

Sacred Heart Parish, Kew

24th Week in Ordinary Time Year A 17 September 2023



KEW VICTORIA
CELEBRATING 133 YEARS

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Father John Madden
Director of Liturgy

Parish Manager
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Sacred Heart Parish Prayer

Lord, may we the parishioners of Sacred Heart strive to be people of the gospel and prayer. Imprint in our hearts a deep desire for your Word and a love of the Eucharist. Motivate us to be an engaging, welcoming, and supportive community. Help us to be a people of compassion and justice for all.

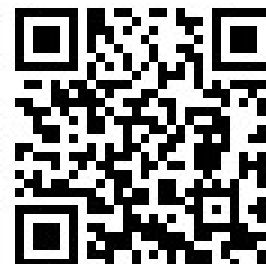
Seminar Series No. 3 Stillness Meditation—where therapy meets spirituality

Speaker: Pauline McKinnon

Tuesday 26 September 7.30-8.30pm Sacred Heart Auditorium

Book your seats Trybooking <https://www.trybooking.com/JTPG>

An exploration of Stillness Meditation Therapy, a medically-based and effortless practice which was created for anxiety relief and stress management – a simple but profound innovation. Perhaps never before has our world been in such need of the management of stress and of personal serenity. Stillness meditation is one powerful way to gain those strengths and one which opens the way to profound spiritual experience.



About Pauline Mckinnon

Pauline is an author and psychotherapist who has practised and taught Stillness Meditation for over 40 years. She is internationally known for her pioneering book *In Stillness Conquer Fear* which has offered hope and relief to anxiety sufferers throughout the world and across the lifespan. Beyond other published works, her most recent release is the illustrated edition of *Quiet Magic*, a parable-type tale to help kids find calm – a story initially inspired to nourish her four children and subsequently, her eleven grandchildren and as many other young people as possible! Widowed in recent years, Pauline continues to offer her clients the simplicity and power of 'stillness' for therapeutic purposes and to support personal contemplative practices within all faiths and religions. She is currently collaborating with neuroscientists and philosophers at Monash University and the University of Melbourne on research into stillness-based practices.

Twenty Fourth Sunday of the Year: Ecclesiasticus 27:30–28:7; Romans 14:7-9; Matthew 18:21-35.

Our readings tackle the relationship between a duo that is foundational for our lives: justice and mercy/forgiveness. According to the Bible we can't have one without the other and we would not need either if there was no sin. As far as I can tell we will not need justice and mercy in heaven because we will finally be graced to love as God loves. Like the other virtues such as faith, hope, courage, etc, justice and mercy will be perfected in perfect love.

Justice is needed to rectify our injustice towards our neighbour and even ourselves in this life; and the same goes for forgiveness. God is of course just and merciful and could not, by definition be anything else. In God they are one with God's love, goodness and truth. But, the reality of human sin and injustice and God's intervention against the 'sin of the world' reveals them as two sides as it were of one coin. We need a just God to judge where sin and injustice has occurred otherwise we would have no hope—says the Bible—of sorting out our relationships with God or with one another. We often still make a mess of it, despite the Bible and revelation. Once injustice in a relationship has been identified and its perpetrator has acknowledged the wrong then the relationship can be restored to its just state through pardon/forgiveness. Hence there can be no mercy without justice; that is, a judgement that wrong has been committed must first be made, and the relationship must be restored in a proper or righteous way. Similarly, there can be no justice without mercy which seeks to heal what has been wounded, to restore what has been damaged and divided. The relationship between justice and mercy/forgiveness is so close that we can easily miss one or confuse one with the other. This often occurs in our law courts where, despite the best intentions of law makers, the process of litigation results in divisions and barriers between the parties rather than the restoration of just relationships. One is convicted and taken to prison; the other is freed and, as often happens now, takes the money.

The reading from Ecclesiasticus or, in Hebrew, Ben Sirach can be read as a poetic presentation of rights and responsibilities within the context of Israel's covenant relationship. The passage ends with the ringing call to the reader/listener to 'remember the covenant of the Most High'. Within this covenant you enjoy the right to God's justice and mercy. You therefore have a responsibility to ensure that others enjoy the same rights. The 'neighbour' here in the Old Testament context would I think refer to another Israelite rather than include the foreigner. The implication of course is that it can be extended to include all kinds of neighbours. To treat your neighbour in the manner described is therefore not only a breach of covenant rights and responsibilities but an insult to God. A bit like a person who flouts all the rules of a club and is then outraged when he or she is given the boot. An important feature of this reading is that it shows the commandments are meant to serve and enhance justice and mercy/forgiveness ('remember the commandments, and do not bear your neighbour ill will'). There is no legalism here.

The Gospel reading does much the same thing via a parable that contrasts a just and merciful king with his unjust and unforgiving servant. The gracious mercy of the king should have led to the servant being as merciful towards his fellow servant, his neighbour, but it didn't. This adds an element to the theology of Ben Sirach and it is the sober warning that experiencing forgiveness may not change me, the servant. I may be just as unforgiving afterwards as before. How to avoid this? One way is to listen to this kind of parable; it is a torah or teaching that a just and merciful Jesus provides to help us avoid falling into such a bleak hole. A key

component of this teaching is that we are only able to forgive because God has first forgiven us. This forgiveness is of course dependent on our acknowledgement of our sins (God's judgement); if we don't acknowledge any sin how can there be forgiveness because, from our perspective, there is nothing to forgive or ask forgiveness for. How will I know that the grace of God's forgiveness has changed or is changing me? When I forgive my neighbour from my heart.

The reading from Paul adds another important ingredient to the justice-mercy nexus, namely that 'The life and death of each of us has its influence on others'. Paul is speaking primarily of the Christian community, the 'body of Christ' ('we live for the Lord') but it applies equally to the larger context of our 'global village'. When two people fall out there is a much wider ripple effect. The Gospel parable catches this with its reference to the distress that the servant's conduct caused his fellow servants.

Fr Mark O'Brien, from his book *Sunday Matters*



Thank you for your valuable help during the church working bee yesterday. Your selfless contributions, whether it was cleaning, repairing, or beautifying our sacred space, have made a significant difference. Thank you for being shining examples of dedication and love. **Our parish working bee is on the 3rd Saturday of the month from 1-4pm.**



A Joyful Invitation to Our Parish Morning Tea!

A sunlit church foyer, the gentle hum of conversations, and a spread of delectable treats that could rival the grandest feasts. Join us for our parish morning tea on **Sunday 24 September, immediately following the 9.30 am Mass** in our beloved church foyer. We kindly request that you bring a dish—it could be your secret scone recipe, a tantalizing tart, or even a plate of finger sandwiches.



The Feast of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Saturday 7 October 2023

Please join us in our continuous prayer of the Rosary. We will commence praying at 10 am.



MASS TIMES

No weekday Masses
Weekend Mass Times
6.00pm Saturday Evening
9.30 am Sunday Morning

Quiet Prayer

Friday 9.45-11.15am

Reconciliation
Please contact our office.

Baptisms
Please refer to our website
<https://shkew.org.au>.

Sacramental Programme
Please refer to our website
<https://shkew.org.au>

Weddings
Please contact our office

Funerals
Please contact our office

Music License A-739406



Responsorial Psalm

R: The Lord is kind and merciful; slow to anger and rich in compassion.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord,
all my being, bless his holy name.
My soul, give thanks to the Lord
and never forget all his blessings.

It is he who forgives all your guilt,
who heals every one of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grave,
who crowns you with love and compassion.

His wrath will come to an end;
He will not be angry for ever.
He does not treat us according to our sins
nor repay us according to our faults.

For as the heavens are high above the earth
so strong is his love for those who fear him.
As far as the east is from the west
So far does he remove our sins. **R**

**R: O that today you would listen to his voice!
Harden not your hearts.**

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia x 2

I give you a new commandment: love one another
as I have loved you,

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia x 2

Your Parish: Your Financial Support

1st Collection—

This money is to support Fr John,
Priests of the Archdiocese & Archbishop.
Bank account: BSB: 083 347
Account #: 663 832 561
Reference: Full name

2nd Collection—

This money is used to pay for the running
of and the upkeep of our Parish.
Bank details: BSB: 083 347
Account #: 682 606 383
Reference: Full name

**1st Collection—this money is used to support
Fr John and the priests of the Archdiocese.**

**2nd Collection—this money is used to pay for the
running Costs for the upkeep of our Parish.**

**Thanksgiving this week was \$2,257.2. We need \$4K
per week just to meet our everyday running cost.**

