

He put another parable before them, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest shrub of all and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and shelter in its branches.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

by Dianne Bergant CSA

Today we hear how the Spirit of God dwells in all of us, helping us in our weakness. The first disciples had Jesus to explain the parables; we have the Spirit to enlighten us. It is the Spirit who helps us to interpret the teaching of Jesus and to be receptive to the challenges that they pose.

The presence of sinners in the kingdom of God is often a stumbling block to good people. There will be a time for separation and judgment, but the time is not now. This means that the righteous will have to live with the sinner and, even more challengingly, show them the same kind of concern that they show to others. The presence of sinners does not necessarily erode the quality of the kingdom. Rather, it provides disciples an opportunity to rise to the occasion of generosity and forgiveness.

There are two images of judgment in the readings. The one in the gospel is terrifying and decisive. The wicked are bound together into bundles and readied for burning. We must remember that this is a parable. In the first reading and in the psalm response the justice of God is said to be lenient, clement and kind. The power of God is demonstrated not in retribution but in mercy. God is said to be 'merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in kindness and fidelity', and repentance is a very real possibility. This is the image that gives us hope.

Biblical Overview

by Greg Sunter

Good seed. Bad seed. Today's parable has challenged preachers and catechists for years as they offer one more interpretation. Approaches have ranged from unproductive soil to global warming. There is a growing consensus, however, that Matthew wanted to rationalise the diversity of the Christian community at his time. Jews and Gentiles, faithful followers of Jesus and stragglers along the way of Jesus – all are seeds and all are subject to growing spurts.

David Bartlett, professor of New Testament, suggests a new understanding that deals with a 'mixed world'.

'While the Church may consist almost entirely of faithful disciples, the world is full of those who fail to understand. It is not the Church's job to impose its vision of fidelity upon the world. It is the Church's job to live out its own fidelity and to trust the final judgment of the world to God.'

A more traditional approach is that the good seed is the believers and the bad seed is the unbelievers; the latter includes the ones who fall into the category of the unsaved. They will be the goats at the Last Judgment when the 'trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible'. Thank you, Paul, and your first letter to the Corinthians, especially the fifty-second verse.

Both Bartlett's approach and the traditional understanding lead to the same point – the judgment of 'who is' and 'who isn't' is present in both. The parable points to eschatological judgments and the consequences of the judgments. It is as true for us as it was true for the companions of Jesus: what we sow we shall harvest, be it a sturdy mustard tree or a handbell program. Neither can make it alone. They both need the human touch.

! The WYD Papal Mass will be shown on SBS TV from 10am

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Our Sunday Word

St Michael's Parish, Nowra

nowraparish.org.au

16th Sunday (Year A) ~ XXIII World Youth Day 2008

20 July 2008



First Reading

12:13,16-19

A reading from the book of Wisdom

There is no god, other than you, who cares for everything, to whom you might have to prove that you never judged unjustly. Your justice has its source in strength, your sovereignty over all makes you lenient to all.

You show your strength when your sovereign power is questioned and you expose the insolence of those who know it; but, disposing of such strength, you are mild in judgement, you govern us with great lenience, for you have only to will, and your power is there.

By acting thus you have taught a lesson to your people how the virtuous man must be kindly to his fellow men, and you have given your sons the good hope that after sin you will grant repentance.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 85

- R/** Lord, you are good and forgiving.
1. O Lord, you are good and forgiving, full of love to all who call. Give heed, O Lord, to my prayer and attend to the sound of my voice. (R.)
 2. All the nations shall come to adore you and glorify your name, O Lord: for you are great and do marvellous deeds, you who alone are God.
 3. But you, God of mercy and compassion, slow to anger, O Lord, abounding in love and truth, turn and take pity on me. (R.)

Second Reading

8:26-27

A reading from St Paul to the Romans

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what he means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation

Mt 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia! Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom. Alleluia!

Gospel

13:24-43 (shorter form)

The holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus put a parable before the crowds, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. The owner's servants went to him and said, "Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?" "Some enemy has done this" he answered. And the servants said, "Do you want us to go and weed it out?" But he said, "No, because when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the wheat with it. Let them both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burnt, then gather the wheat into my barn."

It's here!
15-20 July 2008
wyd2008.org





St Michael's Parish, Nowra – Tel: 4423 1712 E-mail: office@nowraparish.org.au

Website: nowraparish.org.au 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.

16th Sunday (of the Church Year (A))

20th July 2008

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 7am & 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 5.30pm, Tues to Fri 5.00pm
S'haven Heads; Mass resumes on Fri next Jul 25th.
Kangaroo Valley: Mon/Tues/Thurs/Sat 8.00am; Wed 6.15am. No Mass on Fridays.

Confession/Reconciliation

Nowra: Sat 11.30-12.30pm. 5.00 - 5.30pm
Culburra: Sat. 5.30pm. **Berry:** Tues 6.00pm
B'derry: 1st Fri. 5.15pm. **K'Valley:** Sat 4.30 – 5.00pm
Vincentia: Sat 5.00pm – 5.30pm

PLANNED GIVING RECEIPTS are available at all Mass Centres from this weekend. Receipts will **not** be posted out systematically.



We prayerfully remember: **George Cross, and Patrick Koppman who died this week;** also **Albert Muller** whose anniversary occurs at this time. *May they rest in eternal peace.*

MARRIAGE ANNIVERSARIES MASS 2008. If you are celebrating 25, 40, 50 or 60 years of marriage and would like an invitation to the Mass to be celebrated by Bishop Peter at the Cathedral on Sun 10 August, we encourage you to please contact Helen – 4253 0934 or email helen.bennett@dow.org.au

THE BUS TO THE PAPAL WYD MASS will leave the Parish Centre at 5.00am this Sunday morning 20 July and pick up in Berry at 5.15am. There are 57 pilgrims on the Bus. They will be told when dropped off where and when to meet the bus for the return journey.



THE W'GONG DIOCESAN COUNCIL FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES & THEIR FAMILIES has organised a satellite viewing of the WYD Papal Mass today Sunday 20 July in the Parish Hall – a direct telecast via SBS. Parishioners are cordially invited to a communal viewing of the Mass on a 'big screen'

Pilgrims in their masses

An estimated crowd of some 150,000 pilgrims from more than 170 nations then gave Pope Benedict a rapturous welcome on Thursday afternoon on the shores of magnificent Sydney harbour.



The Pope said it was a delight to greet the pilgrims. He thanked the Aboriginal elders for their earlier welcome, saying he was "deeply moved to stand on your land knowing the suffering and the injustices it has borne, but aware too of the healing and hope that are now at work, rightly bringing pride to all Australian citizens".

He offered a welcome to the Catholics and Christians in the crowd, and offered encouragement to those "hovering on the edge" of church life, and support for those not present who may be struggling on the margins of society.

Praise for Australia

The pontiff also had praise for Mary MacKillop - - as "one of the most outstanding figures" in Australia's history. "I know of her perseverance in the face of adversity, ..her practical example of holiness has become a source of inspiration for all Australians," he said. "Generations have reason to be grateful to her."

He said WYD filled him with "confidence for the future of the church and the future of the world".

CATECHISTS' INFORMATION –

- Level 2 course Aug 11, 18 & 25 from 9.30am – 2.00pm in the Parish Centre. It has been proposed that we have an evaluation meeting of new curriculum (2.30 – 3.30pm) and a lesson planning workshop (3.30 – 4.30pm).
- Retreat day – Gerringong Sept 29 at 9.30am
- Child Protections – Oct 20, 9.30am to 12 noon at Nowra Parish Centre. Everyone must update every 3 years. To register for any of the above ring Lyn 4423 1009

YOU ARE ALL AWARE OF THE EFFORTS OF THE YOUNG ADULT GROUP

in raising funds towards financially assisting young people of the Parish attend World Youth Day. With the various fundraising activities they have organised including the Gingerbread night and the Recipe Books – they have raised a total of \$6688 to date. A final figure for WYD expenses and fund raising will be advised in a couple of weeks.

FOSTERING A CULTURE OF LIFE TALK – Friday 15 August, 7pm in the Parish Hall. Paul Hanrahan and Gail Instance from Human Life International in Sydney will be guest speakers... More details will follow later. **Please note this date in your diary.**

FEASTDAYS FOR THE WEEK

Tues 22 – Mary Magdalene
Fri 25 – James, apostle
Sat 26 – Joachim & Ann, parents of Mary
Special Mass for Grandparents Friday August 1st. 11.30.a.m.

VALUING & SUPPORTING OLDER PEOPLE IN OUR PARISHES

The Aged Care Advocate is an initiative of Bishop Peter and managed by Centacare to work with parishioners to provide information and support to people who are ageing, their families and carers.

- Do you want to assist older people participate in parish life?
- Do you require information about aged care services available in the community?

If your answer is yes, contact Carmen Karauda, Aged Care Advocate on 4254 9331, mobile 0448 930 287 or email carmenk@centacare.woll.catholic.org.au