

‘AN IMPORTANT WEEK FOR THE FUTURE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA’
Solemnity of the Body & Blood of Jesus Christ – 23rd June 2019

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AS PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

We gather this week, celebrating our relationship with God.
As part of the Body of Christ,
we are conscious of the need to pray for people in our lives.

We are influenced by what happens overseas and locally, including

- The international economies and trade
- The increasing tension between the USA and Iran
- The plight of refugees and asylum seekers
- The state of the earth, our common home
- Conflict zones and wars
- Humanitarian concerns
- Peacekeeping initiatives
- Increasing poverty
- Drought, Famine, Cyclones and Hurricanes, Floods, Earthquakes.
- Cyberbullying
- Ongoing positive and negative developments in Information Technology

WE PRAY FOR SISTERS & BROTHERS IN ERITREA

As a church community this weekend,
we pray for our sisters and brothers in Eritrea
after the forced and sudden closure by the Eritrean Government
of 23 Catholic health facilities.

AUSTRALIAN BISHOPS REPORT TO POPE FRANCIS

As a church nationally, we pray for the visitation to the Vatican
by the Australian Catholic Bishops between June 23rd-30th.
They meet with Pope Francis this Monday June 24th.

GOSPEL OF LUKE

From early in Luke’s Gospel Chapter 9 we recall that
Jesus called the Apostles together and

‘sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.’

After instruction from Jesus

*‘They departed and went through the villages,
bringing the good news and curing diseases everywhere.’*

Jesus debriefs them, giving them space to share the stories of their mission.
And to be accountable to Jesus and each other.

‘On their return the apostles told Jesus all they had done.’

He took them with him and withdrew privately to a city called Bethsaida.'

THE AUSTRALIAN BISHOPS THIS WEEK

The Australian bishops have the opportunity this week to share stories of the Australian Church with Pope Francis and with Vatican meetings with Dicasteries and Congregations and Pontifical Councils.

Some topics might include

- current trends in Australia and in the Church
- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Church sexual abuse,
- human rights and responsibilities
- synodality
- accountability, transparency, responsibility, compliance
- subsidiarity, solidarity
- dialogue
- inclusiveness
- Australian Indigenous concerns
- Laudato Si' and the earth our common home
- issues of identity
- option for the poor
- our models of being Church
- the strengths and weaknesses of the Church
- how the Church shares the Good News
- how the Church proclaims the Kingdom of God
- Youth
- Vocations – Marriage, Single Life, Lay Leaders, Religious, Priests and Deacons
- Lay movements
- Women in ministry
- Sacraments and Liturgy
- Spirituality
- Disability
- Volunteers
- Ageing
- the Plenary Council in 2020 and 2021
- Church health services including hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, medical research, care of health care workers
- Church educational services, including schools, universities and adult education facilities
- Seminaries and places of formation
- Eastern Catholic churches and Vicariates in Australia
- Migrants, Refugees, Asylum Seekers
- overcoming clericalism and changing the culture of the church
- multicultural, ecumenical and interfaith perspectives and relationships

- religious freedom
- Catholic Social Teaching
- and many spiritual, moral, medical, ethical, sexual, canonical, theological, justice, social media and governance issues.

More issues were recently mentioned in the consultation phase of the Plenary Council preparation.

Perhaps details about two new developments will be shared with the Bishops

- The Vatican is creating a new Vatican Dicastery where a much higher priority is given to our mission as Church, and how we are prepared for mission and resourced for mission.
- The Amazon Synod issues in October this year at the Vatican

TODAY'S GOSPEL OF LUKE

We turn back to Jesus, as the early Apostles did.

They had a private briefing with Jesus.

Then they accompanied Jesus once more in his mission.

Today's Gospel continues the story.

They see how Jesus speaks to the crowds about the Kingdom of God and his healing ministry.

They make practical suggestions to Jesus, which he hears, but does not follow.

Jesus teaches them to be open to the surprises of God in their lives.

The miracle of the loaves and fishes is one such surprise.

GOSPEL OF LUKE 9:11-17

'When the crowds found out about it, they followed him; and he welcomed them, and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed to be cured.'

The day was drawing to a close, and the twelve came to him and said, 'Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a deserted place.'

But he said to them,

'You give them something to eat.'

They said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish— unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.'

For there were about five thousand men.'

And he said to his disciples,

'Make them sit down in groups of about fifty each.'

They did so and made them all sit down.

*And taking the five loaves and the two fish,
he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them,
and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.
And all ate and were filled.
What was left over was gathered up,
twelve baskets of broken pieces.'*

We note the blessing of the loaves and fishes
and we give thanks to God for the blessings we have received.

We note that the leftovers were gathered up.
May we not waste food, water and precious resources.
May we not waste the opportunities that God gives us.

We are learning continually how essential it is
in our relationship with God and each other,
to be open to the surprises of God,
to follow wherever Jesus leads us,
to respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

We pray this week for the Australian Catholic Church and its Bishops.
We pray for the grace to live our mission humbly and lovingly and justly.
We pray that we follow Jesus.

Let us pray.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/062319.cfm>]

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