



Tea Tree Gully Parish - St David's Catholic Church

Incorporating - Our Lady of Hope Chapel - Greenwith

8264 4694

Under the care of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate

email: pp@stdavidsttg.org.au

11th February 2024



Sixth Sunday Ordinary Time Yr B

Readings next weekend 1st Sunday of Lent— Genesis 9:8-15, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Mark 1:12-15

The Dark Night as Impasse

What happens to us when we experience a dark night of the soul? What's happening and what's to be our response?

There are libraries of literature on this, each book or article making its own point, but here I want to share a rather unique and highly insightful take on this by Constance FitzGerald, a Carmelite nun and someone well versed in the various classical spiritual writers who speak about the dark night of the soul.

She uses the word "impasse" to render what is commonly called a dark night of the soul. For her, in effect, what happens in a dark night of the soul is that you come to an "impasse" in your life in terms of your emotions, your intellect, and your imagination. All the former ways you understood, imagined, and felt about things, especially as this relates to God, faith, and prayer, no longer work for you. You are, so to speak, paralyzed, unable to go back to the way things were and unable to move forwards. And part of the paralysis is that you cannot think, imagine, or feel your way out of this. You are at an impasse – no way back and no way forward. So, what do you do? How do you move beyond the impasse?

There's no simple or quick path out of this. You cannot imagine, think, or feel your way out of this because the vision, symbols, answers, and feelings you need, in effect, don't exist yet, at least they don't exist for you. That's the exact reason why you are at an impasse and so emotionally and intellectually paralyzed. The new vision and feelings that can reset your vision, thoughts, and feelings first have to be gestated and given birth to through your own pain and confusion.

At this stage, there is no answer, at least not for you. You may have read accounts of others who have undergone the same impasse and who now offer counsel as to how to undergo the dark night. That can be useful, but it's still your heart, your imagination, and your intellect that are in the crucible of fire. Knowing that others have gone through the same fire can help give you vision and consolation in your paralysis, but the fire must still be gone through in your own life to reset your own imagination, thoughts, and feelings. For FitzGerald, being in this state is the ultimate liminal space within which we can find ourselves. This is a crucible within which we are being purified. And, for her, *the way out is the way through*. The way out of a dark night of this kind is through "contemplation", namely, staying with the impasse, waiting patiently inside it, and waiting for God to break the impasse by transforming our imagination, intellect, and heart.

So ultimately, this impasse is a challenge for us to become mystics, not that we begin to search for extraordinary religious experience, but that we let our disillusion, broken symbols, and failed meanings become the space wherein God can reset our faith, feelings, imagination, and intellect inside of a new horizon wherein everything is radically reinterpreted.

How do we do this concretely? How do we contemplate? We do it by sitting in the tension, helpless, patient, open, waiting, and staying there however long it takes for us to receive in the depth of our souls a new way of imagining, thinking, and feeling about God, faith, and prayer – beyond the impasse.

Moreover, the broken symbols, the disillusion, and our helplessness to think or feel our way out of the impasse is precisely what assures us that the new vision which is given to us comes from God and is not the product of own imagination or projection or self-interest.

One of the most penetrating criticisms of religious experience ever given was made by Friedrich Nietzsche who claimed that all religious experience, all of it, is ultimately human projection. He argued that we create God in our self-image and likeness for our own self-interest, and that is why a lot of sincere faith and religion can be hypocritical and false.

Reacting to this, Michael Buckley, the renowned Jesuit philosopher, and theologian, made this counterclaim: Nietzsche is 95% correct. Ninety-five percent of what claims to be religious experience is in fact human projection. But, Buckley adds, Nietzsche is 5% wrong and that 5% makes all the difference – *because in that 5% God's revelation flows untainted in our lives.*

Now, and this is the essential point here, that 5% happens precisely when we are in a dark night of the soul, when our symbols are broken, our intellect is impotent, our imagination is empty, and our hearts are at loss. It is precisely then, when we are helpless to help ourselves that we are also helpless to fudge and taint the way God is entering us.

God can flow into our lives pure and untainted when we are at an impasse and unable to substitute our vision for God's vision.

Fr Ron Rolheiser OMI

DIOCESAN NEWS

Fringe Festival 2024 - Pipe Organ Recitals at the Cathedral of St Francis Xavier February 21, 1pm: Amir Robin-Karas February 25, 1pm: Festival of Hymns by James Lloyd February 28, 1pm: Jacinta Jakovcevic March 6, 1pm: Graham Bell March 17, 1pm: Young Organists

Caritas 60th Anniversary Celebration— All Caritas supporters, young and old are invited to join the Archbishop on Sunday February 25 for Mass at St Francis Xavier's Cathedral (11am) followed by a coffee and sausage sizzle to commemorate 60 years of Caritas in Australia, with its foundations proudly in Adelaide! All are invited to join in unity as we continue to support those most vulnerable in our world. We look forward to celebrating this milestone with all parishes, schools and anyone who proudly supports the good work of Caritas Australia - helping us to create a just and compassionate world. Make it a fun day out and join the Adelaide Fringe – Festival of Hymns Event – Pipe Organ Recitals at 1pm in the Cathedral.

Oblate Youth SA (all youth 16-30 are welcome!)

Youth Mass & Carnevale

Sunday 11th February
St Pius X, Dernancourt
5:30pm Mass and Carnevale
to follow

Gospel Session

Thursday 22nd February
St David's, Tea Tree Gully
6:30pm - 8:30pm

Youth Mass & Dinner

Sunday 10th March
St Pius X, Dernancourt
5:30pm Mass, Dinner to follow

Games Night

Tuesday 19th March
St David's, Tea Tree Gully
6:30pm - 8:30pm

Good Friday

Friday 29th March
St David's, Tea Tree Gully
More Info coming!



MISSIONARY OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE (OMI)
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO THE DIACONATE ORDINATION
Of
Br LUAN HA OMI
by
MOST REV. MARK EDWARD OMI DD
FRIDAY
16 FEBRUARY 2024
7PM MASS
ST JOHN VIANNEY CATHOLIC CHURCH
23 POLICE ROAD, MULGRAVE VIC 3170
Refreshments to follow in the Hall
Please, RSVP for catering purposes by 10th February 2024
to lha@oblates.com.au or 0432 503 398

DIARY DATES

ASH WEDNESDAY - 14th February—day of Fast and Abstinence

Morning Mass at 9.15am with Saint David's School and evening Mass at 7pm

WIDOW/ERS MASS

Thursday 15th February at 11am with shared lunch

PARISH LENTEN GROUP

Held in the Gerard Room from 7pm to 8pm. Commencing Thursday 15th February.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Held every Friday evening at St David's beginning at 7pm

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

1st March at 1.30pm at Trinity Lutheran Church, 1215 Grand Junction Rd, Hope Valley (Lutheran Homes)

OBLATE YOUTH DATES

Please see opposite page for diary dates.

PROJECT COMPASSION BOXES AND ENVELOPES

Are available from the foyers.

REGIONAL 2ND RITE OF RECONCILIATION

To be held at St David's Church Wednesday 13th March at 7pm

CHILDREN'S LITURGY FEBRUARY 2024

St David's Church at 10:30 am - 25th February

OLOH at 9:00 am – 18th February

If anyone is interested in becoming a leader, please contact Amanda Bartels by email – gfdb@bigpond.net.au with your contact details.

CHILDREN'S/YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHOIR

If you would like to join the children's/young people's choir, Parents, please email – Amanda Bartels gfdb@bigpond.net.au with your contact details.

ALTAR SERVERS

If your child has received their First Communion and Confirmation and would like to serve at Mass, please contact Fr James.

LENT BEGINS with ASH WEDNESDAY—14TH FEBRUARY

LENTEN GROUP—for the parish will commence Thursday 15th February at 7pm—8pm in the Gerard Room. All Welcome.

MINISTERS ROSTERS FOR ST DAVID'S ARE NOW DUE FOR RENEWAL Please advise if you will not be available from March through to the end of May. If you wish to be trained as a Reader, Commentor or Extraordinary Minister, please speak to Fr James or David Reynolds.

RCIA PROGRAM

Our RCIA group this year consists of 5 candidates (to be received into the Church) and 3 catechumens (to be baptised and receive their sacraments of initiation).

They have completed now several weeks of catechesis and looking forward to the next stage of their sacramental preparation. On Sunday 18th February, the 3 catechumens will be enrolled in the Book of the Elect at a ceremony at St Francis Xavier Cathedral with Archbishop O'Regan. This will begin a more intense period of prayer and reflection for them as they journey through the Lenten Scrutinies and towards the Easter vigil where they will be baptised. Our candidates will also continue their own spiritual journeys towards being received into the Church at the Easter Vigil. Please continue to keep the RCIA group in your prayers.

