

CELEBRATE SPECIAL TIMES, TREASURE OUR FAITH, PRAY FOR WEST PAPUA
17th Sunday in Ordinary time ~ 26 July 2020



CELEBRATIONS

Yesterday we celebrated three joyful baptisms.
A special time of celebrations.

Today, at the beginning of our celebration,
we joyfully welcome Jay and Dami into the Catholic Church.

Jay receives the *Sacraments of Baptism* and of *Confirmation*.

Dami, already baptised years ago in Africa in another Christian tradition,
is welcomed prayerfully into the Catholic Church and receives the Sacrament of
Confirmation.

Jay and Dami receive Jesus in the Eucharist.

During this week, children will receive the *Sacrament of Reconciliation* for the first time.
They had prepared for this special time in March, but because of COVID-19 gathering
restrictions, the children and their families have waited patiently until this week.

+ GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 13:44-52 +

OUR TREASURE

The Gospel says:

***'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field,
which someone found and hid;
then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.'***

WHAT A COMMITMENT MADE RESOLUTELY IN JOY

What a commitment made resolutely in Joy.

What might we ask in response?

- what is our treasure – our faithful and loving relationship with God?
- who is our treasure - God?

How would we respond to the question – where is our treasure?

OUR PEARL OF GREAT VALUE

The Gospel continues:

***'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant
in search of fine pearls;
on finding one pearl of great value,
he went and sold all that he had and bought it.'***



The Gospel uses the word ***“search”***.

We reflect on our journey of searching.

Jesus invites us beyond our comfort zone into the unknown.

The search includes reaching out to the marginalised people

- in our society,
- in our families,
- in our churches,
- in our neighbourhoods,
- in the world.

We are invited, in the light of Jesus,

- to search out the goodness of others,
- to listen to and stand with the disadvantaged,
- to advocate with them.
- to shares the struggle and the joy.

FISHING NET

The Gospel continues:

***'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown
into the sea and caught fish of every kind;
when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down,
and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad.'***



We are called

- to affirm the goodness lived every day across our nation and world.
- to affirm all the goodness lived in ministries serving others.

In a genuine Christian way, we are called to challenge the badness.

We are called to challenge the temptations to cover-up, ignore, abuse, discriminate and belittle.

WEST PAPUA

We have received a special request to pray for the people of West Papua.

The people of West Papua have been waiting for a true and fair referendum for many decades now.

They have been abused and persecuted.

This has been well documented by several agencies, including the United Nations, Amnesty International and our Catholic Justice & Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Three years ago, a document signed by well over one and half million West Papuans was smuggled out of West Papua, verified and presented to the United Nations.

Several days ago, 57 priests in West Papua supported the call for a genuine referendum for the people of West Papua.

<https://www.ucanews.com/.../papuan-priests-call-for-ind.../88883>

(West Papua is currently divided into Papua and West Papua provinces).

The people of West Papua are still searching for justice and peace.

The people of West Papua are still waiting for their human rights and dignity to be respected.

Let us pause and pray for the people of West Papua.

Let us pause and pray for the 157 priests and all their faith leaders and communities.

[pause and pray]

We pray that our lives are a lifelong listening to Jesus.

We pray for continual openness in our church

to the challenges, joys, struggles, hope and resolute action that are our mission.

COVID-19

In prayerful solidarity, we pray

- for the partnered parishes of Flemington and Kensington
- for the people of Victoria in lockdown,
- for the people in clusters in NSW
- and for all suffering from COVID-19 overseas.

The treasure. The fine pearl. The dragnet full of fish.

Empowered by Jesus, we pray for people who are our treasure, our fine pearl.

We pray for discernment to see the goodness and badness within us as church community.

And to act resolutely with God in love.

Guided by the Holy Spirit we pray.

Amen.

Fr Gerry

[Readings:<https://universalis.com/Australia/20200726/mass.htm>]