



St. Michael's Parish, Nowra

Incorporating the Catholic Communities of St Michael's, Nowra - St Patrick's, Berry - Sacred Heart, Bomaderry
- Help of Christians, Culburra – St Joseph's, Kangaroo Valley - Holy Spirit, Vincentia

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27th Sunday in Ordinary Time A

4th October 2020

Season of Creation

THE HIDDEN FACE OF EVIL

Fr Ron Rolheiser OMI

We tend to be naïve about evil, at least as to what it looks like in everyday life. Our picture of evil has been falsely shaped by images taken from mythology, religious cults, and from books and movies that portray evil as personified in sinister spiritual forces. Demons haunt houses, appear at séances, are summoned up by Ouija boards, contort bodies, and are exorcized by the sprinkling of holy water. Whatever evil does reside inside this concept of demonic forces (and you can believe in them or not) is infinitely eclipsed by the ordinary face of evil which looks out at us from newscasts, is daily manifest in ordinary life, and is manifest too in our own face on a given day.

Mostly we are blind to the hidden evil that foments inside us, tears communities apart, and eats away at God and goodness. The Gospels can help us understand this.

In the Gospels, the evil one has two names because evil works in two ways. Sometimes the Gospels call the evil force “the Devil” and other times they call it “Satan”. What’s the difference? In the end they both refer to the same force (or person) but the different names refer to the different ways in which evil works. *Devil*, in Greek, means to slander and to tear things apart. Ironically, *Satan* means almost the exact opposite. It means to unite things, but in a sick and malevolent way.

So evil works in two ways: **the devilish** works by dividing us from each other, tearing us apart, and having us habitually slander each other so that community is forever being torn apart through jealousy and accusation. **The satanic**, on the other hand, does the opposite, with the same result. The satanic unites us in a sick way, that is, through the grip of mob-hysteria, social hype, self-serving ideologies, racism, sexism, envy, hatred and in a myriad of other malevolent ways so as to draw us into mob-hatred, gang-rapes, lynchings, and crucifixions. It was satanic forces that engineered Jesus’ crucifixion.

When we look at our world today, from politics to social media to what’s happening inside many of our religious circles, we would have to be blind not to see the powers of the “devil” and of “Satan” at work (however you personally define and picture these).

Where do we see the devilish at work? Basically everywhere. Today, most everywhere, you see persons sowing division, attributing false motives to others, calling for them to be distrusted and ostracized. Indeed, this is almost the dominant element we see in our politics and in our social media. The result is the breakdown of community, the stalemate in our politics, the breakdown of civility, the loss of trust in the meaning of truth, the smug belief that our own idiosyncratic narrative functions as truth, and the near universal neglect of elemental charity. Today we are witnessing a dangerous breakdown of trust and civility, coupled with a massive erosion of simple honesty. The devil must be smiling.

Where do we see the satanic at work? Everywhere as well. More and more we are retreating into tribes, gangs, with those others who think like us and have the same self-interests to protect. While this can be a good thing, it’s not good when we unite in ways that are rooted in self-serving ideologies, economic privilege, racism, sexism, false nationalism, envy, and hatred. When this happens, our group ceases being a community and becomes instead a mob, a sick one, which at the end of the day, whatever its particular idiosyncratic slogan, ends up chanting, as did the crowds on Good Friday, “Crucify him! Crucify him! It’s significant that in the Gospels almost every time the word “crowd” is used it’s used pejoratively. Commentators tell us that almost without exception every time the word “crowd” appears in the Gospels it could be preceded by the adjective “mindless”. Crowds are mindless; worse still, they generally have a sick bent towards crucifixion. The renowned Czech novelist Milan Kundera highlights this when he shares his strong fear of “the great march”, the sick fever that so generally infects a crowd and, soon enough, has them chanting “Release to us Barabbas! And as for Jesus, crucify him!” This is the face of Satan in ordinary life, the actual face of evil.

We need to name this today as we see the ever-intensifying and bitter polarization inside our families, communities, neighbourhoods, cities, and countries. Factionalism, anger, bitterness, distrust, accusation, and hatred are intensifying most everywhere, even inside our own families where we are finding it harder and harder to sit down together, be civil with each other, and talk through our political, social, and moral differences. Sadly, even the deadly presence of a pandemic which threatens all of us has worked to divide rather than unite us.....

***Evil doesn't ordinarily have the face and feel of the devil in Rosemary's Baby;
it has the face and feel of this evening's newscast.***

Mass Times

Saturday Vigils

Nowra	5:00pm
Culburra	5:00pm
Vincentia	5:00pm 6:15pm

Sunday Mass Times

Nowra	8:00 am	9:30am	5:00 pm
Berry	8:00 am		
Bomaderry	9:30 am		
Vincentia	9:00 am	10:15	
Kangaroo Valley	11:00 am		

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Nowra	8:00 am	8:00 am	8:00 am	8:00 am	8:00 am
Berry		5:30 pm			11:30 am
Culburra				5:30 pm	
Bomaderry					5:30 pm
Vincentia	8:00 am	5:30 pm	5:30 pm	8:00am	8:00 am
Kangaroo Valley		9:00 am	9:00 am	9:00 am	

To Register for weekend Masses in *Nowra, Culburra, Berry and Bomaderry*

please call 0477 427 396 (Mon to Fri between 10:00am & 3:00pm)

To register for Mass at **Kangaroo Valley**, please email ronankangaroo1@gmail.com

To register for Mass at **Vincentia**, please call 0435 862 156 or email holyspiritvincentia@gmail.com

***** IF YOU HAVE REGISTERED FOR MASS AND ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND, PLEASE CALL TO CANCEL YOUR BOOKING.*****

Confessions / Reconciliation

Nowra: Saturday: 9.30 – 10.30am

Culburra: Saturday prior to Vigil Mass at 5.00pm

Vincentia: Saturday 4pm

Berry: Tuesday following 5.30pm Mass

Bomaderry: Friday following 5.30pm Mass

This week includes the following celebrations:

Sunday: Mass of the **Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**. The gloria is said or sung. The creed is said.

Tuesday: The Optional Memorial of **Saint Bruno**, priest

Wednesday: The Memorial of **Our Lady of the Rosary**

Friday: The Optional Memorial of the **St Denis, bishop**, martyr and companions and **St John Leonardi**, priest.



We prayerfully remember the recently deceased: **Thomas O'Connell** (Brian) and **Johnathan Spence** and all those whose anniversaries occur at this time especially. We pray also for all who have died from Covid-19 in Australia and worldwide. May they rest in peace.

TO LIVE LIFE TO THE FULL

FEEDBACK FROM MENTAL HEALTH GATHERINGS 21 September

Participants who attended the discussions on Mental Health, held in response to the recently released statement from the Australian Catholic Bishops, expressed appreciation for the opportunity provided.

Those in attendance came from a variety of areas of concern and discussed support, advocacy and awareness. It was resolved that we continue this initiative and you are invited to be part of this venture.

"In our parish communities, our institutions and throughout the Church in Australia, we have a duty to break through the stigma of mental illness."

Contact Bernadette Pullen 0402136691

Children's Liturgy Worksheets can be downloaded from the parish website.

Younger Children - <http://nowraparish.org.au/docs/Parish/Children's%20Liturgy%20Resources/Junior%20Worksheet.pdf>

Older Children - <http://nowraparish.org.au/docs/Parish/Children's%20Liturgy%20Resources/Children's%20Worksheet.pdf>



Livestream Holy Hour

Join the NET Team for online Holy Hour! Every Wednesday from 6:30pm on Instagram @wollongongnetteam or Facebook @CYMDOW (Catholic Youth Ministry Wollongong). Witness adoration, join in for praise and worship, and hear the Gospel as well as a reflection written by one of our team members! All from the safety of your home!

Mass of the Holy Oils

Last Tuesday Bishop Brian together with the priests of the diocese celebrated the Mass of the Holy Oils. Normally this Mass is celebrated on the Holy Thursday.

It is not only an opportunity for blessing the Oils which are used in the celebration of the Sacraments such as Baptism, Confirmation, the anointing of the sick and the Ordination of Priesthood.; it is also an opportunity for the Priests to renew their own commitment to their vocation as ministers of the Gospel and pastoral care of God's people.

Why does the Bishop bless the oils?

The bishop is mandated to shepherd the faithful and to be responsible for their moral and spiritual well-being. By blessing the Holy Oils, used at important junctures of the life of the faithful, the bishop takes part through 'sacramental signs' which are celebrated by the priest or deacon.

Different blessing for different needs?

Oil of Catechumens – In the times of antiquity, athletes prepared themselves for the challenge and struggle ahead by using oil to make the muscles supple. In blessing this oil the bishop prays "... *help them* (those anointed with this oil) *to accept the challenge of Christian living and lead them to the joy of new birth in the family of your Church.*

Oil of the Sick – Olive oil has long been known to have healing properties. In blessing this oil, the bishop calls to mind the healing of Jesus, both spiritual and physical. A common misconception is that the **Anointing of the Sick** is only given in danger of death, however this is not the only purpose of this sacrament. In blessing this oil, the bishop prays "... Make this oil a remedy for all who are anointed with it; heal them in body, in soul, and in spirit, and deliver them in every affliction."

Chrism – This oil to which is added a **perfume**, is not actually blessed, but rather consecrated. And during the consecration the bishop 'breaths' over oil, calling to mind the Holy Spirit and the imagery of creation. It is used **three times** in the Catholic Church. The first time is at Baptism, the second at Confirmation and the third time is at Ordination. Through this anointing is conferred an **indelible character**. Each time the oil is used it creates a new relationship between the person receiving the sacrament and God who invites us into a new life.

The prayer of consecration includes "... Through this sign of Chrism grant them royal, priestly, and prophetic honour, and clothe them with in corruption."

If you would like to watch the Mass, go to the St Michael's Parish Nowra 'Page' in Facebook

Worldwide Marriage Encounter

Marriage Enrichment Weekend 20 – 22 November Mt Carmel Retreat Centre

Learn to become the best version of yourselves together and live your best life in love!

Book online at www.wwme.org.au, alternatively contact **Christine & Terry Mahony**

on 0490 774 419 or nswbookings@wwme.org.au

If you would like Worldwide Marriage Encounter brochures please see website at www.wwme.org.au



Used Stamps

A request has been received from the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart to send used stamps to support their ongoing charity work:

- Aid to provide education to disabled children in Papua, New Guinea
- Assist in funding the life skills training programs in Peru
- Help to provide vital health care to poor communities in Timor, Leste



All these compassionate objectives can be achieved by sending your used stamps to:

The Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart / Old Stamps / Attention: Lyn

PO Box 1508

North Sydney NSW 2059

(Since 2001, \$378,000 has been raised, hence, they are respectfully requesting for our utmost cooperation and attention on this project).

Entrance Antiphon Cf. Est 4:17

Within your will, O Lord, all things are established, and there is none that can resist your will. For you have made all things, the heaven and the earth, and all that is held within the circle of heaven; you are the Lord of all.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah Is 5:1-7

Let me sing to my friend the song of his love for his vineyard. My friend had a vineyard on a fertile hillside.

He dug the soil, cleared it of stones, and planted choice vines in it. In the middle he built a tower, he dug a press there too. He expected it to yield grapes, but sour grapes were all that it gave. And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, I ask you to judge between my vineyard and me. What could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done? I expected it to yield grapes. Why did it yield sour grapes instead? Very well, I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge for it to be grazed on, and knock down its wall for it to be trampled on. I will lay it waste, unpruned, undug; overgrown by the briar and the thorn. I will command the clouds to rain no rain on it. Yes, the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the House of Israel, and the men of Judah that chosen plant. He expected justice, but found bloodshed, integrity, but only a cry of distress.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 79

Response. The vineyard of the Lord is the House of Israel.

1. You brought a vine out of Egypt;
to plant it you drove out the nations.
It stretched out its branches to the sea,
to the Great River it stretched out its shoots. (R.)

2. Then why have you broken down its walls?
It is plucked by all who pass by.
It is ravaged by the boar of the forest,
devoured by the beasts of the field. (R.)

3. God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from heaven and see.
Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted. (R.)

4. And we shall never forsake you again:
give us life that we may call upon your name.
God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine
on us and we shall be saved. (R.)

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians Phil 4:6-9

There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honour, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise. Keep doing all the things that you learnt from me and have been taught by me and have heard or seen that I do. Then the God of peace will be with you.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! I call you friends, says the Lord, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. Alleluia!

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew Mt 21:33-43

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, 'Listen to another parable. There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard; he fenced it round, dug a winepress in it and built a tower; then he leased it to tenants and went abroad. When vintage time drew near he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his servants, thrashed one, killed another and stoned a third. Next he sent some more servants, this time a larger number, and they dealt with them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them. "They will respect my son," he said. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, "This is the heir. Come on, let us kill him and take over his inheritance." So they seized him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' They answered, 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will deliver the produce to him when the season arrives.' Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures: It was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone. This was the Lord's doing and it is wonderful to see?

'I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.'

Communion Antiphon Lam 3:25

The Lord is good to those who hope in him, to the soul that seeks him.