

**St Peter and St Paul
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The **Charity Shop and Repository** within the parish Centre in Milton Street is open from 10.30—2.00 on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

24th Sunday of Year C - 16th September 2007

This Week

Monday: Mass at 10.00 a.m.
Tuesday: Funeral Mass at 11.00 a.m.
[Margaret Brown RIP]
Wednesday: Mass at 11.00 a.m.
Thursday: No Mass
Friday: Mass at 11.00 a.m.
Saturday: Mass for the Sick at 11.00 a.m.

Please note the times of Mass each day this week

SUNDAY MASS

**Anticipated Mass on Saturday at 6.00 p.m.
Mass on Sunday at 9.30 a.m. and 11.00 a.m.**

We pray for: **Gerard Mackie, Caleb Gardiner & Kenny Macdonald** who are ill; for **Winnie Reilly, Nan Brady, Peter Devlin, Bert Devlin, John Devlin, Bella Devlin, Ina Henderson & Pamela Bruce** who are housebound; for **Alex Murray & Margaret Brown** who died recently; and for **Hilda Mackie, Irene Duncan, Lena Stewart, Ann Arnott, Jessie Heffel, Margaret MacGregor & Elizabeth Chaplain** whose anniversaries occur at this time.

HOLY HOUR FOR VOCATIONS

led by Bishop Vincent

St Andrew's Cathedral

Sunday 16 September 2007

3.00 - 4.00

You are invited

**Please come and share this time of prayer,
song, scripture, reflection and
intercession.**

I am told there is to be a joke in the newsletter every week.....

Bubba went to a psychiatrist. "I've got problems. Every time I go to bed I think there's somebody under it. I'm scared. I think I'm going crazy."

"Just put yourself in my hands for one year," said the shrink. "Come talk to me three times a week, and we should be able to get rid of those fears."

"How much do you charge?" "Eighty dollars per visit, replied the doctor." "I'll sleep on it," said Bubba.

Six months later the doctor met Bubba on the street. "Why didn't you ever come to see me about those fears you were having?" asked the psychiatrist.

"Well, eighty bucks a visit three times a week for a year is an awful lot of money! A bartender cured me for \$10. I was so happy to have saved all that money that I went and bought me a new pickup!"

"Is that so? And how, may I ask, did a bartender cure you?" "He told me to cut the legs off the bed! - Isn't anybody under there now!!!"

THREE PARABLES

Jesus is in trouble again. This time it's his attitude to 'sinners' that has provoked the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus seems to be just too open to the despised margins of Jewish society. He eats with tax-collectors, he drinks with sinners: doesn't he know he is being contaminated by their company? How can Jesus be a holy man, when he behaves like this?

Jesus' critics are rightly concerned with holiness: all are called to be holy as God is holy. But have they really understood God's holiness? Jesus doesn't think so. He and his opponents have very different ideas about what holiness means.

The scribes and Pharisees think that eating and drinking with sinners would wipe out their holiness. Holiness can be so easily destroyed, and it is their duty to avoid whatever threatens it!

But Jesus thinks that the holiness of God is quite different from that. God is open to the outcast: his merciful holiness reaches out to the sinner. Jesus is explaining why he himself acts towards sinners as he does. Jesus acts just as God acts towards them: his holiness reaches out to them in mercy and love. He acts towards them like that because that is how God acts: the merciful holiness of Jesus is the merciful holiness of God.

Jesus explains further with some parables: a lost sheep found by the shepherd, a lost coin found by a woman, a lost son found by his father. These explain what Jesus has been doing. He has been doing the work of God by finding what had been lost. When he ate with sinners, he was eating with the 'lost'.

There is no pretence that the tax-collectors and sinners were anything other than 'lost'. That is a judgement against them: their way of life, their behaviour had put them in the wrong. Jesus' behaviour, God's behaviour, was intended to put them in the right. So to call them lost is a judgement against them.

But look how it is already a judgement in their favour! To judge something lost is to judge it precious! We don't describe something as lost and so go searching for it, unless we judge it to be something worth finding, something precious.

If the sinners are the lost, then they are precious to God and therefore precious to Jesus. So off he goes in search of them. And when he finds them, he calls on others to rejoice with him.

Look at how each of Jesus' parables ends. The shepherd finds the lost sheep, takes it on his shoulders, and when he gets home calls together all his neighbours and friends and asks them to rejoice with him at his find. When the woman finds her lost coin, she calls in her friends and neighbours, again to rejoice with her that what was lost is now found. And finally, the father calls for a feast to celebrate the return of his son: the one who was dead has returned to life, he who was lost is found.

This tells us how we should share in God's holiness. We should join in the celebration, the scribes and Pharisees should take their place at the feast, the brother of the son who was lost should celebrate too and not sulk outside. There is rejoicing among the angels of God, Jesus tells us, over one sinner who repents. It is for us to rejoice with the angels, to celebrate with Jesus, to share in the divine joy.

But perhaps there is something else to be said in all this about the holiness to which all Christians are called. Our holiness is not simply to rejoice in the mercy of God by welcoming the sinner. Surely we too can be called to go out and find what is lost, to sound the call to repentance. This means surely that we recognise that what is lost is lost, and there is much that is lost in violence, in revenge, in hatred.

But it also means that we must recognise that if something is lost, then it must be precious. What is precious to God, precious to Jesus, must be precious to us too, or we will never be holy.

PARISH SERVICES

***Children's Liturgy of the Word at 11.30 a.m. Mass on Sundays.
The Sacrament of Reconciliation on Saturdays from 10.15 to
10.45 a.m., and from 5.00 to 5.30 p.m.***

PARISH ACTIVITIES

***Mass for the Sick
Next Saturday at 11.00 a.m.***

Following their meeting at Scotus College in Glasgow last week, the Catholic Bishops of Scotland have released a statement urging MP's not to allow the creation of mixed animal – human embryos as proposed by the forthcoming 'Human Tissue and Embryology Bill.'

"The Human Tissue and Embryology Bill which will be introduced in the Westminster Parliament in November will among other things allow for the creation of mixed animal – human embryos which would be known as "hybrids".

Human beings are unique and distinct from all other creatures. Our natural distaste at the prospect of mixing species reflects a natural intuition that a moral boundary is being crossed. Like many people we are appalled and shocked by this horrific prospect.

It is alarming to imagine a new category of embryo being fashioned by scientists in order that they might have a further supply of raw genetic material upon which to experiment and then discard.

For many years unsubstantiated claims on the alleged benefits of research on stem cells from human embryos have been made without foundation. At the same time research using adult stem cells has proven to be clinically beneficial without being ethically contentious.

Creating hybrids between animals and humans would be a step too far. We urge our MP's not to support such controversial and morally questionable techniques, which have demonstrably failed to produce results when non-controversial adult stem cell therapies have produced many successes."

Apologies for size of the newsletter. I am waiting for my computer to be linked to the machines so that I can make a B4 newsletter. Please be patient for a few weeks.
Thanks. Fr Ken