

Reflection by Greg Sunter



The three gospel accounts from the final three weeks leading up to the season of Advent all come from Chapter 25 of the Gospel of Matthew. They can be seen together as an extended treatise on living life in response to Jesus' message and preparing for the end of time. This week's gospel starts out as a Kingdom parable and becomes a bit more of a metaphor for living a Christian life.

The gospel parable relates to ten bridesmaids – five foolish and five wise – who are participating in a wedding ritual that involves meeting the bridegroom and escorting him the last part of his way to the wedding reception. The foolish bridesmaids have not brought sufficient reserves of oil for their lamps and have to leave at the critical time to try to obtain more. When they eventually arrive at the reception hall they are turned away because they have shamed themselves as well as the bride and groom by not fulfilling their duty.

Some of the original audience of Matthew's gospel, along with many of the early Christian followers, had an expectation that Jesus was going to return and usher in the end of the world in their lifetime. The message of this gospel is captured in Jesus' final words, 'So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour.' The timing of Jesus' coming cannot be predicted and so all Christian believers, like the bridesmaids, need to continue to act with hope and expectation; being prepared for the fact that it may be further off than anticipated. Many early Christians were living their lives as though the world would end at any time. The gospel warns them, and us, to continue to follow the example of Jesus and not to become complacent – expecting that everything is about to come to an end.

PARISH HAPPENINGS

LOOKING AHEAD

Monday 20 November

- 7.00pm Italian Prayer Group – Church

Tuesday 21 November

- 9.30am Playgroup – Hospitality Area

- 9.30am Scripture Group – Library

Thursday 23 November

- 9.00am St Martin's joining Mass

- 9.30am Playgroup – Hospitality

- 7.00pm Italian Choir - Church

Let us remember in prayer all those who are sick: and those whose anniversaries occur around this time: Sharon Grau, Mark Roff, Rosa Orsetto, Joseph Lee, Giovanni Di Gregorio, Rosa Di Gregorio, Antonio Marinucci, Giovanna Marinucci, Angelo Marinucci **and the recently deceased** Antonio Vitelli, Vica Petkovich, John Matson and Leonarda Gangemi

OFFICE HOURS FOR THE COMING WEEK

Monday 20/11 8.30am to 12.30pm

Tuesday 21/11 8.30am to 12.00pm

Wednesday 22/11 8.30am to 12.00pm

Thursday 23/11 8.30am to 12.00pm

Friday 24/11 OFFICE CLOSED

St Vincent de Paul - Thank you

Thank you to the wonderful and generous support of the Italian Parish Community who organised and attended the St Vincent de Paul, Italian Fundraiser brunch on Tuesday. In total \$6900 was raised and will go to St Vincent de Paul, Carina Conference and \$300 will go to the Parish. The St Vincent de Paul at Our Lady of Graces are so grateful in particular to Graziella Cavallaro, Maria Coco and Tina La Monaca who organised this whole event. Year after year they hold this amazing event and work tirelessly to provide excellent food and an amazing atmosphere in which we were all able to enjoy and have a laugh. I often comment that St Vincent de Paul at Our Lady of Graces would not be able to undertake the work we do without the wonderful support of the Parish and this is so very true in this case. The funds raised will bring the families and in particular the children great happiness at Christmas time this year so thank you.



Barbara Dougherty – SVDP President

Daily Mass Book and Break Open the Word

If you missed out on buying either of these books through the parish, you can purchase them off Liturgy Brisbane, just go to their website <https://liturgybrisbane.net.au/> or call 3324 3314.



Parish Working Bee

It seems like we only just had a working bee, however as all the leaves have blown off the trees and copious amounts of rain our grounds are needing a good clean up as we head into Christmas. The working be will be on Saturday 16 December starting at 8.30am and finishing around lunch time. If you are interested, please come along and if you have any gardening tools/wheelbarrows etc. please bring them along too. We hope to see you there!

Advent Adventures

The Advent Adventures Program will run from 9am-12pm on the following days:

Mon Dec 11

Wed Dec 13

Mon Dec 18 and

Wed Dec 20

Ages: 8-12 years

Cost: \$5 per child and \$10 for two or more siblings.

Watch this Space for more information about the Advent Adventures!

November is the Month of Remembrance

There has again been a great response during November of parishioners writing the names of their deceased loved ones in a book in the sanctuary of the church. A special Requiem Mass will be offered at 8am on Saturday, 25 November for all our deceased loved ones whose names were written in the book.

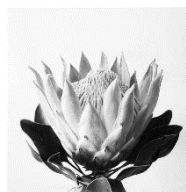


If you would like a weekday Mass said for the intentions of your departed loved one, November Mass offering envelopes available at the church entrance.

Social Justice – Domestic Violence Weekend

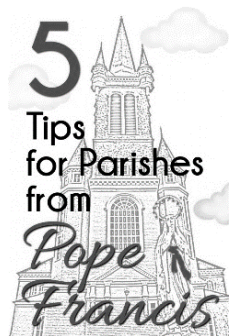
In the news this week, we see yet another victim of Domestic Violence so it is appropriate that this weekend in our Masses we are pray for recognition and healing in relation to Family & Domestic Violence.

The words below are for you to reflect on and possibly say if you are drawn to make a promise:



I promise never to commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women, against men and against children. I also promise to educate myself and my children about respect for all.

If you or anyone you know is in need of support, please contact DV Connect on 1800 811 811 or if in an emergency 000. May God bless all your efforts.



5 Tips for Parishes from Pope Francis

Tips for Parishes from

Pope Francis

1. DON'T Be Like A Custom's Office: Pope Francis is pretty clear in this, Jesus "instituted seven sacraments" it is not the place of the parish office to institute an eighth sacrament – "the sacrament of the pastoral customs office." In other words, the parish office should not close doors for people. And yet most of us can think of times when we have felt more like we are at the DMV rather than our parish office because of the way we were treated or the business-like approach that was used. Attitudes like this attempt to "control faith rather than facilitating it." Instead, Pope Francis prays that "all who approach the Church find doors open to encounter Jesus' love".

2. DON'T Be Tarantulas: Pope Francis says that when people go to their parish, they should feel like they are entering their mother's home. He says, "Being parish secretary means opening the front door of the mother's home, not closing it! And one can close the door in many ways. In Buenos Aires there was a famous parish secretary: they called her the "tarantula"... I'll say no more! To know how to open the door in the moment: welcome and tenderness."

3. DO Put Those Who Are "Distant" First: I have often heard grumbling about families who only come to their parish for baptisms, weddings and funerals. These people are often treated like a last priority, but Pope Francis urges us to put those distant from the Church *first*. Why? Because we want these people to become regulars. Pope Francis says, "It is about assuming missionary dynamism in order to reach everyone, putting first those who feel distant and the most vulnerable and forgotten people. It means opening the doors and letting Jesus go forth. Many times we keep Jesus closed inside the parishes with us, and we do not go out and we do not let Him leave! Open the doors so He can go out, at least Him! It is about a Church which "goes forth": a Church which always goes forth."

4. DO Get the Laity Involved: Pope Francis is pretty clear on this, the laity need to be involved in their parishes. Parishes do not belong to priests or to the parish office, they belong to everyone. This is why parishes need laity on councils, advising and helping in the running of everyday matters. In fact, Pope Francis very sternly has said that "a parish that does not have a pastoral Council and a Finance Council, is not a good parish: it lacks life."

Last Week's 2nd Collection

Loose	\$768.00
Planned Giving	\$2,664.73
Total	\$3,432.73

Planned Giving Program

To obtain envelopes, Direct Debit or a Credit Card request, please complete the form on the back page of this newsletter and place on either collection plate or deliver to Parish Office.

A LITTLE LAUGH

Whoops...



COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

"What does it mean to be Ecumenical in the Catholic tradition?"

Catholic Charismatic Renewal Brisbane End of Year Event at the CCR Brisbane Centre, 688 Nudgee Rd, Northgate on Saturday 25 Nov 2017 from 9.30am – 2pm.

ALL welcome. Bring and Share lunch.
Enquiries: Miriam (3202 6856) or email: secretary@ccrbrisbane.org.au for more details.

Advent Awakenings

This weekend is Signup Weekend for *Advent Awakenings: Take the Time* from RENEW International. Small groups will gather to learn, pray, and share on the true meaning of Advent. Please join us once a week for four weeks to remember in community what we are anticipating during this season, and connect with others as we journey in faith. Register today by completing details on the forms on the seats and putting them on the collection plate or emailing to Lisa: stthomas@bne.catholic.net.au. Or St Thomas Parish website for more information.

Become a part of the parish Planned Giving Program to help your Parish grow.

We thank, sincerely, all Parishioners who contribute to Planned Giving. Your ongoing commitment and contribution assists the parish to budget for operating expenses (wages, rates, electricity, phones, maintenance etc) as well as parish pastoral planning (faith education, sacramental preparation, resources etc). To obtain Planned Giving Envelopes or to contribute by direct debit, complete this form and place on the plate, or contact the Parish Office. Planned Giving contributions are not Tax Deductable.

Surname: _____ **Given names** _____

Address _____ **P/code** _____

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Email _____