



Love your enemies and do good . . .

Jesus of Nazareth

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.

Warm greetings to the members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on the Seventh Week in Ordinary Time.

1. REFLECTION ON THE SUNDAY WORD.

The **first reflection** for this Sunday is offered by Julian McDonald, a Christian Brother who lives in Sydney.

A little over fifty-seven years ago, the *Orlando Sentinel* reported Martin Luther King Jr as stating: *Humankind must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love* (11 Dec 1964). That was the day after he had accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, saying: *I accept this award on behalf of a civil rights movement which is moving with determination and a majestic scorn for risk and danger to establish a reign of freedom and a rule of justice.*

In recent days, the world's news media have been preoccupied with the posturing, threats and counter-threats that world leaders have been hurling at one another with seemingly little regard for the welfare of the citizens of Ukraine. There has been little or no mention of working in collaboration towards a peaceful outcome. And certainly nothing about loving those who disagree with us or allowing them to bring out the best in us. Like the rest of us, world leaders

seem to resent it when they think their peers are trying to take advantage of them.



The readings of this Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time challenge us all to stop and reflect on how we expect other people to treat us, and then, without hesitating, to go and do that for them. If

there has been anyone in living memory who has done that, it was Martin Luther King Jr. Despite having been repeatedly arrested for demonstrating for freedom and justice for his people, and having been stoned and stabbed, King did not retaliate, but persistently preached the way of non-violence, proclaiming: *I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits.*

Today's first reading from 1 Samuel sets the scene for the gospel-reading. It's a story of how David spared the life of King Saul who was hunting him down to kill him. The story of David's refusal to have the king's blood on his hands was thought to be so important in defining the character of David that it occurs twice in the First Book of Samuel.

Chapter 24 is completely devoted to how David came up behind Saul when he was intent on relieving himself in the privacy of a cave (To cover one's feet was a Hebrew idiom for "to relieve oneself"). Saul was so preoccupied that David was able to snip the hem of Saul's garment and sneak away.



James J. Tissot, 'David and Saul in the Cave' (1896-1902), gouache on board, The Jewish Museum, New York.

his men so sound asleep that the writer describes it as a sleep induced by the power of God. David took the spear and bowl of water that Saul had left by his head. In the light of day, in both accounts, David confronts Saul from a distance and reveals that he had spared the king when he so easily could have slain him. In each story, David admits to those close to him that he was unable to take the life of God's anointed representative.

We are left wondering if David acted out of the fear of bringing God's wrath down upon himself or if he was responding in love to the one who intended to murder him. The fact that he spared Saul probably raised his status among those who were close to him. In so doing, he demonstrated that he was the nobler of the two of them. However, we can safely conclude that they did not become the best of friends.

However, we already know that it is the theme of love for one's enemies that it is at the centre of today's gospel reading. And that's so difficult that we are inclined to think that Jesus is asking a bit too much of us. When we discover somebody walking off with our property or conducting fraudulent transactions on our credit-card, we are quick to cry foul. But Jesus seems to be urging us to seek out the miscreant and double the amount of which we have been relieved. But that's a bit simplistic, isn't it? There are fraudsters and schemers whose sole purpose is to get rich at the expense of the unwary. They are wealthy people bent on accumulating even more through sophisticated crime. Jesus, however, is talking about people who are victims of class distinctions and locked out of opportunities they deserve in justice. While he urges us to double our efforts to reach out to those who are genuinely in need, the crux of his message in today's gospel-reading is to be found in the last few verses: "Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and

Today's reading from chapter 26 describes how David and his lieutenants came upon Saul and

you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven" (Luke 6, 36-37). That's what he practiced in his own life, even to the point of forgiving those who crucified him. True, he did challenge the injustices and hypocrisies he saw all around him, especially as they were exhibited in the oppressive religious system of his day. But his heart was always open to forgive. Not once did he advocate violence. There was no one whom he refused to forgive.

If we dare to stop and reflect on the way in which we can slip almost automatically into judging and labelling those who have an opinion or a way of seeing things different from ours, we might well come to recognise that all we are doing is to admit to our limited capacity to love,

or our reluctance to acknowledge that somebody else might have a point of view worth hearing.

A good place to begin venturing into what Jesus is calling us to consider is to be found in the opening verses of today's gospel-reading: "Pray for those who treat you badly" (Luke 6, 28). Our first inclination may well be to set about planning how to even the score. To move into the territory of praying for those who treat us badly is not about asking God to help them see things as we see them. Surely it's more about opening ourselves up to begin seeing others as God sees them - people worthy of compassion, love, forgiveness and mercy. And isn't that precisely how God sees us?

A **second reflection** is from the *Catholic Women Preach* website. The preacher is Deborah Wilhelm, D.Min, Adjunct Professor of Preaching and Evangelization at the Aquinas Institute of Theology, where she also co-directs the Delaplane Preaching Initiative; in addition, she lectures in practical theology at Loyola University New Orleans.

Deborah and her husband live in a rural area of Oregon's Willamette Valley, where the rivers are spectacular, the blackberries delicious, the wine exquisite, and the rain constant. They enjoy the company of their golden retriever, Maggie, as well as the daily parade of local turkeys, the occasional appearance of elk, and especially the visits of their family and friends.



Imagine for a moment that you are King Saul, and that you (and all of your troops) are deeply, deliciously asleep. Actually, probably half of you right now are

thinking, oh yeah, I'd love some deep delicious sleep, and the other half are probably thinking, I'd love it if my children or students or colleagues would fall into a deep delicious sleep! Ah but back to Saul--or you, as Saul. You've placed your spear and your water jug carefully beside you. Off to dreamland.

But what you don't know is that also beside you stand two wide-awake people, one of whom wants to pin you to the ground with your own spear, and the other one of whom has the power to say, "Do it." You'll never know what hit you.

In our first reading today, Abishai is ready to kill Saul, but David says it would be wrong to harm the Lord's anointed. I get the struggle. Tensions in Israel are high, lives on the line, the country at stake, the leadership and future uncertain. Wait ... am I talking about Israel, or about us? And look: Everyone's asleep, and there's a spear, just begging to be picked up. It seems to me right now especially during this pandemic that we're all somewhat ready to pick up a spear and pin

our enemies to the ground. Today's version of a spear might be something obvious, like a gun, or a bomb. Or today's spear might be more subtle, like a piece of legislation. Today's spear might even be an anonymous letter. An angry word. A trashcan full of single-use plastic containers, not-yet-spoiled food, and clothes that we're just tired of, all headed for the dump.

It's understandable to want to be Abishai. And easy to pick up the spear. But we can also be David. That pause for conversation is a gift; it only takes place because everyone's asleep--and as the text says, that deep sleep is the work of the Lord. This conversation is in that liminal space, neither here nor there, in which decisions are made and carried out, and lives are changed. Because at some point in our lives, we're all going to be Saul--broken, vulnerable, and

nevertheless anointed by God. In fact, we already are: Saul's water jug reminds me that each of us at baptism is anointed by the Holy Spirit into Christ's anointing as priest, prophet, and king. David takes both spear and water jug as a sign, and then he returns them. We, too, are gifted with God's mercy, beloved of the Creator, and called to lives of mercy and love, water jug in hand.

To view the recording of this homily, [click here](#).

Compassionate God and Father,
you are kind to the ungrateful,
merciful even to the wicked.

Pour out your love upon us,
that with good and generous hearts
we may keep from judging others
and learn your way of compassion.

(Year C: 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Alternative Opening Prayer)



15th February 2022

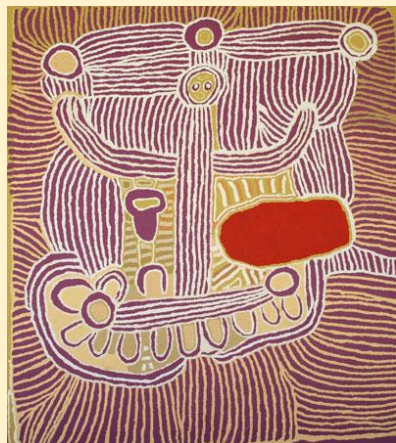
2. *Boonah Parish happenings . . .*

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:



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
& 9.30am Sun morning Boonah)

Desert Eucharist, Linda Syddick Napaltjarri (b. 1937)

Our **WEEKDAY EUCHARIST** schedule for this week, the 7th week in Ordinary Time:

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

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

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

Friday 25th February No Mass in Boonah

We pray with and for those who are sick in our parish and beyond: all across the globe infected with COVID-19; 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.

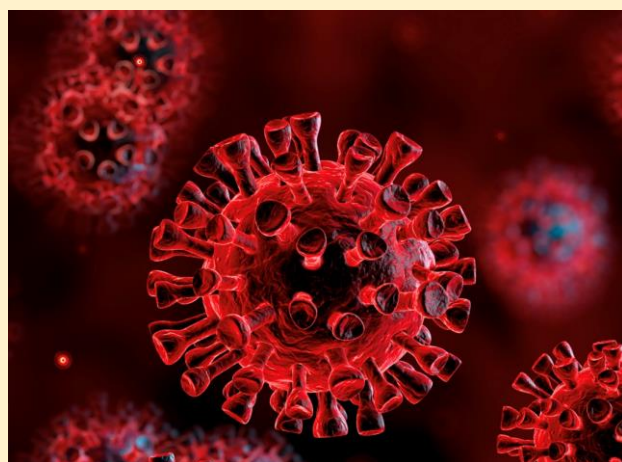


- We pray for all who are dying in our State and across the country from Covid-related illness. *May they rest in peace.*
- We also pray for **James O'Toole**, grandson of Mary and Colin O'Toole from Ipswich and who is known to parishioners. Let's remember the family at this time.
- We remember **Robert Prior** who has died recently and also **Roberta Robertson** who died suddenly some weeks ago. Roberta was part of our Boonah community from 2020-2021. May they both rest in peace.

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS IN OUR PARISH.

I thank all parishioners abiding by the protocols in place at this time. We are being asked to do the minimum for the common good. I don't make up the rules. As citizens we must abide by the health directives of the State Government which are:

- **WEAR A MASK WHEN INSIDE THE CHURCH**
- **SANITISE BOTH HANDS ON THE WAY IN AND OUT**
- **WHERE POSSIBLE, MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING WHEN SEATED AND WHEN COMING FORWARD TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION OR A BLESSING.**



- **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.



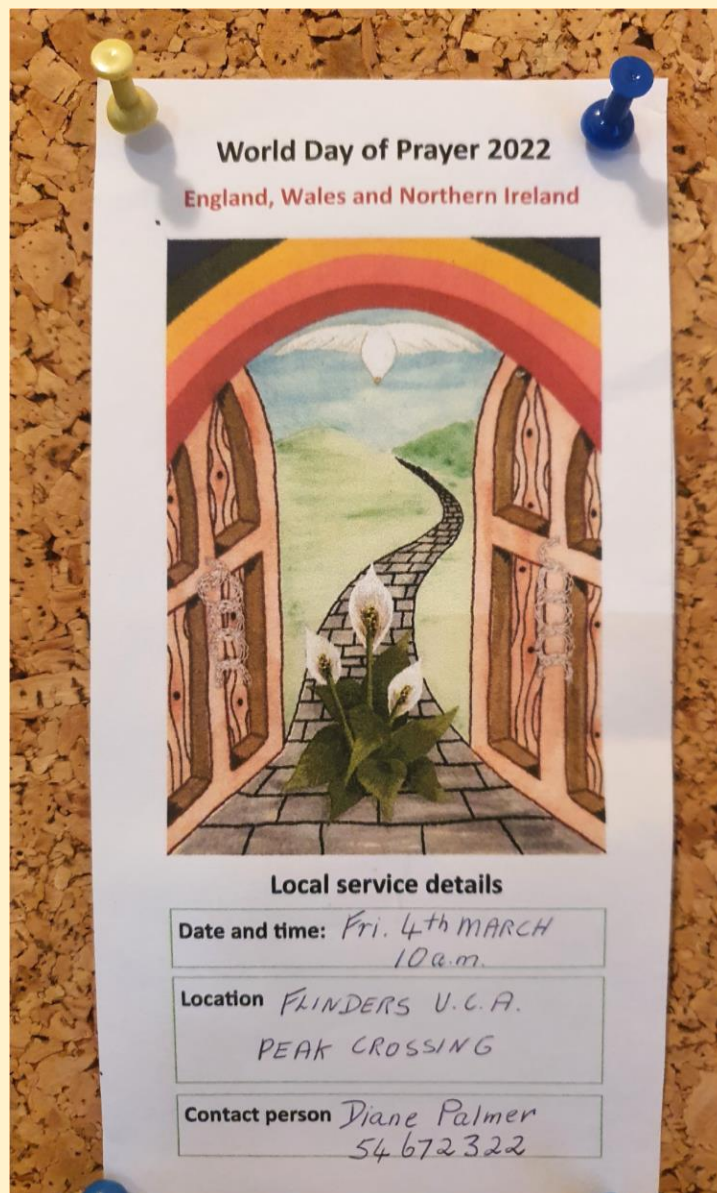


One of the native trees in the presbytery garden is blooming

- **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.
- **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).
- **WORLD DAY OF PRAYER** will be celebrated at various churches in the parish on Friday 4th March.

The hosts in Boonah this year is the congregation at the *Church of Christ, Boonah*, and the service begins at 10.30am. Morning Tea will be available from 9.30am.

The advertisement below is for the northern part of our parish:



▪ Divine World Missionary **FR TIM NORTON** will become Brisbane's new Auxiliary Bishop this Tuesday at St. Stephen's Cathedral, 10.30am. Originally from suburban Ryde in Sydney, Fr Norton was trained as a physiotherapist and worked with young street people in Darlinghurst who were experiencing homelessness, addiction and mental health issues. After six years of carrying out key formation roles in Melbourne and Sydney, nine years as the Divine Word Missionaries' Australian provincial, and seven years in a mountain retreat just outside of Rome running the society's renewal programs for priests and brothers, Fr Norton will see a new mission as Brisbane's Auxiliary Bishop.

There is a short video that helps us get to know him. Cut and paste the link below into your browser: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wNIYXK6nNs>

Go to the Cathedral website for details of the liturgy if you want to watch it live-streamed.

3. **ANNIVERSARY TO AN APOLOGY** from *Eureka Street*, 14th February, by Andrew Hamilton SJ.

This past week is bookended by the *Anniversary of the Apology to the Stolen Generations* (13 February) and *World Social Justice Day* (20 February). The Anniversary of the Apology recalls a specific, local event which was preceded by long discussion, celebrated with great publicity, and accompanied by great emotion. Social Justice Day is more general and timeless in its reference and largely passes by unnoticed. It offers a larger view of the rhythm of public life. The difference in focus between the two events is like that of the beach seen at the onrush of a king tide with its rearranging of the beach and local flooding and of the view provided by the tide charts and current patterns over a year. These different perspectives need to be held together.



Indigenous Australian Joan Baker, daughter of Ruby Williams who was taken from her family at three years of age, looks on after watching the live television broadcast from the Australian Parliament in Canberra where Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered an apology to the Aboriginal people for injustices committed over two centuries of white settlement on February 13, 2008 in Sydney, Australia. (Kristian Dowling / Getty Images)

Certainly the image of the king tide matches the distracted rhythms of current public conversation. The attention span is relatively short, turning from this outbreak to the next. Calls for symbolic action and declamatory statements abound, such relatively small events as demonstrations and insulting behaviour are milked for universal and urgent significance, and forecasts of the reach of the high tide of the coronavirus and the time of its decline are made and changed with undiminished confidence. A disillusioned Macbeth found dismissive words for the superficiality of his previous priorities:

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage

And then is heard no more. It is a tale

told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing.

The reality of life cries out for a fuller view.

Both the importance and the limits of climactic events that catch the public imagination can be seen in the Apology to Indigenous Australians. The Apology by the representatives of Government was a landmark at the juncture of the road from the past and the path to the future. It defined the harm suffered by Indigenous Australians at the hands of governments obsessed by an ignorant and biased ideology. It also vindicated the Indigenous advocates who had long demanded an end to discriminatory attitudes and behaviour within non-Indigenous Australian society and its institutions. It led to official acknowledgement that the indices of health, education, access to services and representation in the justice system for Indigenous Australians should match those for other Australians. Discrepancies should therefore be addressed. As a result, Governments set targets for the move towards equality.

These were good results on which a more just future could be built. For that reason, the anniversary of the Apology is a cause for celebration. The aftermath has also revealed, however, how deeply dispossession, discrimination and poverty have affected Indigenous communities, the weak commitment of non-Indigenous Australians to change that might embarrass or cost them, and the complexity of the path to equality.

The most poignant and telling test of progress after the Apology lies in whether there is any reduction in the marked discrepancy between the proportion of Indigenous children who are forcibly separated from their family and the proportion of the children of other Australians.

This is shown starkly in the [annual reports on the range of targets](#) set for moving towards equality between Indigenous and other Australians. The targets have generally been missed.

Perhaps the most poignant and telling test of progress after the Apology lies in whether there is any reduction in the marked discrepancy between the proportion of Indigenous children who are forcibly separated from their family and the proportion of the children of other Australians. Such children composed the stolen generations.

Numbers, of course, do not provide conclusive evidence of change for the better or worse. Statistics can be unreliable. Where the life and welfare of a child are threatened in their family, too, it may sometimes be in their best interests to be placed with other families. The Apology was for the indiscriminate removal of children on racial grounds. It did not envisage children at serious risk if

left in their own homes. That said, however, to separate any children from their family and culture has serious consequences for their development. Consequently, removal, and particularly permanent removal, must be a last resort. Government policies should always focus on addressing the reasons why children are at risk, and to help families and local communities to care for their children. Where they offer removal as the first or only option, the practice will most likely be based on prejudices as blind and as harmful as those that led to the Stolen Generations.

The annual reports of *Family Matters*, an organization dedicated to the welfare of Indigenous children, are not reassuring. The 2021 Report shows that in 2021 throughout Australia over 20,500 Indigenous children – comprising 16 per cent of all Indigenous children – were in care, separated from their families. Over 17,000 of these children were permanently separated. Less than half were placed with Indigenous carers. In comparison with the children of other Australians, Indigenous children are ten times more likely to be taken into care. Despite commitments, this gap has deepened over the last decade. In response the National Agreement on Closing the Gap set the target of reducing the discrepancy by 45 per cent in 2031. On present trends, however, in ten years' time not only will the gap grow, but the number of Indigenous children in care will rise by 54 per cent.

Many reasons are offered for this appalling sacrifice of another generation of children. The most telling statistic, however, is that over 85 per cent of government funding of children at risk is spent on out of family care, and only 15 per cent on supporting communities and families to raise families well. Effectively, removing Indigenous children from their parents is the solution of choice to family dysfunction.

This evidence of a receding tide can be depressing if we focus exclusively on it. In such a situation World Social Justice Day offers a complementary view. Like Family Matters it rests on the recognition of the dignity of each human being, and especially of the most vulnerable. It is broader in its focus, however, including all the relationships in Australia on which the welfare of particular groups depends. It insists on the importance of an attitude in governments and society that looks to the good of the whole of society and especially its most vulnerable members in the making of policy, including the collection and allocation of revenue. It insists on the importance of strengthening communities of justice empowered and trusted to care for their members and given a say in the matters that concern them. Social Justice depends on persons who care for justice, communities that build just relationships, and institutions that embody justice in all their relationships.

These are the larger changes on which the welfare of Indigenous children rests. They need to be fed both by the narrowly focused passion on the Apology and the broader commitment of Social Justice Sunday to a more just society.



Andrew Hamilton is consulting editor of Eureka Street, and writer at Jesuit Social Services.



17th February 2022

4. **BARRY UNIVERISTY** is live-streaming the 2022 Yves Congar Award Ceremony on **Wednesday 23rd February 2022 at 10am** (Brisbane time).

The *Yves Congar Award for Theological Excellence* recognizes the contributions of contemporary theologians who embody the spirit of Cardinal Yves Congar, OP (1904-1995), by working, writing, and teaching in light of the tradition while moving that tradition forward to meeting the challenges of today.



On February 22, 2022 at 7:00pm Barry University's Department of Theology and Philosophy will welcome Bryan Massingale, S.T.D. Professor Massingale is a priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, the James and Nancy Buckman Professor of Theological and Social Ethics at Fordham University, and the Senior Fellow in its Center for Ethics Education. He will accept the 2022 Yves Congar Award for Theological Excellence and present a lecture: **A Spirituality of Racial Metanoia:**

There are many ways to understand racism, for example, as a social divide and as a political reality. At its deepest level, racism is a soul sickness, that is, a profound warping of the human spirit. This presentation will describe the social impacts of this spiritual distortion. It will then explore the Gospel's call to repentance and offer an understanding of the profound transformations needed to address this spiritual wound and create a more just society.

[Click here](#) to register to attend virtually.

5. **PRAYER AS SEEKING DEPTH** by Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI.

In our more reflective moments we sense the importance of prayer; yet, we struggle to pray. Sustained, deep prayer doesn't come easy for us. Why?

First of all, we struggle to make time for prayer. Prayer doesn't accomplish anything practical for us, it's a waste of time in terms of tending to the pressures and tasks of daily life, and so we hesitate to go there. Coupled with this, we find it

hard to trust that prayer actually works and brings about something real in our lives. Beyond that, we struggle to concentrate when we try to pray. Once we do settle in to pray, we soon feel ourselves overwhelmed by daydreams, unfinished conversations, half-forgotten melodies, heartaches, agendas, and the impending tasks that face us as soon as we get up from our place of prayer. Finally, we struggle to pray because we really don't know how to pray. We might be familiar with various forms of prayer, from devotional prayers to different kinds of meditation, but we generally lack the confidence to believe that our own particular way of praying, with all its distractions and missteps, is prayer in the deep sense.

One of the places we can turn for help is the Gospel of Luke. More so than any of the other Gospels, his is the Gospel of prayer. In Luke's Gospel there are more descriptions of Jesus in prayer than in all the other Gospels combined. Luke gives us glimpses of Jesus praying in virtually every kind of situation: He prays when he joy-filled, he prays when he is in agony, he prays with others around him, and he prays when he is alone at night, withdrawn from all human contact. He prays high on a mountain, on a sacred place, and he prays on the level plane, where ordinary life happens. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus prays a lot.

And the lesson isn't lost on his disciples. They sense that Jesus' real depth and power are drawn from his prayer. They know that what makes him so special, so unlike any other religious figure, is that he is linked at some deep place to a power outside of this world. And they want this for themselves. That's why they approach Jesus and ask him: "Lord, teach us to pray!"

But we must be careful not to misunderstand what constituted their attraction and what they were asking for when they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. They sensed that what Jesus

drew from the depth of his prayer was not, first of all, his power to do miracles or to silence his enemies with some kind of superior intelligence. What impressed them and what they wanted too for their own lives was the depth and graciousness of his soul.

The power they admired and wanted was Jesus' power to love and forgive his enemies rather than embarrass and crush them. What they wanted was Jesus' power to transform a room, not by some miraculous deed, but by a disarming innocence and vulnerability that, like a baby's presence, has everyone solicitously guarding his or her behavior and language. What they wanted was his power to renounce life in self-sacrifice, even while retaining the enviable capacity to enjoy the pleasures of life without guilt. What they wanted was Jesus' power to be big-hearted, to love beyond his own tribe, and to love poor and rich alike, to live inside of charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, longsuffering, fidelity, mildness, and chastity, despite everything within life that militates against these virtues. What they wanted was Jesus' depth and graciousness of soul.

And they recognized that this power did not come from within himself, but from a source outside him. They saw that he connected to a deep source through prayer, through constantly lifting to God what was on his mind and in his heart. They saw it and they wanted that depth-connection too, for themselves. So they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray.

Ultimately, we too want Jesus' depth and graciousness in our own lives. Like Jesus' disciples, we also know that we can only attain this through prayer, through accessing a power that lies inside the deepest deep of our souls and beyond our souls. We know too that the route to that depth lies in journeying inward, in silence, through both the pain and the quiet, the chaos

and the peace, that come to us when we still ourselves to pray.

In our more reflective moments, and in our more desperate moments, we feel our need for prayer and try to go to that deep place. But, given our lack of trust and our lack of practice, we struggle

to get there. We don't know how to pray or how to sustain ourselves in prayer.

But in this we are in good company, with Jesus' disciples. And so a good beginning is to recognize what we need and where it is found. We need to begin with a plea: *Lord teach us to pray!*



[Click here to visit the Stopline website](http://www.bncatholic.stoplinereport.com)

John

pastor
Boonah Catholic community