

‘LAMB OF GOD AND CLIMATE CHANGE’
2nd Sunday Ordinary Time Year A ~ 19TH JANUARY 2020



[Juan de Juanes c. 1562 | The Last Supper | Museo del Prado – edited \[www.stjosephsbrackenridge.com\]\(http://www.stjosephsbrackenridge.com\)](#)

We face many critical issues in the New Year.

IRAQ & THE UNITED NATIONS

One comes from **Iraq** and the urgent need for distribution of aid.

Further details are in the UN article,

[“Aid to vulnerable Iraqis may ‘come to a complete halt within weeks’ “](#)

We pray them in their hour of need.

A CRITICAL TIME IN OUR NATION’S HISTORY

We are at a critical time in our nation’s history

as we discuss what changes are needed,

due to **climate change** and **the causes of climate change**.

In current debates we hear how our weather in Australia is affected, for example, by

- The Pacific Ocean - El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) with [El Niño and La Niña](#)
- The Indian Ocean – the [Indian Ocean Dipole](#) (IOD)
- The Southern Ocean – the [Southern Annular Mode](#) (SAM)
- Above Antarctica - changes in the stratospheric polar vortex

We read detailed CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology reports.

We read of climatic measurements used for drought and rainfall and heatwaves.

A **Royal Commission** or other investigations have been mentioned.

A **Private Member’s Bill** is being prepared, drawing on overseas experience

Some of its proposals include

- an independent Climate Change Commission (CCC),
- an annual National Climate Change Risk Assessment,
- Government five-year national adaptation plans “for the nation and for nominated regional and economic sectors”
- “a long-term national emissions target that aligns with scientific imperatives, State government policies and global commitments.”

- “five-year national emissions budgets”
- “five-year plans set at least five years in advance”
- “principles by which Australia would engage in international climate change negotiations.”

The Private Members bill has not been released yet, but the Catholic Church has given an agreement ‘*in principle*’ with its purpose.

WE TURN TO THE FIRST READING & GOSPEL FOR INSPIRATION

Having experienced such a long, divisive and heated debate in the Australian community on climate change, let us turn to this weekend’s First Reading and Gospel for inspiration.

We note *four* important points from the *First Reading from Isaiah today*.

1. We identify with God’s call to us to be **servants of God**.
2. Our own thoughts. Perhaps, faced with such **enormous challenges**, we might think that we have labored in vain. Perhaps we get depressed. Perhaps we find excuses to give up. We name our responses.
3. We are not alone.
God has intimate knowledge of us and **God is our strength**.
This realization brings hope and the strength to work together with God.
4. God will gift us to others as a light to the nations.

Let us read together this passage from Isaiah.

ISAIAH 49:3-6

*‘And he said to me, ‘You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.’
But I said, ‘I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my cause is with the Lord, and my reward with my God.’
And now the Lord says, who formed me in the womb to be his servant,
to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him,
for I am honoured in the sight of the Lord, and my God has become my strength—
he says, ‘It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the
earth.’*

What does God mean in these words:

‘It is too light a thing that you should be my servant’?

And God goes on to add *‘I will give you as a light to the nations’*.

The mission includes –

as *servant* – to restore the survivors of Israel

as *light* – that salvation may reach to all parts of the earth.

There are local and world – wide calls from God.

We are not only servants but a light to the nations.
We can pray about this revelation during the week.

*For example, in our concern for the earth, our common home,
how do we not only serve God, our Creator,
but also look to the international dimension as a light to the nations?*

How is the church teaching of [Laudato Si' – On Care for Our Common Home](#), a part of this light to the nations?

Today's Gospel brings the essential dimensions of *Humility* and *Sacrifice*.

LAMB OF GOD

At every Mass throughout the world, we call Jesus by the name "*Lamb of God*".

A Lamb is not an image of a mighty weapon or a warlord.
It is not an image of a dictator or a corrupt political leader.
It is not an image of powerful people gloating over their power,
It is not an image of arrogance or high status or wealth or connections.
It is not an image of someone belittling another.

It is a humble image.

It is a sacrificial image.

It is an image of the Passover Lamb.

**In working together and facing urgent environmental issues
we turn to the humble example of Jesus as Lamb.**

And we realize that we might need to **sacrifice time and effort** to make a difference.

In John's Gospel 1:29 and 1:36 we hear that John gives witness to Jesus as the "*amnos tou theou*" Lamb of God.

1:29 "*Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*"

1:36 "*Look, here is the Lamb of God!*"

Later in John 19, he will refer three times to the suffering and death of Jesus on Preparation Day (for the Passover). In John 19:14, 31, 42.

Jesus the Christ is the Suffering Servant foretold in Isaiah in the Old Testament.

Jesus is the Lamb of God.

We, as disciples of Jesus, are called **lambs** in John 21:15.

On this Sunday we call Jesus the Lamb of God.

You are invited to look around the church community today – a community of lambs.

Now, as lambs, let us read the Gospel together.

GOSPEL OF JOHN 1:29-34

*'The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and declared,
'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!
This is he of whom I said,
"After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me."
I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason,
that he might be revealed to Israel.'
And John testified, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove,
and it remained on him.
I myself did not know him,
but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me,
"He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain
is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit."
And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.'*

POPE FRANCIS TEACHING US ABOUT THE LAMB OF GOD

With so much division in society, in politics,
in families and in groups about climate change,
let us draw upon the following inspiring words from Pope Francis.
Six years ago, on Sunday 19th January 2014,
Pope Francis spoke about the [Lamb of God](#).

Some of his insights included:

*"The verb that is translated as "take away"
literally means "to lift up", "to take upon oneself".
Jesus came into the world with a precise mission: to liberate it
from the slavery of sin by taking upon himself the sins of mankind.
How? By loving."*

Later Pope Francis explained what it means for us as church today:

*"We Christians must do this:
replace malice with innocence,
replace power with love,
replace pride with humility,
replace status with service."*

*Being disciples of the Lamb means not living like a "besieged citadel",
but like a city placed on a hill, open, welcoming and supportive.
It means not assuming closed attitudes
but rather proposing the Gospel to everyone,
bearing witness by our lives that following Jesus makes us freer and more joyous."*

During the week ahead, let us ponder how we apply
both Bible Readings and the explanation of Pope Francis,
to the challenges of Climate Change here and elsewhere.

May we find liberation, love, openness, service, joy and humility
in working together in protect the earth, our common home.
Working together in Jesus Christ, our light.

And as lambs, we reach out to people of goodwill,
to make a difference, to care for the earth.
As lambs, we search for ways
to uplift the political will in Australia,
so that we all face together,
the daunting challenges before us,
and implement the comprehensive changes needed.

Let us thank God for the blessing of recent local rain
and continue our prayer for areas of drought and bushfire.
'PRAYER DURING FIRE & DROUGHT'.

In solidarity, let us pray.

Fr Gerry

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



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