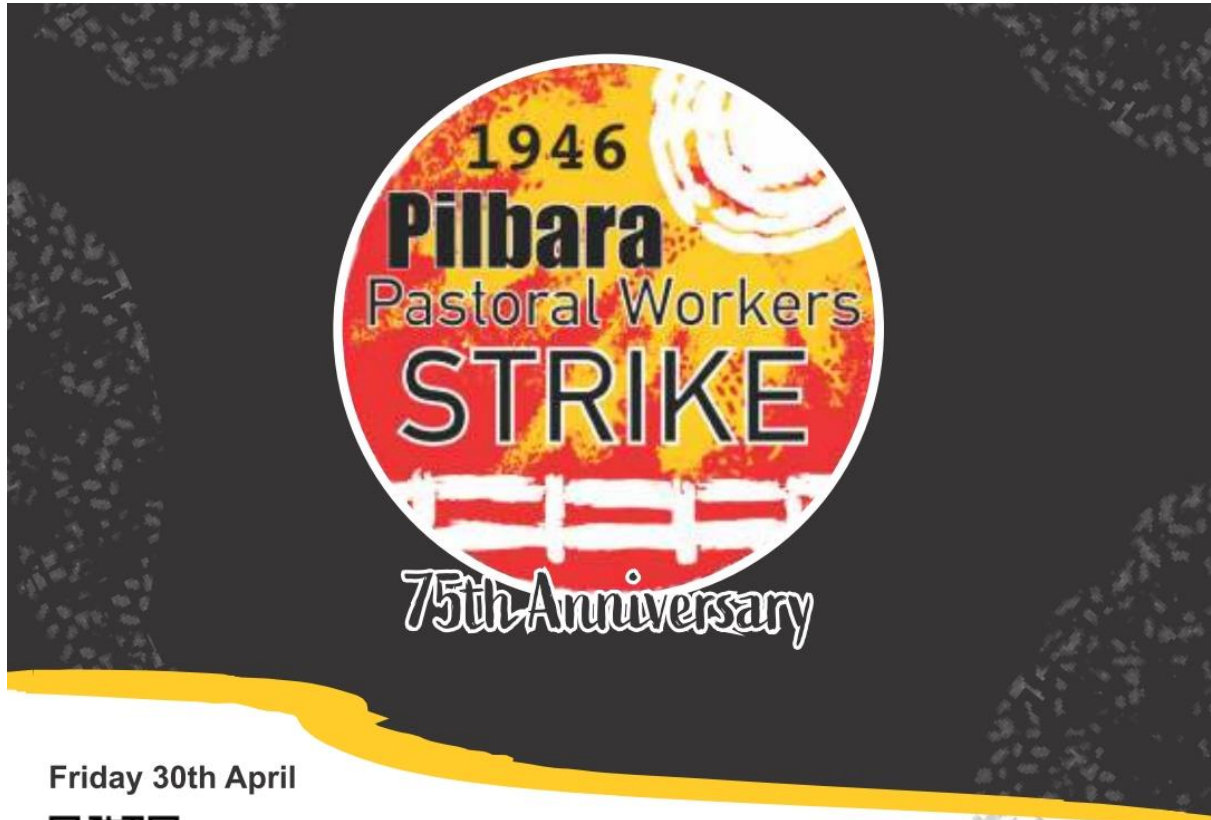
As a young boy I was catechized to confess "bad thoughts" as sinful, but bad thoughts then were defined as sexual thoughts. As we age, I suggest, we might continue to confess "bad thoughts", but now those "bad thoughts" have to do with anger.

A cynic, it's said, is someone who has given up, but not shut up! He's also someone who has confused one of the seven deadly sins, wrath, with virtue.



<https://www.pinterest.com.au/pin/216243219583949674/>

7. During the week passed, I heard a very interesting radio podcast that commemorated 1st May, Labour Day. The podcast drew attention to the 75th anniversary of the Pilbara Pastoral Workers Strike which began in 1946. It wasn't really resolved for decades. It was especially moving to hear the recordings of people now deceased and to understand how they were treated as workers in our nation. Thanks ABC! Interested in this neglected part of our history, I found the following information.



Friday 30th April



How The West Was Lost: screening of acclaimed Pilbara Strike documentary.
7-9 pm, DADAA Cinema, 92 Adelaide Street, Fremantle (doors open 6 pm)
Tickets: <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing?eid=748164&>

Saturday 1 May

'Stories in the Park' family event. Sit down and listen to stories of courage, strength and determination about how and why the 1946 Strike happened:

3-5 pm, Fremantle Park, Ellen Street, Fremantle (behind Fremantle Lawn Tennis Club)

'Remembering the Strike': an evening of songs and stories to commemorate the 1946 Pilbara Aboriginal station workers' strike. Featuring Lois Olney, David Milroy, Dave Johnson, Mike Burns & David Hyams.



Tickets: https://www.stickytickets.com.au/v85h6/pilbara_pastoral_workers_strike.aspx
7-9.30 pm (doors open 6pm). Fremantle Park Centre,
36 Ellen Street, Fremantle

Sunday 2 May

Unions WA May Day event.

From 10 am, Fremantle Esplanade

For programme updates 'like' and 'follow us' on Facebook:
Remembering the 1946 Pilbara Strike



So what was the 1946 Pilbara Strike?

75 years ago, on May 1, 1946, hundreds of Aboriginal workers began walking off dozens of pastoral stations across the vast Pilbara region to fight for wages and better living conditions.



Committed Aboriginal leaders had for months secretly travelled to stations all over the Pilbara to alert Aboriginal workers to the strike, timed to take place just before shearing began in May.

After a hard-fought three-year struggle, the strikers finally achieved their original aim of '30 bob a week', as well as establishing their own communities independent of the previous domination of 'pastoralist, policeman and native welfare officer'.

The Strike was supported 'down south' by church and women's groups, lawyers, unions, and the Australian Communist Party: the WA Government's hand was finally forced in July 1949, when the Fremantle-based Seamen's and Lumpers' Unions voted to black ban wool from Pilbara stations still holding out against the Aboriginal strikers' demands.

The Pilbara Strike movement reshaped colonial race relations in WA and helped to inspire later and better-known acts of Aboriginal resistance like the 1966 Wave Hill walk off in the Northern Territory and the 1980 Noonkanbah blockade in the Kimberley region.

Since then, the 1946 Pilbara Strike has been recognised by the ACTU as the longest strike in Australian history, and has been regularly commemorated by WA unions at their annual May Day event on Fremantle Esplanade.

This May Day weekend we invite you to join us and members of the Pilbara Strike families in Fremantle to honour the courage and determination of the strikers, and commemorate this pivotal, yet little known event in our shared history.

*'Remembering the 1946 Pilbara Strike'
75th Anniversary Working Group*

Continue enjoying these Easter days and nights!

John

pastor
Boonah Catholic community.