

Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life.

For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved.'

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

**Reflection**

by Dianne Bergant CSA

**T**oday we concentrate on the power of the cross in our lives. It is the ultimate demonstration of the nature of God. Christ gave of himself even to death on the cross. This is characteristic, not only of the man Jesus, but of the Godhead. Creation is the first example of divine emptying; redemption is the ultimate example. Unlike Good Friday when we stand before the stark cross and mourn the death of our innocent messiah, today we stand before the glorious cross and praise God for God's incomprehensible goodness toward us. God's graciousness is poured out indiscriminately, prodigally as only profound love can be given. Such is the nature of our God, and the cross is the symbol of this nature.

Jesus compares the pole in the wilderness on which was fixed the serpent to the cross which becomes the source of our healing. It was through the cross that Jesus conquered sin and death and won for us access to God. It is through the cross that we die to sin and rise to new life in Christ. As painful as life's crosses may be, they serve to transform us. It can be our hope in the midst of pain and suffering and brokenness, because it promises to carry us into new life.

Through the goodness of God, which has been poured out for us, we have been granted eternal

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life. It is incomprehensible to think that death is the way to life, but that is the message of this feast. The cross, which is a sign of shame and misery, is now a symbol of glory and exaltation.

**Historical Context**

If you have studied the history of liturgy (or registered for WYD!), you would have come across the name Egeria. She is the fourth-century pilgrim nun who recorded her travels through the Holy Land and sent them home to her community. Her accounts of Palm Sunday and Good Friday are major contributions to our understanding liturgy of the time as it was celebrated in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The focal point of the Good Friday liturgy was the veneration of the true cross. Constantine's mother, Empress Helena, is attributed with having discovered it on 14 September 320.

The veneration of the cross consisted of a portion of the cross resting on the seated bishop's lap while people came forward to kiss it, touch it, and bow before it. It is the source of our Good Friday ritual of veneration and the reason why we celebrate the Exaltation liturgy today.

That liturgy was a celebration of the victory of the cross, the trophy made heroic by the saving death of Jesus. At the time and until well into the next millennium, the cross had no corpus on it. These crosses were ornamented with jewels, gold and silver, which exalted the cross as the means of salvation. Today our liturgy connects directly to the liturgies Egeria experienced. Mind you, that's almost 1700 years ago. Notice it is the exaltation of the holy cross, not the lament at the cross. The cross is the trophy of the heroic death of Jesus.

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

Worrigeer House | 7.30pm 27 Sept  
Today is last chance to buy tickets.  
Get yours today!

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# Our Sunday Word

St Michael's Parish, Nowra

nowraparish.org.au

**The Exaltation of the Holy Cross**

14 September 2008



**First Reading**

21:4-9

**A reading from the book of Numbers**

On the way through the wilderness, the Israelites lost patience. They spoke against God and against Moses, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in this wilderness? For there is neither bread nor water here; we are sick of this unsatisfying food.'

At this God sent fiery serpents among the people; their bite brought death to many in Israel. The people came and said to Moses, 'We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you. Intercede for us with the Lord to save us from these serpents.' Moses interceded for the people, and the Lord answered him, 'Make a fiery serpent and put it on a standard. If anyone is bitten and looks at it, he shall live.' So Moses fashioned a bronze serpent which he put on a standard, and if anyone was bitten by a serpent, he looked at the bronze serpent and lived.

**The word of the Lord.**

**Responsorial Psalm**

Ps 77

**R/** Do not forget the works of the Lord!

1. Give heed, my people, to my teaching; turn your ear to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable and reveal hidden lessons of the past. (R.)

2. When he slew them then they would seek him, return and seek him in earnest. They would remember that God was their rock, God the Most High their redeemer. (R.)
3. But the words they spoke were mere flattery; they lied to him with their lips. For their hearts were not truly with him; they were not faithful to his covenant. (R.)
4. Yet he who is full of compassion forgave their sin and spared them. So often he held back his anger when he might have stirred up his rage. (R.)

**Second Reading**

2.6-11

**A reading from St Paul to the Philippians**

The state of Jesus was divine, yet he did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are; and being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all other names so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**The word of the Lord.**

**Gospel Acclamation**

Alleluia, alleluia! We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you, because by your cross you have redeemed the world. Alleluia!

**Gospel**

3:13-17

**The holy Gospel according to John**

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

'No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven; and the Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.



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**Website: [nowraparish.org.au](http://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.

**23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the Year (A)**

**14 September 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. 7.00am & 11.30am; Sat 9.00am  
**Morning Prayer:** Wed 7.50am; **Holy Hour** Fri 10.30am  
**Berry;** Tues. 5.30.p.m. **Culburra:** Thurs. 5.30.p.m.  
**Bomaderry** First Friday 5.45pm  
**Vincentia:** Mon/Thurs/Fri. 8.00a.m. Tues/Wed 5.30pm  
**S'haven Heads:** Friday: 3.30.p.m.  
**Kangaroo Valley:** Mon/Tues/Thurs/Sat 8.00.a.m. 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:** 1<sup>st</sup> Fri. 5.15pm. **K'Valley:** Sat 4.30--5.00pm  
**Vincentia:** Sat 5.00pm – 5.30pm

**A Parish Retreat Day will be conducted at St. Patrick's Berry on Sat. 20 September 9.30am – 3.00pm.** The format will be similar to last year. A cordial invitation is extended to all parishioners. The focus this year will be on St Paul in this the year of Paul, the great missionary and evangeliser. **Please bring lunch to share.** Tea and coffee provided

We prayerfully remember the recently deceased:

**Marcia Lefoe** (Nowra) and **Monica Hudson** whose anniversary occurs at this time. *May they rest in eternal peace.*

**LIVING JUSTLY OR JUST LIVING?** Bishop Peter will launch this year's Social Justice Statement on the challenge of affluence and poverty in Australia at the Cathedral for 10.30am Mass on Sun 28 Sept. This will be followed by morning tea and a forum with Bishop Peter where we consider practical ways of living justly in our homes, workplaces, parishes, schools and wider community. The forum concludes with a commissioning at 1.00pm.

**The Diocesan Office of Disability** Annual Inclusion Mass for **Sun 21 Sept** will be held in the Parish Hall. The Mass will be a celebration of the gifts that each member of our Parish community brings and a reminder of the importance of **including** everyone in the celebration of Mass. All are welcome! Refreshments will be served following Mass.

**“COME & SEE” Spirituality Program.** “Sharing our story connects us” .....our faith journey is strengthened and enriched by our shared experiences - an invitation to listen to guests from our Parish as they share a part of their personal faith journey with us. Join us to listen to their stories, and for prayer and conversation on Wed 17 Sept from 7.30pm at the Parish Centre, followed by supper (please bring a plate of finger food to share). Contact Moira 4423 6077 or Liz 4422 1279.

This particular Sunday has been designated as Child Protection Sunday by the National Committee for Professional Standards. The aim is to continue to engage the broader Catholic community in promoting safe and nurturing Church communities and families for children against abuse, focusing on protection and prevention. Information sheets in this regard are available at the Churches in the parish this Sunday. The Spring edition of the Diocesan Magazine **JOURNEY** which will be available next week will carry Pope Benedict's Apology to sexual abuse victims delivered during WYD July 2008

**DIOCESAN MASS SUN, 5 Oct** at St Thomas Aquinas Church Bowral at 11.00am as part of the Tulip Festival. Featuring music from WYD and a Mass arranged by Geoff Harvey.

**DIOCESAN LAUNCH OF WORLD MISSION MONTH 2008.** Theme: **“One World, One Family, One Mission of Love”** will be launched at W'gong City Art Gallery on Sun 21 Sept at 2pm. An open invitation is extended to all parishioners. Afternoon tea to be provided RSVP to The Catholic Mission Office 4284 0970 or [Mary.Hiscox@ceowoll.catholic.edu.au](mailto:Mary.Hiscox@ceowoll.catholic.edu.au)

**NOWRA CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE**

- 18 Oct. Sat Fashion Parade – 2.00pm.
- 7 Nov. Friday Ecumenical Evening. – 7.30.p.m.

**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. **Only a week to book!!!!!!!**

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.
- **Tickets are on sale at** all Mass Centres and the Parish Office. Tickets must be paid for at time of booking. Get in early to avoid disappointment.
- **Tables may be booked** – a max of 10 per table – contact Robbie at the Office. Please support the occasion.

**NOWRA YOUNG ADULTS GROUP** will be attending the WYD reunion Pics & Flicks on the 19 September as their next activity. Contact Jody for carpooling & rsvp.

**WYD REUNION PICS AND FLICKS** celebrating World Youth Day 2008 through film and photography on Fri 19 Sept from 6pm to 9.30pm at McKinnon Theatre, University of W'gong. **All WYD08 participants are welcome!** A free night with dinner provided. See [www.youth.dow.org.au](http://www.youth.dow.org.au) for more details.

**ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY – Culburra**

**Conference** would like to thank parishioners for their generous donation to their Winter Appeal last weekend.

**YMT Wollongong seeking paid work**

From October 30 through to December 5 members of the Youth Mission Team Wollongong are seeking paid employment. If you have a business with a position, or know of positions available please contact Chris Brennan (YMT Wollongong Manager) on 4284 1635, 0433 636 359 or [wollongong@ymt.com.au](mailto:wollongong@ymt.com.au), thank you.

**END OF THE SPEAR** – a movie based on a true story of 5 missionary families who went to Ecuador in the 1950s. The movie will be shown at the Roxy Cinema on Wed 17 Sept at 6.30pm and Sun 21 Sept at 1.15pm.