

‘JESUS IS THE LIGHT IN THE STORIES OF OUR LIVES’
3rd Sunday Ordinary Time Year A ~ 26TH JANUARY 2020

REMEMBERING IN PRAYER

As we gathered today, we remembered in prayer those who have died in the fires. We prayed together our special prayer for all Catholic churches this weekend, for all affected by the Bushfires.

<https://catholic.org.au/images/bushfire/bushfire%20resources%202.pdf>

POPE FRANCIS: MESSAGE FOR WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS 2020

Then we listened to the Bible Readings.

We are all in the story of life.

Pope Francis spoke about stories recently

in his [Message for World Day of Social Communication 2020](#).

Pope Francis invited us

to remember ‘who and what we are in God’s eyes’,

to bear ‘witness to what the Spirit writes in our hearts’

and to reveal ‘to everyone that his or her story contains marvellous things.’

Let us read slowly from a section of his Message.

*‘As we read the Scriptures, the stories of the saints,
and also those texts that have shed light on the human heart and its beauty,
the Holy Spirit is free to write in our hearts,
reviving our memory of what we are in God’s eyes.*

*When we remember the love that created and saved us,
when we make love a part of our daily stories,
when we weave the tapestry of our days with mercy,
we are turning another page.
We no longer remain tied to regrets and sadness,
bound to an unhealthy memory that burdens our hearts;
rather, by opening ourselves to others,
we open ourselves to the same vision of the great storyteller.*

*Telling God our story is never useless:
even if the record of events remains the same,
the meaning and perspective are always changing.*

*To tell our story to the Lord is to enter
into his gaze of compassionate love for us and for others.
We can recount to him the stories we live,
bringing to him the people and the situations that fill our lives.
With him we can reweave the fabric of life, darning its rips and tears.
How much we, all of us, need to do exactly this!*

With the gaze of the great storyteller –

*the only one who has the ultimate point of view –
we can then approach the other characters, our brothers and sisters,
who are with us as actors in today's story.
For no one is an extra on the world stage,
and everyone's story is open to possible change.*

*Even when we tell of evil, we can learn to leave room for redemption;
in the midst of evil,
we can also recognize the working of goodness and give it space.
So it is not a matter of simply telling stories as such,
or of advertising ourselves,
but rather of remembering who and what we are in God's eyes,
bearing witness to what the Spirit writes in our hearts
and revealing to everyone that his or her story contains marvellous things.'*

If you wish, you could highlight words or phrases that spoke to you.
During the week you could ask how those words or phrases
speak to your life story now.

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 4:12-23

Let us now read from today's Gospel Message in Matthew.

*'Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested,
he withdrew to Galilee.
He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake,
in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali,
so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:
'Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—
the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.'
From that time Jesus began to proclaim, '
Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'*

Jesus has taken time to pray and discern about his next stage of ministry.
To do this, he “withdrew”.

Having ‘withdrawn’, he travels to Capernaum,

- fulfilling the prophecy of his being the light,
- bringing light to our shadows
- and being the light that dawns in our lives.

The first Reading from Isaiah 8:23-9:3 told of the prophecy that

- a great light that God will shine on the people who are in darkness
- God will make their joy increase
- and God will break the yoke, the bar and the rod of the oppressor.

Such Good News.

The Gospel reveals that Jesus is the light to the nations.

He calls us to repent *'for the kingdom of heaven has come near'*

The Gospel continues:

*'As he walked by the Sea of Galilee,
he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter,
and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen.
And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.'
Immediately they left their nets and followed him.
As he went from there, he saw two other brothers,
James son of Zebedee and his brother John,
in the boat with their father Zebedee,
mending their nets, and he called them.
Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.*

*Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues
and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom
and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.'*

The dawn of Jesus calls us into the light.

We are called, as people of the light, to follow the light of Jesus.

Our story is about God's love for us and our response,
and our mission is to love and proclaim the reign of God.

PLACING OURSELVES INTO THE STORY OF JESUS

Let us enter into today's gospel Story.

Where do we begin?

We begin in Jesus.

Read today's passage about Jesus on the shore at the Sea of Galilee.

Read it slowly.

God gave us the gift of imagination.

Imagine Jesus walking by the sea.

Picture the scene in your mind.

Perhaps early in the morning after people have been fishing at sea.

Jesus is already known in the area.

He is living by the Sea of Galilee.

He has been proclaiming the 'Good News'.

He surprises Peter and Andrew.

They were casting out a fishing net.

They hear Jesus inviting them to follow him.

As they begin to follow. Jesus sees James and John.

Have they been working during the night?

Are they tired?

We hear that they are mending their nets.

They are at work.

Jesus called them.

Hear the tone of his voice.

Think what Peter and Andrew might have thought.

Think about what James and John might say to their father.

So many questions and things to consider.

What must they have seen and heard from Jesus that would lead them to follow?

Picture the face once more of Jesus looking at each of them individually.

They follow.

Let us pause once more.

Let us imagine ourselves as we meet Jesus.

Let us imagine ourselves at the beach,
or perhaps the shoreline of a lake or lagoon.

Imagine.

Rest for a moment where you are.

Gaze at Jesus walking along the shore.

He is at one with the scene around him.

Calm, serene.

Yet also with a sense of purpose.

He sees you.

He comes up to you. And speaks.

How does he sound?

How is his face, his posture?

Describe slowly the way he gently looks at you.

It touches something in you, something you are looking for in life.

His words surprise you.

He invites you to follow him.

Deep down, you know him.

He is calling you.

We pause.

And after a while, we remember.

We remember the beach scene with Peter, Andrew, James and John.

The sea and the beach are their workplace too.

IMAGINE JESUS IN YOUR BUSY WORKPLACE

Now imagine Jesus in your workplace.

Is it outside on the streets?

Is it in the fields, or driving, or building or lifting?

Is it inside a factory, or an office?

Is it in a classroom or someone's place or your home?

Are you listening or directing?

Are you working on a computer?

And like Peter and Andrew, James and John,
Jesus comes up to you while you are busy.
And he invites you to follow him.
Think of your reaction, of your questions.
Perhaps at this very moment, Jesus gives you the very calm you need.

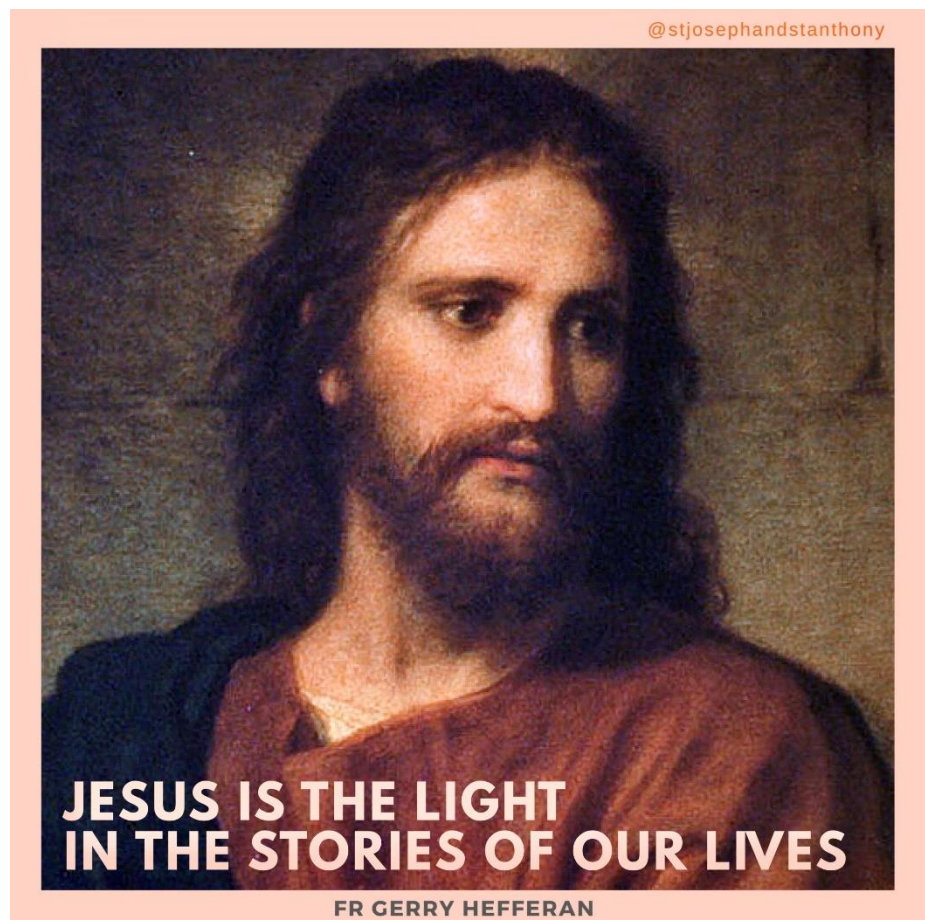
Now you go back to the Gospel passage
and imagine you are one of the workers there.
Think and pray like one of them.
Experiencing the call of each other into love.

How you respond is part of your prayer.
Be still and gently hand over to Jesus.
Be with Jesus.
Gaze in wonder at Jesus.
Let God take the initiative.

Amen.

Fr Gerry

[Readings: <https://universalis.com/Australia/20200126/mass.htm>]



Heinrich Hofmann, "Christ and the Rich Young Ruler", 1889 | edited www.stjosephsbrackenridge.com