

ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA Catholic Parish of Cronulla

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Incorporating: Our Lady of the Way Church, Bundeena

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As A Community We Serve God



Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B

Prayer of the Church: Psalter Week 3

Entrance Antiphon:

O Sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.

First Reading: Jonah 3: 1-5.10

The Ninevites renounced evil ways.

Responsorial:

Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Second Reading: Corinthians 7: 29-31

The world as we know it is passing away.

Gospel Acclamation:

ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA! The kingdom of God is near: believe the Good News. ALLELUIA!

Gospel: Mark 1: 14-20

Communion Antiphon:

Look toward the Lord and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed.

OUR TIME IS GROWING SHORT...THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT IS PASSING AWAY...

The Scripture readings from this Sunday's Mass, have as their theme the urgency of conversion in our lives, for time is growing short, and the world as we know it is passing away. We are challenged not to become engrossed and overly-preoccupied with our daily activities and responsibilities, as if there were nothing else to be concerned about, and nothing else on which to focus our attention. What becomes crucial, is that we examine our lives, that we keep our priorities in their proper perspective, and that we recognise where our lives are ultimately heading.


In the First Reading, the Prophet Jonah is sent to a great City, Ninevah, to call the people away from their sins and back to Almighty God. Jonah must have been a very effective and dynamic preacher, for it was indeed conversion that followed, rather than destruction. It becomes clear that God desired the conversion of this people, rather than their downfall, but God's warning that destruction would follow their refusal to repent, is nonetheless real and sincere. God meant that the people of Ninevah should take him seriously. Yet, perhaps they also understood the whole situation from the positive side, that only in the case where conversion was freely brushed aside, glossed-over and refused, would God actively destroy evil for the sake of good.

In the Second Reading, from the First Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians, St Paul comes to a dramatic and far-reaching conclusion, concerning the shortness of time, in which we can continue to seek what is most important in our lives: the need for conversion of heart. St Paul recognises that time is so pressing, relentlessly moving forward, and stopping for no man, that we are unable to settle into our lives with complacency and lack of regard for the consequences of our attitudes, actions and choices, and yet also profess to be a faithful follower of Christ. This is a challenge directed to the entire Church, that we are to live our lives, fulfilling our responsibilities and attending to our needs, not with self-indulgence and single-minded blindness, but with an eye focussed on the final end of our lives: death, judgment, heaven or hell.

Even though our individual choices, attitudes, and actions can seem at times so remote and isolated from the wider context of our lives, we are reminded that they do, in actual fact, make us the person we are, good or evil, and direct us toward our final end. Every freely made moral choice and decision, counts towards our final salvation or condemnation. Time is pressing and the world is gradually decaying and changing before our eyes, and so all the goods that we have and need to use, must be owned and employed with enough indifference that one could do without them at any point. Time is loaned to us, only on the condition that it can be cancelled at a moment's notice. It might seem harsh, even unfair and inconsiderate, but we are reminded that our lives are a gift to us. They are not ultimately our own property in which we can do what we please, and for this reason, they can be equally demanded of us when we least expect. All that we can do in preparation and readiness, is to live our vocations, whatever state of life they might be, faithfully and with a spirit of detachment, repentance and genuine humility. It the same way, God does not desire our destruction, but our conversion of heart. Throughout our lives, particularly from the time that we first started to make moral choices and decisions, God has looked for ways to reach within us, so to prompt our decisions and actions with his grace, in order that we can freely choose what is right and good, and to avoid what is evil. Our salvation is what God desires first and foremost for us. Yet, he also gives us a very real warning, just as he did to the people of Ninevah long ago. Our destruction can equally be a reality, that is, hell is also a real possibility for us. The Church has not ceased to believe in the reality of hell, for it is an unchanging doctrine of our faith that we must believe, yet hell is NOT what God desires for us. He desires our repentance, our sorrow and weeping for our wrong-doings, our conversion, our being built-up in the truth and ultimately our eternal salvation. Yet, is that what we really desire? Is it even a question for us?

Fr Andrew Benton



 **Congratulations To**
Arabella Jackson whom we welcome to our Holy Catholic Church this Sunday. Through her Baptism we pray she will love and serve the Lord always.

This week in the Catholic Weekly

- 'Drowned' boy's survival a miracle, says family
- Asylum seekers with bridging visas 'at risk of exploitation'
- Jackie's song of a single girl with desire to love
- Marist Brothers to scald down to a single province
- Pope's address to Vatican diplomats
- Pilgrims' prayers answered - cathedral visit after hours.



CALENDAR FOR THE COMING WEEK

Monday:	No Notices
Tuesday:	Memorial of St Francis de Sales, bishop, doctor. The Legion of Mary meet in the Parish Centre at 4.00pm.
Wednesday:	The Feast of The Conversion of St Paul, apostle. Care and Concern: There will be a Coffee Morning at the Coffee Shop at Monro Park Lane (All Welcome) 10.00am.
Thursday:	AUSTRALIA DAY MASS AT ST ALOYSIUS' CHURCH, 8.00am.
Friday:	No Notices
Saturday:	Memorial of St Thomas Aquinas, priest, doctor. Mass at St Aloysius' Church at 8.00am. Vigil Mass of the 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B. Mass at St Aloysius Church at 6.00pm
Sunday:	Masses of the 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B. Masses at St Aloysius' Church: 8.00am, 10.00am 6.00pm. Mass at our Lady of the Way Church, Bundeena, 9.00am,

MASS OF FAREWELL & SUPPER
Celebrated by
Fr Thomas Kurunthanam
Friday 24th February, 2012
St Aloysius' Church 7.00pm
All Parishioners are invited to join in this celebration.

After Mass join in a farewell supper to Fr Thomas in Thornton Hall
ENVELOPES are available at the back of Church for a donation towards a farewell present

AUSTRALIA DAY



THIS Thursday we celebrate the birth of our nation. It is our National Day and every citizen should be proud to be called an Australian. There will be many celebrations around the nation to recognize this Day and Christians along with other religions, will be offering thanks for the freedom we have in this wonderful country of ours, Australia.

MASS WILL BE CELEBRATED AT 8.00am AT ST ALOYSIUS' CHURCH to thank God for His blessings on our Country.

RETREAT TRANSPORT ::::

If there is anyone attending the Parish Retreat at Mittagong on the weekend of February 3rd to 5th who requires transport there and back, could they please contact Brian Collins (9523 5533) or Kim at the Parish Centre (8522 0300)

ST FRANCIS DE SALES ::::::



St Francis De Sales
Bishop & Doctor

This Tuesday we celebrate the Feast Day of St. Francis de Sales, Patron of our Primary School at Woollooware. St. Francis de Sales was born in 1567, destined to become a nobleman of Savoie, Bishop of Geneva and to be canonized a saint in 1665. St. Francis is the patron of writers and journalists. His 'The Treatise of the Love of God' has been called one of the greatest works of genius in theology since St. Thomas Aquinas. We ask for his intercession and prayers, that he might inspire within us the same apostolic zeal.



KATH HILDER, has for many years, been a faithful reader in our Parish. Kath, after all of these years of service to God as a Reader of the Word and an Extraordinary Minister of Communion, has decided to step down from these duties. She will continue to assist the St Vincent de Paul Conferences in their work in the phone job she has been doing for such a long time.

On behalf of our Parish we say **THANK YOU KATH**, you have "Done Well" and we feel sure your devotion to these Works of Service over these long years is well remembered. "Thank you" is really not enough in appreciation of your willingness to come forward when called upon many a time to fill in a gap in the roster, and other works in the Parish. We very much appreciate what you have done over the years.

DINNER FOR EIGHT 2012 :::::

Would you like to meet some new friends? Would you like to be re-acquainted with some old friends?

A new round of Dinner for Eight will commence in February and we would like to have the pleasure of your company!

Dinner for Eight is a popular way for parishioners to get to know each other socially. Members of each group take turns to act as host (not a compulsory condition of participating if you can't manage it) and other members bring along something to contribute to the meal. In the course of six months, the group ideally meets four or five times. At the end of the six months, half the group will move on to mix with another half of another group, giving you more opportunities to mix with, and get to know other people in the Parish.

There is no pressure and the emphasis is on *good conversation, good eating and good company*. If you are new to the Parish you are most welcome and we would like to get to know you. If you have been in Dinner for Eight previously and dropped out for some reason or other, now might be the time to think about re-joining. You too will be most welcome.

If you would like to join us, please phone: Brian Collins on **9523 5533** or Kim at the Parish Centre on **8522 0300**

Why Genuflect? Kneeling in Mass and Adoration

When someone is proud, they stand tall; their posture reflects their self-perception. When a good person is in the presence of greatness, they know to humble themselves, whether it be in posture or expression. The instinct is to *lower* oneself and, in some way, acknowledge the greatness before them and to *adjust their heart, and height, downwards*. The difficulty with modern culture is that we don't often know what to do with this instinct. As well, we are taught from our youth to be independent, to question authority, to never consider another as more important than we are *ó never to bring ourselves low as the Lord did when he washed the Disciples' feet*.

The only place in modern western culture (outside of Church) where we still occasionally kneel is when men propose marriage (though it seems even this noble custom is fading). Why does a man do this? Because he knows that this *posture expresses reverence and love* toward his desired bride. It communicates that he holds her in high esteem and is willing to *lower himself to her judgment, to serve her, to honour her*.

So, when we kneel in Church the sentiment expressed in this gesture should be in keeping with all of these good instincts. Stop for a moment and imagine if you were suddenly drawn into the presence of the King of Kings. What would happen to the heart, soul, and body of any good person? Scripture indicates that even holy men are inclined to fall to the ground in the face of Ultimate Holiness or its representatives. Scripture also points out that eventually *every knee shall bow...* (Romans 14:11) whether now, or at the final judgment.

With these perspectives in mind how should we practice kneeling or genuflection in a way that is consistent with our understanding and desire?

It is fairly simple really. When we are in a Catholic Church, we are in the presence of the King of Kings; so, we *should act like it*. In that light, would a sweeping and lighting fast bend of the knee toward the floor suffice? The key question for all of us really is, *what would we do if we really believed* that we are in the presence of God Almighty?

As with everything in our lives, we can use our circumstances, our gifts, our work, or any capability we have to bring us closer to God. The key is the disposition of our hearts and the exercise of our will. Here's a proposed approach for the next time we walk into a Church:

1. Approach the sanctuary slowly *ó don't rush in to find a seat ó instead enter in to worship*.
2. Recognize where you are and focus on that reality. Look to the tabernacle and acknowledge you are before the King of Kings.
3. Move your body in a way that expresses what is real in your heart and mind *ó or at least what you desire to be real*. Stop and kneel *ó right knee ó all the way down to the floor and pause*. Say a prayer honouring Him *ó the glory be is a good prayer, or just say óthank you Lord, help me know and honor you.ö Make the sign of the cross, and slowly rise *ó He really is present* and we should be expressing our love and reverence in His presence.*

