Love Cannot Hurt Your Neighbour

Whenever there’s a gathering of people - a small gathering, like a family or a football team; or a big one, like a university or a church - there will almost inevitably be disagreements, misunderstandings and fallings out from time to time. That they occur is no cause for alarm; what happens next may well be.

On the one hand, differences of opinion or viewpoint can lead to brooding and bitterness, and in the case of nation states even to armed conflict. On the other hand, they may result in healing, in helpful discussions, in the airing of grievances. There can be little doubt which is the wise and which the foolish course of action to take. In Winston Churchill’s famous quip, ‘to jaw-jaw is always better than to war-war.’

When there is persistent error Jesus tells us to treat them ‘like a pagan or a tax collector’. That does not mean that the individual, group or community are to wash their hands of the offender. On the contrary, just as pagans and tax collectors were a special focus of Jesus’ ministry, so Jesus teaches us to include them in our mission also.

Paul teaches us that ‘Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour.’ Christian correction makes sense only when it is done in the spirit of love. To correct with love means that we don’t set out simply to win an argument; we don’t descend to sarcasm; we are deeply conscious of our own weakness and sinfulness; we do what we are called to do, aware that the Lord alone knows hearts and can change them.

Loving others may be relatively easy when it’s a matter of being generous and compassionate towards them. But there is another, deeper and more costly love: there may be times when we are called to practise the love that cares enough to confront, to challenge and even to oppose. Genuine love refuses to collude with wrongdoing through silence, though there may be situations where wisdom dictates that, for the time being at least, silence is the best policy.

Whenever we have courage to oppose what is evil we are involved in the Church’s task of binding and loosing - binding the evil forces that oppress people, loosing the bonds that prevent them from living the fullness of life in God’s kingdom. The Christian is called to love enough to speak uncomfortable truths at times - but always in humility and love. The final words of today’s Gospel apply not only to communal prayer but also to every honest attempt to restore peace and harmony within the community: ‘where two or three meet in my name’, Jesus promises, ‘I shall be there with them.’

*The Living Word* Majellan Publications
A World of Unexpected Blessings

Recently I returned to my office after lunch and realised that I had left my glasses somewhere in my lunchtime travels. I retraced my steps and found that the glasses had been placed in the middle of the table, now cleared, where I had drunk a coffee. As I approached the table the owner looked up from behind the coffee machine, smiled and gave me the thumbs up sign – pointing to the glasses. I was overwhelmed. In the rough and tumble of the working day this small act of kindness was unexpected. It served to soften the sharp edge of the day and to remind me that we live in a world of unexpected blessing.

I was reminded that somewhere along the way on that day I had closed my eyes to the many blessings that surrounded me and this act of kindness jolted them open. Our capacity to see the blessings of our days can be clouded by so many things. We can be weighed down by trouble or grief. The day begins with news about world-wide stories of human tragedy and suffering which can seem relentless and cause us to feel powerless. We may feel traumatised by the knowledge of the great abuses that have occurred in our Church and feel heartbroken for the survivors who live with the effects.

Perhaps we feel terribly sad about declining church attendance in our local parish or the results about religion in the latest census. We may just feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the issues living in the contemporary world raise for us. But I wonder if the ability to see the holiness of the world is one of the great challenges we face.

Seeing Mary Through New Eyes

The traditional Catholic practice of venerating Mary, the Mother of the Lord, has not fared particularly well lately. Some largely regard devotion to Mary as un-biblical or even as some kind of medieval superstition. Other Catholics have been given over to an all too shallow devotionalism that does Mary no real honour at all. This is a truly great contemporary tragedy of our faith. Our traditional veneration of Mary is underpinned by a number of profound biblical truths that make it one of the greatest treasures of the Church. Let’s take a journey through Sacred Scripture to recover these truths and, in so doing, see Mary through new eyes.

Our journey commences with the story of the conception and birth of Jesus as told by Matthew (1:18-25). In those days, girls were betrothed at around age twelve. This was not an engagement as we understand it; the betrothal ceremony was a proper marriage ceremony. By custom, the girl returned to her parents’ home following the betrothal ceremony. A year or so later, she was brought to the house of her husband where the marriage was consummated. Joseph and Mary were, therefore, legally married when Mary conceived Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, not being the father, could only conclude that Mary must have committed adultery. The penalty for adultery under the Law of Moses was death by stoning. (Deut 22:23-24). Although it appears that the death penalty was not enforced by this time, Mary faced a life of public humiliation and shame. Joseph, described by Matthew as a ‘righteous man’, decided to divorce Mary secretly to spare her any shame.

This was an extraordinary development. Hitherto, a ‘righteous man’ was one who strictly upheld the Law of Moses. A ‘righteous man’ would have exposed his wife’s breach of the Law and publicly divorced her. Here, Matthew has redefined a ‘righteous man’ as one who shows mercy rather than one who strictly upholds the Law. This new approach to ‘righteousness’ will later become a hallmark of Jesus’ mission. Mary, a vulnerable young girl (she could have been as young as twelve and almost certainly no older than fourteen), knew the consequences when she stepped out in faith and agreed to bear Jesus.

(continued next week)
Calling All Grandparents

Our Grandparents play a very significant role in our lives - perhaps today more than ever. From them we learn our history and traditions as a family. Often today it is our Grandparents who offer us support in our faith journey.

Our Parish family would like to honour Grandparents at the 9:30am Mass next Sunday 17 September. It is a special privilege to belong to family. Our Parish family is no exception. The Mass will be a celebration of thanks for all they do for us. The patron saints of Grandparents are St Anne and Joachim - the parents of Mary and the grandparents of Jesus. After the Mass there will be a special Morning Tea at the canteen.

Please Note

Child Protection Sunday & Safeguarding Month
This Sunday and throughout September we are reminded how each of us must play a part in protecting our children, working together as a community to stop abuse or neglect from happening to children as well as the vulnerable. Please find information at the confessional table and on the diocesan website: www.dbb.org.au

Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill Forum
You are invited to a public forum to hear medical and legal experts discuss the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2017. Thursday 21 September 9:30am-12:30pm Theatrette Parliament of New South Wales. Free registration by Monday 18 September (gold coin donation for morning tea) to tammy.tsimbrikas@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2017 - www.noeuthanasia.org.au (HOPE)
Do you know the facts? The ‘Hope’ website provides compelling and greatly needed information and formation around the delicate issue of Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia. It is vital that we understand how the most vulnerable members of our community will be affected by this proposed legislation and to know what we can do to stop this life threatening bill from being passed. Now is the time to act. To get involved please contact Steven Buhagiar 0415 600 290 or steven.buhagiar@dbb.org

Postal Plebiscite on “Same-Sex Marriage”
The Australian Government has announced there will be a postal plebiscite on whether the definition of marriage in the Marriage Act 1961 should be changed to include “same-sex marriage”. Ballot papers will be sent out to households on 12 September and all votes must be received back by 7 November. Be sure to vote and to vote No, to keep marriage as a unique relationship between a woman and a man. Please visit our diocesan website for more information: www.dbb.org.au

Mass & Prayer Vigil for Life, Marriage & Family in Australia
Entrusting our nation to Our Lady of Fatima on the 100th Anniversary of the September apparitions of 1917 and praying for the intentions of Marriage and Life in light of the Redefinition of Marriage vote and the NSW Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia Bill 7pm Wednesday 13 September St Agatha’s Church Pennant Hills. Enq: 0415 600 290.

Prayer: Affirming the Relationship
This Encounter Course highlights the necessity of an active and vibrant prayer life for fostering a personal relationship with Jesus. Presented by Very Rev Dr David Ranson Tuesday 12 September 7pm St Cecilia’s Parish Wyong. Bookings: 4332 9825.

Alpha for Young Adults
Alpha is an opportunity to share a meal, watch a film about how to know and follow Jesus, and have a conversation with friends about how to follow Jesus in daily life. Join local young people from central coast parishes at St Patrick’s 76 York Street East Gosford Friday nights 7-9pm. For info call David 0401 337 127 or Dana 0401 413 746.
Serving the Catholic Community of The Entrance and extending the Kingdom of God

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Mass & Devotions in Ordinary Time

Sunday Masses Saturday Vigil 6:00pm Sunday 8:00am & 9:30am
Weekday Masses Monday - Thursday 9:00am Friday 11:45am Saturday 9:00am
Reconciliations Saturdays 9:30-10am & 5-5:30pm
Liturgy of the Hours Saturday 8:40am Rosary Monday-Thursday 8:35am Friday 11:20am Saturday 9:30am
Cenacle Wednesday 9:30am Christian Meditation Group Friday 10:30am-11:30am Muldoon Room. Come & join us!

23rd Sunday of Ordinary Time Ezekiel 33:7-9 Romans 13:8-10 Matthew 18:15-20

Entrance Antiphon: You are just, O Lord, and your judgment is right; treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.
Responsorial Psalm: O that you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.
Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! God was in Christ, to reconcile the world to himself; and the Good News of reconciliation he has entrusted to us. Alleluia!
Communion Antiphon: Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God; my soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

Keep Us In Your Prayers There is no gift more precious than prayer - Fr Benedict Groeschel

Funeral: The funeral of Paul Keast was held during the week. Please pray for Paul and his family.
Families: Bouchet, Cole, Attard.
Baptisms: Katie & Mia Kelaher, Tillie Cross.
Sacramental Program: We pray for the children and their families who are in the Confirmation Programme.

Pearly Gates

Our Lady of the Rosary GIFT CENTRE For all your devotional needs

We have lovely gift ideas for Confirmation, Baptism and all the Sacraments, as well as for everyday use. Everyone is welcome to browse. You’ll find the Gift Centre behind the Church carpark, corner of Ashton and Copnor Avenues.

Open:
Sunday 9am-9:30am & 10:30-11am
Tuesday-Friday 9:30am-1:30pm
Phone/Fax 4332 5997