

A Coffee with Alessio



24th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A

Lectionary:

First Reading: Sirach 27:30 – 28:7

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 102(103):1-4,9-12

Second Reading: Romans 14:7-9

Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

The Scripture Readings for this Sunday give us a great deal of food for thought. As I was reading through them, a lot of material came to my mind – some of which I'll have to keep for future columns.

The Readings this Sunday focus on forgiveness and how we should forgive. Forgiveness can be one of those difficult topics or conversations to have. Yet, we hear this Sunday, from the Lord Himself, that forgiveness is an act that must be ongoing. He didn't mean you must forgive someone exactly seventy-seven times. Some people constantly make the same mistake over and over again, and that can be difficult to deal with.

At the beginning of the First Reading, we hear

"Resentment and anger, these are foul things...
He who exacts vengeance
will experience the vengeance of the Lord...
Forgive your neighbour the hurt he does you,
and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven."

Yes, being vengeful is a complete waste of time and energy and we would be better directing our thoughts, time and energy to doing positive things in our society. Easier said than done.

Four hymns come to mind in light of the Readings this Sunday:

-Forgive our sins as we forgive (CWB #680; CWBII #120)

-Make me a channel of your peace (AOV2 #126,CWB #793, CWBII #555, GA #490)

-O Father, I know I can count on your mercy (CWB #762; CWBII #122) and

Where there is charity and love (CWB #863, CWBII # 638, GA #323)

As, I was reading though these Scripture Readings, I am mindful that today is the 19th anniversary of those shocking plane attacks. This event is another one that changed the world forever and created a new normal. We still have procedures that are in place as a result of those attacks. Every year when this anniversary approaches, I can't help but think of what can we learn from this tragedy. When those people who were fortunate enough to tell their family and friends "I love you" before they died, the people on the other end of the phone must have wondered what was going on. I am sure they were grateful for the phone call they received. There were others who didn't get to say goodbye. So, what can we learn from this experience? I would say four things.

Firstly, each day is a gift from God. Our morning prayer should always be: Thank you, God, for the gift of another day. Please help me to use it wisely and bless everything I do.

Secondly, we should value life. Life is a gift from God, from the womb until He calls us home. No one has the right to take that away.

Thirdly, don't put off a necessary or a kind deed for tomorrow. Tomorrow may not come. So do it today, even if that includes taking a risk. You'll have nothing to lose.

Fourthly, we should value the people in our lives who are a blessing to us. Let's pray to the Lord in thanksgiving for them and ask His continued blessing upon them.

On a more joyful note and much closer to home, today also marks the anniversary of the Presentation Sisters beginning educating students in Mosman Park – what we now know as Iona Presentation College. You are probably wondering what that has got to do anything. As I had a look at the first line in the Second Reading this Sunday from Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans he writes: "The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; if we live, we live for the Lord: and if we die we die for the Lord." Yes, the Sisters that I know all lived and worked for the service of the Lord and His people. Having played at many of their funerals as well, they also died for the Lord, after a lifetime of faithful service. Anybody who has had the fortune of attending a Presentation Sisters school or being one of their co-workers would know what a privilege and joy it was to be a thread of wool in their many tapestries. So, to the

Presentation Sisters, today we salute you in gratitude and pray that God's blessings will be upon as you continue to serve Him and His Church and various ministries.

This weekend in our prayers let us remember the victims of the September 11 tragedy, their families and also those frontline workers who with extreme bravery and courage did what they could to rescue people in the most difficult of circumstances. Let us also pray for the Presentation Sisters and all our Religious, giving thanks to God for the way in which they have enriched our Catholic Education system and our society.

As for a coffee and cake this week, it's out to Guildford – the Lounge Room on James Street. I was there with a friend a couple of weeks ago, and their pecan and walnut pie was absolutely delicious. I think it had a layer of figs in it as well, which added to the taste. Together with a coffee, it was a nice way to finish a meal and a good way to end the week.

Till next week – enjoy your coffee and cake!

Mr Alessio Loiacono
Music Field Officer

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