

# *A Coffee with Alessio*



## The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year B

**AMDG**

### Lectionary:

First Reading: Leviticus 13:1-2,44-46

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 31(32):1-6

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

Gospel: Mark 1:40-45

In this week's column there are again a number of topics I would like to include (and I couldn't decide what to leave out), so I will do my best to thread everything together. I'll let you be the judge of the effectiveness of this week's column and if it all links together. I probably have enough material to publish a supplement to the daily newspaper for the whole of this week.

In the First Reading and the Gospel this Sunday we hear about the lepers being declared unclean. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron:  
'The man is leprous: he is unclean. As long as the disease lasts he must be unclean; and therefore he must live apart: he must live outside the camp.'

This situation of the lepers that we hear about in the First Reading seems to be very similar to our pandemic situation. Anyone who has COVID-19 must self-isolate for fourteen days. They are considered to be 'unclean'. In the Gospel Reading, Jesus cures the leper but orders him to go the priest - which is what we heard in the First Reading.

At the top of this column, I have written four letters - AMDG. You might be wondering what does that mean. In Latin it is: *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam* - translated as: all for the glory of God. In the Second Reading this Sunday Saint Paul tells us that whatever we do we should do for the glory of God, even if it something as mundane as washing dishes. Yes, our ministry of being a liturgical musician or a teacher or a priest or whatever else we have committed ourselves to doing, should be done for God's glory. In that way we return to the Lord what He has given us and blessed us with and we serve our neighbour with a joyful and willing heart.

This Sunday is Valentine's Day. For some people it is a joyful day, for others it can be a day spent wondering. The words of the Australian poet James McAuley offer us some wisdom and encouragement about how sensual love should be lived out as followers of Christ. He writes:

'The love of man and woman clear as dawn,  
the will for truth and justice broad as day,  
the wisdom of the heart profound as night,  
praise and reflect the glory of Christ.'

This text is a verse in the hymn 'Sing a new song' set to music by another Australian, Richard Connolly. Yes, we are told here that the love that a married man and woman share for each other and with each other should reflect that sacrificial love of Christ, who died on the Cross for all of us. As I've mentioned before, McAuley and Connolly are like the Rodgers and Hammerstein of the Australian Catholic Church. Their contribution has been outstanding and the hymn 'Sing a new song' is no exception.

Speaking of Rodgers and Hammerstein, Christopher Plummer passed away last week. He, of course, is best known for his role in 'The Sound of Music'. He didn't come to appreciate how well the film had been received till late in his life. Rodgers and Hammerstein are the jewel in the crown of musicals for me. I have to say that the organ processional piece they composed for the film is a gem. A bride walking down the aisle to that of piece of music, is a bride worth waiting for! The groom who is waiting for her is a lucky man indeed!

So, to those who have found the right person I hope you have a very happy Valentine's Day and you get shown the love and appreciation that reflects the Lord and His goodness. For those who have not found the one you are looking for or who have been disappointed, know that the Lord loves you just as much. Just recently, I was having a conversation with a couple of friends who were wondering where the Lord is when we have traumatic experiences. He is right

beside us carrying us, we are just not aware that He is. Perhaps He was helping us dodge a bullet, or maybe He allowed us to experience something unpleasant so that when someone else experienced the same, we could be a shoulder for that person to lean on and a listening ear. The Lord is always finding ways for us to spread His Name and goodness in the world.

Those of us who haven't found 'the one' are able to share the love around more. So, why not find someone you haven't had a coffee with for a while (and strike while the coffee is hot) and ask them to join you, or invite one of your friends whom you've never had a coffee with to spend sometime together. The Lord will be a guest at your coffee, just as He is a guest at the dinner table of a married couple. This Lent-Easter time I am going to try to have a coffee with a couple of friends that I haven't seen for a while, and also find 1 or 2 new coffee friendships - spreading the love and broadening the horizons! This weekend, single or married, a sticky date pudding seems an appropriate dessert to devour at the end of a meal.

In the Saturday edition of 'The West Australian' they publish a week in review. I've done a little bit of that already mentioning the passing of Christopher Plummer. This past week we also saw the passing of Sir Thomas Moore. Captain (Sir) Tom Moore became well known recently for his fundraising efforts for the National Health Service in the UK by walking a hundred lengths of his garden. What an amazing feat! Perhaps he himself didn't realise what a positive impact he would have. He definitely shared the love around.

This Sunday will be the last Sunday in Ordinary Time before Ash Wednesday, so we will farewell the Alleluia. The Alleluia will be taken up again at the Easter Vigil. So a couple of hymn suggestions with an alleluia in them: 'All creatures of our God and King' and 'Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven'.

Tuesday next week will be Shrove Tuesday and so at some point in time on Tuesday I will be having my pancakes. The pancakes at Dome seem to be the way to go.

So, as we come to the end of Ordinary Time for now and prepare ourselves for Lent, this year with the sprinkling of the ashes on our head, Valentine's Day and Pancake Tuesday, let us remember that there are those in who community for whom COVID-19 has changed their lives dramatically. Lent gives us an opportunity to take the focus off ourselves and put it all back on the Lord and neighbour. So, remembering the words from Saint Paul advising us to do everything well and for the glory of God, let our works of charity and kindness be done for the right reasons during Lent.

Speaking of Lent, next week I am going to resume my series on the Stations of the Cross. We'll have a look back at where we left off last year, before moving onto the next Station.

Three other comments before I wrap up for this week. Firstly, school officially went back this week. We are getting reaccustomed to the routines and procedures. That will take a bit of time, so we must be patient with everyone. A special hello to any school staff who are reading this column. I hope the first week back has been a fruitful one for you. Also, we have some new readers to the column who joined at the end of last year or during the holidays. Welcome to those people and welcome back to the 'old readers' as well. I hope this column will be a help to your prayer life and help you to know that the Lord is truly present in your life and guiding you. Finally, to those celebrating the Lunar New Year - a very happy new year to you.

We have a dessert double this week with sticky date pudding and pancakes. What a way to finish Ordinary Time before Lent!

Till next week enjoy your coffee and cake!

Mr Alessio Loiacono  
Music Field Officer

Friday 12 February 2021