

out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants." So he left the place and went back to his father.

'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly. Then his son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found." And they began to celebrate.

'Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about. "Your brother has come" replied the servant "and your father has killed the calf we had fattened because he has got him back safe and sound." He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out to plead with him; but he answered his father, "Look,

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all these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. But for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property – he and his women – you kill the calf we had been fattening."

"The father said, "My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. But it is only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Gospel thoughts *by Dianne Bergant CSA*

In the midst of Lent we are given a moment for rejoicing, Laetare Sunday. All of the readings provide us with reasons for rejoicing. The overarching theme is the prodigal goodness of God. The responsorial psalm sets the context for the reflections. The other readings show how needy people were showered with divine favour. Even in the midst of this rejoicing, we find a challenge. We must undergo a change of heart if we are to rejoice in God.

The goodness of God is strikingly portrayed in the radically new image of father. This is a God who allows us to follow our own dreams, who is partial to no one, who faithfully and patiently waits for us to return, who gently corrects our misperceptions. God longs to be reconciled with us even more than we long to be reconciled with God.

The challenges placed before us set out some of the conditions required if we are to be a new creation. We are called to a profound and total reconciliation, first with God and then with each other. Christ was identified with sin so that we might be identified with God's righteousness. Reconciliation requires that we be open to giving and receiving forgiveness. It requires that we both remember and forget. We must always remember the causes of alienation, so that we not succumb to them again. However, we must forget the resentment that we felt so that we not allow it to influence our lives.



Parish Life

The Year for Priests (2009 - 29 June - 2010)

Fourth Sunday (Year C) - Season of Lent

St Michael's
Nowra

www.nowraparish.org.au

14 March 2010

First Reading 5:9-12

A reading from the book of Joshua

The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have taken the shame of Egypt away from you." The Israelites pitched their camp at Gilgal and kept the Passover there on the fourteenth day of the month, at evening in the plain of Jericho. On the morrow of the Passover they tasted the produce of that country, unleavened bread and roasted ears of corn, that same day. From that time, from their first eating of the produce of that country, the manna stopped falling. And having manna no longer, the Israelites fed from that year onwards on what the land of Canaan yielded.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 33

R/ Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

1. I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise always on my lips; in the Lord my soul shall make its boast. The humble shall hear and be glad.
2. Glorify the Lord with me. Together let us praise his name. I sought the Lord and he answered me; from all my terrors he set me free.
3. Look towards him and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed. This poor man called; the Lord heard him and rescued him from all his distress.

Second Reading 5:17-21

- the 2nd letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

For anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone, and now the new one is here. It is all God's work. It was God who reconciled us to

himself through Christ and gave us the work of handing on his reconciliation. In other words, God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not holding men's faults against them, and he has entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled. So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the goodness of God.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation Lk 15:18

Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ I will rise and go to my Father and tell him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel 15:1-3, 11-32

from the holy Gospel according to Luke

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained. 'This man' they said 'welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So he spoke this parable to them:

'A man had two sons. The younger said to his father, "Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me." So the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery.

'When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself



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

Fourth Sunday of Lent
14 March 2010

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.

Sunday Masses:

NOWRA 6pm Vigil; 8am, 9.30am & 6pm
BERRY.....8.00am
BOMADERRY.....9.30am
CULBURRA6pm Vigil
VINCENTIA..... 6pm Vigil, & 9.30am
KANGAROO VALLEY11.00am

MASSES DURING THE WEEK

Nowra: Mon 7.00am Tues/Wed/Thurs 8.15am
 Fri 7.00am and 11.30am; Sat 9.00am
Berry: (St Patrick's Day) Tues 6.30pm
Culburra: Thurs 5.30pm
Vincentia: Mon, Thur, Fri 8.00am; Tues/Wed/ 5.30pm
Kangaroo Valley: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Sat 8.00am
 Wed 6.15am. Divine Office is prayed 15 mins prior to Mass.
 No Mass on Fridays. **Shoalhaven Heads** Friday 3.30pm

Confession/Reconciliation

Nowra: Sat 11.30am-12.30pm & 5.00 - 5.30pm
Culburra: Sat 5.30pm **Berry:** Tues 6.00pm
Vincentia: Sat 11.00-11.30am & 5 - 5.30pm
K Valley: Sat 4.30 – 5pm.

Stations of the Cross:

Nowra Fri March 19th. 7.30.p.m.
Vincentia: Each Fri after 8am Mass.
Kangaroo Valley: Stations of the Cross and
 Benediction, 5pm during the Fridays of Lent.

WE PRAYERFULLY REMEMBER: Peter McRae
 (K.Valley) **Ruth Collins** (Taree/formerly Old Erowal Bay)
 who died this week. Also **Veronika Merkys** and
Phyllis Lake (UK) whose anniversaries occur. May
 they rest in eternal peace.

Choir for Holy Week Ceremonies

Practice will be held Thurs 18 Mar, and
 Wed 24 Mar, in St Michael's Church, at
 5.30pm. **All singers and musicians most welcome.**



FEASTDAYS:

Wed. March 17th. Feast of St Patrick.
Fri March 19th Feast of St Joseph.

Mary Help of Christians Culburra: Easter raffle
 tickets now on sale – raffle drawn 27 March. All
 donations gratefully received.

First Holy Communion Meetings:

- **Nowra: Wed 24 March, 7pm**, in St Michael's Hall. An information night for parents of children making their First Communion. Children need to have made their First Reconciliation. (Parents only)
- **Vincentia: Mon 22 March, 3:45–5pm**, Holy Spirit Vincentia meeting room. Attendance at this First Communion enrolment session is essential for parents and children.

Project Compassion: The Chilean Earthquake



Rather than have a separate appeal for Chile at this time, we encourage parishioners to generously support Project Compassion, keeping the plight of the Chilean people in mind. At least 2 million people have been affected and 1.5 million homes have been destroyed. Eight out of 27 dioceses were affected by the quake. The national office of Caritas Chile was partly damaged but remains operational. "The Caritas response from around the world has been quick and effective. It has not just been material aid, but counselling and comfort to survivors that has made a real difference. It has given the people hope," said Lorenzo Figueroa León, Secretary General of National Caritas Chile.

Do You Love Me? Week 5 of our Lenten Program is titled 'To Live Justly'. James Maher's hymn, 'Your Heart on Earth', tells of many ways to do this through four meaningful verses, one of which follows: 'We will welcome all your people, without favour, without fear. We will ease the heavy burdens, and attend to every tear. We will draw with bonds of kindness, we will see the last are first. In our loving, in our living, we will be your heart on earth.'

"COME & SEE" Spirituality Group will not meet during March due to participation in the Lenten Program. Our next gathering will be Wed 21 April.

We hope to have the Holy Week/ Easter Time-table for the entire parish available next weekend.. the Second Rite of Reconciliation will be celebrated at St Michael's on Friday March 26th. at 7.p.m.

St Michael's School Enrolments 2011: An Open Evening will be held **Mon 15 March, 7-8pm**; and an Open Day on **Tues 16 March 9.30-11am**, for parents interested in enrolling their children for 2011. Each session will include a tour of classrooms, facilities and curriculum programs.

Parish Paschal Meal Celebration, Passion Sunday 28



Mar. All parishioners, children, friends, family etc, are invited to this simple meal and liturgical celebration in the Parish Hall. Here we remember the Last Supper which Jesus shared with His disciples and so began the journey of His Passion which culminates in Easter and the Resurrection. You may form your own group or give your names to a Lenten Group leader, or to Francene 4421 5962, Maree 4421 8516, or Peggy 4421 3417. Numbers by Mon 22 March please. **Lenten group leaders** are reminded to organise their groups for the Paschal Meal.

'**BORN FOR THIS**' is a modern interpretation of the Stations of the Cross performed by a cast of young people from the Diocese. **Don't miss your chance** to see this moving Way of the Cross as part of your Lenten journey. **19 March 7.30pm**, St Michael's Hall, Nowra. Tickets, \$10/\$5 (Concessions), will be sold at Mass Centres /the Parish Centre at the Door on the Night or online www.dow.org.au/born-for-this.



St Patrick's Day will be celebrated at St Patrick's Berry on **Tues 16 March** with Mass at 6.30pm followed by tea/dinner in the hall .Please bring something to share - casserole, finger food, quiche etc. Whisky toss /Irish Quiz/lucky door prizes and please wear something green. All most welcome.

The Sisters of the Good Samaritan invite you to an afternoon tea to meet with sisters, **Sun 21 Mar, 4 - 6pm**, at the Polding Learning Centre, St Mary's College, Wollongong. Please enter via Gate 6 in Market Street. Parking in grounds. For more information email ritafitt@hotmail.net.au or phone/text 0419 169 400.