

From the Rector

Last week I brought in simple and practical changes to how we “receive” Holy Communion. I will be using the old practice of intinction and then passing the bread to the communicant. The method of **intinction** can be dated back to around 340 A.D. This practice predates individual cups, which were adopted in some form by a range of denominations since 1890. I believe the course of **intinction** would be a practical and honouring way of distributing the elements.

The wearing of masks continues to bring concern for some members. Naturally, some impositions are given by the NSW Health Department, which seem perplexing, yet we are required to adhere to. As we move to the practice of **intinction**, when you come to receive the elements, the wearing of masks at that time is up to your discretion. This suggestion is for both the 8:00AM and 9:30AM services. Please note: when there is congregational singing at your service, then the wearing of masks is compulsory under the NSW Health Department regulations. For the practical purposes of receiving Holy Communion, I would leave that decision to wear a mask up to your discretion. If you would like to discuss this matter with me, please contact me.

Last week, Psalm 19 was the Biblical text for the sermon. The omission of the Psalms in the 8:00AM service was brought to my attention. I have asked that the set lectionary readings, including the Psalms, be part of the order of services. When it comes to the BCP services, there was a line of thought that the LORD’s Supper followed Morning Prayer, so certain elements, such as the Psalm, could be omitted. The pattern of the LORD’s Supper following Morning Prayers is not the case at the moment. Therefore, the omitted Psalm can correctly be reinstated.

I chaired the St. John’s, Gordon Parish Council on Monday night. The meeting was hybrid. There were members in attendance and also members who Zoomed in. The meeting was productive and I hope an encouraging time. To remove any ambiguity, I intend to work within the Parish Administration Ordinance, which required the Parish Council to exercise their responsibility in the decision-making process for the life of the parish.

The Parish Council is comprised of the Wardens plus the elected body of parishioners and the Rector. The Parish Council is designed for the good governance of the parish. There are various duties and responsibilities which the Parish Council is required to adhere to. One of the great joys of the Parish Council is to ensure that those who are elected can freely express their views or concerns as part of the decision-making process.

Of course, the Wardens do have other specified responsibilities which are also made clear in the Parish Administration Ordinance.

What does all this mean practically? Parish Council is required to give guidance, approval and the authorisation of decisions for the good order of the life of the parish. Individuals and groups would submit their requests, their visions, their respective plans to Parish Council for their consideration. This procedure is to ensure we as a parish are complying with the Parish Administration Ordinance. A practical illustration as an example: if a group decides to hold an event during which and unforeseen accident results in an injury, the Diocese's insurance will require—who permitted this event to happen? Where is the paperwork to support this event? I know you can all appreciate that the Parish Council is designed for the good order of the parish.

Sesquicentenary Celebrations

I have been giving some thought to the sesquicentenary celebrations for 2022. It would be great to have a year celebrating and giving thanks to the LORD for the 150 years of faithful ministry. After investigation (which includes the Archbishop's possible availability), the date for the laying of the foundation stone for the sandstone church would be an ideal date for the climax of the sesquicentenary celebrations. This date is the 15th of September. A letter of invitation has been sent, asking the Archbishop Executive Assistant for the closest available Sunday, either the **11th or 18th of September 2022**.

The Sesquicentennial Project

I have begun listening to various options for projects. These projects can be classified as internal, external or mission based. Of course, there is a real possibility for more than one project. Another option is not to have a project at all.

The way I shall proceed is at the next meeting of Parish Council, I will be in a better position to bring forth various suggestions. Parish Council will then be

able to consider these recommendations. The first decision will include an important question: Do we have a project as part of the sesquicentennial celebrations? In short, any proposed projects for the sesquicentennial celebration will require to come to the Parish Council for their decision and authorisation. As we follow this procedure, we will ensure all activities and “projects” are covered by the Parish Administration Ordinance provisions. I do invite and welcome suggestions for consideration.

A reminder that Saturday the 20th of March will be the time for when you can join me in giving the Sanctuary a bit of loving care. This work will also include the brassware, etc. This “working bee” will commence at 8:30AM.

If you would like to volunteer for sidesmen duties, please speak to John Brandon. If you would like to volunteer to assist with the Bible reading roster, talk to Chris Russell. If you would like to know more about these tasks, either of these men would be happy to answer your questions.

Biblical Reflection

Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray Jesus to them. Mark 14:10

There is no doubt that the early Church witnessed and taught that the betrayal of Jesus by Judas was a fulfilment of Scripture:

Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted the heel against me. Psalm 41:9

While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. John 17:12

They even acknowledged that this took place after Satan had first *prompted* and then *entered into* Judas.

The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray him. John 13:2

After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.” John 13:27

These facts do not exonerate Judas. Neither Biblical prophecy nor Satanic influence robbed Judas of his responsibility for his actions. Jesus made an appeal to Judas in the upper room, yet Judas rejected His plea. What could have been Judas' motivation for betraying the Christ? John's focus was on Judas' love for money. John reveals that Judas was the treasurer and he was a thief who helped himself to the contents of the money bag. Others have suggested that Judas' motivation may have been political. Judas desired to force Jesus' hand. Judas may have thought establishing the new kingdom of God would mean the liberation of the Jewish people from their Roman oppressors. This concept was first mentioned by Josephus, a first century Jewish historian, yet there is no strong evidence for this concept.

We actually cannot be sure what motivated Judas to betray Jesus. Judas is portrayed in the Scriptures as the one who seemed to have a love for money. Remember the account when Mary washed Jesus' feet with her tears, dried them with her hair and then broke the jar of perfume and anointed Jesus. Judas' response was recorded as he calculated the jar's cost—he was indignant, as it was worth a whole year's wages. Judas sold Jesus for a third of that amount. The warning we all have must be:

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. 1 Timothy 6:10a.

Reference—John Stott “Daily Devotions”

The peace of God be with you all.

Father Robert H.