



The apostles said to the Lord,
Increase our faith.

The Lord replied,
*Were your faith the size of a mustard seed
you could say to this mulberry tree,
"Be uprooted and planted in the sea,"
and it would obey you.*

GOSPEL – 27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C)

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 this 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

1. Reflections on the Sunday Word.

This scripture reflection is from Br. Julian McDonald, a Christian brother who is in Sydney.

In Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear*, the aging king, on the edge of dotage, set out to judge which one of his three daughters loved him the most. Somehow or other, he had come to think that love was something like a substance that could be measured or quantified.

So, when Lear asked his youngest daughter, Cordelia, how much she loved him her reply rightly expressed her filial love, explaining that such love is not easily put into words:

*Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth. I love your majesty
According to my bond, no more nor less.*

Act 1 Sc. 1

In today's gospel, the request from the disciples to Jesus to increase their faith suggests that they saw faith as something measurable to which more could be added. Rather, like love, it is an intangible aspect of relationship.

Faith, then, belongs to the feeling, emotional, relational part of our lives.

We recognise the presence of both love and faith when we see them in action in the lives of real people relating to others, including God.



The faith we have in God, the relationship we have with Jesus draw us into a vision of God's dream for our world in which we are invited to work

to make peace and justice real. Yet the very thought of that can daunt us, and leave us longing for something more comfortable, something which we can more easily grasp.

In this context, I suggest that the following story, which I have borrowed from the scripture commentator Jay Cormier, is a good illustration of what I'm struggling to explain.



The members of a Catholic University admissions committee were hard at work assessing enrolment applications from high-school graduates. The applicants were expected to write a few paragraphs on why they might be given a place in the faculty of their choice. Committee members found themselves dealing with an endless list of submissions from young people who had visions of themselves as having the qualifications to become medical practitioners, politicians, research scientists and lawyers.

But one application grabbed their attention for its surprising lack of pretence. This is part of what the applicant wrote:

I'm neither a high-performing student nor a leader. You could say that I am average. I work very hard to get pass marks in all my subjects. However, over the school holidays during the last three years I have worked as a volunteer at camps for children with cancer. At the beginning, I was terrified that I would say something insensitive or do something stupid that would add to some child's pain. But it wasn't long before I became surprised at how much I really enjoyed working with these kids. I've been even more surprised at everything I have learned from them about life and death, coping with illness and setbacks, about what is really good and important. Eventually, I would like to work with children who are

chronically ill and physically challenged. I hope to pursue a degree in education and psychology so that one day I might be able to offer these children something of what they have given me.

That application found its way to the top of the Admit Pile.

When we come to appreciate in humility that the faith we have is pure gift from God not earned, we begin to realise that, like every other gift we have, it works only when it is shared. Like the mustard seed it becomes a source of abundance in the lives of others when it is patiently nurtured.

While Jesus seems to be quantifying faith in his response to the disciples, saying, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree: 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea', and it would obey you" (Luke 17: 6), he is gracious enough not to launch into a discussion about whether faith is quantifiable or not. With the word "size" he uses a quantifying word that matches the language of the disciples. However, he twists it. The disciples seem to think that more is better, that they would be better equipped to follow him if they had more insight, more knowledge, more understanding, deeper faith. Jesus' reply is a bit like a shock tactic.

Effectively, he tells them that, if they had any faith at all, they would be able to do the impossible, like uprooting fruit trees and planting them in the ocean. "Any faith at all" implies that they really have no faith worth speaking of, at all. But Jesus didn't stop there. He added a comment that, on the surface, looks a little bewildering: "Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field: 'Get my supper ready; fasten your belt and wait on me

while I eat and drink. You yourself can eat and drink yourself afterwards”?’ (Luke 17: 7- 8).

I suggest that the point he is making is that faith, like lots of other things, develops into maturity by living it. One does not grow in faith by asking for it to be doled out. The only way for faith to grow and mature is to practice it, to live it.

So, be wary of thinking it’s going to grow by practicing it just once. It’s a life-long process.



Luke views faith not as a list of theological notions or dogmas to which we are expected to give our assent, but rather in terms of giving our allegiance to the person of Jesus Christ.

Faith in Jesus is committing ourselves to

live in imitation of him. Many of us can remember a time when we described our Christian faith in terms of what we were expected to believe in order to qualify as Christians. I believe that there has been a shift from what we believe to being devoted to the one in whom we believe, to embracing Jesus Christ as our brother and embodying his Gospel in our living.

We know that we all struggle at times to live faithful to Jesus and his Gospel.

We know, too, that there are times when the struggles we encounter in life - life-threatening illness, loss of employment, break-up of family, sudden death of a loved one - lead us to question the very existence of God.

There are times, too, when we encounter people who are do intensely attached to doctrinal correctness that their living seems devoid of compassion, mercy, tolerance and peace of mind and heart.

So, let’s not forget that God’s presence in our world is radiated through creation and in and through the people around us, in the people beside whom we sit when we come to worship.

When we live faithful to Jesus, God’s presence becomes visible.

The responsibility of all who are part of the people of God is to reveal something of the goodness, love and compassion of God to our world. When we can manage that, we are living in faith.

Moreover, our lives will be enriched, as the young man who worked with kids with cancer found his life enriched.



A **second reflection** is by Barbara W. Eckert who is a leadership consultant for the Catholic Church. She has worked in over 60 dioceses in the US, Canada, and the Caribbean. Her work with bishops, priests, deacons, seminarians, and lay persons emphasizes outcomes and skills for effective self, interpersonal, team, and organizational leadership.

Click [here](#) to watch and listen to her homily.

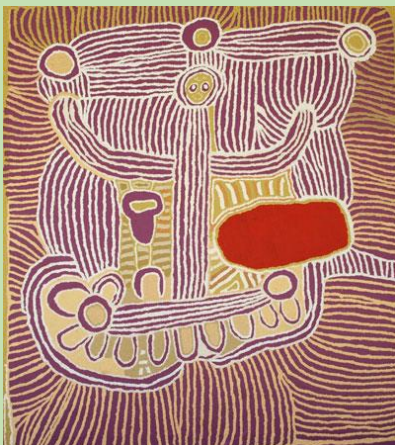
2. *Boonah Parish happenings . . .*

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**

Desert Eucharist, Linda Syddick Napaltjarri (b. 1937)

(5th Sunday of the month: 6pm Sat night Harrisville church & 9.30am Sun morning Boonah church. **We have a 5th Sunday on 29th October**).

Our **weekday eucharist** schedule for this week, the 27th week in Ordinary Time:

Tuesday	4 th October	5.30pm Boonah church
Wednesday	5 th October	6.00pm Peak Crossing church followed by meal at <i>The Peak Pub</i>
Thursday	6 th October	5.30pm Boonah church
Friday	7 th October	8.00am Boonah church



We pray with and for those who are sick in our parish and beyond: all across the globe infected with COVID-19; all those who are unwell because of the war raging in Ukraine and in other places of the globe; all who are starving; Chris Healy, Paul White, Arthur Devin, Liliana Toohill, Libby Shields, Marko Babic, Max Gardiner, Bernadette Pinchin, Cate Mitten, Bernice Brault, Paula Ebrington, Fletcher Casey, Jill Archer, Louisa, Lynne

Nunan, Bea Bedard (USA), Carol Libke, Angela Kearney, Tony Pisani, Lorraine Bakon, Maureen Wilson, Fletcher Casey, Moira Lehmann, Robert Hensen and sick members of parish families and those beyond our parish boundaries.

▪ **Boonah Parish Safeguarding Officer.** Leigh Muller is the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Email: boonah@bne.catholic.net.au

▪ **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).

▪ Last Sunday the **Liturgy and Music Preparation team** meet after 9.30am Mass in Boonah to prepare liturgical music for the coming months. *Thanks to the team members.*

On behalf of all who worship on Sunday, we thank and acknowledge the weekly commitment of our organists: Mary, Sharon, Noela and Angela. They minister almost every weekend. We have music at our three Masses!

We are grateful for your commitment to this ministry. I am reminded at times of how fortunate we are when speaking with returning parishioners who have been travelling across the country. At times there will be a mention of participating in Sunday Mass elsewhere where there was no musician, no singing or the community sang with pre-recorded music. This is not the case in our parish and the reason for this is that our musicians minister weekly. *Thank you.*

▪ The **Moogerah Passion Play Association** is holding *Christmas by the Lake* on Saturday 26th November. The gates open at 2.30pm and the performance starts at 5.00pm.



At the Boonah Masses last weekend, Chris Young promoted this event and especially invited singers to join a choir.

Choir rehearsals began on Saturday 1st October at 2pm at the **Uniting Church, Boonah**. *All are welcome.*

A call is also being made for actors (non-speaking roles), narrators, welcomers, and people to do both preparation and cleaning-up.

Please put your name on the sheets at the back of the church. Further details and information is on the noticeboard or you can contact Chris on 0422 878 744.

Information is also on the website: <https://moogerahpassionplay.org.au/>

▪ **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.



We know the truth, not only by reason but also by the heart.

Blaise Pascal
1623-1662

3. *The Conversation* (Australia) carried an unexpected article last week on an international survey of more than 17,000 Catholic women from over 100 countries published this month. *The International Survey of Catholic Women* is one of the most extensive surveys of Catholic women ever undertaken, and its findings might inform lasting and genuine change in the Catholic Church.



The survey was initiated by *Catholic Women Speak* in response to the invitation of Pope Francis for the Catholic Church to engage in a process of “synodality” for the 2021-2023 *Synod of Bishops*.

The aim of the survey was to gather feedback on the experiences of Catholic women.

It provides insights into the complex realities of Catholic women’s lives, the ways in which they express their faith, and their relationships with the institutional church.

Two of the three leads were Australians: Dr Tracy McEwan, University of Newcastle, and Dr Kathleen McPhillips, University of Newcastle, and the other lead was Professor Tina Beattie, University of Roehampton, London.

This is the link for the article: [HERE](#)

This is the link for the *Survey Synthesis*: [HERE](#)

4. **Andrew Hamilton SJ is consulting editor of *Eureka Street* and writer at Jesuit Social Services. He wrote this piece on 29th September 2022: “Devaluing freedom”.**

Recently many people have expressed disquiet about the trend to authoritarian rule throughout the world. They have good reason for doing so. Australian critics have questioned the harsh laws passed by State Governments in Australia affecting demonstrations against forestry and mining operations that contribute to climate change. At issue is the right of people to personal freedom of movement and to freedom of association for expressing ethical convictions.

These laws have been passed in the aftermath of COVID during which Governments legislated emergency powers to restrict freedom of movement, and imposed further conditions on dress and bodily integrity as conditions of employment and access to public transport and eating houses. They attached penalties to breaches of these restrictions.

In ensuring that COVID did not spread, Governments appealed to two popular responses. Initially they publicised the self-sacrificing behaviour of health workers and others in caring for the ill and in preventing the spread of the virus. They represented them as models of placing the good of the community and particularly its most vulnerable members above their own health and leisure. They appealed to these altruistic values.

As the pandemic spread and mutated, however, Governments generally appealed to the fear of being caught and fined. They publicised police presence, the daily number of people fined, and the risk of being caught. Police became the public face of the restrictions.



It is easy to see how this emphasis on restrictive law could encourage governments to introduce punitive and restrictive legislation to deal with such other situations as public demonstrations. The bridge to this expansion of law may have been the often violent and unpopular demonstrations against mask wearing and other infringements of individual liberty involved in the restrictions. Though these demonstrations were libertarian in character and so differed from the ecological demonstrations that are communally motivated, the path was open to address both by punitive legislation.

The advent of Coronavirus, however, did not initiate but only intensified an already firmly entrenched trend by Governments to limit human freedoms. The restrictions imposed on strikes in industrial disputes were only one example. Refugee policy, and particularly indefinite mandatory detention and the principle of deterrence that underlay it, were the furnace in which the steel of punitive detention was hardened. It set the Government against the Law and its tradition of *habeas corpus* and its role of custodian of the human rights of persons in the face of State power. Successive

Governments tried to limit the appeal by asylum seekers to the rule of law by distance, by such sophistries as the excision of most of Australia from the migration zone, by off-shore processing and delays in processing appeals, stacking appeals boards with its appointees, and by seeking to avoid appeal to the High Court against its laws and regulations. It abandoned the convention of being a model litigant by opposing appeals until it seemed that the Court might rule against its legislation. It would then withdraw from the case, so saving the individual plaintiff but preserving the regulation for future use.

*If Peter Garlett were not Indigenous, but were your son or mine,
however might we not be outraged and ashamed
that our fellow Australians could so lightly and indefinitely deprive him of freedom?*

This punitive behaviour by the State has also spread to other minority groups with similar restrictions on freedom. It has been embodied in the regulation of people who are unemployed through the Cashless Debit Cards, oppressive conditions for work for the dole, the imposition of Robodebt, and the prosecution of whistle blowers who publicised governmental misbehaviour.

It is also reflected in the infringements on the right of judges to exercise discretion in sentencing, in remanding prisoners and in granting parole. Such changes have increased the time spent in incarceration, the likelihood that innocent people will spend more than a year on remand, and the difficulty of prisoners entering the community when freed unsupported from prison. For Indigenous children and adults the consequences have been disproportionately heavy.

The power of the State to impose indefinite detention and the neutering of Law as a custodian of human rights can be seen most recently by the High Court's recent rejection of Western Australian Indigenous man Peter Garlett's appeal against an indefinite sentence in prison. Originally found guilty, he served his sentence of over three years for robbery with a fake gun. Having done his time for the sentence for which he was convicted, he was then sentenced to further detention under a recent Western Australian law because he was judged to be a potential threat of harm to the community. Laws providing for detention to prevent further crime have also been passed in other states, but usually restricted to violent sex offenders. It is hard for a non-lawyer to see the High Court decision as anything else than the court's decision to step back from insisting that the citizen be punished by deprivation of liberty only as a sentence imposed by the court for the commission of a criminal offence. This retreat by the court then allows governments and parliaments to impose detention on the citizen for reasons other than punishment, and without court order or supervision.

Taken together these developments suggest that in the world we are entering, the freedom of citizens in the State depends on the will of Governments that will have no enforceable obstacle to withdrawing such freedoms on suspicion of future misconduct and not just for punishment of past, proven misconduct. Nor will citizens who lose rights at the will of the State have any recourse from Courts low or High. These are now essentially subservient to the other organs of the State. *Habeas Corpus* will become a quaint conceit of purely historical interest. The impact of this on Indigenous people who form the vast majority of prisoners and are the object of popular suspicion is incalculable.

Underlying these trends is a philosophy that denies to human beings any inherent worth independent of their economic contribution, virtue, class, race or popular acceptance, and so allows their freedom of movement and of association to be stripped away, not for crimes committed but for possible crimes they may commit. Within this philosophy legal judgment risks being ruled by of popular prejudice and the will of the government of the day.

It can be argued that this presentation is alarmist, that it overstates the scope and the significance of the single events that it describes. The lack of public outrage or even concern about the assumed authority of the State exercised and not fully relinquished in the CV crisis, and about the effect of laws that have filled gaols, might support this argument. If Peter Garlett were not Indigenous, but were your son or mine, however might we not be outraged and ashamed that our fellow Australians could so lightly and indefinitely deprive him of freedom?

A Prayer for Ukraine

God of peace and justice,
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.
We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment and compassion
to guide their decisions.
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
Amen.

Archbishop Justin Welby
Archbishop Stephen Cottrell





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

John

pastor,
Boonah Catholic community