

SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY
22nd SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – 28 AUGUST 2022



HOMILY IN THREE PARTS

Today's homily is in three parts.

- 1) *Social Justice Statement – Respect: Confronting Violence and Abuse*
- 2) *Brisbane North East Deanery Forum*
- 3) *Today's Gospel*
- 4) *Community sharing*

Let us begin.

1) *Social Justice Statement – Respect: Confronting Violence and Abuse*

Our annual Catholic Social Justice Statement for 2022-23 by the Australian Catholic Bishops is titled *Respect: Confronting Violence and Abuse*.

The Statement includes

- cultural, structural, Biblical, theological, religious language and First Nations perspectives.
- spiritual violence and abuse.
- insights about its causes and what survivors experience.
- examples of practical Church action.

Among its messages are:

“Whenever a woman or child is subjected to violence, abuse or coercive control, the image of God and the freedom of the children of God is violated.

When we talk about marriage, we should consider how our words will be heard by and impact upon women and children living in situations of domestic violence.

They are present in our parishes, schools, and communities.

They need to hear that their lives are sacred, that they are worthy of respect, and that they should be afforded justice.

Men need to understand that they do not have a biblical warrant to dominate and control women and children.

They can play a positive role by having tough conversations about this with friends and relatives.”

“In cases of violence and abuse, discussion of forgiveness should not be separated

from consideration of the cardinal virtue of justice.
We cannot preach forgiveness without justice to the victims of violence without tacitly colluding with perpetrators.
We should support forgiveness which does not accept the injustice of domestic violence but rather calls for its repudiation.
Forgiveness must be linked with justice and dignity.
In situations of violence and abuse it is the virtue of justice that must be emphasised.
Our faith provides hope for transformation for both victim-survivors and perpetrators.
It calls us to believe and support women and children experiencing violence and to ensure their safety and well-being.
It calls us to challenge perpetrators to take responsibility for their behaviour and to assist them to change.”

“Ensuring the safety and respecting the dignity of those who experience violence and abuse is an urgent priority which must also be accompanied by preventative action.
Laws and policies play an important role, but these will not succeed without community action and cultural change too.
Faith communities can play a powerful role in reducing domestic violence.
As Catholic Health Australia says, “parish priests and other community leaders are in an ideal position to educate the community, inform and support victims of violence and assist on the ground addressing systemic issues in line with our faith.”

“Catholic Health Australia, Caritas Australia and Catholic Social Services Australia are among those working to support women and children experiencing domestic violence with healthcare, accommodation, counselling, support, and care.”

These are urgent issues that the whole community must address.
Please take the time to read the Statement and discuss it with others.
Its link is <https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/2022/08/02/sjs2022-23/>

2) Brisbane North East Deanery Forum

Yesterday, parish representatives in our deanery met with the Archdiocesan Episcopal Council.
We heard about the consultations in each of the nine parishes, and later moved into discussion groups.
Someone from each group read the key points from the discussions.
These were collected and will be forwarded to the parishes.
Two of the parishes in the consultation remarked how helpful it was to have the parish school rostered every few weeks in preparing and participating in a Sunday parish Mass.

We discussed our mission and leadership, and what we seek from the Archdiocese so that we can be sustainable.
The representatives now report back to our Parish Pastoral Councils.

The next deanery consultation will be with Brisbane North East Deanery Pastoral Council and clergy in October or November.

Sue Williams is our parish representative on the North East Deanery Pastoral Council.

Then, in early 2023, the representatives who were invited yesterday, will be invited again to meet with the Archdiocese Episcopal Council.

We will have less priests in the next few years, and not every parish that has a resident priest in the deanery now, will have a resident priest in the years to come. Priests will be shared in some form across parish communities.

3) Today's Gospel

As we focus on parish leadership now and into the future, we invite Jesus into our discussions.

The Gospel today invites all into hospitality with Jesus.

At meals, Jesus would invite people into a deeper understanding of God's love at work in their own lives. He would listen and challenge and heal and offer life to them. They could note his tone of voice, his concern, his joy, his compassion. They could see his facial appearance and body language.

GOSPEL OF LUKE 14:1

Luke 14:1 introduces the dinner with these words:

'On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.'

GOSPEL OF LUKE 14:2-6

Jesus is always concerned about us.

Out of his compassionate love, at the meal, he healed a man who had dropsy.

Healing of this person came first.

Jesus tried to engage the lawyers and Pharisees about doing good on the Sabbath.

They were silent.

We cannot afford to be silent about violence and abuse.

We cannot afford to be silent about future directions of our parish communities.

We need to engage with Jesus and with each other.

GOSPEL OF LUKE 14:7-14

Jesus, as teacher, noticed how they were seated, and engaged them with the telling of a parable.

Let us find out what happened. The Gospel says:

'When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honour, he told them a parable.

'When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honour, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, "Give this person your place", and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place.'

But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, "Friend, move up higher"; then you will be honoured in the presence of all who sit at the table with you.

For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.'

He said also to the one who had invited him,

'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid.

But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.

And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'

We note the invitation of Jesus to be inclusive.

'But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.'

4) Community sharing

Year 3

Congratulations to Year Three at St Joseph's for your study of three saints – Mother Mary MacKillop, Mother Teresa of Calcutta and St Vincent de Paul.

Thank you for the spiritual celebration of Year Three Mass on Friday.

After Mass, the children remained in the church for a while

as our Principal, Mr Gary Creevey, shared with them about his faith and invited questions and insights from the children.

St John Fisher College

Earlier that morning was the special Blessing and Opening celebration

of a new building Mercedes and Magnolia Place at the St John Fisher College.

Congratulations to all involved. Links to the occasion are at ...

First Eucharist

Congratulations to all the children who receive First Eucharist today,

and for all the children who have received First Eucharist on the last two Sundays.

Thank you to Carolyn Kenny and the parish sacramental team.

Thank you to all in the music ministry who have helped us to pray at the First Eucharist celebrations.

Thank you to the parents of the children.

Study Renewal

Last year I had two month's study leave, and the third month is September this year.

1997 had been my previous study leave.

Last year's study focused on the Cross in the New Testament, and on two Carmelite saints who wrote about the cross - St John of the Cross and St Edith Stein.

I begin late morning this Thursday September 1st.
I'll use accommodation provided by the Archdiocese.
Towards the end of the month I will be on a prayer retreat.
Father Gary Walker will be our celebrant at parish weekend Masses, and the Seniors Mass on Tuesday 6th. He feels very much a part of our parish family.
Welcome Father Gary.

September Diary

From September 1st until October 4th, we celebrate the *Season of Creation*.

Next Sunday is *Father's Day*.

On the 2nd Sunday of September, *Clare Kennedy* will speak at all Masses.

On the 3rd Sunday of September, *Parish Finance council members* will speak at all Masses about how we are going financially.

While away, I keep our community in prayer.

Thank you all for your continuing prayers for my sister.

May we experience in September, a deeper understanding of God's love at work in our own lives.

Let us pray.

Father Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/082722.cfm>