

Our Sunday Word

St Michael's Parish, Nowra

Fifth Sunday (Year A) ~ Season of Lent

First Reading

37:12-14

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

The Lord says this: I am now going to open your graves; I mean to raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel. And you will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, my people. And I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live, and I shall resettle you on your own soil; and you will know that I, the Lord, have said and done this – it is the Lord who speaks.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 129

R/ With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

1. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord, Lord, hear my voice! O let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleading. (R.)
2. If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord, who would survive? But with you is found forgiveness: for this we revere you. (R.)
3. My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on his word. My soul is longing for the Lord more than watchman for daybreak. Let the watchman count on daybreak and Israel on the Lord. (R.)
4. Because with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption, Israel indeed he will redeem from all its iniquity. (R.)

Second Reading

8:8-11

The letter of St Paul to the Romans

People who are interested only in unspiritual things can never be pleasing to God. Your interests, however, are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him. Though your body may be dead it is because of sin, but if Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation

Jn 11:25-26

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ! I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord; whoever believes in me will not die for ever. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!



Gospel 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33-45 {Shorter}

From the holy Gospel according to John

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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection by Dianne Bergant CSA

As a metaphor, death can stand for many things. The prophet Ezekiel witnessed the death of the nation. The gospel reports the death of Lazarus. Although Paul refers to the mortal character of our physical bodies, he is more concerned with spiritual life and death. Death attacks each one of us in all three of these ways. We are all mortal and subject to physical death; we are all sinners and must deal with the implications of spiritual death; we are all subject to the consequences of social sins such as terrorism, violence, group hatred, greed and ecological exploitation. The question before us is whether or not we are going to allow death to reign in our lives and in our communities.

All three readings for this Sunday, as well as the psalm response, point out our inability to raise ourselves out of the deaths that afflict us. In the passage from Ezekiel, it is God who promises to open the graves of the people; the people are helpless to do anything. The psalmist cries to God from out of the depths of pain and helplessness. Acknowledging human propensity to sin, Paul credits the Spirit of God with transforming death into life. Finally, it is Jesus who calls Lazarus out of the grave and returns him to his life. We can see that God does not leave us to languish in our various deaths. Instead, God offers us new life out of the tombs. All of this is accomplished through the mercy and compassion of God.

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19
weeks to go



What is the Cross and Icon?

In 1984, Pope John Paul II entrusted a simple wooden cross to the youth of the world, and asked them to 'bear it in the world as a sign of the love of the Lord Jesus for humanity'. In 2003 he presented young people with a further gift, an icon of Mary with the child Jesus, *the Salus Populi Romani*, to journey 'together with the Cross' as 'a sign of Mary's motherly presence close to young people'.

In response to the Holy Father's requests, literally millions of young people from every continent have carried, touched and prayed before the Cross and Icon. The Cross and Icon has become a central symbol of the international World Youth Days and provides a focal point for the immediate preparation by the Church for World Youth Day.

Standing at almost 4 metres tall, the SYD Cross has travelled far and wide - it has been throughout Europe, North and South America, across Africa and Asia, and even to Ground Zero in New York. It has been carried by commercial airline, light aircraft, dog sled, pick-up truck, tractor, sail boat, fishing boat and on shoulders. From parish churches to youth detention centres, prisons, schools, universities, national historic sites, shopping centres, nightclub districts and parks. It is truly an international symbol for Catholic youth.

Now we, the Church in Australia, have been given the important task of adding our own steps and prayers to the 24 year-long pilgrimage of young people who have carried these symbols of Christ's love for humanity in every corner of the world. These symbols will be the focus of over 63 events held across the Macarthur, Illawarra, Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven from 24 March to 5 April 2008.

The Message Stick

For the first time in its history an Indigenous Message Stick is also part of the journey. This is an invitation from the Indigenous people of Sydney, the Eora Gadigal people, to the Indigenous youth of Australia to attend WYD08.

Shoalhaven Highlights

Saturday 29 March

- Kangaroo Valley
5pm Pilgrim walk (From Hampden Bridge to forecourt of St Joseph's Church)
- 7.30pm Vigil Mass (celebrated by Bishop Peter) followed by talks and camp for young adults and families [Call Christy Honeysett 4253 0809]

Sunday 30 March (2nd Sunday Easter)

- 7am Travels for events in Ulladulla
- Vincentia & Huskisson
2.30pm Travels by boat from Vincentia
- 3.00pm Indigenous ceremony and Memorial service for HMAS Voyager; Naval Cadet march (Huskisson Wharf)
- St John's High School, Nowra
4.30pm School celebrations and BBQ begins
5.30pm Arrival of Cross, Icon & Message Stick
- 7.00pm Outdoor Mass
- 8.00pm Live entertainment continues
- 10.00pm All-night vigil & veneration in St John's Chapel

Monday 31 March (Annunciation)

- Nowra
7am Dawn Service (Hanging Rock, Nowra)
- 9am Procession through the streets (from Marriott Park along Kinghorne St to Junction Court, Junction St, Osborne St to North St)
- 10.20am School and Parish celebrations (Around Parish Centre, North St, Nowra) BYO Picnic lunch in grounds of school
- 12.50pm Pilgrim walk over the Nowra Bridge (via Colyer Ave to river, then over Southbound bridge to Bolong Rd)
- Bomaderry
1.50pm Indigenous celebrations (Bomaderry Homes, Bomaderry)
- 3.00pm Travel to Kiama

"Carrying the World Youth Day Cross and Icon is not about ceremony or religion - it's the declaration of a friendship - it's a statement of God's love for every person and His invitation to friendship with Him."
(Bishop Peter Ingham)

We need volunteers

to help in dozens of areas (catering, music, parking, marshalls, decorations, disability support...)

The Cross & Icon are accompanied by both the National JCI team and our Diocesan team, plus a film crew. Bishop Peter Ingham will also be present as a pilgrim for all events. We have organised already places for them to stay and most of their meals!

Come to the planning meeting on Thursday 13 March at 3.30pm in the Parish Centre.

More than anything, we need your prayer support that many, many people in Nowra will be touched by the presence of the Cross in our parish, and discover more deeply the love of Jesus the Saviour.

Call Fr Richard (0401 621 591) if you are free to help in any way!

Light of the Cross Festival

The celebrations will culminate with *The Light of the Cross Festival* at the WIN Entertainment Centre on the evening of Friday 4 April 2008 (doors open 5:30pm). This ecumenical event, which is anticipated to attract over 5,000 people, has secured Aria award-winner Damien Leith and his band to perform as the headline act. **Tickets are \$10** (raising money for Kiribati youth to attend WYD) call Ticketek on 132 849. **Please call the Parish Centre if you would like to be part of a group booking.** Depending on interest, a bus may be organised as well. Book early as tickets will sell out quickly!



St Michael's Parish | Tel: 4423 1712 | E-mail: office@nowraparish.org.au | Website: nowraparish.org.au

9 March 2008 (5th Sunday in Lent) *The raising of Lazarus*

Incorporates the Church Communities of St Michael, Nowra; St Patrick, Berry, Sacred Heart, Bomaderry; Mary, Help of Christians, Culburra; St Joseph, Kangaroo Valley; Holy Spirit, Vincentia

Sunday Masses:

NOWRA 6pm Vigil; 8am, 9.30am & 6pm
BERRY 8.00am
BOMADERRY 9.30am
CULBURRA 6pm Vigil
VINCENTIA 6pm Vigil, & 9.30am
KANGAROO VALLEY 11.00am

MASSES DURING THE WEEK

Nowra: Mon 7.00am, Tues/ Wed/Thurs 8.15am, Fri 7.00am and 11.30am, Sat 9.00am
Morning Prayer: Wed 7.50am; **Holy Hour:** Fri 10.30am
Berry Tues 5.30pm
Culburra Thurs 5.30pm
Bomaderry First Friday only 5.45pm
Vincentia Mon/Thurs/Fri 8.00am, Tues/Wed 5.30pm
Shoalhaven Heads Friday 3.30pm
Kangaroo Valley Mon/Tues/Thurs/Sat 8.00am
 Wed 6.15am. Divine Office is chanted 15 mins prior to Mass. No Mass on Fridays.

Confession/Reconciliation

Nowra Sat 11.30 - 12.30pm. 5.00 - 5.30pm
Culburra Sat. 5.30pm
Berry Tues 6.00pm; **Also Sat 15th 9.00 - 10.00am**
Bomaderry 1st Fri. 5.15pm
Kangaroo Valley Sat 4.30 - 5.00pm
Vincentia Lent - Sat. 11.00 - 11.30am & 5.00 - 5.30pm

STATIONS OF THE CROSS (Last chance on 14 March)

Nowra: Fridays at 7.00pm
Vincentia: After the 8.00am Mass each Fri of Lent
K/Valley: Stations and Benediction Friday 5.00pm

EASTER LITURGY – Due to daylight saving and the Liturgical Recommendation that the Easter Vigil be in the hours of darkness, parishioners are advised that the Vigil Masses at Nowra, Berry, Culburra and Vincentia will be at 7.00pm

CONFIRMATION 2008

It is essential parents and candidates attend one of the following meetings as it provides an opportunity to meet on a personal level with the Priests of the Parish and other parents.

- **Nowra/Bomaderry:** St Michael's Church Tues 11 and Thurs 13 March, both at 7.00pm or following the 6.00pm Vigil Mass, Saturday 8 March.
- **Culburra:** Thursday 13 March, 6.15pm after Mass.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2008

It is essential parents of children making their 1st Holy Communion this year attend one of the following meetings

- Nowra** in St Michael's Hall on Wed 12 March at 7.30pm
- Vincentia** in Holy Spirit meeting room on Thurs 13 March at 7.30pm



'YOUTH MINISTRY' does not necessarily mean a Youth Group – as in previous years' or generations' understanding – if we are lucky we might have projects and events designed to give effect to ministries such as **Advocacy, Catechesis, Evangelisation, Justice and service, Leadership and development, Prayer and worship. There could be many options.**

But before anything like this can happen we, the Parish Council, with the support of Fr Pat, need to identify interested people (**both youth and adults**) from **each** of the parish centres willing to assist in the development and implementation of a strategic plan and structure for a 'youth ministry' within our wide and diverse parish with a view to building on the outcomes of WYD08.

The Proposal for Youth Ministry Strategy and Activ8 are available on the Web site for your information.

If you are interested in becoming part of this much needed and indeed exciting new Youth initiative, please call Grant Gleeson (Council Sec.) on 0411 039 941 or send an email ggleeson@mh.com.au or phone the Parish office (4423 1712) or email office@nowraparish.org.au. Following the reception of expressions of interest, a meeting of interested parishioners will be convened as soon as is practicable. At that meeting the concept of the draft strategy will be presented and explained.

SCHOOL ENROLMENTS FOR 2009

- **ST MICHAEL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL**
Applications for enrolment for 2009 are available from the School Office from Monday 18 February. Interviews in May.
- **ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST HIGH SCHOOL**
Enrolment Applications for Year 7, 2009 will be accepted from 5 March until 28 March 2008. Enquiries Mrs Josephine Geer 4423 1666

UOW CATHOLIC SOCIETY

The University of Wollongong Catholic Society is a group of young Catholic students who regularly meet on campus for prayer and fun. There are regular opportunities for Mass, and prayer meetings, and a highlight this year will be the WYD Cross & Icon on Campus on 4 April. To join, or for more information email catholicclub@clubs.uow.edu.au

JOURNEY TO THE HEART

Week 6 of our Lenten program is essentially a meditation on Holy Week. We are invited to imagine journeying with Jesus during his final days, as one of his disciples. A series of reflections invite us to consider our response both to our journey and to the Journey to Jesus.



PARISH PASCHAL MEAL COMMEMORATION – Sunday 16 March – 7.00pm for 7.30pm in the Parish Hall.

All welcome to this simple and joyous Parish celebration that reminds us of the connections between our Christian beliefs and customs (our Easter mysteries) and the Old Testament Passover.

Numbers should be given to Maree McMillan 4421 8516, Francene 4421 5962 or Peggy 4421 3417 by Monday 10 March – **PLEASE**

HELPERS URGENTLY NEEDED TO SET UP THE HALL NEXT SUNDAY MORNING (our few regular helpers are becoming more and more 'age' challenged!)

EXTRACTS OF THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL – 10 Feb 2008

Parish Statistics for the Sacraments for 2007:

- Baptisms – 114; (infancy -7yrs).
- First communicants: 120;
- Confirmations: 127;
- Marriages in the Church: 28
- Funerals within the parish 76
- The Parish Dinner for 2008 has been booked for Sat 27 Sept at Worrigeer House. (Based on a general questionnaire)
- WYD08 the Parish is still in need of HomeStay coordinators for each centre. Fr Richard will act as overall HomeStay coordinator for the parish.
- Fund raising for a meeting hall (Vincentia) – dinner scheduled at a local restaurant and a silver circle has also been formed.
- Vincentia & Berry auxiliaries have held their elections – new committees formed.

NOWRA EASTER CEREMONY CHOIR – will meet again on Thursday at 5pm in the Church. All welcome.



YOUNG ADULTS – Monday 17 March – Easter Prayer Night at 8.00pm in the Parish Centre. For information contact Jody on 4422 3318.

CROSSROADS – the next meeting will be held on Friday 13 March with The Christian Motorcyclists Association at the Nowra Baptist Church on Old Southern Rd., South Nowra. Come at 7.00pm for a 7.15pm start. Dress up as a biker or wear something made of leather – just come.

NOWRA CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE – next meeting Tues 11 March at 9.30am for morning tea – meeting at 10.00am. If possible please stay back for a short time to help with a craft session compiling Mothers' Day cards.



LIGHT OF THE CROSS FESTIVAL
Please book your \$10 tickets with the Parish Office by Tues 18 March so that we can organise a group booking. (see the ad on the back page)

During the overnight vigil of veneration of the WYD Cross and Icon in the chapel at St John's on Sunday 30 March, there will be opportunities for parish groups to have time to pray around the Cross. If you would like to organise a time between 10pm and 7am, please contact Amanda Lloyd (wyd08@nowraparish.org.au)

DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE RECIPE?– if so please share it with others by contributing to a professionally printed, A5 size wire-bound recipe book, all categories needed – to assist



young parishioners to attend WYD08 in Sydney. The book should sell for \$6.00 and should be 50 - 60 pages in size. Please send your copy either by email to Frances at francestherese@hotmail.com or drop into the Parish office, or in an envelope marked to Robbie's attention at Mass on Sunday. **Hopefully the book will be ready for sale when the Cross & Icon travel through the Parish 29-31 March.**

Support in this venture is also being **sought with local business people** by their **advertising** throughout the book, in either a half or full page advertisement – the cost is very reasonable. For information about advertising ring 4422 7791 – just think – we get to see the advert every time we use the book – for generations (you never know).



SECOND RITE OF RECONCILIATION – an opportunity to prepare for the Holy Week and Easter Liturgy at St Michael's, Nowra on Monday 17 March at 7.30pm. There will be 4 of 5 priests available.



We prayerfully remember **Bernard O'Neill** (Nowra) who died recently. Also **Jim Dempsey** and **John Basha** and all whose anniversaries occur at this time. *May they rest in eternal peace.*

WARATAH DAY CLUB BOMADERRY – this Seniors' Day Club meets every Mon from 10am to 2pm in the Bomaderry RSL Club. It is open to any interested senior member of the community who meet membership criteria. Activities include gentle exercises, quizzes, games, carpet bowls, entertainment and guest speakers. Morning tea and lunch provided. Cost \$5 each week. For info ring Sandra 4422 5342, Tony 4422 3592