



July – November 2015
Pastoral Care Newsletter

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Hello! I hope this newsletter finds you well.

REFLECTION MORNING

You are invited to... 'Rest in My Love'

Facilitated by Fr John Sullivan

- Saturday, 1 August at 10am to 12pm in the Church. Includes morning tea. ALL WELCOME!

Come along and experience some 'you' time, especially if you are involved in the parish through our various pastoral ministries or in a caring role within your family, workplace or as a volunteer.

MASS DATES

Aged Care/Nursing Home Masses

Ferndale Gardens: 33 Jersey Ave, Mortdale

Shangri-la: 107 Carrington Ave, Hurstville

Fairlea: 11 Hawk St, Penshurst

Gannon Gardens: 53 Gloucester Rd, Hurstville

August

- Tuesday, 11 August – Ferndale Gardens
- Tuesday, 18 August – Shangri-la
- Wednesday, 19 August – Fairlea
- Tuesday, 25 August – Gannon Gardens

November

- Tuesday, 10 November – Ferndale Gardens
- Tuesday, 17 November – Shangri-la
- Wednesday, 18 November – Fairlea
- Tuesday, 24 November – Gannon Gardens

Nunyara: 8 – 12 Neilson Avenue, Peakhurst

- First Tuesday of the month at 11am in the chapel

Visitors MUST sign in/out when visiting a care facility.

Anointing Mass

- Saturday, 5 September at 10.30am. Mass is followed by morning tea.

To experience, as community, the prayerful and healing power of our faith through the sacrament of 'Anointing of the Sick'. Mass is followed by morning tea.

Remembrance Mass

- **New date: Monday, 2 November** (All Souls Day) at 7.30pm, followed by supper in the meeting room

This annual Mass is a gentle and prayerful celebration remembering, as community, the life of our loved ones who have died.

BEREAVEMENT GROUP MEETING

- Monday, 21 September at 7.30pm, in the Presbytery. Includes a light supper.

For those involved, please come to catch up, share in prayer and organise the Remembrance Mass.

We are examples of love...

Lord Jesus,
 We pray that you give us the insight and understanding we need each day; may we continually be guided by your example of forgiveness and may our actions continue to be of love. Amen.



DECLAN CRAFT

Something social & creative for those in their 40s & up...

A Jewellery Making class held in June was fabulous; we had some very creative and talented participants. Stayed tuned for future activities/sessions; these will be advertised in the bulletin, website and around the church. Thanks for your continuous interest, involvement and support.

DAYS FOR GIRLS

DfG is a registered charity which allows girls in developing countries to have access to feminine hygiene products; which means they don't miss out on school or work. So far St Declan's Parish has made and delivered 129 kits to Timor! A great effort, thanks to all involved!

Final Group DfG Kit Making and Packing

...Come along and assist in making and then packing more kits for Libby Bleakley to take to Timor. This will be our last official organised kit making and packing as a group. For information on pick up of material, sewing and packing stay tuned to the bulletin, website and ongoing emails and correspondence. To continue to be involved next year please contact Beverley, St George Area Contact person: 9594 4898; beverley@daysforgirls.org.

PASTORAL CARE RECORDS

Visitation ministers & bereavement group...

Please contact me if there are changes within your ministry, if you require information, support or if your visit situation has changed. Pastoral Records and updates are necessary and always appreciated.

REFLECTION

Who Am I To Judge?

Perhaps the single, most-often quoted line from Pope Francis is his response to a question he was asked vis-à-vis the morality of a particularly-dicey issue. His, infamous-famous reply: "Who am I to judge?"

Although this remark is often assumed to be flighty and less-than-serious; it is, in fact, on pretty safe ground. Jesus, it seems, says basically the same thing. For

example, in his conversation with Nicodemus in John's Gospel, he, in essence, says: I judge no one.

If the Gospel of John is to be believed, then Jesus judges no one. God judges no one. But that needs to be put into context. It doesn't mean that there aren't any moral judgments and that our actions are indifferent to moral scrutiny. There is judgment; except it doesn't work the way it is fantasized inside the popular mind. According to what Jesus tells us in John's Gospel, judgment works this way:

God's light, God's truth, and God's spirit come into the world. We then judge ourselves according to how we live in the face of them: God's light has come into the world, but we can choose to live in darkness. That's our decision, our judgment. God's truth has been revealed, but we can choose to live in falsehood, in lies. That's our decision, our judgment to make. And God's spirit has come into the world, but we can prefer to live outside that spirit, in another spirit. That too is our decision, our judgment. God judges no one. We judge ourselves. Hence we can also say that God condemns no one, though we can choose to condemn ourselves. And God punishes no one, but we can choose to punish ourselves. Negative moral judgment is self-inflicted. Perhaps this seems abstract, but it is not. We know this existentially, we feel the brand of our own actions inside us. To use just one example: How we judge ourselves by the Holy Spirit.

God's spirit, the Holy Spirit, is not something so abstract and slippery that it cannot be pinned down. St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Galatians, describes the Holy Spirit in terms so clear that they can only be rendered abstract and ambiguous by some self-serving rationalization. How does he describe and define the Holy Spirit?

So as to make things clear he sets up a contrast by first telling us what the Holy Spirit is not. The spirit of God, he tells us is not the spirit of self-indulgence, sexual vice, jealousy, rivalry, antagonism, bad temper, quarrels, drunkenness, or factionalism. Anytime we are cultivating these qualities inside of our lives, we should not delude ourselves into thinking we are living in God's spirit, no matter how frequent, sincere, or pious is our religious practice. The Holy Spirit, he tells us, is the spirit of charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, and chastity. Only when we are living inside of these virtues are we living inside God's spirit.

So then, this is how judgment happens: God's spirit (charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, and chastity) has been revealed. We can choose to live inside the virtues of that spirit or we can choose to live instead inside their opposites (self-indulgence, sexual vice, rivalry, antagonism, bad temper, quarrels, drunkenness, and factionalism). One choice leads to a life with God, the other leads away from God.

And that choice is ours to make; it doesn't come from the outside. We judge ourselves. God judges no one. God doesn't need to.

When we view things inside this perspective it also clarifies a number of misunderstandings that cause confusion inside the minds of believers as well as inside the minds of their critics. How often, for instance, do we hear this criticism: If God is all-good, all-loving, and all-merciful, how can God condemn someone to hell for all eternity? A valid question, though not a particularly reflective one. Why? Because God judges no one; God punishes no one. God condemns no one to hell. We do these things to ourselves: We judge ourselves, we punish ourselves, and we put ourselves in various forms of hell whenever we do choose not to live in the light, the truth, and inside God's spirit. And that judgment is self-inflicted, that punishment is self-inflicted, and those fires of hell are self-inflicted.

There are a number of lessons in this. First, as we have just seen, the fact that God judges no one, helps clarify our theodicy, that is, it helps deflate all those misunderstandings surrounding God's mercy and the accusation that an all-merciful God can condemn someone to eternal hellfire. Beyond this, it is a strong challenge to us to be less judgmental in our lives, to let the wheat and the darnel sort themselves out over time, to let light itself judge darkness, to let truth itself judge falsehood, and to, like Pope Francis, be less quick to offer judgments in God's name and more prone to say: "Who am I to judge?"

by Ronald Rolheiser OMI (20/04/2015)

Visit his website on www.ronrolheiser.com/index.php

PRAYER

Jesus the Storyteller

Jesus,

You came to live with us, to show us the way;
To live in peace and harmony, each and every day.
You did this through parables and stories you told;
examples where love and life unfold.

Each story taught us how to forgive,
to love unconditionally; and faithfully live.

May we be examples of the compassion you shared;
through the struggles and joys each of us bear.

Be with us Jesus, the story teller of love.
Guide us continually with blessings from above.

Amen.

P.N.

Wishing you all the very best and may each day bring you joy and peace...

Yours faithfully,

Paulineke

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Pastoral Care... responding to the needs of St Declan's Parish

Pastoral Care aims to provide spiritual nourishment, social interaction and support to parishioners who are bereaved, lonely, aged, infirmed, sick, disabled and are unable to take part in parish Eucharistic celebrations by:

- involving parishioners to minister to others & share their faith
- creating a community of care
- developing a strong parish network.