



Today's gospel invites us to walk in the footsteps of Jesus who lovingly embraces his mission for the salvation of the world. This comes to life in the story of Psyche Mae Asencio from the Philippines. We see how this young woman brings hope and



new life to her family and to other families living in her village through the help of the urban renewal program run by the Faithful Companions of Jesus. The program, supported by Caritas Australia, empowers families living in poverty to regain their self-confidence and skills in building a better future.

Your generous donation to Project Compassion this Lent will contribute to making a difference to those who are socially disadvantaged in our world.

Unfortunately, our envelopes and boxes from Caritas seem to have gone astray. Every effort is being made to obtain some replacements – hopefully by next Sunday. Apologies!!

just want justice... a call to action



Spirituality in the Pub:

'JOURNEYS FROM THE EDGE'

Guest Speakers:

DR. SABINE ERIKA

Academic, Lifelong Pacifist and
Activist for Human Rights

&

PROFESSOR TONY VINSON, A.M.

Leading Australian Social Scientist,
Honorary Professor,
Faculty of Education & Social Work,
University of Sydney.

Wednesday 13th February

7.30pm to 9.00pm

Gardner's Inn Hotel
255 Great Western Highway,
Blackheath.

Bistro meals at 6pm.

Men's Breakfast Saturday 23 February

Join us for our first breakfast for 2008. Be entertained by the musings of a Bomb Disposal Man. Tony Jacques has titled his talk: *"Bombs and Things that go Bump in the Night"*

Subtitle:

"How NOT to go up in the world!"

As always, great food and great company. If you know anyone who has not been, invite him along and remind the regulars – 8am start.

The Sacramental Program

for children will get underway by next month. Please contact Sr Lyn if you wish your child to receive the Sacraments of Penance (Confession), Confirmation and Eucharist (Holy Communion) this year.

**Home Mass: Louise & Laurie Noyes, 8 Days Crescent, Blackheath.
Wednesday, 13th February at 7.30pm.**

February Cosmology Morning

The theme of the meditation will be "The Greening of Life" for our gathering on Friday, 15 February at 10am till noon at the Good Samaritan Community House, 3 Valley Road, Wentworth Falls. The discussion will centre on "In the Beginning" Chapter 8 of our book for study 'Quantum Theology' by Diarmuid O'Murchu. Prayer for the sick and other needs as well as morning tea will be included in the morning's gathering. New guests are always welcome. Enquiries: Sr. Jacinta 4757 2290

The Retreat in Daily Life

The second group began their retreat last night with

Sr Trish and will meet daily with her, concluding on Thursday night at 7.30pm.

Please keep them in your prayers during this special time for them and also for the parish.

Alive in the Spirit ~ 16th to 17th February

Presenters: Fr Vincent Savarimuthu and Sr Helen Cunningham OP.

BYO lunch – tea & coffee provided.

Our Lady of Lourdes Church,
7 Grantham Road, Seven Hills.

Time: Saturday, 16 February, 9am-4pm
and Sunday 17 February, 12pm-5pm.

Details: Catholic Charismatic Renewal
9896 3711 or 9838 1344.

Christian Meditation

17 February: Benedictine Monastery, 121 Arcadia Rd, Arcadia. Time: 10.30am. BYO lunch – tea & coffee provided. All welcome tel 9653 1159.

Leading your family to health and wellbeing

This workshop on 8 March is an opportunity to hear from two women who will present ideas from their professional research and experience as mothers.

Sisters of Mercy Centre, 6 Victoria Rd,
Parramatta. Time: 9.30am-12.30pm.

Cost: \$20. Details: CWLA – NSW Inc.
tel 0407 419 500, jpcvmcgrath@bipond.com

Blue Mountain Centre for Religious Enquiry: HISTORY OF THE CENTRAL BLUE MOUNTAINS

Speakers:

Eugene Stockton (archaeologist): Environment,
Aboriginal pre-history, the present Canton community

John Low (local historian): Early inns along the highway; first buildings

Ken Goodlet (editor of Hazelbrook-Woodford)

Growth and changing patterns of population

Sunday, 24th February from 2pm - 4.30pm at Our Lady of the Nativity School Hall, Great Western Highway, Lawson. (Parking available in church grounds).

For enquiries contact Helena on 02 4759 1461.

**TAI CHI – Alex is happy to teach anyone interested – beginners welcome.
Wednesdays 5pm – 6pm in the Parish Hall. Begins on February 13th. A small donation.**

Images for Lent

(Ronald Rolheiser)

What is the meaning of lent? Why do we set aside forty days each year to voluntarily give up some legitimate enjoyments so as to prepare for Easter?

The need for lent is written right into our DNA. Perhaps a look at some of images for lent can help make this clearer.

Religiously, the richest image we have for lent is the image of the desert, of Jesus going into there voluntarily to fast and pray. Scripture tells us that Jesus went into the desert for forty days and, while there, he ate nothing. This doesn't necessarily mean that, literally, he took no food or water during that time, but rather that he deprived himself of all physical supports (including food, water, enjoyments, distractions) that protected him from feeling, full force, his vulnerability, dependence, and need to surrender in deeper trust to God. And in doing this, we are told, he found himself hungry and, consequently, vulnerable to temptations from the devil - but also, by that same token, more open to God.

The desert, by taking away the securities and protections of ordinary life, strips us bare and leaves us naked, both before God and the devil. This brings us face-to-face with our own chaos. That's an image for lent.

But we have some wonderfully rich anthropological images for lent as well. Let me briefly mention three of them.

In virtually every culture there is, somewhere, the concept of having "to sit in the ashes for a time" as a necessary preparation for some deep joy or fulfillment.

We see this, for example, in the story of Cinderella. The name itself, Cinderella, holds the key: It is derived from two words: Cinders, meaning ashes; and Puella, the Latin word for young girl. Etymologically, Cinderella means the eternal girl who sits in the ashes, with the further idea being that, before she, or anyone else, gets to put on the royal clothes, go to the ball, and dance with the prince, she must first spend some time sitting in the ashes, tasting some emptiness, feeling some powerlessness, and trusting that this deprivation and humiliation is necessary to help bring about the maturity needed to do the royal dance.

There is a similar concept inside some North American Native cultures, where it is accepted that, in everyone's life, there will come a season where he or she will have to spend some time sitting in the ashes.

For example, in some tribes, when they used to live communally in long-houses, the fires for heating and warmth were kept in the centre of the house so that a partially open roof could function as a chimney.

Ashes would, of course, accumulate around the fires and occasionally someone from the community would, for a period of time, simply sit in the ashes, quiet, withdrawn from ordinary activities, and take little food or water. Eventually a day would come when he or she would get up, wash off the ashes, and resume normal activities. Nobody asked why. It was taken for granted that this person was working through something, a depression or crisis of some sort, and needed that space, that quiet, that withdrawal, to work through some inner chaos and demons. In short, he or she was seen to need a lenten season.

A second image is that of being a child of Saturn. In some mythologies, Saturn was thought to be the planet that causes us to feel sadness and despondency. And so, if you were a poet, an artist, a philosopher, a writer, or a religious thinker you would want, sometimes, to sit under Saturn, that is, to enter voluntarily into certain inner areas of the soul that ordinarily you might want to avoid precisely because they trigger chaos, sadness, heaviness, and despondency. Part of the idea was also that, occasionally in every person's life, you would for a time become a child of Saturn, meaning that you would be overcome by a certain sadness and heaviness and would have to cease your normal activities and sit for a time with that, patiently learning some lessons that only a certain sadness could teach you. Again, the idea was that there is some necessary inner work that can only be done in sadness and heaviness and we need sometimes to enter these voluntarily.

Finally, there is yet another rich image in anthropology to help us understand lent, the image of our own tears as re-connecting us to the flow of life. The image is simple: Our tears are salt water, as is the ocean which is ultimately the origin of all life on this planet. What our tears do is put us back into touch with the physical origins of all life on this planet, salt water. The idea then is that, occasionally, it is good to forsake the joys of life for the salt of tears because only tears can deepen us and help us connect to our origins and grounding.

Lent is meant to do exactly that.