

'ENCOUNTERING JESUS IN A MULTICULTURAL PARISH THIS LENT'

5th Sunday Lent – HOMILY 18 MARCH 2018

MOTIVATION AND FORGIVENESS

This weekend the pace of our Eucharistic celebration is slower and more reflective. Since last weekend, where we heard of the Motivation of Jesus in John 3:16-17, we have had the opportunity to focus on our motivations for what we say and do, what we are silent about and ignore.

Let us pause for a full minute and say to God quietly what we discovered during the week about ourselves, and our motivations for goodness and for sin. We ask forgiveness where needed. [\[Pause - one minute\]](#)

CULTURES AND OUR PARISH

In today's Gospel of John 12:20-30 we learn about cultural sensitivity. At Mass today we celebrate one of our two parish feasts – the Feast of St Joseph. We are a multicultural parish and the Gospel has a wonderful example for us. The first lines follow. Some words are highlighted, for the purpose of this homily.

*“Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some **GREEKS**. They came to **PHILIP**, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’ **PHILIP** went and told **ANDREW**; then **ANDREW AND PHILIP** went and told **JESUS**.”*

We note people from another culture wanting to meet Jesus. They wish to encounter Jesus. They come to Philip. Philip is a Greek name. Philip consults Andrew. Andrew, a Jew, has a Greek name. Together Andrew and Philip inform Jesus. This Gospel passage portrays this cultural sensitivity and respect for people from other cultures.

When people in our parish community wish to share their encounters with Jesus, **HOW SENSITIVE ARE WE TO THEIR STORY AND THEIR NEEDS AND THE CULTURAL WAYS SURROUNDING THEIR CHRISTIAN BELIEF?**

We pause and thank God for our cultures and blessings in our community. We ask God's forgiveness for the times when we do not respect each other's culture.

RACISM AND AUSTRALIANS

Some time ago, there was a national survey called '*Face Up to Racism: 2015-16 National Survey*'.

You can find the results on Western Sydney University's [Challenging Racism Project webpage](#). - commissioned by SBS for a documentary 'Is Australia Racist?' - shown in 2017.

It explored racism in Australia.

Some of the points were:

- *“respondents (80.4%) believe it is a good thing for a society to be made up of different cultures.”*
- *“respondents (77%) appreciate the need to challenge racism and for there to be anti-racism initiatives.”*
- *“Seventy-six per cent of respondents also expressed a commitment to personal action”*
- *“Most Australians recognise that racism exists within Australia (79.3%).”*

Yet

- *“51.4 per cent expressed anti-Middle Eastern sentiment.”*
- *“43.9 per cent of respondents expressed anti-African sentiment.”*

We ask ourselves if some of our motivations are related to racism and anti-people.

We pause and ponder this with God silently.

DO WE SPEAK UP LIKE PHILIP AND ANDREW FOR PEOPLE OF ANOTHER CULTURE AND RACE?

WITH WHAT MOTIVATION DO WE ENCOUNTER OTHERS?

DO WE ENSURE THEY RECEIVE EQUAL ACCESS?

DO WE CHALLENGE RACISM AT WORK AND AT LEISURE? [Pause]

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

We are not loners. We are a community, a family of faith.

The Gospel continues with some words highlighted for the homily.

Single grain can be translated literally as *“it remains alone”*.

**We are not a grain remaining alone,
but are called to bear much fruit.**

We have a mission.

We pause soon and reflect on why we do what we do.

IS IT TO REMAIN ALONE?

OR TO WORK TOGETHER, EACH WITH OUR OWN GIFTS, TO BEAR FRUIT?

Encountering Jesus together in our lives and faith community.

Bearing fruit for Jesus. Serving Jesus. Following Jesus.

As the Gospel says:

***“Whoever SERVES me must FOLLOW me,
and where I am, there will my servant be also.
Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.”*** [Pause]

TROUBLED

Troubled not only ourselves. Even Jesus says this in today's Gospel.

***“Now my soul is TROUBLED. And what should I say—
“Father, save me from this hour”?***

*No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour.
Father, glorify your name.’ “*

We bring our troubles before our encounter with God.
We question what we face.

**WE ASK: ARE WE REALLY DOING THIS OR FACING THAT
BECAUSE GOD ASKS US OR BECAUSE WE DECIDED THAT WE WANT IT? [Pause]**

We approach the start of the most sacred part
of our Christian year next weekend – **HOLY WEEK** –
~ **From Palm and Passion Sunday to Easter Sunday** ~

Let us seek both God’s blessing and God’s forgiveness in our lives today.
One more week before Holy Week begins.
Another week of opportunities to encounter Jesus and bear fruit.

Let us pray.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031818-year-b.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook18032018>]



GOSPEL OF JOHN

“Jesus answered them,
“The hour has come for the
Son of Man to be glorified.

Very truly, I tell you, unless a
grain of wheat falls into the
earth and dies, it remains just
a single grain; but if it dies, it
bears much fruit.”

*“We are not a grain remaining alone,
but are called to bear much fruit.
We have a mission.” Fr. Gerry*