



Word of Life mural (1964) by Millard Sheets,
Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA,
41m x 21m,

The artwork depicts a procession of figures representing Christian saints, thinkers, teachers, and writers, a topic that connected to the idea of the library. Figures were selected from different centuries and places to convey the concept of the Catholic Church's historical continuity. At the top of the procession the central figure is the resurrected Jesus Christ, conceived as the great teacher and master, and the fountain of knowledge contained in the library.

This is a marvellous mural and you can contemplate it from a reflective pool in front of the library. I was often mesmerised by this piece of art when I attended Summer Sessions in Liturgical Studies at UND from 1996-2001.

Sunday greetings to the members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on the Solemnity of All Saints.

1. REFLECTIONS ON THE SUNDAY WORD.

We share **two** reflections on the Sunday scriptures our church selects for this Sunday.



The first Sunday preaching is by Marguerite Barankitse, better known as “Maggy,” has always lived a life out of the ordinary. She was born in Ruyigi, Burundi in 1956.

Maggy studied to become a teacher then she went on to study theology for 3 years in Lourdes (France).

When she returned to Burundi, she taught French in a secondary school in Ruyigi, and tutored students after class. Aged only 23, Maggy adopted one of her students, Chloe, who had been orphaned for a long time. In the years to come, Maggy welcomed four other children in her home. She raised them as if they had always been part of her family, without ethnic distinction.

After studying administration in Switzerland at the end of the 1980s, Maggy returned to Ruyigi, and started working as the secretary to the bishop until 24 October 1993.

In October 1993, Burundi was in tension. In Ruyigi, chaos struck on 24 October.

Maggy was forced to powerlessly witness the massacre of 72 people who were hidden with her in the diocese. The violence was brutal, but Maggy managed to convince the killers to spare 25 children. As chaos continued in the region, she welcomed and took care of more orphans with no distinction.

Faced with this situation, Maggy realised that her mission would be to fight against the hate and indifference which were ravaging the Great Lakes region, giving to her children, and to the 47,000 who would follow, an alternative to hate: it will be a home of peace and love, where the life of each and every human, and their dignity, will be respected. It will be “Maison Shalom”.

To this day, she continues to advocate for Burundian refugees so that they can retain their dignity while in exile, preparing them for a constructive return to their home country.

Maggy reflects:

Contemplating the Feast of All Saints urges us to marvel at God's vision for humanity, at the diversity of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and at the answers with which each and every one of us responds.

Today we also celebrate the saints of our respective countries, those who fell under the machetes of genocide in our two countries where I was born, Burundi and Rwanda. Yes, the saints of our families, those who died because of fratricidal hatred. The saints in the streets who die to save others, those in prison. Those who fall ill in hospitals, like the chaplains in Italy: 60 priests who died of COVID-19 to save the forgotten in elderly care homes. In refugee camps, the saints who drown to save others in the Mediterranean, those who try to cross borders to give their children better lives.

Yes, as Father Daniel Ange said, this feast reveals to us once and for all that our world is a wellspring of untapped holiness.

Maggy's homily is spoken French and there is an English translation at the bottom of the screen as in international films:

<https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/11012020>



Our [second Sunday reflection](#) on the scriptures is written by Fr. Don Senior, a Passionist priest who is a renowned student, scholar and teacher of scripture.

Don is President Emeritus, Chancellor, and Professor of New Testament Studies at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago.

[“BE HOLY AS I AM HOLY”](#)

All Saints' Day is a beautiful feast celebrating the call to holiness open to all the daughters and sons of God — those already wrapped in God's loving embrace and those of us still on the road. Paul the Apostle frequently referred to his fellow Christians as “saints” or “holy ones.” The Greek word he used is *hagios* — meaning to be holy or saintly — the same word in fact is used of God, the “all holy one.” Paul applied this title to all Christians, not just the ones that seemed to be the most pious or well-behaved.

This call to holiness reaches deep into the Scriptures. In Leviticus (19:2), God summons Moses to tell the people: “Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy” — a command that rings down through the entirety of the Bible. The notion of humans imitating the holiness of God is something distinctive about our Jewish heritage and our Christian faith. Most ancient religions did not correlate the worship of their gods with the values that ought to guide the lives of their devotees. They hoped that homage to their gods would protect them from harm and lead to prosperity, but they did not derive their code of conduct from the example of their gods. In fact, some of the behaviour of the ancient gods of the Middle East and in Greek mythology was not to be imitated!

For the Bible, however, the “holiness” of God referred to the awesome beauty and power of God, and God's astounding tender love and mercy towards God's people. One of the earliest acclamations about God is found in Exodus 34:6, as Moses encounters God at Sinai: “The Lord,

the Lord, a God gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in love and fidelity." God's steadfast mercy, fidelity, and abiding love define what "holiness" means and set a pattern for the way we are to live our lives. Astoundingly, as Genesis (1:16) affirms, the God of Israel creates humans in the divine "image and likeness" – we are endowed with a God-given capacity for holiness.

For the Christian faith, God's holiness is embodied in the person of Jesus. In his very being and in the manner of his own life, Jesus revealed God to us. As Pope Francis has repeatedly said, "Jesus is the human face of the Father's mercy." God's Old Testament command to "be holy as I the Lord your God am holy" becomes for Christians equivalent to Jesus' call to his disciples, "Come, follow me." In striving to live as Jesus lived, we find the path to holiness.

That is the spirit of today's readings. The first reading from Revelation is typical of the dramatic and vast canvas of this visionary New Testament book. Standing before the throne of God and the Lamb (the exalted Christ), "a great multitude which no one could count from every nation, race, people and tongue" cries out in exaltation, praising God and the Risen Jesus. The Responsorial Psalm 24 also exults in God's beauty and power: "The Lord's are the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it." And our response expresses the longing we are to experience as we, too, strive for a life of goodness, a life of holiness: "Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face!"

The reading from the First Letter of John underscores the link between God's love and the quality of our lives: "Beloved: See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God." John will affirm over and over: to be a child of God is to love as God loves, the central command of Jesus' teaching.

And, finally, in the gospel passage from Matthew we hear Jesus' beatitudes that begin the Sermon on the Mount, a summation of the values and commitments that lead to authentic holiness, and, in fact, reflect Jesus' own manner of life: comfort for the poor, for those who mourn, and for the meek; blessing on those committed to mercy, to peace-making, and, to justice even at the cost of persecution.



At this tense and fractious moment in our history, this Christian vision of what authentic human life can be is balm for our souls. *God calls all of us to be holy as God is holy!*

<https://ctu.edu/faculty/donald-senior/>

2. 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:

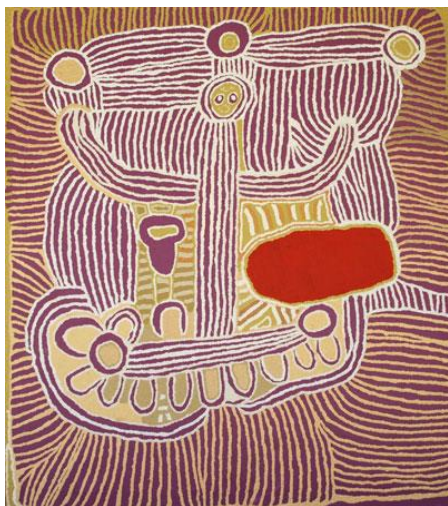
<https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/multimedia/on-demand-web-casts/>

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

4. *Boonah Parish happenings . . .*



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)

I am away on annual retreat from late Sunday 1st Nov – 7th Nov so there are no weekday celebrations of Mass.

♦ *Arise!* Youth Group will minister at our 0930 Sundays Mass, 1st November,
SOLEMNITY of ALL SAINTS, 9.30am.

We welcome our younger parishioners to these ministries and thank Clare Brandon for getting us all organised.



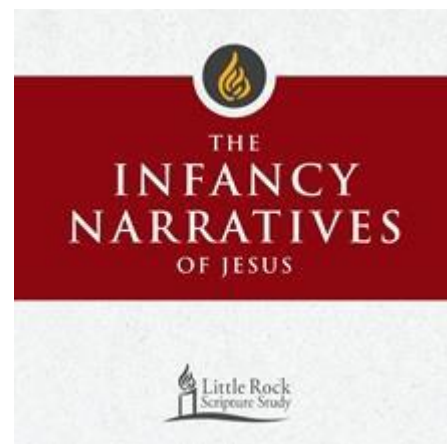
The image above is of several magnificent tapestries from the Catholic Cathedral in Los Angeles, CA, USA: <http://www.olacathedral.org/cathedral/art/tapestries1.html>

- ♦ Advent is fast approaching! Yes . . . Advent starts 29th November.

Garrett Publishing, a religious publishing house in Australia, sent us advertising about a revised book called *The Infancy Narratives of Jesus*. I have ordered a copy.

There are only **three** lessons! I thought some of us would be interested in looking at these gospel stories from Matthew and Luke. It looks great: commentary, reflection questions for discussion, prayers and access to online lectures.

Dates next Sunday and starting the first week of December.



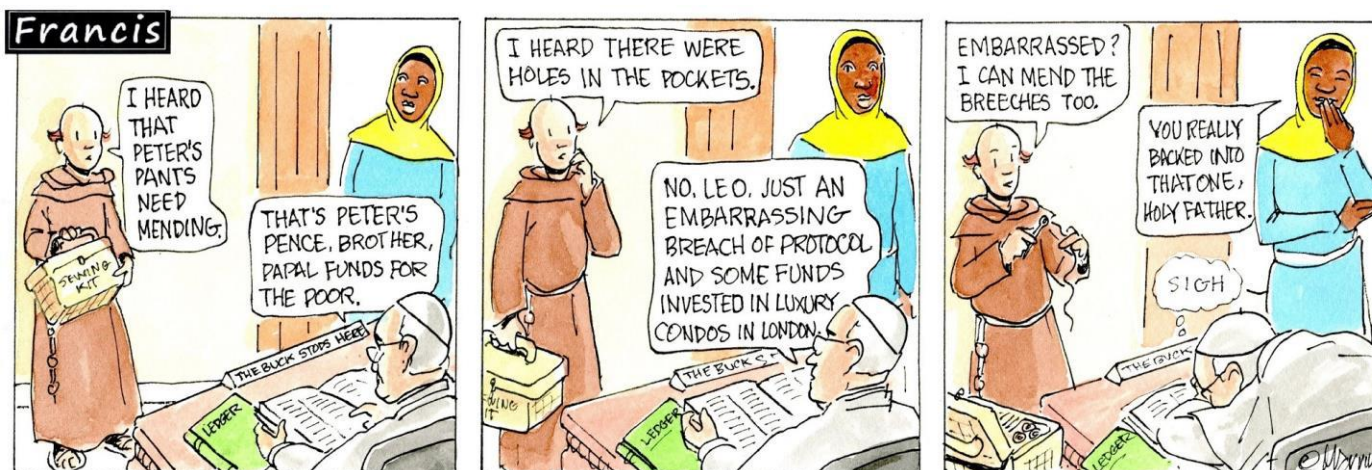
- ♦ Last Sunday we baptised **Lachlan Woodforth** (born June 2020), the first born son of Sarah McInnes and Ben Woodforth, at our Harrisville Church. It was a great celebration of faith! Thanks Sarah and Ben for sharing this picture post-baptism!

- ♦ Thanks to parishioners actively supporting our local SVDP food pantry Sunday by Sunday. There is a great response from the community who gather at Harrisville church every week.



Boonah folk are encouraged to participate too and I thank those who are gifting food to the conference. On behalf of the local conference, THANK YOU.

Donations are welcome at both churches. Dry-shelf contributions only please. Food donations to be placed in baskets at our two churches.



NCRonline.org/cartoons

29th October 2020



- ♦ On Friday last week, the parish school anticipated the Solemnity of All Saints (because I am away next week on retreat).

Thanks to the senior students in the pic who fulfilled various ministries during the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word.

Thanks to Mrs. Douglas APRE for preparing the liturgy and to Principal Mr. Seymour for preparing all the children to celebrate as well as the smaller number who ministered.

*The school community learned the Australian hymn, *The Beatitudes*, composed by Peter Kearney. They sang very well and I was interested to note how Peter's hymn continues to speak across the generations. Thanks Peter!*

- ♦ Next Saturday 7th November, a group of parishioners will travel to Marian Valley to celebrate First Saturday Mass. If you would like to make the pilgrimage, meet outside our Boonah church at 8.30am. For more details: Mary 0413 632 431.

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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.

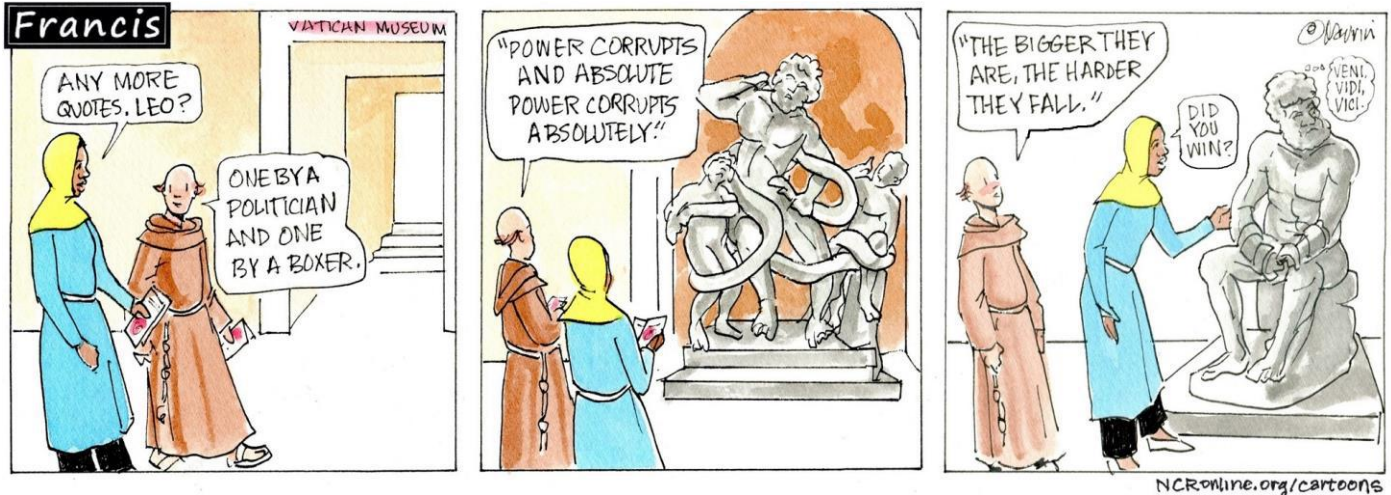
- Fr. John O'Malley SJ, 2006





5. THE CATHOLIC LEADER digital edition is available free at the moment and can be sent to your inbox every Thursday morning while the pandemic is still with us. 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.

6. FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP by Pat Marrin.



27th October 2020

7. Cathy McGown is the now retired federal member for Indi, Victoria. She has a new book out and this edited extract appeared in *The Guardian Australia* today. I was interested to read in her own words how she approached this amazing opportunity in her life and thought it appropriate 'food for thought' for All Saints this Sunday. It is also apt for this weekend as we vote!



Because I've championed the cause of the parliamentary independent from the beginning, I'm often asked how many independents should rightly sit in the House of Representatives. Do I have an ideal number? I don't. My starting point

is good representation. I don't care what colour or shape our representatives are, I just want them to be professional. That is, professional in the way they go about representing the best interests of their constituents.

Rather than concentrate on labels or how many independents we should have, instead ask this: how many professionally qualified politicians who understand constituent service, policy development, how parliament works, how the media works, can self-reflect and have a bit of humility, are there in the system? Not many.

The big picture in politics is all very well but what I know from my time as an MP is that, as an independent, I maintained a sharp focus on my electorate and tried not to allow the larger political debates and big-party controversies that constantly occupy the media's attention to inhabit my mental space or direct my behaviour.

I don't care what colour or shape our representatives are, I just want them to be professional. That is, professional in the way they go about representing the best interests of their constituents.

This was a key to our success in Indi, which may seem counterintuitive to some. First, we built much higher levels of voter engagement by getting things done at a constituent level, which challenged the predictable line that a vote for an independent was a wasted vote. My message to the electorate was: "I want to represent you and I will always do that. I will always put Indi first."

By doing that and not trying to make myself a major national talking head on every subject going, I managed to get some good things done in Canberra. I was regularly surprised by how people there treated me. I knew I had a vote they needed but it was more than that, it was also because I stuck to my knitting and everybody knew I was sticking to my knitting; I wasn't going to interfere and get involved with party politics.

Both sides had a pretty clear idea of my agenda. I did not needlessly play the power card. I understood from my leadership experience pre-politics that power was something you managed, not brandished about. I did play on the national political stage when I needed to: on drought policy, for example. I knew about that subject. I had credibility on it.

As an MP I had an abiding interest in strengthening higher education facilities and opportunities outside the metropolitan cities. In March 2018 I introduced a private member's bill, the higher education support amendment (national regional higher education strategy) bill,

calling on the government to establish a strategy for regional tertiary education based on a four-yearly review process, with a commissioner to oversee its implementation. In the reshuffle after Malcolm Turnbull's departure later that year, I found a willing ear when Dan Tehan was appointed education minister. With his rural background, he was supportive of a separate rural and regional strategy, and of a commissioner, and he recognised the need to address the gap between urban and rural completion rates. In his June 2020 higher education policy he announced his intention to appoint a regional, rural and remote education commissioner to be a champion for regional education.

The lesson here is that it pays to plant the seed.

Late in my second term I found myself taking much of the load of advancing the idea of a national integrity commission to deal with corruption within federal bodies. I believe it's an absolute must for the nation, as did many of my fellow crossbenchers. In the fractious period when the government's parliamentary majority was getting shaky, five of us on the crossbench raised a matter of public importance on the subject. Turnbull had flagged he might do something about establishing the sort of body we were looking for but then he was gone, replaced by Scott Morrison.

My staff worked for three months, enormous hours with the parliamentary counsel and Transparency International Australia drafting a bill. We shared our draft around Parliament House and the respect for our office, and for my staff, who had considerable experience working at a high level for various departments, meant we were taken seriously. We were able to win Labor's support. (The government took it up too but proceeded to hasten slowly afterwards.) That had a national impact, at least in part because our office was viewed as skilled, not afraid of hard work and capable of delivering.

. . . it pays to plant the seed.

It's an object lesson for some of the more enthusiastic younger people I've known who love politics and want an independent to make a big impact on Canberra. I tell them that the competition with everyone trying to play on the big national stage is intense. If an independent starts at the local level and looks after their community, that will garner respect and lead eventually to the bigger national policy wins. Back home is where the joy of the job lies.

But community politics is not for the faint-hearted. One of the challenges of being an independent is how

exposed you are; all the time you're in the public view and there's no place to hide. If a constituent had a complaint I would always call them. My view was that it didn't matter if the person was a habitual critic, I'd still call them. I'd listen to whatever it was that had made them disgruntled. I suspected that person was unlikely to like me or even vote for me but they'd been heard, and we could not afford to lose that basic respect that was central to the values of Voices for Indi.

Trust is such a precious commodity in our politics and it comes from respect. There's too little trust between the major parties. Tony Abbott never respected Julia Gillard, he laid into her in the most disrespectful way. Many people see that and think: "I don't behave like that in my family, I don't behave like that in my business. If I behaved like that I'd be out of business." It's such an unnecessary way to behave and it puts people off politics.

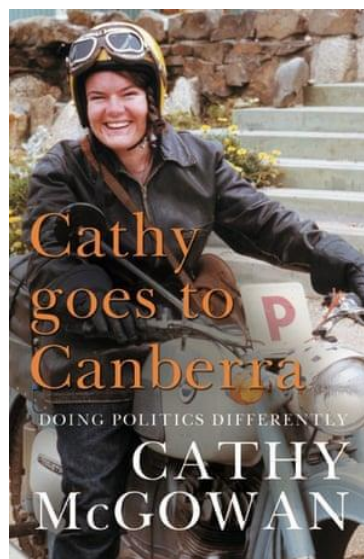
There are many people of good will, skills and relevant community and business experience who could make very good parliamentarians but they're turned off by what they see on the trust and respect score. I know from my Women in Agriculture networks that there is not a woman who runs an Australian agricultural business with her husband and her extended family who would not be capable of holding her own in parliament. These women are in multimillion-dollar businesses, managing staff, droughts, fires, floods, communities, trade and commercial issues and government regulations. I know they could rise to the occasion but they rarely raise their hands to try to become MPs.

The problem is they feel shut out of contention, seeing politics as a game played by men – mostly

men, but some women – who have made politics their vocation from an early age. The diversity is not there in the parliament, the lived experience is not there.

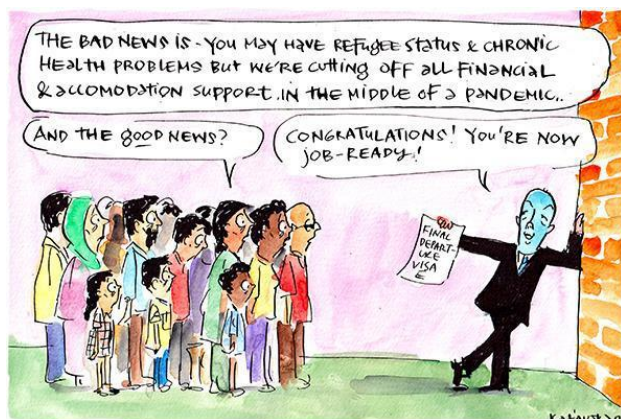
This is where the opportunity for independents beckons. When I was first elected, I was a single female farmer and consultant who was a few months short of 60, with zero direct political experience. Would I have won a major party preselection?

For all that, we have a good system and it can work. That's how I operate. I don't begin from a negative starting point. We definitely need to improve it. Australia needs to work out once again how it does democracy more meaningfully. It won't happen all at once. I have faith and trust and hope that we will do that, because there are enough good people in our communities to make it work. I balance that with my absolute realism that the system also has a lot of bad practices that need to be wiped out. I don't pretend they're not there.



The essence of my political mission as an independent was to see our democracy for what it is and work on the things that were bad. I concluded that I couldn't make the big changes but I could work where I had some influence. I couldn't solve all the problems, but I could work around them, and I always kept thinking: "Being the change you want to see is the most powerful thing I can do."

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/oct/31/cathy-mcgowan-on-politics-humility-and-tony-abbotts-disrespectful-treatment-of-gillard>



8. Here are a few links for interesting reading: 'Refugees are the canaries in the mine' by Aussie Jesuit, Andy Hamilton: <https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article/refugees-are-the-canaries-in-the-mine>

'Corruption in the church must be stamped out continually, pope says' by Junno Arocho Esteves: <https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/corruption-church-must-be-stamped-out-continually-pope-says>

9. A friend of the parish sent this introduction and wonderful prayer from Fr. Ron Rolheiser OMI:

'Be still and know that I am God.' Scripture assures us that if we are still we will come to know God, but arriving at stillness is easier said than done. As Blaise Pascal once stated, "All the miseries of the human person come from the fact that no one can sit still for one hour." Achieving stillness seems beyond us and this leaves us with a certain dilemma, we need stillness to find God, but we need God's help to find stillness. With this in mind, I offer a prayer for stillness.

A PRAYER FOR STILLNESS

God of stillness and of quiet ...

- *Still my anxiety, my heartaches, my worries, and stop me from always being outside the present moment. Give me the grace to know that you have pronounced my name in love, that my name is written in heaven, that I am free to live without anxiety.*
- *Still my unrelenting need to be busy all the time, to occupy myself, to be always planning for tomorrow, to fill every minute with some activity, to seek distraction rather than quiet. Give me the grace to accept what circumstance and failure have dealt me.*
- *Still in me the fear I feel in the face of the powerful, dark forces that unconsciously threaten me. Give me the courage to face my darkness as well as my luminosity. Give me the grace to not be fearful before my own complexity.*
- *Still in me the congenital fear that I'm unloved, that I'm unlovable, that love has to be earned, that I need to be more worthy. Give me the grace to know that I'm a beloved child of a God whose love need not be earned.*
- *Still in me my false fear of you, my need to treat you like a distant and feared dignitary rather than as a warm friend. Give me the grace to relate to you in a robust way, as a trusted friend with whom I can jest, wrestle, and relate to in humour and intimacy.*
- *Still in me my doubts, my anxieties about your existence, about your concern, and about your fidelity. Give me the grace to trust, even in darkness and doubt, that you will give me immortality.*

Still my heart so that I may know that you are God, that I may know that you create and sustain my every breath, that everyone, myself no less than everyone else, is your beloved. Nothing falls outside of your love and care, and that everything and everybody is safe in your gentle, caring hands, in this world and the next.

Enjoy the new week ahead as well as the continued gift of rain . . . almost five inches here!

John, pastor, Boonah Catholic community