

keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.' Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

by Fr Richard Leonard SJ

A **fuore broke out** in a country diocese some years ago about the retreat style of priest who was taking Catholic students in their last year of high school or who were attending university away for weekend retreats. On the Friday night of the retreat this priest would tell the young people that by the end of the weekend they should make a decision about their Christian faith.

Some parents were shocked that their young people were given an ultimatum that included the possibility of rejecting their faith. The priest replied that Catholic youth have to make all sorts of decisions regarding career, lifestyle, residence, studies and relationships. Religion, he contended, often fell by the wayside, either not important enough on which to make a decision, or relegated to the personal shelf of neglect to be possibly taken down and dusted off years later for a hatching, matching or dispatching.

The priest argued that this wasn't good enough. After 12 years of Catholic education or many years of catechetics the Church had to take the risk of calling for a personal decision for faith. Some of the young people consciously chose membership in the Church. In making such a profession of faith many reported having a deep encounter with God and an experience of their faith in Christ. Other students made decisions against belonging to the Church, which is, of course, never irrevocable.

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- Mrs Robbie Forsythe, *Secretary* 4423 1712
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- St Michael's Primary School 4421 3630
- St John the Evangelist High School 4423 1666

The entire retreat process was based on the question in today's Gospel: 'Who do you say that I am?'

The disciples, reflecting on their experiences with Jesus, offer various possibilities, but it is Peter who says that Jesus is the revelation of God for the world. This is the great profession of faith and the basis on which the Church comes into being.

And what was true then, is true now. At some point, if we want our faith to move from being a code of law, a concept, or some excellent ideas to something we can experience, we must take the faith of the Church, which has nurtured us up to now, and make it our own. In doing so, when we encounter Christ, we contribute to the re-founding of the Church in our generation.

Just being part of the 'Catholic crowd' is hardly the challenge Jesus presents to the disciples in today's Gospel. We are commissioned like the disciples to bear witness to Christ's personal love in the workplace, with our friends and in our families.

It's always helpful to be reminded that we might be the only face of Catholicism, or even Christianity, that another person may encounter. The way in which we bind them up or set them free might be the measure by which they judge if the Church is the face of Christ in today's world and whether they could find a home with us.

And it all hinges on that great question which is asked of each of us today: 'Who do you say that I am?' How we answer this question reveals so much, including whether Christ is an idea we like, or the object of our passion.



**St Michael's Parish
Feast Day Dinner**

Worrigee House | 7.30pm 27 Sept

Tickets available @ Parish Office
and @ each church today

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Our Sunday Word

St Michael's Parish, Nowra

nowraparish.org.au

21st Sunday (Year A) ~ in the season of the year

24 August 2008

First Reading

22:19-23

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Thus says the Lord of hosts to Shebna, the master of the palace:

I dismiss you from your office,
I remove you from your post,
and the same day I call on my servant
Eliakim son of Hilkiah.
I invest him with your robe, gird him with
your sash, entrust him with your authority;
and he shall be a father
to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the
House of Judah.
I place the key of the House of David on his
shoulder; should he open, no one shall close,
should he close, no one shall open.
I drive him like a peg into a firm place;
he will become a throne of glory
for his father's house.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 137

R/ Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the work of your hands.

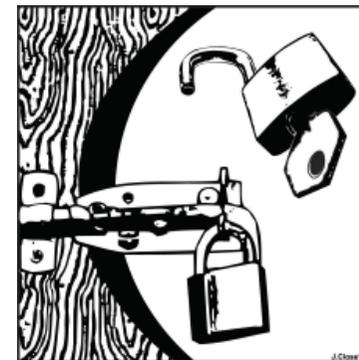
1. I thank you, Lord, with all my heart, you have heard the words of my mouth. Before the angels I will bless you. I will adore before your holy temple. (R.)
2. I thank you for your faithfulness and love which excel all we ever knew of you. On the day I called, you answered; you increased the strength of my soul. (R.)
3. The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly and the haughty he knows from afar. Your love, O Lord, is eternal, discard not the work of your hands. (R.)

Second Reading

11:33-36

A reading from St Paul to the Romans

How rich are the depths of God – how deep his wisdom and knowledge – and how impossible to penetrate his motives or understand his methods! Who could ever know the mind of



the Lord? Who could ever be his counsellor? Who could ever give him anything or lend him anything? All that exists comes from him; all is by him and for him. To him be glory for ever! Amen.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation

Mt 16.18

Alleluia, alleluia! You are Peter, the rock on which I will build my Church; the gates of hell will not hold out against it. Alleluia!

Gospel

16:13-20

The holy Gospel according to Matthew

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 'But you,' he said 'who do you say I am?' Then Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Christ,' he said, 'the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the



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.

21st Sunday of the Year (A)

24th August 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. 7.00.a.m. & 11.30.a.m. Sat 9.00am
Morning Prayer: Wed 7.50am; **Holy Hour** Fri 10.30am
Berry Tues 5.30pm **Culburra** Thurs 5.30pm
Bomaderry First Friday 5.45pm –
Vincentia Mon./Thurs /Fri. 8.a.m. Tues/Wed 5.30pm
S'haven Heads Fri 3.30pm
Kangaroo Valley: Mon/Tues/Thurs/Sat 8.00am;
Wed 6.15am..

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



We prayerfully remember: **Lester Ireland**
(formerly Currarong), and **Herbert (Bert)**
O'Neill of Perth (grandfather of Matthew Jelavic)

who died this week; also **Joe Basha and John**
McGlinchy whose anniversaries occur at this time.
May they rest in eternal peace.

THE ANNUAL MASS & FESTIVAL FOR MIGRANT & REFUGEE SUNDAY will be celebrated by Bishop Peter at the Cathedral, on Sun 31 Aug at 2.00pm followed by a concert, cultural displays & food sampling. All are welcome. Enq. Kim 4235 0985.

INVITATION TO VOLUNTEERS in the S/haven Parish Disability Connections Program and families to attend a lunch meeting on Wed 3 Sept 12noon to 1.30pm in the Parish Meeting Room to prepare for the Mass on Sun 21 Sept. Sandwiches and a cuppa will be provided. Please try to think of some ideas for the celebration of the Mass and new families to invite. RSVP for catering 4654 8709



LAST MINUTE PLEA FOR HELP – The St Vincent de Paul Society is holding its annual Doorknock Appeal this weekend and next and desperately need more volunteers. If you would like to help for 3 hours today (Sunday) or next weekend 30/31 Aug, to help the Society gain public financial support for its vital **local work** please phone Margaret Perkins on 4423 2029 or fill in the form at the Church door.

PRAISE & WORSHIP NIGHT - Help keep the spirit of WYD alive in Nowra – join in a night of music, dancing, testimonies, WYD photos and loads more. Bring yourself, a family member, a friend or a bus load of people. Starts at 7pm Sat 6 September in St Michael's Hall.



THE YOUTH MISSION TEAM invites you to an information & fundraising evening at St Columbkille's Parish Hall, Corrimal, Fri 5 Sept at 7.30pm. Bring the whole family and friends to find out more about the work of YMT. Contact Chris Brennan 0433 636 359 or Wollongong@ymt.com.au for information.

PARISH DIRECTORY - we are about to reprint the Parish Directory – if any parishioner is aware of any changes or amendments to be made please contact Robbie at the Parish Office by 12 September

▪ **1st HOLY COMMUNION MEETING –Vincentia** – Fri 29 Aug 7.30pm in the hall – **please note change of date**

In keeping with State Legislation relating to Parish volunteers and child protection there is a need to review and update Parish & Diocesan records. Therefore parishioners who have come onto the parish rosters over recent years and **haven't** signed the relevant declaration Form, need to do so with the next 3 weeks. The forms are available in the Sacristy and Parish Office.

BAY & BASIN CWL – next meeting 4 Sept at Mary O'Connor's home, 324 Elizabeth Dr, Vincentia 12 noon.

CULBURRA FAMILY GROUP will be Barefoot Bowling (socks if you prefer) at Callala Beach RSL Club on Sun 24 Aug at 1.30pm. Cost will be \$5. All Welcome.

THE FEAST OF ST MICHAEL - Our Parish Patron. The Parish Dinner in conjunction with the Feast will be held this year at Worrigeer House on Sat 27 Sep at 7.30pm. Dinner music by the Morrison Family, and Daniel Hopper will be guest speaker. **'WYD after the event.'**

- Cost of tickets will be \$30 (adult) 3 course meal and \$10 (child) 2 course child's meal. A vegetarian meal available – please indicate on your ticket. If you have any other special dietary needs please ring John Bennet (at Worrigeer) 4423 1222 personally.
- Tables may be booked – a max of 10 per table -by ringing Robbie at the Parish Office (you don't have to book 10 – we can combine tables) **Names of those sitting on your table must be given to Robbie.** There is an option on the ticket to indicate your seating preference. All other parishioners will be allocated seating prior to the evening.
- Transport will be available for those who need it by 'car pooling' with parishioners. Please indicate on your ticket stub.
- **Tickets are on sale from this weekend** at all Mass Centres and the Parish Office. Tickets must be paid for at time of booking. Get in early to avoid disappointment.

PARISH MINISTRIES. At present St Patrick's Berry would be delighted to hear from interested persons who can read music and have an acceptable level of keyboard technique. Geoff Wilkins would gladly give the necessary tuition in organ technique associated with the organ at Berry – by phoning 4464 1464.

Feastdays during this week...

Wed 27 – St Monica
Thurs 28 - St Augustine, bishop, doctor
Fri 29 – Beheading of John the Baptist, martyr

"In this deeply restless culture, the Church needs not just to refresh the observance of Sunday but to shape a new spirituality of the Lord's Day. A new spirituality of the Lord's Day will have to be consciously counter-cultural. It will involve saying 'no' to some things in order to say 'yes' to something greater and deeper. Without the Eucharist, Sunday cannot be the Lord's Day....." Archbishop Mark Coleridge.