



**St John
Vianney**
Parish Morisset



TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A 25 JUNE 2023

In today's Gospel Jesus encourages his disciples to be open and fearless witness to the Gospel.

Being a Christian is not a matter of convenience, but one of integrity and courage. We are challenged to live out our faith, in a way that outstrips our fears and survival instincts.

Once it took courage of a sort, not to go to church on Sundays. But for many today, it takes courage to attend church, or stand up for Christian principles and beliefs.

Christian discipleship demands our moral courage, integrity and fidelity. We do so by our willingness to confront situations of injustice or conflict, without compromising the Gospel.

Christian discipleship is not a one-man show. Anybody who wants to watch from the sidelines will never be more than a spectator. Being part of the dynamic of the coming of the reign of heaven requires active participation



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Awabakal People who, long before us lived, loved, educated and raised their children on this Country. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and we recognise the young people who are our future. We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in our communities. We respect their deep physical and spiritual connections to Country through their stories, traditions and living cultures.

PARISH LEADERSHIP TEAM:

Foundation	Leader	In Office
1. Identity and Community		
2. Worship and Prayer.	Uta France	Mon
3. Formation and Education		
4. Mission and Outreach.		
5. Leadership and Structure.	John France	Sat & Sun

If you have any concerns or questions you can also talk to any member of the **Parish Pastoral Council** who are: Juliet Hutchins, Mal and Pam Melvey, Kerry Lendon, and Rod Hay.

PRIEST SUPERVISOR: Fr Joseph Figuardo
SACRAMENTAL PRIEST: Fr John Purnell
Parish Secretary: Mrs Rosanna Suckling

OFFICE: 60 Yambo Street, Morisset, PO Box 87, Ph: 02 4973.6859
 Office Hours: 9.00 am to 2.00pm—Monday to Friday (except public holidays)
 (Due to COVID we ask that you make an appointment to come to the office)
 Morisset Parish Office email: morparish@mn.catholic.org.au
 Morisset Parish Web site: www.vianneymorisset.org
 Morisset Parish Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/stjvparish>
 Morisset Parish Instagram : https://www.instagram.com/stjvparish_morisset/
 Morisset Parish Bulletin Items: morparish@mn.catholic.org.au

UPCOMING WORSHIP TIMES :

Saturday	24th June 5pm Mass— Cooranbong
Sunday	25th June 9.30am Mass— Morisset
Tuesday	27th June 9.30am Liturgy— Morisset
Saturday	1st July 5pm Family Mass— Morisset
Sunday	2nd July 9.30am Mass— Morisset
Saturday	8th July 5pm Mass— Cooranbong
Sunday	9th July 9.30am Mass— Morisset
Saturday	15th July 5pm Family Mass— Morisset
Sunday	16th July 9.30am Mass— Morisset
Tuesday	18th July 9.30am Liturgy— Morisset
Saturday	22nd July 5pm Mass— Cooranbong
Sunday	23rd July 9.30am Mass— Morisset
Tuesday	25th July 9.30am Liturgy— Morisset

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Reflection for Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A —25th June 2023

The readings for today really challenge us but they are also strangely reassuring. We are warned that being a follower of Christ will

not be easy, but we are promised that God's grace is with us.

In some countries of the world today, especially in North Africa, Christian communities are facing frightening persecution. Here in Australia, however, we seem relatively secure. While I think I could cope with verbal abuse or ridicule, I ask myself if I would I be brave enough to continue to go to Mass, if we faced the possibility of being burnt alive or machine gunned in our church, as we gathered to worship? I really don't know but I do know that, as individuals and as a community, we are not alone.

Jeremiah suffered greatly in fulfilling his call to be God's prophet but his consolation came: "The Lord is at my side," he declared; and the Lord's presence is with us.

There is further reassurance in Paul's letter to the Romans, which emphasised the greatness of God's gift to us in his beloved son, Christ Jesus. Being human, we are less than perfect; each of us has sinned in some way, symbolised in Adam's fall from grace. Paul tells us: "If it is certain that through one man's fall so many died, it is even more certain that divine grace, coming through the one man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an abundant free gift." Christ's great sacrifice for us offered us redemption and the promise of life beyond this earthly life, if we just accept the free gift of his love. At the same time, we, like the disciples, have the task of continuing his mission, which is where our challenge lies.

Fear can paralyse us, just as it paralysed the disciples after Christ's death. They stayed together, locked in a room in fear of the Jews but then came Pentecost and the gift of the Spirit. In Matthew's Gospel, Christ reassures the Twelve (and us), "Do not be afraid" and he repeats it again, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul." God knows us and loves us but we are warned that, being a follower of Christ, may cause us to suffer. However, we have the promise, "If anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven."

When we see the horrors of the war in the Ukraine; the suffering under the effects of climate change, especially in Africa, and the tragedy of the senseless loss of life in the Hunter bus crash, our faith can be sorely tested. It is not only in these big events; we can also be tested in the struggles of daily life: How do we pay the bills this week? How do we deal with serious illness or constant pain? How do we go on when we have lost our life's partner? We are all challenged in different ways, at different times, so where can we find the strength to persevere?

We **can** find strength in the gift of God's grace and in the reassurance of the Scriptures. We **know** that Christ is with us and in us as our companion on life's journey. We **know** we have the ongoing inspiration of the Spirit to strengthen us. While most of us would not be comfortable proclaiming our faith from the roof tops, we can proclaim our faith in the way we live our lives in our homes and in our community and openly show our pride in being Christians.

Pam Melvey

Change of Visitation Date

We have received notification from the Bishops Office, that Bishop Michael Kennedy will now only be in our parish on Friday evening 8th September to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation. He will not be presiding at the weekend Masses as previously reported.

Workshops and Cathedral Lecture - Richard Lennan

We are excited that Father Richard Lennan will be visiting his hometown this August. During his stay he is offering several workshops and presentations. Join Richard in 'tilling' the Church for a more faithful, just, and creative church, one responsive to the movement of grace.

Tues 15 -Workshop open to all diocesan community – The Church: Foundations, Challenges, and Possibilities- Maitland Gaol - 9.30am-3.30pm

Wed 16- Cathedral Lecture open to all diocesan community – Shaping the Church's Future: The Grace of Creative Faithfulness- Sacred Heart Cathedral. 6.00pm-7.00pm

Fri 18- Workshop open to all diocesan community – The Church: Foundations, Challenges, and Possibilities Forster Tuncurry Parish Hall. 9.30 am to 3.30pm

To register go to www.mn.catholic.org.au/church-mission/catholic-life/faith-formation/upcoming-events/

Diocesan Association of Pastoral Ministers Meeting

The 2023 Diocesan Association of Pastoral Ministers will next meet on Thursday 6 July from 9:30am to 2:30pm at St. Stephen's Parish, Witt Street TEA GARDENS. The gathering is to support those commissioned in parishes or the life of the Diocese for Pastoral Ministries. All are welcome to join as we break open the Foundation of Formation and Education with Rose McAllister. Mass will be celebrated at 12:30pm with Fr Phillip Doyle, followed by a catered lunch.

To register please contact Kate Crncevic at the Diocese on 4979 1329 or email her at: kate.crncevic@mn.catholic.org.au by Thursday 29 June.

Rediscovering Joy - Dr Michele Connolly

How are hearts set on fire with love of God and love of the world? 'The only thing that counts for me,' wrote Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, 'is not to propagate God but to discover him.' Join us for a day of formation with Dr Michele Connolly, current Associate Professor of Biblical Studies within the Catholic Institute of Sydney and University of Notre Dame Australia. In a retreat style and setting, Michele will help us examine how rich and life-giving Scripture can be, revealing a God whose story intends to renew our lives and calls us to actively engage with the world.

Monday 11 September, Crown Plaza Hunter Valley, 9.30am – 3.30pm, \$30pp RSVP: 13 August 2023. Registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/rediscovering-joy-tickets-626620176817>

Pints with a Purpose: Modern Day Pilgrims

Join us as we engage with a panel of our Pilgrims from across our diocese who are planning to journey into the Holy Land and on to World Youth Day in Lisbon. Who are they? Why are they going? What are their hopes for the journey? Date: Monday 3 of July Time: 6pm Location: Sydney Junction Hotel Please contact Eliza Beletich for any questions. P: 4931 1228 E: eliza.beletich@mn.catholic.org.au



St Vincent De Paul Winter Appeal

Our Morisset Conference of St. Vincent de-Paul Winter Cash Appeal will be held this weekend Saturday 24th and Sunday June 25th. All cash donations are gratefully received and go to helping needy families in our community!!

Please let me know if you need a receipt.

Many thanks! Monica Gray



SEA SUNDAY

9 July 2023



"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."
- Matthew 11:28 (NRSVCE)

Stella Maris is the largest network of chaplains and ship visitors around the world. We welcome and support seafarers who come into Australia to bring us many of the things we need. Help us to help them. On Sea Sunday, pray for them in your parishes.

To volunteer or donate, please visit our website: www.stellamarisaustralia.org

Sea Sunday

Sunday 9th July is Sea Sunday, when the church prays for all those who live and work at sea. Without them, we would not have most of the items we rely on for daily living. Even during the pandemic, seafarers continued to bring into our ports products that sustained our population and economy.

On Wednesday of this week, 9 handmade blankets, made by our Parish 'Wraps with Love' knitters, together with a bag of knitted beanies, were delivered to the Newcastle Seafarers Mission located in Hannell St Wickham.

The Newcastle Mission to Seafarers is an ecumenical (Anglican/Catholic) centre working alongside Stella Maris. The (MTS) cares for the spiritual and practical welfare of seafarers from all races and creeds and their families.

2023-aMeN Camino

We have been notified by Rose Macalister from the Diocese, that two aMeN Camino pilgrimages will pass through our parish at Cooranbong, in 2023. The first date is set for Monday 10th July, and the second date is Monday 7th August.

The vision behind the Hunter based Camino is to bring together people from across the diocese including staff and parishioners to take on a physical and spiritual journey surrounded by God's creation. In total, pilgrims walk almost 100km. Along the way they take in sacred Aboriginal sites in the Wattagan and Glenrock national parks. The pilgrims are provided with insightful glimpses into our Diocese's rich history, including Mary MacKillops visit to Cooranbong.

More about this, as the date draws nearer.

Safeguarding

Preparation for the Safeguarding Audit to be conducted in our Diocese continues. Forty-three per cent of parishes will be audited for compliance.

Forums and training sessions will continue to be conducted in the Diocese for people who are involved in Parish Ministry.

People who are non-compliant will be notified shortly.

The Catholic Church's commitment to the safety of children and adults at risk is motivated by the central place that children and those who are vulnerable have in the ministry of Jesus and the value each person has for the Catholic theological position.

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations that underpin the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, are the secular standards to which we are held accountable through regulation audit and assessment.



NAIDOC Week 2023

The Diocese's commitment to the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, launched in August 2022, was about developing relationships, and exploring avenues to engage with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. Our Diocesan Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Catholic Ministry and Reconciliation Action Plan Reference Group continues to foster this journey and shows our public commitment to Reconciliation and education - please consider promoting, supporting, and attending the following upcoming July events:

NAIDOC Week - March and Community Festival - Monday 3 July - 9am - 3pm

As part of our continued Reconciliation Action Plan journey, the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and Catholic Care Social Services have chosen to sponsor a tent at a community event hosted by Awabakal Ltd. We encourage all staff, volunteers, and parishioners to attend and/or volunteer their time at the NAIDOC Week Community March and Festival.

The event starts at 9am in Civic Park, Newcastle with a flag-raising before marching in a procession to Foreshore Park where the festival takes place from 10am-3pm. There will be lots of entertainment and community services, so it is a great educational event for young and old. Enquiries can be sent to Kate E: kate.crncevic@mn.catholic.org.au or P: 02 4979 1329

For Our Elders - NAIDOC Week Prayer Service - Sunday 2 July 2023

You are invited to join us for our 2023 NAIDOC Week Prayer Service from 1pm at the Sacred Heart Cathedral. The service will include an official Welcome to Country with Aunty Sandra Griffin, Awabakal Country. Join with local Elders, including Canon Aunty Di Langham who will lead us through a special reflection. This service is held in collaboration with local Aboriginal and faith communities. A special water ceremony will take place and guests are asked to bring a small container of water from Country along with them. Refreshments and light meal will be served. RSVP by Sunday 25 June via Eventbrite: <https://NAIDOCprayerservice.eventbrite.com.au> or by contacting Kate P: (02) 4979 1329

An evening with Noel Pearson - Sunday 16 July

From 5pm to 8pm on Sunday 16 July Noel Pearson will host an event in the Toohey Room. Listen to Noel's connection to Aboriginal Spirituality, his work on the Uluru Statement from the Heart and The Voice to Parliament. Concluding with a Q&A panel session that will include Noel, Aunty Louise Campbell (Catholic Schools Office) and Aunty Dianne Langham (Anglican Diocese). Register here: <https://NP2023.eventbrite.com.au>

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for June 2023

We pray that the international community may commit in a concrete way to ensuring the abolition of torture and guarantee support to victims and their families.

SUPPORTING THE CLERGY / 1st Collection

If you would like to make contributions to support the Clergy / 1st Collection please do so at Mass in the BLUE bucket or electronically using the Online Payments button on the Parish Website Home page, Diocese App, Bank Account Name: CCF BSB: 062815 No: 00328161 Ref: 5016 1st Collection or set up a direct debit contact the parish office for this option.

SUPPORTING OUR PARISH / 2nd Collection

If you would like to make contributions to support our Parish please do so at Mass via the RED bucket or deposit directly into the Parish Account our details are: Account Name: CCF BSB:062815 Account Number: 00328161 Ref: 5004 2nd Collection or 5004 PG and your Giver Number or Surname, or you can use the Online Payments button on the Parish Website Home page or the Diocese App. If you are considering taking up **planned giving** you may like to know that **a percentage of the contributions are tax deductible**. If you would like to know more or set up planned giving please contact the Parish Office.

WEEKEND ROSTERS			
		<u>THIS WEEK</u>	<u>NEXT WEEK</u>
<u>PRESIDERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	Mass Mass	Mass Mass
<u>PROCLAIMERS:</u>	5PM 9.30AM	U France J Vipan	C Tuck H White
<u>PSALMIST:</u>	5PM 9.30AM	K Lendon D Joyce	J France D Peterson
<u>GIFTS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	P Melvey L Hutchinson M Fowler P Melvey	P Robertson G Walker J Vipan M Melvey
<u>SERVERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	M Melvey F Dyson V Paulo R Lawandos	TBA TBA
<u>Av</u>	5PM 9.30AM	U France J Vipan	J Vipan D Peterson
<u>SOUND / VIDEO</u>	5PM 9.30AM	J France J France	R McArdle L Hutchinson
<u>WELCOMERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	P Melvey M Melvey A Walker G Walker	K Lendon A Sillince J Hutchins K Amon
<u>CHURCH CLEANING</u>	COOR MOR	K & F Dunn K Lendon	XXXX P Stewart

UPCOMING FEAST DAYS MEMORIALS AND SOLEMNITIES

THE NATIVITY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (S)— 24TH JUNE
SAINT IRENAEUS (M)— 28TH JUNE
SAINTS PETER AND PAUL (S)— 29TH JUNE
SAINT THOMAS (F) — 3RD JULY
SAINT BENEDICT (M) — 11TH JULY
SAINT BONAVENTURE (M) — 15TH JULY
SAINT MARY MAGDALENE (F) — 22ND JULY
SAINT JAMES (F)— 25TH JULY
SAINTS JOACHIM AND ANNE (M)—26TH JULY
SAINTS MARTHA, MARY AND LAZARUS (M) - 29TH JULY

Please pray for those who are sick, in hospital or recovering at home:

Pam Mullaly, Mary Johnson, Tintumol Thomas,
Christopher Maloney, Les Findley, Peter Martyn,
Bernadette Martin, Joan Gillett, Bruce Gillett.

Please pray for those who have been called to eternal life may they always be in our prayers.

Recently Deceased: Cyril Bell

Remembrance: Bruce White, Margo Sanden



Prayer Requests for the Bulletin

If you would like the parish to pray for a family member who is sick, recently deceased or you would like remembered please call or email the parish office or complete a prayer card for each person and place in the mail box near the parish office door. Cards are available at the back of the church and at the Parish Office.

All prayer requests require permission from a family member or the person. Due to Australian privacy laws.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there and unite
myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.



Live stream Mass every Sunday at 9.30am at
www.mn.catholic.org.au/places/live-stream

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an enduring and abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult please contact the Office of Safeguarding (ph: 02 4979 1390 or email: childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au), or visit their website for further information (www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au).





SUNDAY PRAYER SERVICE

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time A

Sunday 25 Jun 2023

The Introductory Rites

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as Australia's First Peoples and the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we work and live. Our Parish of St John Vianney Morisset is located on the traditional lands of the Awabakal and Darkinjung people. We honour and pay respect to, Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the spiritual culture of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

Gathering

The Lectionary/Roman Missal or a Bible may be placed on a table together with a candle and a cross.

Sign of the Cross

Leader:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All:

Amen.

Greeting

Leader:

Blessed be Jesus who makes us one,
and strengthens us
by the power of his Spirit.

All:

Blessed be God forever.

Introductory Remarks

Leader (in these or similar words):

Friends in Christ,
although we cannot celebrate the Eucharist this day,
we gather in God's name
for when two or more come together
God is always with us.

We worship in union with the whole Church
keeping this day of the Lord holy.

Opening Rite

LITANY OF PRAISE

Leader:

Before listening to the Word of God
let us praise the Lord Jesus Christ
who has raised us to new life.

A brief period of silence follows.

Leader:

Lord Jesus, you hear the cry of the poor: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you turn toward those who seek mercy: Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you release those who are in bondage: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader:

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

All:

Amen.

Opening Prayer

Leader:

Let us pray.

All pause for silent prayer.

God our Father

we are not afraid

for you care for us and watch over us.

Keep us close to you when the way is not clear

for you are our guide and our help.

We ask this through Jesus Christ,

with the Holy Spirit,

for ever and ever.

All:

Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Jer 20:10-13

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah

He has delivered the soul of the needy from the hands of those who are evil.

Jeremiah said:

'I hear so many disparaging me,

"Terror from every side!

Denounce him! Let us denounce him!"

All those who used to be my friends

watched for my downfall,

"Perhaps he will be seduced into error.

Then we will master him

and take our revenge!"

But the Lord is at my side, a mighty hero;

my opponents will stumble, mastered,

confounded by their failure;

everlasting, unforgettable disgrace will be theirs.

But you, Lord of Hosts, you who probe with justice,

who scrutinise the loins and heart,

let me see the vengeance you will take on them,

for I have committed my cause to you.

Sing to the Lord,

praise the Lord,

for he has delivered the soul of the needy

from the hands of evil men.'

To indicate the end of the reading, the reader acclaims:

The word of the Lord.

All reply:

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 68:8-10. 14. 17. 33-35. R. v.14

(R.) Lord, in your great love, answer me.

1. It is for you that I suffer taunts,
that shame covers my face,
that I have become a stranger to my brothers,
an alien to my own mother's sons.
I burn with zeal for your house
and taunts against you fall on me. (R.)
2. This is my prayer to you,
my prayer for your favour.
In your great love, answer me, O God,
with your help that never fails:
Lord, answer, for your love is kind;
in your compassion, turn towards me. (R.)

3. The poor when they see it will be glad
and God-seeking hearts will revive;
for the Lord listens to the needy
and does not spurn his servants in their chains.
Let the heavens and the earth give him praise,
the sea and all its living creatures. (R.)

Second Reading

Rom 5:12-15

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

God's gift to us is nothing like our sin against him.

Sin entered the world through one man, and through sin death, and thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned. Sin existed in the world long before the Law was given. There was no law and so no one could be accused of the sin of 'law-breaking', yet death reigned over all from Adam to Moses, even though their sin, unlike that of Adam, was not a matter of breaking a law.

Adam prefigured the One to come, but the gift itself considerably outweighed the fall. If it is certain that through one man's fall so many died, it is even more certain that divine grace, coming through the one man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an abundant free gift.

To indicate the end of the reading, the reader acclaims:

The word of the Lord.

All reply:

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

Reader:

From the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All:

Glory to you, O Lord.

Mt 10:26-33

Do not fear those who can kill the body.

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'Do not be afraid. For everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the house-tops.

'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows.

'So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven. But the one who disowns me in the presence of men, I will disown in the presence of my Father in heaven.'

Reader:

The Gospel of the Lord.

All:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

All are seated.

Reflection on the Word

Q. What message is meant to be conveyed by the imagery about the sparrows?

Q. What does it mean in today's world to 'declare oneself' for Jesus?

Q. How might a message to 'fear God' be misunderstood and misused?

Q. Who is someone you admire because they are not afraid to live their faith?

Q. How do you understand the difference between a disciple and an apostle?

Profession of Faith

Leader:

In union with the whole Church
let us profess our faith.

All:

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

At the words that follow, up to and including the Virgin Mary, all bow.

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of the Faithful

Leader: My sisters and brothers, with faith in God who is always with us, let us bring our needs before the Lord.

Reader: That the Church will courageously proclaim the Word of God.

(pause)

In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That world leaders will hear the cry of the poor and make just decisions.

(pause)

In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That those who live with fear and anxiety will find hope in the words of Jesus.

(pause)

In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That our community will be a place of welcome for all, especially the lonely and marginalised.

(pause)

In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That those who are sick or frail will receive physical and emotional support from all those around them.

(pause)

In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That those who have died will be held gently in the hand of God.

(pause)

In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Loving God, we know that you are with us always, even when we are troubled. We ask that you lead and guide us as we spread the Good News of your kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Leader:

At the Saviour's command
and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to say:

All:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever.
Amen.**

The Concluding Rite

Blessing

Leader:

Through the resurrection of his Son
God has redeemed us and made us his children.
May the Lord bless us with joy and fill us with fruits of the Spirit.

All make the sign of the cross during the blessing.

All:

Amen.

Dismissal

Leader:

Let us go in peace. Alleluia.

All:

Thanks be to God.

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FAITH MATTERS: Pain, Prayer, Penance and Paella

I now know why there are so many books and stories told about the Spanish Camino.

NICKI GRAHAM PUBLISHED JUNE 20, 2023

The road that is taken by many over hundreds of years is pretty much the same, but the journey is different for every set of feet that walk the Way of St James from St Jean Pied de Port in France to Santiago in Spain.

800km, looking back, seems like a crazy thing to do. To tell the truth, I was in my comfort zone. I'm no fitness guru, nor am I one for achieving great milestones, however I woke up every morning, put on my favourite pair of shoes (my hiking boots) and the same set of comfortable clothing, sans make up, and for forty days I walked with a painful prayer.

My journey was nothing extraordinary, or maybe, with God's presence, it was...

I never really experienced the pain of excruciating blistered feet or extreme weather conditions. I didn't share lice-ridden beds with a cohort of snoring, sleep deprived travellers.

Nonetheless, I felt a pain of my own sort. I struggled at times with my own acts of penance. I grappled with my negative thoughts and I prayed through them as I walked. Forgiveness manifests in the untimeeliest ways.

Before I left, I wrote a letter to each of my children seeking atonement. I received beautiful messages from two of my children but not from my firstborn.

Weeks later, however, he turned up in Sarria, meeting with me to walk the last 100 km's together. I was overwhelmed with love and gratitude for him and his selfless act of giving so much of his time to be with me.

I expected to be sitting on a mountain, with an incredible vista, discussing profound observations about faith, life, love, family, and forgiveness.

What actually happened was an encounter with God and my son whilst crossing a road. We had not spoken much about 'the letter', however, as we crossed the road together, we embraced, and my son spoke candidly about his love for me. There, on the side of an insignificant road, on the way to Santiago, I made peace with my beloved son. God makes the call. God chooses and justifies the time and place.

Forgiveness holds one heavy in the heart, and I spent time with a pilgrim whose agenda was to seek such. She had experienced the tragic loss of her husband, didn't believe in God and yet was seeking forgiveness.

As we walked and listened to each other, I watched her open herself to the possibility of encountering God in ways that were not just within the four walls of church.

I told her about a pilgrim I met earlier who I jokingly told was going the wrong way. He laughed and told me that he needed to do more k's. What he actually did was drop his pack at the top of a challenging ascent (where I was resting), scrambled back down the mountain to pick up the packs of a couple of strangers who were struggling with blistered feet and carried their packs for them.

I asked my new Camino friend "was that not the Holy Spirit working through him?" She stopped walking and had an incredible look of astonishment on her face, saying, "I never thought about God like that." We walked in silence together for some time. I hoped that she saw that grace allows us to witness and perhaps be random acts of loving kindness.

My dear friend Liz had her own struggles. Her feet became so blistered, and legs troubled with shin splints that at times she could not walk any further. Coupled with that was the news that her son, back home, had a terrible accident. As a mother, she wanted to be home with him. Her strength, motherly love, and resilience showed to me a woman who can overcome adversities. It was a privilege to walk with her, whether in animated conversation that resulted in fits of belly laughter, or in times of deep sadness and tears or just in times of shared silence. We prayed our own petitions of shame as we helped each other lug our huge suitcases of unnecessary 'stuff' up the steep stairways in our accommodation each evening. I will forever be grateful to have Liz as a companion on the journey.

"I went up the mountain to pray." Luke: 9: 29

One warm spring day Liz and I decided to avoid the regular Way and take the road less travelled. We started to climb a mountain and it was steep, rough, and relatively unmarked. I felt fatigued and really wanted to give up and call for an Uber (as if they'd come out there!). The wind was in my face. The mountain was challenging, and I didn't feel up to the task. Then I felt pressure, not unkind but a feeling of a physical presence on my back. Hands were supporting me, pushing me, urging me up the mountain. There is no physical way of explaining the 'push' that I was given. When I reached the top, I knew that I had not hiked it alone. My beautiful team from Pastoral Ministries, who had placed hands on my back and prayed for me just days before I left Australia, were now with me, pushing me on, helping me up. At the top I gave thanks to God for his constant presence in my journey. That walk was painful, but it was real and extraordinary, such is the power of our God.

"Sing to the LORD; praise his name. Each day proclaim the good news." Psalm 96:2-4

One afternoon, in the village of O'Cebretero, I was enjoying a taste of the local cuisine, when a stranger came and asked me

what I was eating. I invited him to share a sample. Later, that night, I met Jeremy and his beautiful wife Mary from Singapore. At Mass we prayed together, speaking the parts in our own language. After dinner I walked outside to hear someone singing the beautiful hymn *How Great Thou Art*. I sat with Jeremy and sang with him, taking in the wonder and awe of a billion stars on a chilly Spanish evening. From then on, Mary, Jeremy and I often celebrated Mass together in the villages we passed through.

"Some have entertained angels without knowing it." Hebrews 13:2

What blew me away was the generosity and genuine kindness of the locals. They must feel inundated with pilgrims passing through their towns. It must seem exhausting. The first time I experienced such generosity of heart was in a remote village (population of possibly 10) when I was tired and thirsty. I walked into a building with very little money. I was welcomed in and offered anything I wanted; food, somewhere to rest, a kind ear to listen, for nothing but a donation of whatever I could offer in return. This act of kindness happened a lot along The Way. No one ever told me about this, how I would encounter locals still upholding the centuries old tradition of embracing and welcoming pilgrims into their village and home.

Hospitality also comes in the form of your Camino family. You meet people along the way and inevitably you end up sharing a table with them at dinner. It was not unusual to start dinner at a table for two, only to find yourself pushing tables together to share with a dozen pilgrims - once strangers, now Camino family. Faith runs deep and in abundance and this is one aspect of the Camino that I will hold in gratitude to the locals and my Camino friends.

I'm passionate about walking, but more so, about walking with others on their faith journey. I believe, with a passion, that walking in the great outdoors provides the opportunity to listen but also to allow the Holy Spirit to work through us all, in our own way within the wonderful tapestry of God's creation.

Part of our mission to help others share the joy of the Gospel is to tell our story. If the moment arises, I do this on our own Maitland Diocese pilgrimage, the aMeN CaMiNo and we invite you to join us on one of our pilgrimages offered: one day community walks, overnight retreats or the full 100km camino. We are happy to offer opportunities for pilgrimage to suit your parish and community.

"The only ones among you who are truly happy are those who have found how to serve." Schweitzer

Did I receive blessings along the way? Every day.

Were my prayers answered? In abundance.

Buon Camino

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