



The Ascension has always been a part of the joyful celebration of the fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost but was singled out for commemoration on the fortieth day (see Acts 1:3) toward the end of the 4th century. The feast develops the glory of the resurrection by acclaiming the exaltation of Christ as Lord of heaven and earth. It serves to prepare the Church, toward the end of the season of Easter, for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

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 Solemnity of the Ascension and the 7th week of Easter.

1. REFLECTION ON THE SUNDAY WORD.

The **first** reflection is by **Br. Julian McDonald, a Christian Brother, from Sydney, as titled: 'Ascension: Accompanied by God's Spirit'.**

Just imagine how things might have turned out if those first disciples had been required to undergo a modern-day risk assessment as a pre-condition to their being accepted as witnesses to Jesus' life and Gospel. Yet, despite the frustrations and disappointments they had caused him, Jesus trusted that, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, these same disciples would measure up, eventually, to the commission which he entrusted to them. Jesus was confident that, inspired by the Holy Spirit, they would find what they needed to stand on their own feet and develop the courage and confidence required to testify to God's love for the world, the love which permeated all that he had said and done in his life. To prepare themselves for an experience the intensity of which was beyond their wildest imagination, Jesus instructed them to stay together in the city and wait "for the fulfilment of my Father's promise...for baptism with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1, 4-5). Prayerful though that waiting period was, they could not

have anticipated the manner in which God's Spirit came upon them and changed their lives forever.



Scripture scholars have repeatedly reminded us that Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles were written by the same person. Acts is a sequel to, or the second volume of, Luke's Gospel. The link

between the two is that the Gospel concludes with an account of Jesus' ascension to the Father and Acts opens with a fuller description of the same event. I suspect that Luke was doing more than reminding his community of the way in which he had concluded his gospel. While he has drawn a parallel between the way in which Jesus prepared for his public ministry and the way in which he went about preparing the

disciples for theirs, I suspect he had something else in mind. But first, let's note the parallel preparations. In his Gospel, Luke tells how Jesus prepared for his ministry of teaching, preaching and healing with a forty-day period of prayer and fasting in the wilderness. In the very first chapter of Acts, he relates how Jesus had spent forty days from the day of his resurrection, reinforcing for his followers the fact that he had really risen and revising with them all he had taught them when they accompanied him in his public ministry.

But why did Luke conclude his gospel with an account of Jesus' ascension and then give a different account of that event at the beginning of Acts? True, it was a way of linking the two books. I suggest that the story is repeated because it heralds the transition from Jesus' time to the time of his disciples with the mandate and responsibility to continue what he had initiated. This was the birth of the Christian community, the community to which we now belong and in which we have a role and responsibility. To highlight the need for urgent action, Luke describes how two angels were on hand to call the disciples out of the mix of grief, loss and wonderment that had left them stunned and gazing up into the heavens. In effect, the angels said to the disciples: "Snap out of it! There's work to be done, and it's for you to go and do it!" (cf Acts 1, 11). Putting it another way, we could say that the final chapter of Luke's gospel marks the conclusion of Jesus' mission as the Messiah while the first chapter of Acts ushers in

the mission of the community that would keep Jesus present to the world.

If we care to look closely at Luke's two accounts of Jesus' ascension, we will discover that there is embedded in them material for our own reflection on loss and death. The account in Acts echoes the story of Elijah's ascension into heaven described in the Second Book of Kings (2 Kings 2, 1-16). As Elijah waited in anticipation to be taken up to heaven in the whirlwind, his disciple Elisha prayed for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. And when he picked up Elijah's mantle, he received an overwhelming experience of God's Spirit. Similarly, Jesus promised his disciples that they would be given God's Spirit to comfort them. So, when they elected to follow him, metaphorically picking up his mantle, they were blessed with a completely overwhelming experience of God's Spirit.

There is also here a story of love. Our experiences of the death of people we have known and loved have shown us that absence does not extinguish the love that has grown between us. We have cherished memories of that love to keep nourishing us. And God's Spirit continues to live in our hearts; God's Spirit is present in the depths of our being. Embedded in these ascension stories is the Christian attitude to death. They leave us with the knowledge that Jesus has gone from among us. He had spent time convincing his disciples that he had risen from the grave. His ascension was a second rising, not from the grave but from the earth, to his abode in heaven. That he still lives confirms our belief that our departed loved ones are also still alive, and that we, too, will live in a different way following our death.

In his gospel account of Jesus' ascension, Luke notes that Jesus walked with his disciples "as far as Bethany". That detail is significant because that's where his dear friends Martha, Mary and Lazarus lived, and that's where he raised



Lazarus to life - an appropriate place for him to spend his last moments on earth.

Ultimately, the event of Jesus' ascension is about transition and change. Jesus had spent his life showing us that God's love for us and our world is limitless and unconditional. He commissioned all who would be his disciples to reflect God's love to everyone we encounter. To do that, we have to be ever open to growth, to change, to transition as we adapt to meet the ever-changing

people we encounter. The words which Jesus directed to his disciples just before he left this earth have also been directed to all of us who have succeeded those disciples.

We, too, are called to be witnesses to the love of God for humankind, to bring healing encouragement and compassion to our sisters and brothers whom we will encounter until the day when our turn comes to transition to the life that awaits us beyond the grave.



A [second reflection](#) is from the *Catholic Women Preach* website. The preacher is Stephanie Boccuzzi who is a Bucks County, Pennsylvania native and currently teaches Theology at Xavier High School in Manhattan. Stephanie recently accepted the role of Mission Leader at Trinity Health of New England, where she will serve St. Mary's hospital in Waterbury and the senior living communities of Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Today is the Solemnity of the Ascension and we shout with joy as we say, "AMEN! I believe in the Glory of the Risen One!"

"Amen" is an affirmation of faith, a personal and communal affirmation, and, at times, a quiet, intimate prayer. There is such power in this one word. A loud and vibrant "Amen" can stir the senses and uplift a congregation. It can also be a soft word, a way to cry out to God when we are lost for all other words.

As an educator the past three years, I have struggled to remain hopeful in light of COVID-19 and the racial injustices that permeate our world. My colleagues and I struggle to put forth enough energy to finish the end of the year with the same passion and excitement we normally would. We see the effects of COVID in our students' behaviour and many times find ourselves at a loss for how to best serve their needs. We continue to wade in uncharted waters even though things are seemingly "back to the way they were before COVID." But, as I have

reflected on that sentiment - the "going backness" to the way things were before COVID - I fear we are setting ourselves up for a mindset of regression. We are being sucked into a backward facing future, rather than a forward facing one. We face the temptation to default to "what was" rather than "what needs to be today." With this mindset, I have felt a descending, rather than ascending to our present realities.

Similarly, the tragic shooting in Buffalo, New York reveals to us how racism and white supremacy still exist in the United States. The misinformation of "Replacement theory" instils a hatred for the future and a longing for a world in which the black and brown community is controlled by a powerful white majority. This theory strikes at the very heart of me and my family. It argues that my husband, who is mixed race, and I should not have a biological child. It states that my niece and nephew, who are half Ugandan and half Italian, are a danger and a threat to society.

But, amidst this, as we focus on today's Gospel we find our hope: Jesus said to his disciples:

Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations . . .

This is why Jesus' resurrection is so restorative. The resurrection could not happen without the horror of death. I realize what I share is heavy, but we can give praise and thanksgiving that we are in the Easter season - the most joyful season in our liturgical calendar. We hold fast that we are Easter people and our hope remains in the glory of God, the joy revealed to us through the life of Jesus, and the justice unlocked for us for all eternity.

Even more so, this Solemnity of the Ascension is the ultimate "here and now" moment that is the pinnacle of our faith. In light of our present realities, I see the Ascension as the means to which all wounds are healed and all hatred is transformed into new life in Christ. What was, what is, and what will be all converge in the Ascension and we are invited into participation in God's glory.

Consider the disciples at this moment of the Ascension, too. They know Jesus will come again, but they do not know when. They can't go back to the "way things were before Jesus" or try to "keep things exactly the same when Jesus was here." This approach would not fulfil the Gospel. The powerful experience of Christ will remain only a historical event that inspired the people of the time and not demand anything of us today if that is the case.

St. Paul had an experience of the Risen Lord that changed the course of his life. He experienced a conversion - a total reorientation of his life - and his response to his encounter with Christ was "Amen."

St. Mary Magdalene, who I stand in front of here, is the first at the tomb. While she is tempted to mourn what she has lost, she recognizes her teacher, proclaims "Amen" and shares this experience with her community. I want to take a moment to lift up and bring awareness to the work of art behind me. This is "St. Mary of Magdala Proclaims the Resurrection," crafted by Sr. Margaret "Peggie" Beaudette. When I first saw this sculpture it struck me profoundly. We see Mary raised, standing tall with her hand up, heralding the Good News that Jesus has resurrected. She ascends to what the moment demands; her entire self bears witness to the Resurrection and anticipates the Ascension.

This Solemnity asks us to Rise! Get up! Be empowered to be a light to the world!

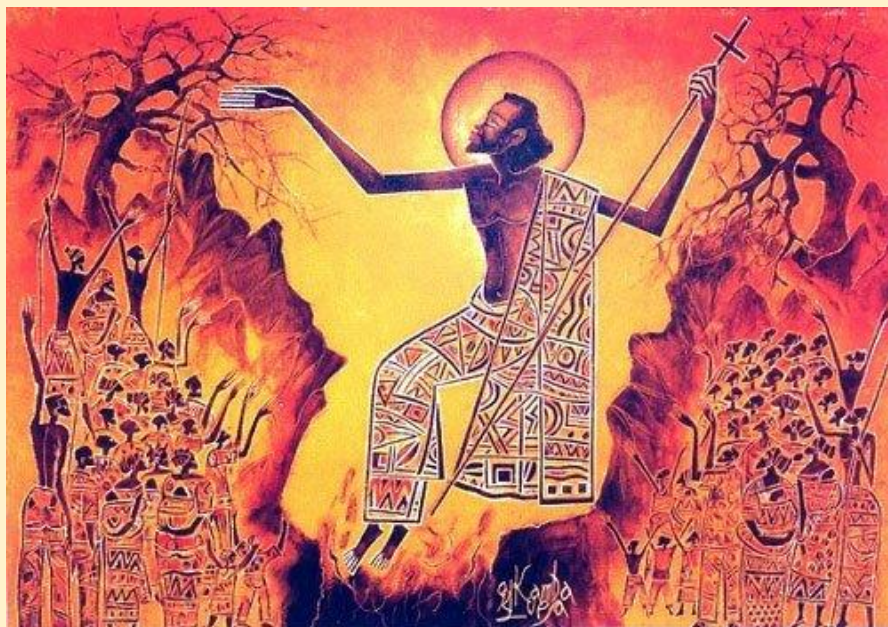
And, to do so, we ask ourselves, "What does ascending mean after these past two years of global, national, and individual suffering?" "How can we rise up to meet the challenges of today?" "Do we situate our gaze on a future of joy and restoration, or do we live in the pain and worry of the past?"

Ascending to the demands of today is hard work because it is unknown. We have to be vulnerable and admit that we are broken. Ascending is not rising above, it is rising with. Rising with the memory of pain and death, the memory of betrayal and sadness, but also with the glory and the hope that comes in the morning.

I pray that my students ascend! That they rise! Get up! And grow out of their fears so that they embrace their capacities to fully engage with the world again. I pray that the communities who continue to face systematic racism and hate continue to be resilient and faithful in suffering.

On this Solemnity we celebrate that Jesus is lifted, raised up, exalted and glorified. And, so will we! *Amen! Amen! Amen!*

[CLICK HERE](#) for video of her homily . . .



A representation of the Ascension from Zaire.

**God of majesty,
you led the Messiah
through suffering into risen life
and took him up to the glory of heaven.**

**Clothe us with the power
promised from on high,
and send us forth to the ends of the earth
as heralds of repentance
and witnesses of Jesus Christ, the firstborn from the dead,
who lives and reigns with you now and always
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.**

(The Ascension of the Lord, Year C: Alternative Opening Prayer)

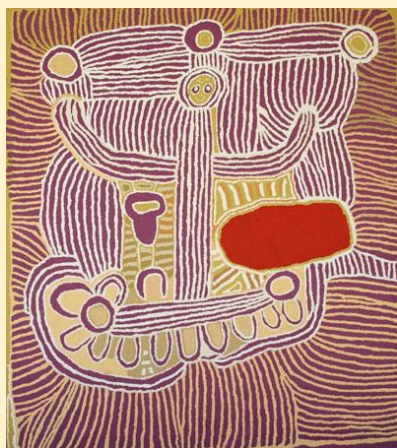
2. *Boonah Parish happenings . . .*

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.
[We have a 5th Sunday in May!](#))

Our **WEEKDAY LITURGY** schedule for this week, the 7th Week of Easter:

Tuesday 31st May 5.30pm **Boonah church**

Wednesday 1st June 10.30am **Funeral: Arthur Sully**, Centenary Gardens Chapel

6.00pm **Peak Crossing church** followed by dinner at *The Peak Pub*

Friday 3rd June 9.15am **Boonah church**

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, Lynne Nunan, Nicholas Brault, Bea Bedard (USA) and sick members of parish families and those beyond our parish boundaries.



- The *Annual Boonah Show* has been celebrated on Friday and Saturday of this week. There has been a great gathering of locals. Due to the rain, some of the events have been cancelled out of concern for the safety animals.

All Saints Parish School display:





Side pic of All Saints' Church, Boonah, on Saturday morning of the Boonah Show:



- The Archdiocese has sent a 2022 Prayer Calendar for those involved with the work of Holy Spirit Seminary at Banyo. *Please take one home.*



- The **BOONAH LANDCARE** group is organising a community meeting event on Monday 13th June to discuss ways to improve support measures in the community in the wake of recent floods, drought, housing stress etc. All are welcome. One of our parishioners is involved and asked if we could promote this activity.

- **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).

- **BOONAH PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER.** Leigh Muller is the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Email: boonah@bne.catholic.net.au





26th May 2022

3. National Reconciliation Week 2022 is celebrated from 27th May to 3rd June.

From the [website](#): The National Reconciliation Week (NRW) 2022 theme, “Be Brave. Make Change.” is a challenge to all Australians – individuals, families, communities, organisations and government – to Be Brave and tackle the unfinished business of reconciliation so we can Make Change for the benefit of all Australians.

Last year Reconciliation Australia encouraged all Australians to take action; not just in National Reconciliation Week but every week of the year.

We saw unprecedented response to our suggested actions for everyday and for braver action.

This year we are asking everyone to make change beginning with brave actions in their daily lives – where they live, work, play and socialise.

National Reconciliation Week – 27 May to 3 June – is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.



NRW's collection of bold, brave characters brought to life by contemporary Torres Strait Islander illustrator, Tori-Jay Mordey, shows some of the different faces of Australians working for a just and equal society. They are a visual reminder that reconciliation is everybody's business.

4. Fr. Ron Rolheiser OMI offers a thoughtful reflection this week:

Not everything can be fixed or cured, but it should be named properly. Richard Rohr said that. James Hillman suggests something similar when he wrote that *a symptom suffers most when it doesn't know where it belongs.*

Where does our present moment belong vis-à-vis our faith in God and the relevance of our churches? Are we post-Christian? Are we witnessing the death of God and our churches? Or, is our faith being purified by the very criticisms levelled against it and, despite a massive decline in church attendance, aren't the churches making genuine moral progress on issues like racism, sexism, and social justice in general? Are we dying or maturing? How do we name our present moment?

By way of an answer, I would like simply to offer a series of "*metaphors*" gleaned from various commentators that attempt a naming. Some of these seemingly contradict each other, but all of them merit some thought. I leave them for you to digest.

1. *Faith is a spent project!* In essence, that's the view of the Enlightenment thinkers, classically expressed in persons like Nietzsche, Freud, Feuerbach, and Marx, who suggest that faith and belief in God are something you eventually outgrow, like belief in Santa and the Easter Bunny. This belief was needed for a time, but it's something we outgrow when we lose our naiveté. God and the churches have had their time in history, and that day is over. Today, this is the belief (or unacknowledged fear) of millions.
2. *Our world is still in diapers!* Pierre Teilhard de Chardin suggests that far from faith being a spent project, it's only in its infancy stage. In an evolutionary view of history and faith, we are still a world in diapers, emerging from the crib. Faith is far from spent! We are just beginning!
3. *A post-Christian West!* That was the view of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger before he became pope. Interestingly, he never asserted it again explicitly after he became pope, namely, that the secularized world, particularly in North America and Western Europe, is now "post-Christian".
4. *Faith in the secularized world is suffering a certain noonday fatigue!* This is an image offered by Fr. Thomas Halik. In his view, faith and the churches aren't dying; they are merely suffering "acedia", the "noon-day devil", the fatigue that the early Christian desert writers told us could afflict even the most committed believers.
5. *We are experiencing a crisis of the imagination, not of faith and fidelity.* The conditions of belief have changed radically and our imaginations haven't caught up. This is the view of the renowned Canadian philosopher on secularity, Charles Taylor. For him, as believers today we are pioneers, struggling to learn how to live in a (faith) country that we and no one else has ever before inhabited. Small wonder we are struggling.

6. *Secular culture is the adolescent child of Judeo-Christianity and in its adolescent grandiosity our culture sees only its parents' faults.* This is the view of the popular spiritual writer Kathleen Norris and is echoed by Yale philosopher Louis Dupre. As Norris puts it, if you want to visualize the relationship between our secular world and Christianity, watch how a seventeen year-old teenager who is out of sorts with her parents interrelates with them. To this, Dupre adds that grandiose adolescents aren't bad, they just aren't finished growing.
7. *Secularity is a fantasy indulged in by intellectuals.* For ordinary people there are divine whispers behind every door. In real life, religion of some sort is unavoidable. This from French philosopher Chantel Delsol.
8. *Like Jonah, we are in the belly of the whale.* This is one of Richard Rohr's preferred namings. Inside our contemporary doubt and confusion, God is taking us through a darkness to where we need to be.
9. *Christian vision in the West is the residue of a former seeing, before suffering a detached retina.* This from Cardinal Walter Kasper. His idea: if someone is born blind, he will not have visual images of outside objects inside of him. However, if someone goes blind sometime in life, he will retain the images of what he once saw, even though he is no longer seeing them. As Christians, we are living too much off past images, and no longer seeing directly with the eyes of faith.
10. *We need "The Benedict Option".* This from Rod Dreher. Heavily secularized culture is asphyxiating our faith. What's needed to save and nurture it is the "Benedict option". Like the great monastic founder, St. Benedict, those of us with a committed faith need to pull away from a culture that is eroding our faith and live out our faith in a "monastic" way, namely by withdrawing and building new kinds of "monasteries" within which to live out our faith and raise our children. Eventually, as has happened before, the world will come to us seeking help and meaning.

Who's right? What best names both our symptoms and our moment? There is something to digest in each of these images.



Fiona Katauskas

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.

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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](http://www.bnecatholic.stoplinereport.com)

John,
pastor,
Boonah Catholic community