

You will listen and listen again, but not understand,  
see and see again, but not perceive.  
For the heart of this nation has grown coarse,  
their ears are dull of hearing,  
and they have shut their eyes,  
for fear they should see with their eyes,  
hear with their ears,  
understand with their heart,  
and be converted  
and be healed by me.

'But happy are your eyes because they see,  
your ears because they hear! I tell you solemnly,  
many prophets and holy men longed to see  
what you see, and never saw it; to hear what  
you hear, and never heard it.

'You, therefore, are to hear the parable of  
the sower. When anyone hears the word of the  
kingdom without understanding, the evil one  
comes and carries off what was sown in his  
heart: this is the man who received the seed  
on the edge of the path. The one who received  
it on patches of rock is the man who hears the  
word and welcomes it at once with joy. But he  
has no root in him, he does not last; let some  
trial come, or some persecution on account of  
the word, and he falls away at once. The one  
who received the seed in thorns is the man who  
hears the word, but the worries of this world  
and the lure of riches choke the word and so he  
produces nothing. And the one who received the  
seed in rich soil is the man who hears the word  
and understands it; he is the one who yields a  
harvest and produces now a hundredfold, now  
sixty, now thirty.'

#### ■ The Gospel of the Lord.

#### A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL

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# Breaking Open the Word



# THE SAVING WORD

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

16 JULY 2023

## THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM

Today's readings converge in their concern that we take time to wonder and reflect on the nature of the kingdom of God, its growth in the world, and in our own lives.

Despite its brevity, the reading from Isaiah is a powerful statement of hope in the ability of God's word to foster life and bring about growth. As the people of Israel struggled to rebuild after the exile Isaiah proclaimed his conviction in the power of God's word.

As Christians, how do we maintain our hope when the world is in confusion? How can we speak of the power of God's word when it is often challenged by our experience of the world desperate for healing and peace? After nearly 2000 years these questions may even be more critical for us than they were in Paul's time. For Paul the key lies in the image of the world and ourselves being involved in the painful process of giving birth. Christians have already received the gift of the Spirit as a foretaste and pledge of what is yet to come.

Jesus' timeless parable of the sower invites us to take heart that despite opposition the seed of God's kingdom has been planted in our world. Opposition, difficulties, and misunderstanding are surely present, but the growth of the kingdom is assured. Perhaps the most pressing question of all is whether we have ears to hear, and the faith to believe, that the kingdom will take root and grow in our world and hearts.



Christopher Monaghan CP

## FIRST READING

Isa 55:10-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

*The rain makes the earth give growth.*

Thus says the Lord: 'As the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.'

■ The word of the Lord.

## RESP PSALM

Ps 64:10-14. R. Lk. 8:8

**R.** The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

1. You care for the earth, give it water, / you fill it with riches. / Your river in heaven brims over / to provide its grain. **R.**
2. And thus you provide for the earth; / you drench its furrows, / you level it, soften it with showers, / you bless its growth. **R.**
3. You crown the year with your goodness. / Abundance flows in your steps, / in the pastures of the wilderness it flows. **R.**
4. The hills are girded with joy, / the meadows covered with flocks, / the valleys are decked with wheat. / They shout for joy, yes, they sing. **R.**

## SECOND READING

Rom 8:18-23

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

*All creation is waiting for the revelation of the children of God.*

I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence to enjoy the same freedom and glory

as the children of God. From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

■ The word of the Lord.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia! / The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower; / all who come to him will live for ever. / Alleluia!**

## GOSPEL

Mt 13:1-23

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

*A sower went out to sow.*

Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the beach, and he told them many things in parables.

He said, 'Imagine a sower going out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth of earth; but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Listen, anyone who has ears!'

Then the disciples went up to him and asked, 'Why do you talk to them in parables?' 'Because' he replied 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed to you, but they are not revealed to them. For anyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but for anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. The reason I talk to them in parables is that they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding. So in their case this prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled:



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TWINNED CATHOLIC PARISHES**  
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Masses Tues, Wed, Fri: 7 am Thurs: 9 am  
Vigil Saturday 5:30 pm  
Sunday 10 am  
RECONCILIATION:  
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Also available by appointment  
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Sacred Heart School Matraville: 9311 2995



Our Parishes acknowledge and honour the Bidjigal and Gadigal People as traditional custodians of this land, that we stand on.



**15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Go Make Disciples, The Mission Plan for the Archdiocese of Sydney

Please pray for the Faithful Departed:

**Recently Deceased:** Sean McConville, Josephine Micallef, Anna Couch, Pam Harrison, Shirley Miller, Mario Petta, Emmanuele Zarb, Maureen Buchan, Marissa Daito, Rosa Lipari, Brian Harvey, Stjepan Cavlovic, Litzia (Letti) Aramini, and all those who have died from the Covid-19 Virus.

**Deceased:** Agnes Brisbane. All the souls in Purgatory.

**Anniversary:** Marie Stromboli, Maria Rodrigues, Anne Baker, Rebecca Soriano, Agnes Pinto, Suk Oi Wong, Rita Ciappara, Julie Laporte, Sue Melia, Jenny Moy, Anne Baker, Joaquim Sarmento Jesuina Sarmento, Beatrice de Araujo, Manuel Alvaro da Cruz, Dulce da Cruz, Raymond Carmichael, Archbishop Rush, Moyah Buckley, Yolande & Robert Aquilina.

**The Sick:** Mary Vella, Robert 'Bob' Spanswick, Beatriz Vesperas, Michael Victor, Marcus O'Dean, Mick Hall Angela Beveridge, Marie Cullen, Merley Nate Fien, Patrick Sargent, John Sarniak Thomson, Pam O'Grady, Heracleo & Mamerta Dela Torre, Santa Viselli and Ernie Ross. Pray for the sick, the dying, the poor and homeless in our parishes, and those suffering from Covid.



**Where will Fr. John be celebrating Mass next weekend?**

Saturday - 22 July 2023 - 5.00 pm St Andrew's (Livestreamed)  
Sunday - 23 July 2023 - 10.00 am St. Agnes'



Greetings to all parishioners and visitors of St Andrew & St Agnes Twinned Catholic Parishes of Malabar-Matraville.

As our 3<sup>rd</sup> Term of 2023 begins this week, John Byrne OSA reflects on today's Gospel. 'Parents with Children, teachers with pupils, speakers with listeners, are all like Sowers in a field where the preparation of the soil is up to another—the child, pupil, or listener. They can sow the seed but cannot guarantee that it will bear fruit. At times there may be temptations not to try anymore. The challenge is to sow in hope. When have you been surprised by the harvest you have reaped?'

The Alpha Course recommences this Monday 17 July in St Andrew's Parish Meeting Room 5.30pm—7.00pm. All are welcome to reconnect to our Catholic Faith through this Program. If you missed the first week that is Ok to come along. It is good to learn more about your faith, come along and enjoy.

Our St Andrew and St Agnes' Parishes Parent/Carer Information night for the First Eucharist Program—1st Holy Communion, Tuesday 25 July at 7pm at St Agnes War Memorial Catholic Church, 509 Bunnerong Rd Matraville. This Program is for those students in Year 3 of our Sacred Heart Primary and St Andrew's Primary Schools Matraville—Malabar and Year 4 for those in State Schools of our parishes who have received the Sacrament of Penance/Confession. If you have any questions about our Parishes Eucharistic Sacrament Program please contact the Parish Offices. Office hours: Tuesday & Wednesday 8.30am—5.00pm and Friday 8.30am—2.30pm.

God bless,

Fr John

We would like to thank Joseph Medcalf Funerals for their continuing kind sponsorship to our Parishes through the sponsorship of printing our Planned Giving Envelopes over the last 12 months. If you are wishing to use Joseph Medcalf Funerals who is Australian owned and family operated. They can be contacted on 9694 9494 (Operating 24 hours).

ALPHA: will return on Monday 17 July Please see the Alpha Schedule on the Church notice boards and websites.



**PARISH OUTING BY COACH** - Tuesday 15th August, South Coast Fairymeadow Illawarra Museum Wollongong. \$50 per person, includes Coach Fare, Museum Entry, Morning Tea and a 2 Course Lunch. Full payment by Sunday, 23 July.

Contact Kathy Sullivan: 9311-1749 or Marie Jennings 9661-7186.

As the 15 August is the Feast of the Assumption and a Holy Day of Obligation, there will be an evening mass at 7pm at St Andrew's together with a 9am Mass on this day.