

Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady
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BULLETIN B 42 – 12TH SEPTEMBER 2021
24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – MISSION SUNDAY

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today we welcome Fr. Benito of the Verona Fathers who comes to tell us of their work on the Mission field.

In talking to parents, I have become aware that there are whole swathes of children who for understandable reasons have not returned to regular worship even though church is one of the safest public places.

Regular worship in Church is fundamental to practicing our faith and this 'fear' of returning to a enclosed environment, shared among social groups of children, needs addressing. I felt that holding a 'special one off Mass' might assist the situation by 'breaking the ice' so to speak.

Agoraphobia is one of our greatest concerns from a pastoral perspective and I wanted to provide every opportunity and support especially for our young people. I hope you feel that this effort is worthwhile, and would be very grateful if you would publicise the **Mass at 12 noon on the 19th September** amongst children, parents and staff. This mass is for the "returning" young people and it is important that they feel safe, so I would ask those who are already back to give it a wide berth.

God bless you all

Fr. John

TIMES OF THIS WEEK'S SERVICES

Sun	12	24 th in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass	Lucy O'Keefe (int)
			1800 Mass	People of the Parish
Wed	15	Our Lady of Sorrows	1000 Holy Hour	
Sun	19	25 th in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1200 Children's Mass	– our young people
			1800 Mass	

Don't forget the McMillan coffee morning 1030am – 12noon Friday 24th September

Their aims, of the Verona Fathers as Missionaries, are as follows:

- To proclaim the Gospel where Christ is unknown
- To foster Gospel values, especially those of justice & peace.
- To promote human development, both spiritual and material through pastoral and socio-economic projects in the Missions where they work by extending:
 - + **education** both formal and vocational for boys and girls
 - + **health-care** (hospitals, Health Centres, Primary Health Education)
 - + **clean water**, essential for healthcare, from hand-dug wells and boreholes.
- To serve and support the young Churches they have established by building churches and local priests' houses, training priests and catechists
- To encourage and create conditions for material and spiritual self-sufficiency
- To promote the missionary vocation and missionary partnership

GOSPEL REFLECTION

There's a story told of a puzzle that really baffled the foreman of a builder's yard. Every evening, when the yard was closing and the workers were leaving, there was one man who always left with a wheelbarrow. The foreman was convinced that this guy was stealing, but he could not figure out what he was taking. Several times he stopped the queue of workers anxious to get home so that he could have a closer look to see what was being stolen. He never found anything, but never gave up the search.

Eventually, the foreman retired, still having failed to solve this mystery. And it still preyed on his mind. One day, he bumped into the man with the wheelbarrow and the two of them ended up going for a drink. Eventually the ex-foreman said, "Look, I know that you were stealing from the yard all those years. What were you taking out in that wheelbarrow?" The man replied, "Nothing at all". "So, what were you doing then?" said the other. He got the shock of his life when the man said, "I was stealing wheelbarrows!"

So what's the moral of that story? Well, perhaps it's quite simple. People are not good at seeing what is right under their noses. This is very apparent in the readings we have for today's liturgy. First, there is the anonymous servant of the Lord from Isaiah, the figure from the exile in Babylon, who is the servant of the Lord, but whom the people eventually kill and only then recognise that he was God's prophet, God's messenger. This servant appears in four passages in the section of Isaiah which scholars usually call Second Isaiah, set in Babylon during the time of exile, somewhere between 586 and 538 BC. The tragedy is that people were aware of this anonymous figure, but they chose to ignore him and his message, to the extent that in the fourth and last of the songs of this servant, the people eventually watch him being killed and do nothing to stop this. After his death they realise how wrong they were and that this was a powerful prophet from God. Only then, and of course much too late, do they feel remorse.

The story of this servant comes to life again in the life and death of Jesus. Just as the anonymous servant in Babylon is misunderstood, so too is Jesus. On his journey in the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus poses two questions to his disciples. First, he asks, "Who do people say I am?" His disciples tell him. Apparently, the people think he is John the Baptist, or perhaps Elijah, or at least one of the prophets from of old. Then Jesus drops a bombshell of a question, saying to the disciples, "But who do *you* say I am?" Silence is all around; no one is prepared to express an opinion. Eventually Peter breaks the silence: "You are the Christ," says Peter. Well done, Peter, or so it seems, but as soon as Jesus speaks of the inescapable fate of his suffering and death, Peter gives a classic example of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. He takes Jesus aside and gives him some advice, "This must not happen to you." Peter is rewarded with Jesus' famous rebuke, "Get behind me, Satan!" Peter is not thinking as God thinks.

Is this just a story about Peter? Or is it a story for all humans? The answer should be obvious – it is for all – but how do we engage with the story? The answer to that is not difficult if we consider what Jesus actually said to Peter. The expression "get behind me" is, in the original Greek of the Gospel, the exact same expression that Jesus used when he called the first disciples, saying "follow me". Those four fishermen stopped what they were doing and followed Jesus. When Jesus tells Peter, "Get behind me, Satan!" he is actually renewing the call to discipleship.

To get behind Jesus is to follow him. That is the task of the disciple. Following Jesus was literally what his disciples did when they were journeying, but the really important following is in living as Jesus instructs. To do otherwise is to run the risk of going in the opposite direction altogether. Perhaps that is what is meant when Jesus calls Peter "Satan".