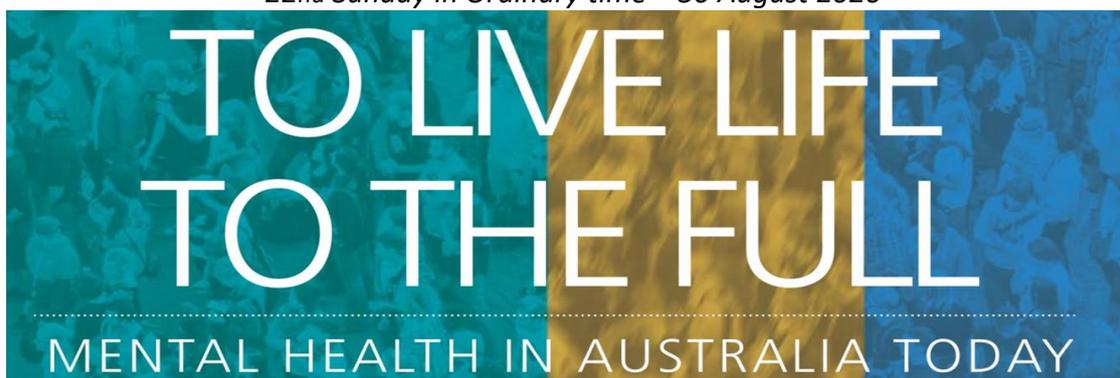


MENTAL HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA  
22nd Sunday in Ordinary time ~ 30 August 2020



*Image from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Statement 2020-2021*

### CELEBRATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY

Congratulations to Xavier and Melissa on their 10<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary yesterday.  
Congratulations to Kate and Matthew who marry today.  
Congratulations to all who have birthdays last week and this week.

### SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT

Today is Social Justice Sunday across the Catholic Churches in Australia.

The Statement is entitled

[“To Live Life to the Full  
Mental Health in Australia Today”](#)

At all Masses in our parish this weekend,  
someone will read from the Foreword to the Statement  
and another parish member will lead us in the prayer accompanying the Statement.

In the Statement of 19 pages, we hear that

*“Mental Health can be seen as a continuum.*

*At one end are people who are feeling well and coping with the demands of daily life.*

*This is the case for 60 per cent of all Australians.*

*At the other end are people experiencing mental illness.*

*Common conditions include anxiety and depression.*

*Others relate to psychosis, including schizophrenia and bipolar affective disorder.*

*These can range from mild conditions that are self-managed, to those that need basic care,  
through to moderate and severe conditions that require specialist support or hospitalization.*

*With proper treatment and care, most people recover completely.*

*And while those who are living with mental ill-health,*

*or who are on the path to recovery,*

*are often active and productive members of the community, significant challenges remain.”*

“People experiencing mental ill-health often encounter stigma  
and may fall through gaps in medical and community care.

In fact, mental ill-health through the lifespan

is quickly becoming the greatest cause of disability in the world.

Having an understanding of mental health can raise our awareness of people in our families,  
faith communities, workplaces and society who need our support.”

The Statement includes

- **Young people** as “mental illness typically emerges in adolescence and early adulthood.  
Three-quarters of people who develop ill-health first experience its symptoms before they are 25 years old.’
- **Older people**
- **Family life**, including post-natal depression, the breakdown of relationships, domestic violence and abuse of women
- **Communities and crises**, such as prolonged drought and its impact on rural and remote communities, ‘environment-related’ anxieties, rural and remote suicides, the recent bushfires.
- **First Nations people and communities**
- **Refugees and asylums seekers**
- **COVID-19**

The Statement also highlights opportunities during COVID -19.

#### FIRST READING

In Jeremiah 20:7-9,

Jeremiah as a prophet, recognizes the hardships he faces, yet he continues to be prophetic, because of the fire burning in his heart and bones.

Today we thank God for the prophetic voices over the generations who have challenged us and highlighted the human dignity of all people. Some of the **prophets with mental ill-health** have spoken from personal experience. Others are **prophets with mental health** who have been deeply touched by the experiences of people with mental ill-health.

#### GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

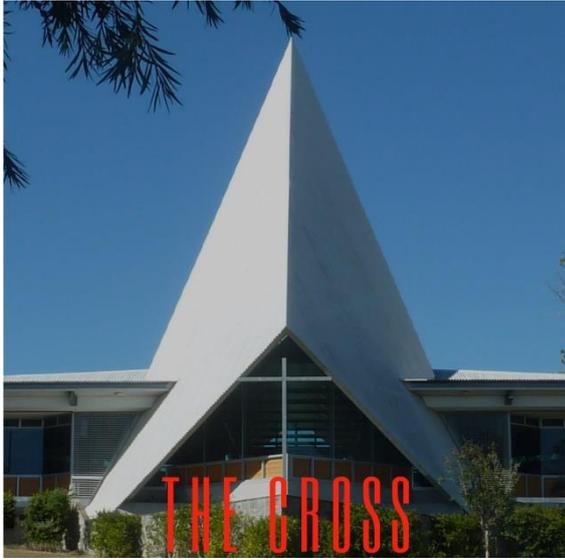
In Matthew 16:21-27,

we hear that, if we want to be disciples of Jesus, we need to renounce our ourselves and take up our cross and follow Jesus.

*“Then Jesus told his disciples,*

*‘if any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.*

*For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.’ ”*



### [OUR EXTERNAL PARISH CROSS](#)

Looking outside our church,  
we see the **external parish cross**,  
reminding us that we follow Jesus into the world.

### [OUR INTERNAL PARISH CROSS](#)

I will move over now to our **internal parish cross**  
in the sanctuary.

As we gaze at it, we see so many individual  
wooden pieces placed together to form the cross.

It is a communal cross, the cross of our  
community.



### [WE GAZE AT THE CROSS | WE REMEMBER](#)

As we gaze at the cross, we remember the figures we heard.

40% of people with mental ill-health and 60% of people with mental health.

Together we make up the cross of Jesus.

We are called to carry it together as a community,  
To be a family together, supporting each other as we follow Jesus.  
And to renounce our prejudice and stereotypes.

**Susan** will read from the Church's Statement today,  
reading from the foreword by Archbishop Coleridge.

**Sam** will lead us in the national church prayer for today.

*Jesus, you invite us all into the fullness of life.  
May we support one another to flourish in body, mind and spirit.*

*Strengthen our commitment to ensure that nobody falls through gaps in our systems of care.  
Help us to recognize you in those who suffer mental ill-health today.*

*Show us how to eliminate stigmatization of mental ill-health  
from our parishes, schools, communities and organizations.*

*You drew near to those who were suffering in body or mind.*

*May we too feel your nearness when we struggle with mental health challenges.  
May we be one as members of Your Body.  
You invite us to share in your ministry of love and true compassion.  
May we be empowered by your Spirit to reach out to all people in need.  
May we build communities of welcome and inclusion. Amen*

And now **we** will pray the prayers of the faithful, composed by parish members.  
Amen.

Fr Gerry

[Readings: <https://universalis.com/Australia/20200830/mass.htm>]

[ACBC Social Justice Statement 2020 - 2021](#)

## THE CROSS OF JESUS CALLED TO CARRY IT TOGETHER



**“TOGETHER WE MAKE UP THE CROSS OF JESUS.  
WE ARE CALLED TO CARRY IT TOGETHER  
AS A COMMUNITY...”** FR GERRY

*Father & Son – David & Alex - carry The Cross on behalf of our  
parish community on Good Friday, 2019.*