



PARISH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION, NORTH WODEN

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18-19 March 2023, Fourth Sunday of Lent, Year A

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH WEEKDAY AND WEEKEND MASSES, LITURGY and RECONCILIATION TIMES:

Monday	9.30am Curtin
Tuesday	9.30am Curtin
Wednesday	9.30am Curtin (Lit of Word and H Comm)
Thursday	5.30pm Curtin (Lit of the Word and H Comm until 30 March)
Friday	9.30am Curtin (including Anointing on First Friday)
Saturday	Reconciliation 5.00-5.30pm; Mass 6.00pm Curtin
Sunday	9.30am and 5.30pm Curtin

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ! I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life. Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON: The Lord anointed eyes: I went, I washed, I saw and I believed in God.

MAY THE DECEASED REST IN PEACE AND RISE IN EASTER GLORY

Recently Deceased: Marie Mesaros, Hamburg shooting victims, Joe Pavlich, Ljuba Kovac, Greek train crash victims, drowned asylum seekers off Italy, Justin Higgins, Robert Kelly, Gary Parker, NZ flood victims, earthquake victims in Türkiye and Syria, Fr Neville Drinkwater, Kyra Berger, Victims of US shootings, Sheila Langtry, Wendy Poole, Paul Bryant, Joyce Theodore, Janice Orr, Jim Molan, Renee Gayer, Lisa Marie Presley, victims of war in Ukraine and victims of COVID.

Anniversaries of Death: Keith McLaughlin, Rod Frazer, George Pugh, Jack Perry, Mary Taxworth, Desmond Lilley, Kevin Wilson, Richard Raymond Spargo, Noel Lane, David Power, Dix and Keily families, Margaret Cusack, Brian Brown, Joanne Binutti, Christopher Perkins, John Holtzapffel, Peter Marlow, , Bali bombing victims and victims of COVID.

MAY THE SICK BE COMFORTED BY OUR PRAYERS

Margie Rose, Ben Arcus, Grayham Rundle, Kathleen Belfanti, John O'Connor, Hennie Timmerman, Jan Chesworth, Peter Hewitt, Stephanie De Jongh, Shaun Clancy, Patrick Jones, Julianna Maher, Jack Kennelly, Susie Menadue, Philomena Fisher, Rajan Fernandez, Ljubica Gotovac, Jose Arquero, Olga Johnson, Patricia Zorzi, Wendy Altimore, Karen Lloyd, David Swan, Grant Brookes, John Grant, Rosa Winstanley, John Manning, John Della Libera, Iole Cicolini, Gaie Ross, James Biddle, Carolyn Wightman, Peter McDade, Lorraine King, Greg Geering, Chandrika, Anselm and Venura Grero and those afflicted with COVID.

TO JOURNEY AND NOT TO JOURNEY

Last week it was the Samaritan woman. Today the man born blind. Both are recipients of graced awareness. Recall that the Samaritan woman and Jesus subverted cultural, political and religious barriers. **Today we have a man who, by virtue of his blindness, is presumed to be a sinner, as was the judgement on the woman at the well. However, in a detailed drama, the blind man's "coming to physical sight becomes a symbol of the further journey that he then begins, a journey out of the 'darkness' of unbelief to the discovery of the 'Light of the world' in the person of Jesus" (Brendan Byrne).** It is noteworthy that this incident occurs during the **Feast of Tabernacles**. Then the Temple was lit up by braziers on the walls, such that pilgrims approaching its lofty position spoke of it as "the light of the world". However, John is at pains to point out that Jesus, "the new locus of God's presence in the world, proclaims himself, not the Temple, to be the Light" (*ibid*). **Further, the Gospel compares and contrasts the journey of the man** from darkness to physical and spiritual sight and the intransigence of the religious authorities who refuse to engage with what the miracle symbolises. **Byrne concludes his commentary with a cautionary note.** "We cannot simply identify with the positive journey of the man and distance ourselves entirely from those who take the opposite direction. Doubtless, both 'journeys' find some resonance in our lives. Lent is the time to renew our baptismal orientation towards the Light" **The last point has prompted me to attach a reflection by Fr Ronald Rolheiser OMI, "Lost Innocence", sourced from the Parramatta Diocese's online "Catholic Outlook".** Harking back to our First Reading where Samuel anoints the young shepherd boy David to succeed Saul as king, Rolheiser considers what might be termed the possible journey of the two halves of life. **Our journey is not always consistent.**

Fr John

LITURGICAL MINISTRY RENEWAL: Thanks to all who have volunteered. You will be contacted over the coming fortnight. **FORMATION SESSIONS** for Welcomers, Commentators, Readers and Ministers of Communion both at mass and to the sick and housebound will be held at 10.30am, next Sat 25 March **OR** again at 5.30pm, Tues, 28 March. **Each session will commence in the Parish Centre and finish within 90 minutes.**

N.B. MASS TIME CHANGE: As last year, so again this year, the time for the Sunday morning Mass on Sunday, 26 March will be 8.30am NOT 9.30am. This will allow organisers of the 'Show N Shine' to set up. **Thank you for your understanding.** You are invited to check out the beautifully maintained vehicles on display and to vote for your favourite. Money raised after expenses will support **Camp Quality.**

PROJECT COMPASSION: Has your household taken a box or set of envelopes to support Project Compassion? Pope Francis reminds us that *"The Future starts today, not tomorrow"*. The theme for this year's appeal is **For All Future Generations.** For decades Project Compassion has been synonymous with the Lenten call to support those in need in recognition of their manifesting the suffering Christ

PARISH OFFICE ASSISTANCE: We are looking to employ someone to assist with office duties for 2 hours per week. If you would like to know more, contact Fr John personally or via the parish office.

50 YEAR REUNION OF ST CHRISTOPHER'S COFFEE HOUSE: Members of the same between 1973-1977 are invited to gather in the Haydon Hall (behind the Cathedral), 3pm - 10pm, Sat, 25 March. Friendships will be renewed and . Fr Mick Burke will celebrate the 5pm Parish Mass with the original music group playing retro hymns. RSVP to Sue Woods. Email: smwoods6@gmail.com, 0438 811 742.

PALM SUNDAY REFUGEE RALLY: The St Vincent de Paul Society welcomes the Government's announcement of permanent residence for 19,000 folk on temporary visas. However, many thousands still seek permanent protection in a fair and timely way. **So, Vinnies invites you to join them at the Palm Sunday Rally in Garema Place, 1.00pm, Sun, 2 April.**

CHRISM OR OILS MASS: 5pm, Monday, 3 April, St Christopher's Cathedral. Archbishop Christopher will bless the Oil of Catechumens, the Oil of Chrism and the Oil of the Sick for use across the archdiocese in the coming year. Clergy will also renew their commitment to serve. All welcome

REGIONAL SECOND RITE OF RECONCILIATION: for North Woden, South Woden and Weston Creek Parishes will be 6pm, Tuesday, 4 April at Holy Trinity Church.

NATIONAL ANZAC DAY MASS will be celebrated 8am, 25 April, St Christopher's Cathedral. All welcome but if attending you must be seated by 7.45am.

MEDITATION GROUP: 6pm, Wednesdays. All welcome. Contact Vikki, 0437 876 487, mulvaney@netspeed.com.au.

PRAYER CIRCLE SUPPORT: Cathy Harris, 6281 2574.

Readings for next Sunday: Fifth Sunday of Lent Year A: Ez 37:12-14; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45.

LITURGICAL ROSTERS NEXT WEEK:

<i>4th Sunday of the month</i>	Curtin Sat. 6pm	Curtin Sun. 9.30 am	Curtin Sun. 5.30 pm
Acolyte	Long Nguyen & Marianne Crane	Stafferd Fernandez	Melissa Bray
Servers			
Reader	V Ciuffetelli	Juliana Maher	K Anderson
Commentator	Nedra Kelaart	Jane Hunt	
Welcomer	Robert & Moya Kennelly	Volunteer	
Ministers of Comm.	T Butler, Rachel Smith, Alex Evers	Brendan Ryan	Anne Hitchings
Communion to Sick	St Andrew's: Helen Crain-Welsby	Fred Ward: Volunteer	Homes: J and B Ryan
Collectors	J David	Volunteer	Volunteer
Counters	<i>27 Mar.</i>	Rosemary O'Mally, Bryan Stevens	
Wednesday Liturgy	<i>22 Mar.</i>	Prayer Leader: Emma Fairfax	Eucharistic Minister: Liz Anderson

Lost innocence

By Fr Ron Rolheiser, 16 March 2023

The biblical story of Saul is one of the great tragedies in all of literature. Saul's story makes Hamlet look like a Disney character. Hamlet, at least, had good reasons for the bitterness that beset him. Saul, given what he started with, should have fared better, much better.

His story begins with the announcement that, in all of Israel, none measured up to him in height, strength, goodness, or acclaim. A natural leader, a prince among peers; his extraordinary character was recognized and proclaimed by the people. They made him their king. The beginning of his story is the stuff of fairy tales, and it goes on in this way for a while.

However, at a point, things begin to sour. That point was the arrival of David on the scene – a man younger, more handsome, more-gifted, and more-acclaimed than he was. Jealousy sets in and envy begins to poison Saul's soul. Looking at David, he sees only a popularity that eclipses his own, not another man's goodness, nor indeed what that goodness offers to others. Instead, he grows bitter, petty, hostile, tries to kill David, and eventually dies by his own hand, an angry man who has fallen far from the innocence and goodness of his youth.

What happened here? How does someone who has so much going for him – goodness, talent, acclaim, power, blessing – grow into a bitter, petty man who ends up taking his own life? How does it happen? The late Margaret Laurence, in a brilliant, dark novel, *The Stone Angel*, offers a good description of how this happens and how it happens in ways that are hidden to the one undergoing the transition.

Her main character, Hagar Shipley, is a "Saul" of sorts. Hagar's story begins like his: She is young, innocent, and full of potential. What's to become of such a beautiful, bright, talented, young woman? Sadly, not much at all. She drifts into everything: adulthood, an unhappy marriage, and into a deep unrecognized and unspoken disappointment that eventually leaves her slovenly, frigid, bitter, and without energy or ambition. What's as remarkable as sad is that she doesn't see any of this herself. In her mind, she remains the young, innocent, gracious, popular, attractive young girl she once was in high school. She doesn't notice how small her world has become, how few real friends she has, how little she admires anything or anyone, or even how physically unkempt she has become.

Her awakening is sudden and cruel. One winter day, shabbily dressed in an old parka, she rings the doorbell of a house where she is delivering some eggs. A bright young child answers the door and Hagar overhears the child tell her mother: That horrible, old egg-woman is at the door! The penny drops.

Stunned, she leaves the house and finds her way to a public bathroom where she turns on all the lights and studies her face in a mirror. What looks back is a face she doesn't recognize, someone pathetically at odds with whom she imagines herself to be. She sees in fact the horrible, old egg-woman that the child saw at the door rather than the young, gracious, attractive, big-hearted woman that she imagines herself still to be. "How can this have happened?" she asks herself. How can we, imperceptible to ourselves, grow into someone we don't know or like?

In some way, it happens to all of us. It's not easy to age, to accept the fall from what we dreamed for ourselves, to watch the young take over and receive the popularity and acclaim that once were ours. Like Saul, we can fill with a jealousy that we don't recognize, and like Hagar, we can grow bitter and ugly without knowing it. Others, of course, do notice.

It's not that we don't gain something as this happens. Usually we grow smarter, wiser in the ways of the world, and remain goodhearted, generous people. However, we tend to be nastier than we once were, whine too much, feel too sorry for ourselves, and give ourselves over more to curse rather than bless those who have replaced us, the young, the popular, the acclaimed.

And so, the penultimate spiritual and human task of the second half of life is to give up this jealousy and ugliness and come back again to the love, innocence, and goodness of our youth, to revirginize, move towards a second naiveté, and begin again to admire something.

At the beginning of the Book of Revelations, John, purporting to speak for God, has some advice for us, at least for those of us beyond the bloom of youth: "I've seen how hard you work. I recognize your generosity and all the good work you do, but I have this against you – you have less love in you now than when you were young! Go back and look from where you have fallen!"

We might want to hear this from scripture before we overhear it from some young girl telling her mother that some dour, bitter, old person is at the door.