

Laetare Sunday

The fourth Sunday of Lent is known as Laetare Sunday. The term is derived from the opening words of the Latin Mass, "Rejoice (*Laetare*) Jerusalem" (Is 66:10). The church is called to joyful anticipation of the victory to be won. This joyful theme provides lightening from the penitential emphasis of Lent. It is a day of relaxation from normal Lenten rigours; a day of hope with Easter at last within sight. Traditionally, weddings (otherwise banned during Lent) could be performed on this day. Since the thirteenth century the celebrant of the eucharist has been permitted to wear rose-colored vestments which express the change of tone in the Lenten observance. Laetare Sunday therefore may be called "Rose Sunday."

Laetare Sunday is one of the two Refreshment Sundays (the other is Gaudete Sunday, the Third Sunday in Advent). It is a moment in liturgical time when people are invited to ease their Lenten discipline for a day and refresh themselves through feasting and resting. The day reminds us we are saved by grace and not by stringent effort. Carl Jung once noted that he had to be careful not to deny himself too much. Refreshment Sunday supports that observation.

In England this Sunday is known as Mothering Sunday. It was a day when servants and apprentices were allowed to take a day off and go home to visit their mothers. The children would pick wild flowers along the way to place in the church or give to their mothers. That tradition later in the sixteenth century became linked to parochial life as people made pilgrimage to the church of their youth, their "Mother Church." On this day, people gathered at the church to play games, eat pastries and engage in various festivities. Eventually, the religious tradition evolved into the Mothering Sunday secular tradition of giving gifts to mothers. It is increasingly being called Mother's Day, although that name properly belongs to the American secular holiday which is quite distinct from the original Mothering Sunday. Simnel cake is a traditional confection associated with both Mothering Sunday and Easter. Simnel cake is a light fruitcake distinguished by two layers of almond paste or marzipan, one in the middle and one on top. The top layer is capped by a circle of "eggs" made of the same paste, and is lightly browned under a grill. Simnel cakes have been known since at least medieval times. Bread regulations of the time suggest they were boiled and then baked, a technique which led to an invention myth, in circulation from at least 1745 until the 1930s, whereby a mythical couple, Simon and Nelly, fall out over making a Simnel. One wishes to boil it, one to bake it and, after beating each other with various household implements, they compromise on one which uses both cooking techniques. The meaning of the word "simnel" is unclear: there is a 1226 reference to "bread made into a simnel", which is understood to mean the finest white bread, from the Latin *simila* - "fine flour" (from which 'semolina' also derives).

READ ✚ REFLECT ✚ RESPOND IN PRAYER ✚ REMAIN
IN SILENCE ✚ RETURN PRAYERFULLY TO DAILY LIFE

PARISH NOTICES

- ★ Bishop Murray is pleased to announce that, following a period of Long Service Leave, Archdeacon Gail Hagon has accepted the position of Special Assistant to the Bishop. This role will see her working a maximum of two days per week for a fixed term, ending 31 May 2019. Archdeacon Gail will focus on a number of specific tasks, including getting Professional Supervision for clergy organised and taking interim responsibility for FINDS Group (First Incumbents and Newcomers to the Diocese). She has been issued with her new license as Archdeacon Emeritus.
- ★ Tim Costello, Baptist Minister and World Vision Australia Chief Advocate, will discuss the plight of refugee families coming to Australia on Friday 5 April at 7:15pm at Mullumbimby Ex-Services Club, 58 Dalley Street, Mullumbimby, cost \$10. This event is sponsored by Refugee Family Reunification Project Mullum Group.
- ★ The Dean invites us to the annual Eucharist of the Holy Oils and Affirmation of Ministry (Chrism Mass) on Wednesday 10 April at 10:00am at the Cathedral. Bishop Murray will bless Oil of the Catechumens, Oil of the Sick, Oil of the Sacred Chrism and there is an important collective act of Affirmation of Ministry and Renewal of Ordination Vows. A light lunch follows in the Edwards Hall—please let me know if you wish to attend.
- ★ Safe Ministry training (required for LLMs, Churchwardens, Treasurers, Parish Councillors, SRE Teachers) will be held:
Saturday 6 April 9:30am-4:00pm at St John's, Coffs Harbour
Saturday 27 April 9:30am-4:00pm at St Andrew's, Lismore
Please let me know which training you wish to attend so I can register you.
- ★ Lent Studies will be held in The Rectory 7:30-8:30am on Sunday mornings and we consider the film 'The Greatest Showman' with Rev'd Canon Dr Rachel Mann's book "From Now On: A Lent Course on Hope and Redemption in The Greatest Showman."
- ★ During the season of Lent when we think about our almsgiving (ABM envelopes available), prayer life (including confessing/forgiving sins), fasting and wealth, if you would like to make your Confession please contact me to arrange a suitable time.
- ★ BCA Boxes are due in March — please give your boxes to Joan Davies or Jeanie Daley. There are also boxes and further information about BCA available from Joan.
- ★ Please continue to pray for parishes seeking new incumbents: Casino, Coffs Harbour, Nambucca Heads, South Grafton, The Bellinger and Tweed Heads. The Parish of Mullumbimby is in transition.

**Your companion, Fr Matthew,
walking with you and Jesus Christ to the cross.**

Christians Like Us will be screened on SBS over two nights at 8:35pm, Wednesday 3/10 April. In this new documentary, 10 Australian Christians with vastly different beliefs live under one roof for a week to confront the controversial topics of their faith. They will grapple with what makes a good Christian, and the role religion plays in modern life. Chris is revealed to be a gay man who underwent years of conversion therapy at the hands of the church, while Marty believes homosexuality is wrong and it is possible to teach gay people to change their gender identity. Reverend Tiffany is an Anglican priest at a progressive church in Brisbane, who is immediately put at odds with Assumpta who, although also Anglican, is very opposed to women as priests and believes women should not be in a position of authority over men. Steve is an Evangelical Christian and founder of the RICE movement—Renewal and InterChurch Evangelism—geared towards Asian youth. Daniel is a strict Coptic Catholic who is saving himself for marriage, whereas Jo is a theology teacher and progressive Catholic who has no issue with sex before marriage. There is also Hannah, who the other housemates are shocked to discover is a Mormon. Most of them don't even consider Mormonism as a Christian faith, so her mission is to prove them wrong; **Christians Like Us** reveals topical and charged conversations, emotional debate and at times, conflict in the house. Ultimately, the participants are wrestling with the hardest question of all – in the face of rapidly declining numbers, how can they bring Australians back to the Christian faith?

Vulnerability bonds us to one another, and makes us a community in league with life. Because we need one another, we live looking for good in others, without which we ourselves can not survive, will not grow, can not become what we ourselves have the potential to be. Vulnerability is the gift given to us to enable us to embed ourselves in the universe.

Joan Chittister OSB

Prayers

Lord of compassion,

in your mercy hear us.

Anglican Communion — The Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean: The Most Rev'd James Richard Wong Tin Song, Archbishop, Province of Indian Ocean & Bishop of the Seychelles

Australia — Theological Colleges, Religious Orders, Mission and Evangelism Agencies

Please pray for those who are sick, lonely, homeless, refugees and asylum seekers

Anniversaries of Death — Patric Joseph Brodie, Walter John Corlis Johnson, Wilson Garfield Vidler, James Blewett, Eliza Jane Blewett, Henry George Fairbairn, Daphne May Small, Neil Garrett, George Reading, Margaret Jane Simms, Harry John Thomas

Jesus' attitude to sinners and sin

...everything suggests that Jesus sought to make his contemporaries understand that sin did not have the kind of importance that they attributed to it, and that he himself and his God attached a different importance to it from that which they were supposed to attach to it. One could be the emissary of God and eat with sinners; one could be the emissary of God and keep company with publicans, prostitutes, Samaritans or those whose infirmities and misfortunes were supposed to have something to do with sin: the lepers, the deaf, the blind, the lame, the paralysed, or even the second-class citizens among the people of God—the women and children.

So everything suggests that Jesus had sought to tame, calm, sort out all the complications felt by the sinner with his view of himself as a sinner before God: he did not deny sin or neglect it, but rather, even before forgiving it he sought to disentangle the bonds through which the sinners were caught up in their sin, to open up a gap in the wall that the believer thought had to be built to testify to his exclusion. Everything suggests that Jesus said, 'You do not need to be afraid of being a sinner like that; look at me, I am not afraid of you because you are sinners. You don't die from being a sinner, you die if you think you are going to die from it; let me come, let me eat with you, and then we'll see. But that's not the first problem to settle; we must not begin there; you and I have other things to do; we have to be together. I want to dine with you this evening.' After that, he evidently had to make up a parable to explain to the others what he was about, since, in a bizarre way, those men and women who were directly involved (Zacchaeus, the woman taken in adultery, and so) knew straight away and did not ask for an explanation. So when it came to the Jesus whom the Gospels showed me there were complications: there was no question of dismissing sin without leaving Jesus and his following (in the sense of being a disciple of Jesus, the imitation of Jesus Christ), but at the same time there was no question—this was more difficult but more decisive—of attaching the kind of importance to sin that the Jesus of the Gospels had constantly fought against because it deformed the image of his God and that of humanity.

The Jesus whose features other Christian communities had constructed by remembering what he had been and celebrating what he would be from now on down the centuries was in fact dead, he had been assassinated, he had not avoided death and had accepted it as his destiny when it proved to be necessary. But one of the main reason for his being put to death by the religious authorities of the period was precisely that he said and did things in connection with sin, the nature of the sinner and the relationship between God and the sinner which abolished the religious structure human beings had made in connection with sin. That is why he is our saviour, the servant of God and man, the revealer of God and of what we are. He shifted the foundations of these conversations, just as he destroyed the foundations of the temple and of its priests. It was this shift that they had at all costs to prevent: this man had to die for the general good, for the good that all people thought they could find in what this Jesus had displaced.

Jacques Pohier in Loades, Anne comp. *Spiritual Classics from the late twentieth century*, (London: National Society/Church House Publishing, 1995), p. 159-160.