



We, the people of Boonah Catholic parish,
acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our parish is located
and where we conduct our mission and ministry.

We pay our respects to ancestors and elders, past and present.

As a local community of faith within the Church of Brisbane,
we are committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'
unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas
and their rich contribution to society.

Lenten greetings to the members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on the Third Sunday of Lent.

1. REFLECTION ON THE SUNDAY WORD.

The **first reflection** is written by Br. Julian McDonald CFC. Julian is a Christian Brother from Sydney.



On Boxing Day 2004, a tsunami in the Indian Ocean brought devastation to the coastal regions of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand. More than 200,000 people lost their lives. People all over the world were stunned by the magnitude of the destruction and the enormous loss of life. When disasters like that occur, there is something about us that sends us searching for an explanation. It is not

unusual to hear ourselves and people around us asking: "Why does God allow such terrible catastrophes to happen?" Unfortunately, the quick explanation that even many Christians give for suffering, sickness and death is that it is God's punishment for sin. That was a popular belief even among the Jews of Jesus' time, and it is reflected at the start of today's gospel-reading where we hear members of Jesus' audience wondering aloud if some people crushed to death in a building collapse and others massacred by Pilate's soldiers were more sinful than everyone else.

That gave Jesus the opportunity to repeat that his very reason for his teaching and preaching was to call people to a change of mind and heart, to transform their lives from putting themselves first and, instead, reaching out to others with care and compassion. He summed it up in words that echoed the Baptist's call:

“Repent and believe the good news.”

Repentance is about changing one’s mind and heart and way of living and relating rather than regretting one’s sinfulness.

In today’s gospel-reading, Luke illustrates, through the parable of the fig tree, how Jesus explained that change of mind and heart does not happen in an instant or as the result of a sudden moment of inspiration. Rather, it generally happens over time.



A teaching-practice followed by Jewish rabbis was to invite their congregations to reflect on God by presenting different qualities of God engaging in debate or dialogue. In today’s parable, the two characters of the land-owner and the gardener represent two different qualities of God - God as judge and God as dispenser of mercy. On one hand, God is like a land-owner who is always looking for fruit and, when no fruit is produced, looks to take action. The gardener, however, represents the all-merciful aspect of a God who gives creatures another chance, a chance for change of mind and heart. Moreover, the gardener recommends that nurture and encouragement might well help in such transformation.

In his letter to the early Christian community of Philippi, Paul said much the same. He had developed a particular appreciation of the Philippians because of the way in which they had welcomed him. So, in the introduction of his letter to them he wrote: “I am convinced that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it through to completion” (Philippians 1, 6).

It is true that natural disasters, the brutality of powerful people, illness, the death of a loved one can all turn our lives upside down,

triggering us to lose confidence in ourselves and trust in God.

Today’s parable is a reminder that God’s patience, mercy and encouragement will never leave us; that God will always offer us opportunity for transformation of mind and heart.

Today’s first reading from Exodus illustrates how God found a way into the heart of Moses when, as a wanted criminal, he was forced into hiding. A story I have borrowed from parish pastor and writer William Bausch offers us yet another insight into how even very ordinary happenings can contribute to transforming our lives:

A taxi driver received a call to a run-down neighbourhood. As it was around 2.30 am, he was tempted to honk the horn, wait a few moments and then drive off. Over the years, however, he had encountered many people for whom taxis were their only means of transportation. So, he got out of his cab, walked to the door and knocked. A tiny, elderly woman emerged, struggling with a small suitcase. *Would you carry my bag to the car?* she asked. This he willingly did, and returned to help his passenger into the cab.

When they were settled, she gave the driver an address and asked: *Can you go via the downtown area? It’s not the shortest way, you know,* he replied. *I don’t mind,* she said. *I’m in no hurry. I’m on my way to a hospice. I don’t have any family left. Besides, the doctor says I don’t have very long.* At that, the driver reached over quietly and shut off the meter.

For the next two hours, they drove around the city. She showed him where she had once worked as an elevator operator. They stopped outside the house where she and her husband had lived just after they were married, and then in front of a furniture warehouse that had been a ballroom where she had gone dancing as a girl. As the dawn was breaking, she announced: *I’m tired now. So, we had better go.* When they reached the convalescent home,

two orderlies hurried out to collect her, while the cab driver followed up with her case.

How much do I owe you? she asked, reaching for her purse. *Nothing*, he replied. *You have to make a living*, she protested. *There'll be other passengers*, he said. And almost without thinking, he bent down and gave her a hug. She held him tightly. *You gave an old woman a little moment of joy*, she said. *Thank you*. He squeezed her hand and walked into the dim morning light. Behind him a door shut. It was the sound of the closing of a life.

The taxi driver finishes this story in his own words: *I didn't pick up any more passengers that*

shift. I drove around aimlessly, lost in thought. For the rest of the day, I was lost for words. What might have happened if she had gotten a driver who was impatient to finish his shift? What if I had refused to drive her downtown? As I reflect on it, I don't think I have done anything more important in my life. Then he added: We're conditioned to think that our lives revolve around great moments. But truly great moments often catch us unaware, beautifully wrapped in what others see as only plain.

The aim of Lent is to open ourselves to a change of mind and heart, to transformation. It's a succession of unspectacular acts of kindness that will take us there.



God of salvation,
we stand before you on holy ground,
for your name is glorified
and your mercy revealed
wherever your mighty deeds are remembered.

Since you are holy and forbearing,
turn us from every rash and shallow judgement
to seek the ways of repentance.

(Year C: 3rd Sunday of Lent, Alternative Opening Prayer)

A **second reflection** is from the *Catholic Women Preach* website. The preacher is Jaime L. Waters who teaches Scripture at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. She is associate professor of Catholic Studies and the author of *Threshing Floors in Ancient Israel: Their Ritual and Symbolic Significance* (2015) and the forthcoming book *What Does the Bible Say About Animals?* (2022).



* * *

Repent and believe in the Gospel! Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return! Don't worry. You didn't click on the wrong commentary. Today is not Ash Wednesday. But, at the halfway point of Lent, today's Gospel for the Third Sunday of Lent echoes the themes of repentance, death, and redemption which are at the heart of the Lenten season.

In the Gospel reading from Luke, Jesus speaks with his followers about Galileans who are suffering and dying at the hand of Pontius Pilate. The account foreshadows Jesus' own encounter with Pilate before his crucifixion. When he hears the report, Jesus says that those who suffer are no more sinful than anyone else, using the event as a way to show the universality of sin and death. Jesus also takes the opportunity to remind his followers that they must grow, change, and repent from sin throughout their lives, saying directly "I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did" (Luke 13:3).

Repentance permeates Luke's Gospel. Early on, John the Baptist heralds Jesus' ministry, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. In a well-known parable, the prodigal son squanders his inheritance but eventually returns home, seeking forgiveness and repenting for his actions. During the crucifixion, according to Luke, one of the criminals who is crucified alongside Jesus admits his own wrongdoing and poignantly says, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Lk 23:42). At the end the Gospel, when Jesus appears to the disciples after the resurrection, he preaches to them and sends them to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins, and this mission unfolds in Acts of the Apostles.

So, what does repentance look like? Repentance requires an acknowledgement of shortcomings, a thoughtful reflection, commitment to change, and a request for forgiveness. Repentance is not only about saying, "I'm sorry." The Old Testament gives us a useful way to think about repentance. The Hebrew verb *shub* means to turn or to return, and it can have a theological sense meaning to turn towards God or to return to God or to turn away from or abandon wrongdoing. It requires an intentional commitment to turn away from sin and turn towards actions that bring us closer to God and one another. The sacraments, especially Baptism and Reconciliation, can help to facilitate repentance, and we should look for a variety of opportunities and settings where we can commit to growth and change.

As the Gospel continues, we hear the parable of the fig tree which can inform how we think about repentance:

*There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard,
and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none,*

*he said to the gardener,
 'For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree
 but have found none.
 So cut it down.
 Why should it exhaust the soil?'*
*He said to him in reply,
 'Sir, leave it for this year also,
 and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it;
 it may bear fruit in the future.
 If not you can cut it down.'* (Luke 13:6-9)

Jesus' parables give us opportunities to compare ourselves to different elements of the stories. In this parable, we might see ourselves like the fig tree, perhaps not always at our best, not always producing fruit. I'm sure we hope that people will not discard us when we are at a low point. Thinking about the parable within the context of repentance, the gardener gives us an example of what we should do, especially during the season of Lent. Repentance allows us to turn our attention to aspects of ourselves and our lives that need more care and correction. The gardener acknowledges the ways that the tree has failed and commits to cultivating the earth and adding nutrients to nourish the tree and help it grow. The gardener asks for time, recognizing that renewal might not happen overnight. Then, the parable simply ends unresolved which I think is very fitting. The missing resolution and the lack of conclusion might signal that we need to finish the story. We have the opportunity to give time and care to nourish ourselves (and others too), and the results hopefully will be very positive! Today's Gospel reminds us to be intentional about our spiritual growth and development, turning away from sin and turning towards God, so that we, too, may bear fruit.



15th March 2022

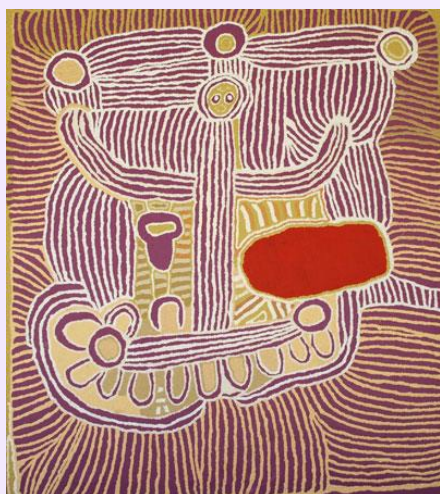
2. BOONAH PARISH HAPPENINGS . . .

*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,
Linda Syddick Napaltjarri (b. 1937)

Saturday

5.00pm

Boonah church

Sunday

7.30am

1st and 3rd Sunday: Harrisville church

2nd and 4th Sunday: Peak Crossing church

9.30am

Boonah church

(5th Sunday of the month: 6pm Sat night
Harrisville church & 9.30am Sun morning
Boonah church)

Our **WEEKDAY EUCHARIST** schedule for this week, the 3rd Week of Lent:

Tuesday 22nd March 5.30pm **Boonah** church

Wednesday 23rd March 6.00pm **Peak Crossing** church *followed by dinner at The Peak Pub*

Thursday 24th March 9.15am **Boonah** church

Friday 25th March *Solemnity of the Annunciation:* 9.15am **Boonah** church



Prayer for those affected by floods:

Compassionate God,
source of all comfort,
we pray for the people whose lives have devastated by rain and flood.
Bring them comfort.
Protect the vulnerable.
Strengthen the weak.
Keep at bay the spread of disease.
Have mercy on all those working to rescue the stranded and to feed the hungry.
May our response to their suffering be generous and bring you praise.
For we ask it in Jesus name.
Amen.



We pray with and for those who are sick in our parish and beyond: all across the globe infected with COVID-19; all who are dying during war, especially in Ukraine; Chris Healy, Paul White, Arthur Devin, Liliana Toohill, Libby Shields, Marko Babic, Max Gardiner, Trish Merlehan, Bernadette Pinchin, Simon Greatrex, Cate Mitten, Bernice Brault, Paula Ebrington, Fletcher Casey, Jill Archer, Louisa, David Mitchell, Lorraine and sick members of parish families and those beyond our parish boundaries.

We also remember those in our parish and beyond who have died recently:

We extend our sympathy to the relatives and friends of **Mrs. Laretta Gwynne**, especially her daughter Majella Eviston and her family. Laretta was buried last Wednesday.

Mrs. Patricia Lynn was resident at Fassifern Aged Care who died today on Sunday morning. We pray for her family who grieve her loss, especially two of her sons, Richard and Nick, who were able to be with their mother.

My father's sister (and only sibling), **Mrs. Elaine Farrelly** (nee Fitz-Herbert), died the previous Saturday morning in Canberra. Her funeral was celebrated last Thursday. Please remember her and her immediate family, especially her husband Leo (my mother's first brother), their six children and their respective families.



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- The parish **Liturgy and Music Preparation Team** meet next Sunday 27th March at 11am in the Boonah church. We start to prepare for the Easter Triduum.
- Thanks to Mike Libke from our local SVDP conference who spoke at all Masses recently on their 2021 activities. It was an excellent report and opened our eyes to the work undertaken in our community. Please continue to support our conference in kind and prayer. I also mention Mike's invitation to locals to consider becoming a Vincentian. Assistance is needed in the Family Support Office on Mondays and Fridays each week.
- Advance notice for Palm Sunday: There will be two Sunday Masses celebrated this weekend in our parish – not the usual three. These are: **5pm Saturday night at Boonah** and **7.30am Sunday morning at Peak Crossing**. *On our behalf, I thank Franciscan friar, Fr. Harry Chan, based at Kedron, who is willing to travel out here and preside at two Sunday Masses.* I thank parishioners for making this adjustment to the regular timetable on this weekend.



- **Every Sunday** when we gather for the Sunday eucharist, there are baskets (of some kind or another) at the entrances of our 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. *The local conference very much appreciates our weekly support.*

- **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 (electronic giving), please see me.
- **Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation.** The 1st Rite for Reconciliation (formerly known as Confession) may be celebrated anytime. Please phone 5463 1057 to make a suitable time. Alternatively see me before Mass (if there is plenty of time) or after Mass (once the majority of people have left the church).





3. This reflection was written for Friday of the 2nd week of Lent. The writer is Keara Hanlon, who is a post-graduate Media Fellow.

The 1st reading of the day was about Joseph, son of Israel, who was sold by his brothers into slavery (Genesis 37:3-4,12-13,17-28).

If you had told 14-year-old me that I'd be working for a Catholic magazine and writing a reflection for Lent, I would have said you were crazy. At that age, I felt like I had so much faith and nowhere to put it. I loved God, but I hated spending time with his people because I felt constantly rejected.

At church, the homilies were more like rants. During *Respect Life Month*, the homily diverged into a sidebar that families who seek fertility assistance disobey the will of God because, like Nazis, they want to pick and choose a child's features so that they might have blonde hair and blue eyes. Besides representing a fantastic misunderstanding of how fertility assistance actually works, the homily was really hurtful to my parents, who had needed medical help in having my sister and me. My mom made a tearful dash for the door after Communion, her two "sins" in tow.

I went through Confirmation training because my parents said that I could stop attending youth group once I had completed the sacrament. I hated youth group.


Each week we were taught the Catholic teaching on a moral issue. During the portion of the two hours when we were allowed to ask questions, I was frequently reprimanded for genuine curiosity by people who believed my questions were the mark of a disturbing lack of faith rather than a genuine desire to learn more about a God I loved. *Were you even raised Catholic?* someone asked me. I am a cradle Catholic, born to cradle Catholics who were born to cradle Catholics (and so on). *Doesn't seem like it*, they remarked, dodging my questions.

Readings like today's remind me why I stayed when it would have been easier to leave the church. The first reading is an important reminder that one of the most painful forms of rejection we face is from our own brothers (and sisters) in Christ. It is in the spaces that we should feel safe, loved and supported that rejection is most jarring and damaging. Betrayal hurts the worst when it comes from within our own community, like Joseph's own brothers selling him for 20 pieces of silver.

Thankfully, if there's anyone who understands rejection, it's Jesus. Like Joseph in the first reading and the landowner's son in the Gospel parable, Jesus, too, faced jealousy, hatred and rejection from his own people. It was not strangers who put Jesus on the cross but those who had once loved and welcomed him.

In the moments when I am most deeply struggling with my relationship with the church, I find solace in Jesus' love for me, which I have always known was there. When the priest raged from the pulpit, Jesus looked upon my family with mercy and an understanding of what it's like to be pushed out of one's own community. When I was punished for my questions at youth group, Jesus was there, too, reminding me of Matthew 18:3: . . . *become like little children*. What are children if not innocently curious?

For Catholics who, like me, struggle with feeling rejected from their church, I feel your pain. The good news is, Jesus does, too. I hope you can find healing and hope during this Lenten season.

A poster for STOPline, a reporting service for abuse and misconduct. The poster features logos for Brisbane Catholic Education, the Archdiocese of Brisbane, and Centacare. The text explains that STOPline receives information about abuse, harm, and serious misconduct by Archdiocesan workers, including priests, religious, employees, and volunteers. It states that information can be provided anonymously and provides contact details: Phone: 1300 304 550, Email: AOB@stopline.com.au, and Online Report: www.bnecatholic.stoplinereport.com. A circular logo with the word STOPLINE is also present. The poster is framed by a thick, hand-drawn blue border and set against a background of colorful brushstrokes in green, yellow, and blue.

 Brisbane Catholic Education

 ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE

 centacare

STOPline

STOPline receives information about abuse, harm and other serious misconduct by Archdiocesan workers (including priests, religious, employees and volunteers).

Information can be provided anonymously.

Phone: 1300 304 550
Email: AOB@stopline.com.au
Online Report: www.bnecatholic.stoplinereport.com

 STOPLINE

If you think it's wrong report it.

[Click here](#) to visit the Stopline website

John

pastor
Boonah Catholic community