

Being Eucharist To Each Other...



Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton ~ Lent 2011



My dear people,

It is a pleasure to introduce this year's Lenten program focussing on **'Being Eucharist To Each Other'**

We are invited to reflect on how we are eucharist to each other. What does this way of life call us to do? It calls us to gather together with others, listen to God's word and share in the Eucharist, and to be for others what Jesus is for us, **'To Be Eucharist To Each Other'**.

Celebrating Eucharist with a community is a key way of making our relationship with God real. You will be invited to reflect on each week's Gospel, to read the stories of other people across the Diocese, and reflect on how you are **'Eucharist To Others'**.

I encourage you to embrace this period of Lent as a valuable opportunity to grow in your faith. In Lenten discussion groups, as families or as individuals, I invite you to take time to use this program as together we strive to understand more clearly and live more genuinely Jesus' words **'Do this in memory of me'**.

When we read the Gospel stories, we see that:

- Temptation can help us clarify our goals and sharing in the Eucharist helps us focus on the things that give life and meaning
- Eucharist can transform our daily lives
- Eucharist is about being in relationship allowing each of us to be present to each other as well as forgiving and welcoming to outsiders
- Eucharist enables each of us to foster and use our gifts and talents
- Eucharist can confirm and enable the things we are passionate about

May this Lent be a time of radical transformation as we commit ourselves to prayer and reflection in the hope that **'there will be a stirring deep within'** as we **'fan into a flame'** the gift of faith and **'like good stewards of the manifold grace, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received'**. 1 Peter 4:10



I am extremely grateful to all who have prepared and contributed to this resource, and ask that we take its call to heart. As followers of Jesus, that we continue to come together with others to give thanks for the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. He teaches us how to live full and rich lives and become the people God created us to be – **'Eucharist To Each Other'**

+ Brian Heenan  
Bishop of Rockhampton

Lent 2011

# Group Sessions - Model for Shared Reflection...

**Prepare a sacred space:**  
*a candle; any symbols that may help connect with the focus; a bible open at the week's gospel; booklets, pencils/biros for each person.*

**Establish an unhurried, reflective mood,**  
*in which there is space for silence and listening to one another.*

- Welcome everyone to the gathering, especially noting any newcomers or apologies.
- Invite people to have this page open each week for the prayer.
- The first time you gather, look together at the booklet and the particular week, to become familiar with the format of the 2 pages and the way the meeting will proceed.



## **Being Eucharist to Each Other through Stewardship**

Heavenly Father,  
we thank you  
for the gifts  
you have given us.  
We thank you  
for the treasure  
of the Eucharist,  
the gift of Jesus  
in our midst.  
Help us to recognise  
Jesus in others,  
so that together,  
we may respond  
to His call to go out  
to be Eucharist  
to each other.  
Amen.

## **+ The Sign of the Cross**

**Turn to the page and  
announce the theme for the week.**

### **Focussing Question:** (15 mins)

Participants consider a life-centred question  
that will lead towards the Gospel.  
Encourage shared responses,  
listening to each person's contribution.

**Gospel:** Proclaimed by a group member. (20 mins)

*Silence*

**Response:** As suggested

**Gospel Commentary:** invite a member to read (10 mins)

How does this commentary add to what you have already  
shared regarding the Gospel?

**Silent Centering Prayer** (2-5 mins)

*Encourage each person to sit in a relaxed, attentive manner and use a  
mantra, breathing the words in with each breath.*

**Connection:** Read and discuss (15 mins)  
the following question.

### **Where God's Spirit is Leading:**

...quietly think about this, maybe write it down.

Share your responses if you wish.

# Week 1: Temptation

**Focussing Question:** *Think about your life at the moment. When has temptation helped you understand and clarify your goals? How does your sharing in the Eucharist help you to focus on the things that give life and meaning: are life-giving?*

## Reading Week 1 ( Year A) Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.' But he replied, 'Scripture says: Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down; for scripture says: He will put you in his angels' charge, and they will support you on their hands in case you hurt your foot against a stone.' Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says: You must not put the Lord your God to the test.' Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'I will give you all these', he said, 'if you fall at my feet and worship me.' Then Jesus replied, 'Be off, Satan! For scripture says: You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.' Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.

### Gospel Response:

- Say aloud a word or phrase from the gospel that speaks to you.
- Listen to each person's word or silence.
- Share how this word, a phrase, or the whole gospel, could be speaking to you or your community at this time.

### 1st Sunday of Lent - The Testing of Jesus

When Adam and Eve reached out their hands to take the fruit of the tree, they were wanting what God had already intended for them: to be like God. Made in divine image, they were to grow even more God-like by free obedience to God's commands but tempted by Satan, they chose to do it their, or rather Satan's, way. Sin then with pain and suffering in its train, entered our world.

Jesus' testing in the desert comes immediately after his Baptism where the Father had proclaimed Jesus, the Beloved Son of God. Satan now tests just what that title means. Just what type of authority would the Son of God exercise? Authority and power are closely linked realities. A person having authority can easily slip into exercising power over people. The difference between using manipulation (by wonders) or force is merely a matter of style. Satan tempts: if you have the authority, you have the power to make bread, to have the angels protect you. When Jesus rejects these displays of power for his own sake, Satan offers him his own raw power over the world. Jesus refuses to sabotage God's plan of salvation by taking Satan's easy way.

Jesus rejects an authority based on anything other than faithfulness to God's word. For the Beloved Son this word was that he was to be like us in all things even experiencing the effects of sin: pain, suffering and finally death. Because in our flesh he encountered our disobedience and our weakness and overcame them he becomes the true authority on salvation. Rather than having power over us, he has power with us. Having been through temptation and death, he puts his arm around our struggling shoulders and says "Learn of me, lean on me and we'll face life in God's way."

## Week 1 - 'Temptation'

We see in the Temptations that Jesus begins to shape His life's vocation. He has decided to place His trust in His relationship with God. He knew what He was saying "no" to as He began this phase of His life. Jesus was faced with a choice: accept what the Tempter had to offer, to take the easy way, the quick solution or God's way which means - Trust. I would like to think that Jesus spent some time pondering and weighing what to do. Jesus makes the choice to trust in His relationship with God. I find sometimes, as we all do, that like Jesus in the wilderness, I have to make choices, some are fairly straightforward, but some are difficult. Do I take the easy way out, go for the "quick fix" and stay with the familiar and the secure? Or do I, like Jesus, trust in God's way - despite the uncertainties and unknowns that ultimately lead to God's truth and life? For this great gift I am grateful to God. To be grateful, I believe, is to accept and recognise every day the presence and love of God in my life and that the gifts that I have are God's gifts to me. The breath that I breathe, the talents that I possess and the people who come into my life are God's gifts. To know that God is good, not by what others say, but because I experience it in my life. Again, God's gift. I clearly remember making the choice to go to the seminary. At age 28 I believed I had everything I wanted in life - a great job in real estate management, a very good wage, I had been engaged which did not work out, a present girl friend, great friends and family support. Yet there was a nagging that something was missing in giving me life and fulfilment. Walking past St Stephen's Cathedral in Brisbane one day, I saw Archbishop Rush preparing for the midday Mass. I acted on a great urge to speak to him - no doubt upsetting his reflection time. He remembered our talk about priesthood when he was Bishop of Rockhampton and I was in Year 12 at the then Christian Brothers College. Bishop Rush told me to pray and wait. After that midday Mass he said to me "Perhaps it's time." It was this advice from this wise man that began my journey to priesthood. Supported by Bishop Wallace, my family, friends and priests, I then had to face telling the woman who was part of my life that I was going to the seminary. I decided to tell her at dinner at a restaurant - thinking safety in numbers? Bad move, bad choice! By conversation end, everyone in the restaurant knew I was going to the seminary. A note of caution, some discussions should not be held in public! My youngest niece could not pronounce seminary - she would tell people I was at the cemetery - my mother saw the humour - eventually! Each of us experience God's loving and forgiving presence in various ways. For me, I receive these gifts ultimately in the Eucharist. Each time I celebrate Eucharist it is new and different, never the same. This is God's gift for me and I hope for all of us. Sometimes the feeling is strong and sometimes not so strong, but always it is life-giving and fulfilling. Always I try to share my feelings of Eucharist with those gathered. St Augustine once wrote that when we say AMEN each time we receive communion we say AMEN to three things: Amen, when we receive Communion; Amen to the Communion Minister because he/she recognises in us the Body of Christ; Amen, to the Body of Christ into which the community is transformed. I urge you to think about your Amen. Wonderful for me is realising that though we all differ in age, culture, gender, ethnic backgrounds, we are all one body at the Lord's Table. I admit to feeling an intimacy and close bond with all who gather at the Lord's Table. Living my life as a priest I definitely made the right choice as Jesus did. I have been blessed with so many people who give me life and energy: brother priests, Bishop Brian, friends and parishioners - above all my great family. Together in Eucharist the Body and Blood of Christ enables us to respond to God's love in a faithful, committed and generous way - God's way. As Christians we are meant to imitate the life of Jesus, whose voice we listen to, the voice that encourages us to take God's way which leads to life and truth.



Fr John Hogan

## Family Connections

**Weekly Focus Activity:** *During this Lenten season strive to come together as a family for the evening meal a couple of times a week and focus on the things we like about each other and the good things about our day. This "sharing circle" embeds in our children the value of ceremony and personal ritual.*

*In the spirit of stewardship....do I recognise my family as a gift given to me by a good and gracious God?*

**"How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity" (Ps 133:1)**

As parents we are the first educators of our children, endeavouring to impart values and qualities of the soul, namely virtues, which will bring out the best in them. As children grow and learn they will come across situations where, like Jesus, they are tempted to deviate from the desired path. The parent, as an effective authority, must set clear boundaries that will enable children to develop their own inner discipline. In our role as stewards of our children our authority is in the service of their learning. Even with our guidance it is the child who chooses how to act and respond to life's opportunities. Choice is the essence of morality.

***Affirmation: I will strive to fully recognise the privilege bestowed upon me in serving as my children's first mentor.***

***"In family life, love is the oil that eases friction, the cement that binds closer together, and the music that brings harmony." Eva Burrows***

# Week 2: Transformation

**Focussing Question:** *Think about your life at the moment. When has someone's positive attitude changed your life? Does your sharing in the Eucharist transform your daily life? In what ways?*

## Reading Week 2 (Year A) Matthew 17:1-9

Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone. There in their presence he was transfigured; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and from the cloud there came a voice which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him'. When they heard this, the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear. But Jesus came up and touched them. 'Stand up,' he said 'do not be afraid.' And when they raised their eyes they saw no one but only Jesus. As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order. 'Tell no one about the vision until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.'

### Gospel Response:

- Say aloud a word or phrase from the gospel that speaks to you.
- Listen to each person's word or silence.
- Share how this word, a phrase, or the whole gospel, could be speaking to you or your community at this time.

### 2nd Sunday of Lent - Transfiguration

In some Gospel stories small details are very significant. The account of the Transfiguration in Matthew begins with the phrase "Six days later". (This is missing in the lectionary text.) By the use of this phrase we are supposed to recall the scene at Caesarea Philippi where Peter recognised Jesus as the Son of God, where Jesus made his first prophecy about his passion, death and resurrection and where his disciples were told that they must take up their cross and follow Jesus. Peter's rebuke to Jesus shows how deeply upset they were by this strange and awful teaching.

Soon after, Jesus takes three of his still disturbed disciples to a high mountain. Mountains in this time were not places one climbed for fun but rather where one went to encounter God. God descended in glory on mountains in the Old Testament and he does also on this mountain. Three times the Greek text says "Behold!" The sheer staggering wonder of what the disciples saw still overawed the early Church. Behold, Moses and Elijah, the two leaders, who symbolised all that was best of the Jewish faith, were speaking with Jesus. Behold, the bright cloud, the glory of God descended. Behold, the voice of God was heard. The voice which the Israelites in the desert could not bear to hear, names Jesus his beloved Son, the one in whom he is pleased and orders, yes orders, them to listen to him. No wonder Peter does not know what he is saying. No wonder the disciples fall in fear.

And then, there is nothing - only Jesus. Gentle, human Jesus touching them and telling them to rise and have no fear. If the disciples were disturbed before, they must have been overawed now. Just who was this man: one facing a horrible death? one in whom the glory of God shone? one who was human like us? All of these. Our human tendency is to reject suffering and to embrace glory. The Transfiguration story stresses that Jesus' passion is both humiliating suffering and the revelation of God's glory. Both are part of God's mysterious love.

## Week 2 - 'Transformation'

In Scripture the Transfiguration is a change that affected Peter so much that he wanted to remain on the mountain in the presence of the Lord. Similarly, I am invited to change in the way I relate to all people around me whether they are family members, work associates, strangers, acquaintances or members of the worshipping Christian community including children and adults. Each time we celebrate Eucharist we are nourished, changed and commissioned to be Christ to all people. At the conclusion of Mass the priest sends us out, blessed and commands us to, "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord." Now I am a steward for the Lord, supporting and being supported by all in attendance at Eucharist, encouraging each other in prayer, sharing a common faith, spending some time in fellowship, and encouraged to act in the name of Jesus to visit sick or housebound parishioners, family and friends. At the moment of receiving communion, I am one with Christ and in the quiet, calm, peaceful moments able to reflect on the mystery of God and try to contemplate how I am to serve him each day. Some of the mystery is revealed in Scripture at specific moments of history; at Christ's Baptism, a voice from heaven said, "This is my own dear Son, with whom I am pleased" (Matt 3 v17) and again in today's Gospel. At Christ's crucifixion the army officer exclaimed, "He really was the Son of God," undoubtedly a revelation for him.



God commands the disciples to listen to Jesus. If I am to be a disciple of Jesus with all my failings, then I too must listen to God reflecting on Scripture, homilies or commentaries, in supporting others by sharing in their joys and sorrows. I am also asked to take up my cross each day to follow Jesus. Sometimes the cross is light and carried comfortably, but at other times it is not so easy to accept when there is emotional or physical suffering that has to be resolved through prayer in helping the person involved, family or the community that may be suffering.

Eucharist is the high point and the centre of our worship in the church and calls us to change (Transfigured). Eucharist is also a healing grace and we pray for that just before sharing communion, "only say the word and I shall be healed." Being Eucharist to each other starts with my family by supporting them prayerfully and with love and understanding, the community gathered at Eucharist on their journey or in the workplace.

Lent is a time of preparation and reflection giving me an opportunity to enrich my spiritual journey and to change, grow, love and serve God and be an active part of his Kingdom on earth. The Transfiguration also helps overcome fears. Jesus goes before us and I am called to follow him. It is a choice I have to make each day being who I am and how I show God's love to those around me.

**Arthur Begea**

## Family Connections

**Weekly Focus Activity:** *During this Lenten season strive to come together as a family for the evening meal a couple of times a week and focus on the things we like about each other and the good things about our day. This "sharing circle" embeds in our children the value of ceremony and personal ritual.*

***In the spirit of stewardship...am I able to be open to new ideas and techniques that may help to transform me to be the best parent I can be?***

***"So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost" (Matt 18:14)***

Our children are spiritual beings brought into the world to grow in body, mind and spirit. As a parent we are the guardians and stewards appointed by God to love and guide this wonderful gift - a child. Raising children presents us with many opportunities to approach a situation in a way that will promote growth for all involved. Teachable moments allow us as parents to name situations and refer to a child using positive language and labels, therefore enhancing self-esteem; and empowering them to deal with their spiritual challenges and address their higher self.

***Affirmation: I will strive to fully recognise the power that my words have in transforming the attitudes and creating happiness for those around me.***

***"There is no doubt that it is around the family and the home that all the greatest virtues, the most dominating virtues of human society are created, strengthened and maintained." Winston Churchill***

# Week 3: Acceptance/Intimacy

**Focussing Question:** *Think about your life at the moment. How can relationships be a source of pain? How does your sharing in the Eucharist lead you to forgive and to be welcoming to outsiders?*

## Reading Week 3 ( Year A) John 4:5-16, 19-25, 39-42

Jesus came to the Samaritan town called Sychar, near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well is there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, 'What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?' - Jews, in fact, do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus replied: 'If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you: Give me a drink, you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.' 'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered 'and the well is deep: how could you get this living water? Are you a greater man than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?' Jesus replied: 'Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again; but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside him, welling up to eternal life.' 'Sir,' said the woman 'give me some of that water, so that I may never get thirsty and never have to come here again to draw water. I see you are a prophet, sir. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, while you say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said: 'Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know; for salvation comes from the Jews. But the hour will come - in fact it is here already - when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: that is the kind of worshipper the Father wants. God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah - that is, Christ - is coming; and when he comes he will tell us everything.' 'I who am speaking to you,' said Jesus 'I am he.' Many Samaritans of that town had believed in him on the strength of the woman's testimony when she said, 'He told me all I have ever done', so, when the Samaritans came up to him, they begged him to stay with them. He stayed for two days, and when he spoke to them many more came to believe; and they said to the woman, 'Now we no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he really is the saviour of the world.'

### Gospel Response:

- Say aloud a word or phrase from the gospel that speaks to you.
- Listen to each person's word or silence.
- Share how this word, a phrase, or the whole gospel, could be speaking to you or your community at this time.

### 3rd Sunday of Lent - A Dynamic Encounter

John in his Gospel has an extraordinary ability to bring the greatest riches out of the most simple situations. Jesus asks a woman for water and what results is not only salvation for the woman but the first proclamation of him as Messiah and Saviour of the World. Mind you the woman is some character. She would have been judged by her peers as in need of salvation but Jesus saw more, and revealed himself openly to her as the Christ.

This woman had lived life to the full. She must have had an extraordinary personal magnetism to have attracted five husbands - I imagine someone like Marilyn Munro. She also must have suffered deep rejection to have been divorced five times - only the husband could initiate the divorce. Coming to the well alone and at midday shows that she was ostracized within her village. What women would trust her near their husbands? Her first questions to Jesus are flirtatious: "What? You are Jew and you ask me...? Are you a greater man...?" But Jesus responds on a very different level. Beneath all her show and through her tough life, he sees a person thirsting for the fullness of life. He treats her with respect and turns every question round into an opportunity to open her heart to her neediness and then to himself as the source of the true living water. What results is such an extraordinary transformation that her own villagers come out to meet this man she proclaims as the Christ.

Jesus took this woman as she was: a larger than life character who had been looking for love in all the wrong places. His respect and his love did not diminish her but rather he used her attractive personality to draw others to himself.

### Week 3 - 'Acceptance/Intimacy'

Midge Jackson was a short, stocky woman with an infectious laugh and ready smile. There was a joyousness about Mrs Jackson and although one of my Mother's generation, she always included me in her 'orbit' whenever she came to our home, or met socially. It was the 1950s. I was a second generation Greek/Lebanese girl. As I approached adolescence, I was bearing the emotional scars of the sudden death of my father and despite all my exercising I could not beat the various bulges that were starting to develop in my adolescent body! One day after listening to yet another litany of all my figure faults and worries of a thirteen-year-old, she laughed: 'Annamaria, don't be so silly. Why worry about that? You've got a lovely personality and a lovely smile and look at the way you entertain people. It's what's inside that counts.' I was speechless! I couldn't grasp that she actually liked me as I was! Fat and all!! And it wasn't even the words, so much as the way she looked at me. Her 'Eucharist' words echoed many times for me, as I met the various challenges of my career. And now that I am retired, I hope that I can continue to bring the Eucharist of courage and confidence and joy to others – just like Mrs Jackson did for that mixed-up thirteen-year-old back in the 1950s.



*Annamaria McGregor*

There are a number of messages that can be interpreted from this piece of scripture, however the main message I pick up on is the Samaritan woman's thirst for the living water of Christ. I relate the thirst and living water with the importance of seeking the Eucharist each week to provide me with the strength and courage to live my life to the fullest as God wanted us to. I can easily look back at times in my life where I was seeking to satisfy my quench for life in the wrong places, which can leave you feeling unsatisfied and unfulfilled. In today's society it is easy to become distracted with the constant noises surrounding our lives. We can tend to isolate ourselves from the source of the Eucharist and Christ's message by distracting our focus with work, social activities and sports, just to name a few. This scripture reading reminds me to constantly ask myself the hard question of where am I seeking the living water from and is this truly going to satisfy my thirst or distract me from what's really going on. It seems to be the hard choices in life are the ones that define us and also the most rewarding in the long term. By coming to the Eucharist each week it allows me the time to reflect on the true source of strength, goodness and courage. I believe this ultimately allows me to live my life to the fullest and provides me with the necessary gifts and qualities to fight the battles and make the hard decisions in life.



*Gerard Melrose*

## Family Connections

**Weekly Focus Activity:** *During this Lenten season strive to come together as a family for the evening meal a couple of times a week and focus on the things we like about each other and the good things about our day. This "sharing circle" embeds in our children the value of ceremony and personal ritual.*

***In the spirit of stewardship....am I able to practise using the language of love to empower those around me in the everyday situations of their lives?***

***"Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matt 25:40)***

Every child is potentially the light of the world and parents serving as their first educators need to work to create a family culture based on gentleness, respectfulness and orderliness. Positive, virtuous words, the language of the soul, provide a simple language of spirituality which allows parents to acknowledge effort and growth in their children. This, in turn, leads to inner strength and authentic self-esteem.

***Affirmation: I will strive to fully recognise how important it is for me to use the language of love in interactions with my family, in order to promote their spiritual growth.***

***"Smile at each other, smile at your wife, smile at your husband, smile at your children, smile at each other - it doesn't matter who it is and that will help you to grow up in greater love for each other." Mother Teresa***

# Week 4: Healing Vision

**Focussing Question:** *Think about your life at the moment. How does your sharing in the Eucharist challenge you to move out of perceived closed and set ways of living?*

## Reading Week 4 (Year A) John 9:1,6-9,13-17,34-38

The blind man went off and washed himself and came away with his sight restored. As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. He spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored. His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man.' They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.' Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the sabbath.' Others said 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet', replied the man. 'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away. Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and worshipped him.

### Gospel Response:

- Say aloud a word or phrase from the gospel that speaks to you.
- Listen to each person's word or silence.
- Share how this word, a phrase, or the whole gospel, could be speaking to you or your community at this time.

### 4th Sunday of Lent - Whose fault was it?

That is what the disciples wanted to know when they encountered the man blind from birth. Was it his parents or the man himself who was to blame? Jesus rejects both alternatives and states that it was 'so that the works of God might be displayed in him'. But the question of blame doesn't go away. In fact in this section of John's Gospel the real question is, "What is sin?"

Jesus had cured a well-known blind man on the Sabbath. The religious authorities were scandalised and refused to accept that Jesus could be from God because he did things that went against their understanding of the Law. This God-given law had become lost under layers of human interpretation till its meaning was lost in legalism. The law, meant to be an aid to walking humbly before God, had become a cause of oppression. Self-serving religious leaders had interpreted the law to make themselves appear righteous and all who deviated from their ways, appear as sinners. They looked so carefully to their own laws that they failed to recognise the coming of God.

In this simple healing miracle, Jesus allowed the light of God to reveal what is truly happening in the human heart. The Pharisees are shown to be blinded by their own self-righteousness, the parents blinded by their fear, but the healed man himself gradually sees who Jesus is. As he stands firm in his belief that Jesus did a good deed, his understanding of Jesus grows. At first he recognises Jesus as 'the man', then 'a prophet', then 'from God'. Even when he is cast out he remains firm in his trust that God was with Jesus. The final meeting between Jesus and him is tender and intimate. Here, heart speaks to heart. Jesus can reveal who he truly is and the man can worship.

## Week 4 - 'Healing Vision'



I live a privileged life because I have the ability to attend daily Mass while many of our diocesan communities only have monthly celebrations. This privilege allows me to be present in a personal way on a weekday to and for a smaller group of parishioners while the week-end celebrations have the greater sense of community with its immense diversity. On a weekday, silence and companionship abound while on the week-end, there is worship through joyous singing, ritual and the ability to 'catch up' with others. At each Mass that I attend, I am searching with expectant faith to hear, see and experience something new to challenge me to name my suffering, identify areas of deficit, need for growth and to pray for others especially those who need or have asked for our prayers, while giving glory and thanks for my gifts and talents.

This 'kick starts' my day for meeting Jesus in others and to participate in the work of God. Eucharist allows me to develop an inner awareness that questions my own attitudes and responses to those around me and those in society. Eucharist is not about following the external observance, but an internal journey to constantly develop a personal relationship with God, Jesus and Spirit. This calls me to examine in daily life, my thoughts and motives while having the courage to act with and in love. Hearing Gods' word, participating and receiving Eucharist while praying with others guides and strengthens me to hopefully make the right decisions to follow the path that I have been called to take in living for others.

"God help me to change, to change myself and to change the world, to know the need for it, to deal with the pain of it, to feel the joy of it, to undertake the journey without understanding the destination, the art of gentle revolution. Amen" [Leunig]

Being in a Marist parish, I am reminded and encouraged to ponder on the words of Mary's son. Therefore this coming week, let us contemplate the words of Jesus through John "you are looking at him, he is speaking to you" as we are kind and considerate to each other, a 'doer of good' and a peacemaker. God CAN do great things even through US. "If we open ourselves as much as we can to the friendship of Jesus and the warmth of human love, we will grow in personal maturity, in the serenity and grace of our 'person'. This growth is ultimately, God's transforming work within us." [Catherine McAuley]

**Annette Rowe**

## Family Connections

**Weekly Focus Activity:** *During this Lenten season strive to come together as a family for the evening meal a couple of times a week and focus on the things we like about each other and the good things about our day. This "sharing circle" embeds in our children the value of ceremony and personal ritual.*

***In the spirit of stewardship....do I explore ways of opening my eyes to my loving family and reflect on my attitudes, which will then allow me to understand and honour their spirit?***

***"Making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph 4:3)***

We are called to recognise the spirit in our children; their creativity, purposefulness, and excellence, by giving them the freedom to explore their gifts, talents and abilities. Children have a natural sense of wonder, which can be developed by using an approach that awakens their sense of the sacred. If we wish for our children to develop a relationship with God it is important to speak about Him when they are young and beginning to become aware of a spiritual experience.

***Affirmation: I will strive to fully recognise that my children's spiritual connections are an integral part of their holistic development.***

***"...our good God understands each one of us better than we understand ourselves."  
(1877 St Mary of the Cross MacKillop)***

# Week 5: Freedom From Darkness

**Focussing Question:** *Think about your life at the moment. When has love and faith set you free from hurt and sin? How does sharing in the Eucharist foster your use of your gifts and talents?*

## Reading Week 5 (Year A) John 11:3-7,20-27,33-45

The sisters Martha and Mary sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.' Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.' On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said: 'I am the resurrection and the life, If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' 'Yes Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.' Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said 'See how much he loved him!' But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man's death?' Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha said to him 'Lord by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.' Jesus replied 'Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said: 'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer. I knew indeed that you always hear me. But I speak for the sake of all these who stand round me, so that they may believe it was you who sent me. When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.' Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

### Gospel Response:

- Say aloud a word or phrase from the gospel that speaks to you.
- Listen to each person's word or silence.
- Share how this word, a phrase, or the whole gospel, could be speaking to you or your community at this time.

### 5th Sunday of Lent - The Fullness of Life

Through his Gospel, John uses various elements as symbols to explore who the person of Jesus is. Water, light, bread, shepherd. Now, as the drama of Jesus' life comes to its climax, death, the greatest enemy of life, is the symbol by which we are invited to understand even more deeply the mystery of Jesus.

Jesus hears of Lazarus' sickness and delays going to Bethany until after Lazarus' death. Lazarus is the player 'out of the scene' for most of this drama and it is through the reactions of his two sisters that the meaning of this death is explored. Both sisters are grief-stricken, as is Jesus himself. Whatever consolation regarding death Jesus offers it does not remove the sheer awful grief of loss. If anything should alert us to the fact that what Jesus is offering is more than our ordinary human life resuscitated, it is this. He could have saved sick Lazarus from death. Before he resuscitates him, he makes clear to Martha that what he is truly offering is not a rerun of life as we know it.

Jesus has not come to save us from suffering and death but rather to save us through them. They are not taken away but rather are given a greater meaning. The dialogue with Martha reveals God's true plan. Martha knows that Jesus could have saved Lazarus from death, she believes that even now God will do whatever Jesus asks of God, implying that Jesus can resuscitate Lazarus. She also believes that Lazarus will rise at the last day. But was her understanding of the last day Jesus'? I doubt not. She probably understood a good life free of pain and suffering. But Jesus offers something more. Jesus, Son of God, passes through death taking our humanity with him, that we may come to know the fullness of life: the life of God.

## Week 5 - 'Freedom From Darkness'

Calling 'a spade-a-spade' is very much an Australian approach. The no nonsense and sometimes blunt approach leads to less confusion and less mucking about. The disciples, in the gospel story, interpret literally the euphemism Jesus uses when he refers to the dead Lazarus as 'being asleep'. Jesus sets them right by speaking plainly. 'Lazarus is dead.' As the story unfolds, Martha reminds Jesus that Lazarus has been dead for four days and 'by now he will smell.' Obvious and true!



Each time we gather to celebrate the Eucharist we are invited through the penitential rites to reflect on our lives and to 'call a-spade-a-spade' by acknowledging there have been gaps in the way we have lived out our Christian vocation. There is no need for niceties or window dressing. Each one present is in the same boat. There are things that we have done and things that we have failed to do. There are matters that have deadened us to living life to the full. We are given the opportunity to own this and to move on. We do not need to gather extra baggage which, in the long term, may bind us up and become a restriction to our freedom – as Lazarus experienced. We are invited to unbounded freedom.

**Mary-Ann Casanova rsj**

The Eucharist influences each person in the society differently, whether to strengthen the link between mind and God or to acknowledge the sacrifice that Jesus made to set us free from sin and hurt. For the youth of today, it is strengthening to know that there is a loving and compassionate friend in Jesus who is there to support and encourage us throughout the arduous journey of life. As demonstrated by the passage from John 11:1-45 it shows that the faith of a few can do wonders, in this case raise the dead. My life is a testament to the power of the Eucharist. I have been blessed by God's love through my family and friends. I have made wrong choices in the past that have affected others, but the support and strength that I find in the Eucharist has made me a better and stronger person. The Eucharist is the perfect example of how when using talents and abilities have benefited many people. It is by this example that I attempt to live life in all its fullness and to give back to the community. The members of the Catholic community have proved to me that inappropriate choices and hurt can be overcome by love and faith, and it is in my willingness to follow their lead that I attempt to portray the talents and gifts that God and Eucharist have bestowed upon me.



**Chris Kitto**

## Family Connections

**Weekly Focus Activity:** *During this Lenten season strive to come together as a family for the evening meal a couple of times a week and focus on the things we like about each other and the good things about our day. This "sharing circle" embeds in our children the value of ceremony and personal ritual.*

***In the spirit of stewardship...do I honour my family's ability to find their own truth and help them to bring light and life into their world?***

***"Do not judge, so that you may not be judged." (Matt 7:1)***

Parenting children comprises; listening to them, being a witness to their feelings and bestowing upon them the gift of recognising the capacity they have to control their own destiny. Meeting our children where they are, through respectful listening, being deeply present and asking clarifying, supportive questions, will empower them to come to their own conclusions. The art of guiding children from darkness to light through spiritual companionship is in being the parental presence that allows the child to hear himself.

***Affirmation: I will strive to fully recognise the importance of "being there" in a conscious way for my family, so I may be their light and they may be certain of my love for them.***

***"Other things may change us, but we start and end with family." Anthony Brandt***

# Week 6: Unconditional Love

**Focussing Question:** *Think about your life at the moment. What are the passions of your life? Does the Eucharist confirm and enable these passions to be life-giving?*

**Reading Week 6 (Year A) Matthew 26:14-27:66**  
**(The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew)**

***This reading is too long to be written in its entirety in the space provided, so for this week's session have someone read the passage directly from the bible.***

## **Gospel Response:**

- Say aloud a word or phrase from the gospel that speaks to you.
- Listen to each person's word or silence.
- Share how this word, a phrase, or the whole gospel, could be speaking to you or your community at this time.

## **6th Sunday of Lent - The Passion of Jesus Christ according to Matthew.**

Each of the Gospel accounts of the Passion of Jesus Christ reflects the particular concerns of its author. Matthew, writing for a Jewish Christian community, stresses how Jesus' death was a fulfilment of the Scriptures. His brutal death by crucifixion, the height of shame in the ancient world, was not a mistake, a blunder, but a plan by God to remain 'with us' in all the worst experiences of humanity. In Jesus, God is with us in suffering, pain and abandonment and this peculiar presence is the means by which God dealt with human sin once and for all.

Matthew often uses irony to show his meaning. The accusations hurled repeatedly against Jesus: being called the Christ, the son of God, the king of the Jews, being able to destroy and remake the Temple are actually true. The mockery shown by the soldiers and people beneath the cross contrasts with the profound homage that is Jesus' due. As Jesus' accusers get wilder and wilder in their denunciations, we realise the horror of this murder of the innocent one, the true Passover lamb. As Judas, the chief priests and Pilate bring about the death of Jesus they constantly try to evade their guilt. Finally, it is the people who bring the condemnation to a head. "All the people" howl for his crucifixion and then cry, "His blood be on us and on our children!" In Jewish ritual, blood was an integral part of purification. Ironically in owning their guilt, they allowed their means of salvation to take place. Jesus, who with his power could have evaded this death, rather accepted all that human sin threw against him and loved us to the end.

Through the ultimate alienation and abandonment of death, he remained faithful. Now with his grace, we truly have the power to face our sin and weakness and faithfully take up our cross and follow him.

## Week 6 - 'Unconditional Love'

Living for many years in the western region of our diocese, I have been privileged to minister to the pioneers of this area. These wonderful people have given their lives to building better conditions for the rural communities in which they have brought up their families. Just as Jesus gave up His life for us, his physical body broken and His life-blood shed, so too the Bread of Life, broken and shared, gives life and spiritual nourishment to these special people. My involvement in pastoral care gives me the opportunity to ensure that those who can no longer leave their homes or the hospital can hear the Word of God and receive Eucharist every Sunday. This weekly visit also nourishes me as I listen to the stories and memories of the past, and, in turn, share the news of local events.



There is a vital link between the sharing of Eucharist, and the 'bread' as food of which many in our world are deprived. I am reminded of the hungry and malnourished populations, and of the helplessness of working families to provide for their needs. We are called to become a bread-sharing community not only within the church, but in the larger society. The challenge for society is the provision of bread for the hungry, and the challenge for the church is to provide Eucharist to its members.

**Sr Rita Connor rsm**

For my family and I, attending Mass every weekend has always been a way of life. Coming together around the family table both at home and at the celebration of the Eucharist, brings us closer together as a family. My early involvement with the music ministry began with my participation in our parish children's liturgy program. From this I discovered my passion for sacred music and ever since have been sharing with the congregation the great gift I have been given. Singing and participating in the Mass is something truly special that allows me to draw more directly to the meanings and wonders of our faith. To perform a piece of sacred music to the fullest, an understanding of what the composer is trying to express has to be captured. This allows us to be more single minded and to take time out from our busy lives, and focus on the message that is being portrayed to us. Singing in front of a congregation of people, not only allows me to express my faith to others, but to become an instrument of God's love as I share music in his name. Throughout the liturgical year, we are reminded of the challenges of expressing our faith in today's world and living out the Eucharist in everything we say and do. Music enables me in a personal way, to centralise the Eucharist in my mind as I proclaim his greatness to others in song.



**Matthew Dennis**

## Family Connections

**Weekly Focus Activity:** *During this Lenten season strive to come together as a family for the evening meal a couple of times a week and focus on the things we like about each other and the good things about our day. This "sharing circle" embeds in our children the value of ceremony and personal ritual.*

***In the spirit of stewardship....do I fully recognise the wonderful gift of my child that God has entrusted to me, as we journey through our time on this earth?***

**No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friend. (John 15:13)**

As parents we model the spiritual goals that we set for ourselves. This may be demonstrated in how we discipline ourselves, in the way we do our work, care for our health or create time for reverence with prayer and silence, which inevitably will bring us closer to God. All children are born with the gifts within, waiting for us to guide them with the sharing of our wisdom, knowledge, skills and most of all, our unconditional love. It is with the help of the Holy Spirit that we learn to honour the spirit of our children, in order to help them become responsible citizens of our global community. Nurturing children is the ultimate stewardship.

***Affirmation: I will strive to be the best parent I can be!***

***"Whatever they grow up to be, they are still our children, and the one most important of all things we can give to them is unconditional love. Not a love that depends on anything at all except that they are our children." Rosaleen Dickson***

# EASTER TRIDUUM

## Opening Prayer

Loving God,

Give us faith to follow you all the days of our lives.

Rule in our minds and hearts as our King.

May our love for you grow stronger  
and stronger each day.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, our Redeemer.

Amen.

Across these days we travel with Jesus in his return, through a violent and unjust death, to the Father. We are with him as he celebrates with friends, as he is betrayed, rejected, tortured and put to death. We remain with him through the still grief of death into the explosion of divine life that comes in his resurrection. We use words and signs to enter into this journey. The heart of our Catholic worship is the use of simple signs to convey to us the love of God. We who are flesh and blood like Jesus need concrete things to help us remember who Jesus was and who we are. These signs are so ordinary that we can miss their significance. What is exciting or dramatic about bread, water, light, words? Not much. These things are the stuff of our ordinary lives. And that is exactly the point. What is with us all the time, are the means by which God's love is constantly being revealed to us. This reflection will look at some of the signs we use in the liturgy over these Paschal days.

## HOLY THURSDAY

Two rituals prepare us for Jesus' betrayal and death – the washing of the feet and the giving of himself in the Eucharist. When washing the feet of his disciples, Jesus took the position of the lowest person in the household and we are often called to serve like him. But first we must allow ourselves to be served. In our time, people who get their feet washed are the weak and vulnerable. I have only ever washed the feet of babies and small children, of the elderly or the sick. Those who couldn't do it for themselves. But like Peter, we often reject Jesus' offer to serve us. We want to be in control. We want to make our own salvation. But at the heart of our relationship with God is the recognition of our profound neediness. No matter how much we may seem to have our act together, we are, each and all, profoundly broken, needing the kind and gentle service of a loving God who stoops to wash our feet and serve us the finest of food.

Washing and feeding – how much do these two activities consume our lives. In fact most work we do is some form of service. As we serve each other like Jesus, so we must recognise the Jesus that serves us in other people. No doubt the disciples sat in awe and reverence as Jesus knelt before them, washing their feet. This same reverence we need to show to each other, within our families and across our communities, as we serve each other in our neediness. Jesus comes to us in the ones who cook and clean, maintain our roads and cars, provide our food, teach our children and take away our garbage.

It is often in service that we enter into our own Passion. Care within the family, working with others, dealing with difficult people and situations, these are the places where we met betrayal and rejection, suffering and sorrow. As Jesus went out and faced his night of suffering, we too can go with him, knowing that he has transformed our pains into sources of grace.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What impressed you most about Jesus at the Last Supper?
- Can you think of an experience that you would describe as "the longest night of your life"?
- What helped you at that time?
- How do you bring "Eucharist" into your daily life?



*Only a Shadow*

Carey Landry (AOV #133)

*I Have Loved You*

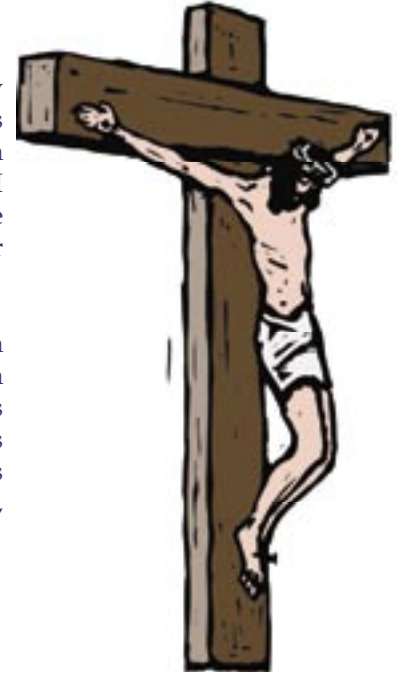
Michael Joncas (AOV #126)



# GOOD FRIDAY

In the celebration of the Lord's Passover we celebrate Jesus' embrace of the mystery of death and diminishment in life. The simple ceremony of the veneration of the cross speaks of the deep griefs that cut across our lives. Each time I approach the cross on Good Friday, I bring with me to Jesus, the griefs, sufferings and sorrow of those I love as well as my own and I sense that each one in our Church does the same. As we approach the cross, wave upon wave of our pain and hurt comes to Jesus, and in our love and trust, we believe that sorrow is taken up in his sacrifice of love.

As the wood of the Cross is hard and unyielding, so often our pain is as well. We can find no answers, there is often no way out. Yet in embracing the pain of our life with Jesus, the hardness does not break. We reach out and touch the wood of the cross with our hands or our lips. In that gesture, we offer a cry from our heart that rises with the cry of Jesus as he hands over his spirit to the Father. The answer of God was to enfold him in death for a time. Often when we feel no answer to our many griefs, we can believe that we are enfolded in the dark mystery of God.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

*What pains and hurts are part of your life?*

*What crosses do you carry?*

*Are there any prayers that you find very helpful when you are suffering?*



***Behold the Cross***

Bob Hurd (AOV # 105)

***Now We Remain***

David Haas (AOV #45)

# HOLY SATURDAY



This mystery is so important that God did not rush to raise Jesus from the dead but waited till the third day. This time of waiting is called Holy Saturday.

On this day we wait in the tomb with Jesus for the time of rising. On this day we use the sign of nothingness to show the mystery of our grief. On this day the Church is left bare –no Eucharist, no baptism, no marriage is celebrated. Like the empty home to which the bereaved spouse or parent returns, our Church is hollow and empty. This is the day we honour the loneliness, pain and suffering that dogs our days. Some pain will never come to closure in this life but this time of waiting in grief has been honoured and made sacred by Jesus in his sleep of death.

# EASTER VIGIL



Dark, dark, dark. The Easter Vigil begins in darkness. We are born from darkness and, but for Christ, our death would be a return to darkness. During our lives we have times when we feel we are in control, that we know where we are going. Then tragedy or mystery strikes and we feel we are walking a bush track in the dead of night. Lost and afraid. Then we know the true meaning of our faith. Christ has died – he has entered this darkness fully – and Christ has risen – he has overcome the darkness. This faith in Christ will not take away our tragedy or our pain but we will gain strength from the presence of Christ walking alongside giving us whispers of his presence. Our time of worship, especially on this Easter night, trains our hearts to recognise his presence in darkness.

The Pascal Feast opens with fire. Most of us, at heart, are pyromaniacs. Yet while we enjoy a good fire, the symbolism is largely lost on us these days. No longer does fire provide warmth, light or the heat to cook food. No longer does it make life pleasant and enjoyable. Electricity does that for us. (Yet when we think about electricity, here too we have a fine symbol for the power of Christ's grace in Resurrection. This energy is not seen, it is only known by its effects. It is the power to transform inert machines into powerful labour saving tools.) Again and again this night, we proclaim – Christ our Light. During this night look at the darkness around the fire then at the fire, later look out the windows of the Church and then back into the brightly lit Church. This is the difference Christ will make to our life if we focus on him and let our hearts be filled with his light.

At the Easter Vigil we have readings, many readings. Words wash over us. Stories and poems, prayers and song fill the liturgy and in these words our name of 'Christian' is spelt out to us. Imagine this celebration as us sitting around the fire yarning about ourselves. As Christians we are so rich and deep that it takes many tellings in different ways for us to get a glimpse of the wonder and glory that is ours in Christ. We need to be patient with ourselves in listening – God has already been patient with us in the telling. We are hearing ourselves being told into existence. As God spoke his Son, the Word, Jesus, into our world, so he speaks again that Word into our being. It takes time for that Word to echo in our lives.



We hear these words, not for information, but for transformation. We already know the story but we have to gradually learn the meaning for our lives. On Easter night do not worry if you miss much of what is said. If some phrase or sentence strikes you, remember that, treasure that. Take that phrase away with you and over time, mull over it. As a plough cuts into the soil, making it easier to farm, so this phrase, given by the Holy Spirit, can open up your heart to the love of God. Listen with your heart and you will hear the words that are important for you this year. There are other years to hear the rest!



Water – how common. But nowadays we are realising how precious it is. As we take care of how we use our water, we can realise how many different tasks it serves in our lives, drinking, washing, cooking, cleaning, swimming, relaxing, farming – you add to the list. Water is also the sign of our rebirth into Christ, into the life of God. This is so easy to say but we can so easily leave God in church, only meeting him in 'religious' occasions. Then we miss out on so much. Consider all the situations of your life and how God would like to enter into it and give you the fullness of life. Imagine how the dry places of your life could become a watered garden with God's love.

Over the days of Triduum, we will use words and water, bread and wine, wood and oil, light and fire to recognise God in the midst of our weak and broken lives. Under the sign of these ordinary things may we know God's love as a gentle light shining in our hearts transforming all that we love and all that we do.

*Sr Kym Harris osb*



**Father John Hogan** - Father John Hogan was ordained a priest in St Joseph's Cathedral on 24 May 1982 for the Rockhampton Diocese. Father John has served in ten parishes in the diocese and is presently assisting in the Parish of Rockhampton South.



**Mr Arthur Begeda** - Arthur Begeda has been married to Dorothy for forty years. They have six children and eight grandchildren. He is a teaching principal at Avondale State School Bundaberg. Arthur has held this position for five years. He is very involved in ministry in the Catholic Parish of Bundaberg.



**Mr Gerard Melrose** - My name is Gerard Melrose and I am currently 25 years of age and reside in Gladstone with my local parish being Star of the Sea. I have been graced to have been brought up in a wonderful loving Christian family who I am very close to. I am currently working at Gladstone Port Corporation which I find rewarding and enjoy the challenges of learning a new role.



**Mrs Annamaria McGregor** - Annamaria is married to Bob McGregor, who, despite his agnostic leanings, has been a constant support in her faith life. Now retired from a busy career in drama and theatre, she lives in Dysart where she is a member of St Therese's Parish and Adult Faith Co-Ordinator there. Her three adult children have been her 'best education' and they are a continued source of her joy and inspiration.



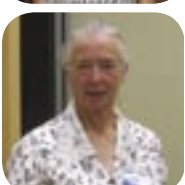
**Mrs Annette Rowe** - Annette is a wife, mother of four sons all married with ten grandchildren. She has lived an active life as a nurse and community advocate while presently working in aged care. Annette is Chairman of the Star of the Sea Gladstone Parish Pastoral Council and a member of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. She has embraced 'change' in our church with enthusiasm and joy and empowers others to embrace their own gifts and talents.



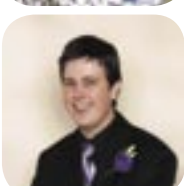
**Sr Mary-Ann Casanova rsj** - Mary-Ann Casanova rsj is a Sister of Saint Joseph, living and ministering at The Haven, Emu Park. Mary-Ann has a keen interest in eco-spirituality and the natural environment.



**Mr Christopher Kitto** - My name is Christopher Kitto, and I'm a sixteen year old student at the Cathedral College. I have been offered the position of school captain for the year 2011. I have participated in numerous liturgical celebrations both within the school community, and the Parish of Rockhampton South.



**Sr Rita Connor rsm** - Rita Connor, a Mercy Sister, has ministered in the west for the past twenty years. She is involved in parish and community activities in Barcaldine, teaches religious instruction in the state school, and is a member of Diocesan Commission for Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations.



**Mr Matthew Dennis** - My name is Matthew Dennis. I am 18 years old and have lived in Rockhampton all my life. Having finished year 12 last year, I am currently on a gap year and working at a local engineering firm. Next year I intend to study engineering at CQ University. My interests include music, theatre and flying radio controlled model aircraft.



**Sr Kym Harris osb** has been in the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton for only eight years but has been so impressed by some of the distinctive features of our region that she now calls herself a Central Queenslander. She belongs to the Benedictine Monastery in The Capricorn Coast Parish. Sister Kym has written the gospel commentaries for this lenten program.



**This lenten program has been produced for the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton, with stories and reflections being contributed by people around the diocese.**

**Please help us continue to improve on the future issues of the program by providing us with your feedback.**

**Call 07 4931 3643 for a copy of the evaluation sheet or download it from the diocesan website [www.rok.catholic.net.au](http://www.rok.catholic.net.au)**

**You might also like to send your comments/suggestions for future issues to:**

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**2011 lenten program was developed by a task group appointed by Bishop Brian Heenan and consisted of Fr John Hogan, Sr Kym Harris osb, Margaret Hallinan, Donna Mitchell, Jocelyne Benoit and Marcia Mansfield.**

**Layout: Marcia Mansfield**

**Family Connections: Contribution by Jocelyne Benoit, based on the philosophy of The Virtues Project by Linda Kavelin Popov**