



Alstonville Anglicans

Twentieth Sunday of Pentecost

Sunday 10th October 2021



Liturgy for 10th October

Sharing the Good Life

We acknowledge the Bundjalung people,
traditional custodians of the Land.
Our doors are open: LGBTQIA+ welcome here.
Streaming licence: One License A-738115

Sentence of the Day

There is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for Jesus' sake, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. Mark 10.29–30

Collect

Merciful God,
in your Son you call not the righteous
but sinners to repentance:
draw us away from the easy road that leads to destruction,
and guide us into paths that lead to life abundant,
that in seeking your truth, and obeying your will,
we may know the joy of being a disciple of Jesus our Saviour;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Readings

Mark 10:17–31

¹⁷ As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁸ Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.' " ²⁰ He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." ²¹ Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." ²² When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions. ²³ Then Jesus looked around and said to

his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" ²⁴ And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶ They were greatly astounded and said to one another, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible." ²⁸ Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." ²⁹ Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

Messages

Pastoral Care

Family Crosses

On Sunday 10 October, the Family Cross is being given to Ken & Denise Ashdown.

Pastoral visits Remember!

If you or anyone you know is ill or in hospital, please let the office or Lynne Watt our Pastoral Care Coordinator know. Also, if you do visit anyone could you email Lynne? wattlg@bigpond.com.

Mothers Union

The MU meeting on Monday, 18 October 2021 will be held at Pam Brown's home at 9.30 am. Old and new participants are welcome. Contact Pam on 0417 258 991 or Joyce 0407 690 874 joyce@stephanies.com.au.

Prayers

This week we remember in our prayers the Ashdown & Thompson families.

Good Governance

COVID

- 4sqm rule applies so 9am services are still in the Ministry Centre
- No singing
- Masks worn indoors
- Ventilation is important – windows and doors open.

Community Engagement

Community-On-the-Verge



Everyone is invited to participate in the first working bee scheduled for Saturday 30th October 2-4pm. (COVID permitting).

If you would like to be involved in the planning and management of the project, or have any ideas to contribute please contact Alan Larsen on 0409 655 123 or Barbara Fewtrell 0429 385 713



Play Place

Play Place 9.30-11.30am

Online ministry

Head to Anglicans Live YouTube channel to catch up on any of our discussion or service videos you may have missed.

[Have you subscribed? Get your friends and family to subscribe at: Anlicans Live YouTube channel.](#)



Sew Helpful

Our first box of cotton octopi, comfort toys for preemie babies, was sent last month. The parcel also included socks and beanies for preemie babies. We received a delightful "thank you" email from the hospital, saying how lovely it was seeing the

tiny mites clutching their new toys.

We had previously donated 160 adults and children's beanies to the Lismore Soup Kitchen, 50 to the Women's Refuge in Ballina and 40 to the Soup Kitchen there.

With the help of a lot of outside knitters, our group supports Knitted Knockers and one of our members coordinates that service.

We also spend time on our own projects and fete projects.

Our next meeting is at 1pm on Monday 18th October in the parish centre. New members and visitors welcome.

Marg Brown for Lorna Simpson



Organ Concert

'From Baroque to French'

Featuring Marius Mulder & Hamsa Arnold

St Mary's Anglican Church Ballina

Sunday 10th October 3pm

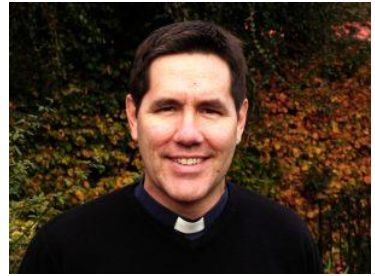
Entry by donation

Bookings 66862094

Worship and Spirituality

Save the date! 7 November

Bishop Murray will be visiting the parish on the 7th November 2021. The Bishop will preach and celebrate at the 9am service and will lead a confirmation service at 5pm where we will also be receiving young friends in First Communion.



Anam Cara Earth Vigil

The Anam Cara group are organising an Earth Vigil Wednesday 3rd November 8am-8pm.

Planning meeting Wednesday 13th October 11am in the meeting room.

Earth Vigil

Unite in a fierce love
for our sacred earth

at St Bartholomew's
The Avenue Alstonville NSW
WED 3 NOVEMBER

Come for quiet thoughtfulness
anytime between
8am-8pm
anglicans.live

May the seeds of our supplication
find fruitful ground and flourish.

Alstonville
Anglicans

Anam Cara

Wednesday 9am

Thursday 6pm

Messy Life Church?!

Messy Life Church?! is in recess during the school holidays.

Next Meeting will be Sunday 17th October 2021

Messy Church

Messy Church Sunday 24th October 4pm.



Sermon notes on Genesis 2:18-24, Mark 10:2-16 for the 3rd October



Image by Tumino from Pixabay

Divorce is a very emotional and difficult topic for most of us. We all know that marriage is not easy. There is definitely some wisdom in the saying that "success in marriage comes not from finding the right person but from being the right person". If only it was that simple.

So many marriages are not successful. Divorce has been happening for thousands of years. It would be very surprising if any of us had a family that had not been touched by divorce.

The Church has always struggled with divorce and divorced people. Straightaway we think of Henry VIII. Princess Margaret forbidden to marry a divorcee by her sister, Elizabeth, nominally head of the Anglican Church. Charles and Diana

Often preaching on divorce has been insensitive and unhelpful. I have seen the results of insensitivity to the struggles which follow divorce in our Parish in Canberra in 1980s. Divorce is not

only an issue for the Christian church. There is an Islamic saying; “The thing which is lawful but most disliked by God is Divorce!”



Take heart if you are hurting; it is divorce, not the divorced person that God dislikes! God wants us to have the best and divorce is simply “not the best thing”. It often causes financial hardship and stress, particularly for children. Grandparents can be collateral damage in divorce where their

access to grandchildren is blocked or they find themselves as full time carers. Divorce may, in some extreme cases be necessary, but it isn’t always the best thing and it’s clear that it’s not what God wanted for us.

So, the church tries to do an uncomfortable balancing act by standing up for the sanctity of marriage and yet at the same time proclaiming God's forgiveness to sinners who don't uphold that sanctity. When I was a Rector, the Bishop's written approval was required to conduct the wedding of a divorced person.

On the surface, the subject in Mark today is divorce, but perhaps the main intention of Jesus is to once again show his followers what the Kingdom of God looks like. We are helped by the reading from Genesis chapter 2. Here, in the story of creation, the sovereignty of God is at the heart of it all. God says, “it’s not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner”. Notice that it is God who decides that Adam needs a helper. It is not Adam saying “Hey God, I am not having all my needs met here in this beautiful garden. Could you please make me a helper”? Clearly God, not man, is the one in charge.

And there’s so much more we can learn from this second chapter of the Bible. If you think about Adam’s situation; he already has

support. Adam has God as his superior helper, and he has animals as his inferior helpers. So, our Creator God is actually recognizing that Adam needs a suitable, **equal** helper / partner.

When sharing that I was preparing to give the sermon, the deep-thinking woman I was speaking to pointed out something that I had overlooked. She had noticed that, quite out of keeping with the idea of men being the only ones who mattered, the last sentence of our Genesis reading is “therefore a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife and they become one flesh” The “clinging to his wife and becoming one flesh” is no doubt the main point to take away from the sentence but the woman in my conversation understood that Scripture was going against the chauvinistic culture of the day when it did not say “the woman leaves her father and mother”.

So, keeping this reading from Genesis in mind, what do we make of the Gospel reading on divorce? It’s helpful to remember that when Jesus spoke these words, he was not teaching or talking to people who were experiencing the brokenness of a marriage failure and had come to him shattered and deeply distressed. Jesus was dealing with opponents who Mark says were Pharisees trying to trap him. There is a political element in that Jesus was in the country of Herod Antipas who had married his divorced ex sister-in-law. These Pharisees remind Jesus that Hebrew law permitted a man to divorce his wife (and he could do that just because he wanted to). In response, Jesus tells them that commandment was written because of hard heartedness and then Jesus refers to Genesis chapter 2 which makes the point that marriage is God’s idea (it is a gift from God).

We can have a fair idea of what Jesus might have said to those who had failed in their marriage commitments. We know what he said to the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8 11); “Go and sin no more”. Jesus was also gentle with the Samaritan

woman at the well who had five husbands and was now living with a man who was not her husband (John 4:4-29).

Jesus offered these women forgiveness and love.

Now, having answered this “loaded question” from the Pharisees by referring to Scripture, Jesus expands on the problem of how to relate to others by once again talking of “little ones”.

A significant link between Jesus’ teaching about children and his teaching about divorce is that women, in marriage, were and are vulnerable. Children also are extremely vulnerable.

What Jesus says against divorce and what he says for children in today’s Gospel are connected in that Jesus very clearly puts himself on the side of all those who are weak and vulnerable.

The church is making a sad error if it takes what Jesus said against marriage breakdown and uses it to chastise those people who, for various reasons, have decided to end their marriage and separate, as if divorce were the one unforgivable sin. Marital separation hurts people, and hurting, vulnerable people are those who are especially loved by Jesus. Hence the Gospel defends those who are victimized in marriage and divorce and defends little children.

This really is Good News! Jesus cares for, and totally supports, the weak, the vulnerable, and the defenceless. We live in a broken world where people make and break promises, where people find it difficult to keep their commitments, and where people suffer because promises have been broken by other people. Jesus is clearly on the side of those who are hurt by such human chaos and human failing.

Most of us are uncomfortable around vulnerable and needy people. Maybe it’s because we are embarrassed that we are OK and that we don’t need help. Perhaps we are frustrated that



these needy people can't look after themselves. Or maybe we are concerned because we think that we simply don't have the time or resources to offer to help. It may boil down to our worry that vulnerable people present a threat to our own stress levels and our comfortable lives.

Well Jesus showed us how to react. There's no doubt where Jesus stood. Jesus is totally in support of the vulnerable, whether they are vulnerable women in marriage or vulnerable children in a dysfunctional family.

But, is there something more to what Jesus is saying? The things we read here in Mark might not simply be some rules and guidelines for Christian behaviour in marriage and the family – though that is certainly what we see on the surface. Perhaps here in what Jesus is saying we are being given a glimpse of the nature of God and we are discovering the great difference between God and ourselves.

We need every glimpse of God we are able to have. It is hard to understand God. Do you remember that God told Isaiah "My ways are not your ways"? However, Jesus is the full revelation of the nature and will of God. We see the ways of God in Jesus!

What are we able to learn about God from the Jesus who Mark shows us here? We learn the Good News that despite our inabilities, our limits, and our failures, God loves us without limit and God is always faithful. We learn that God is a God who heals brokenness, who brings separated parties back together, who reaches out, beyond the bounds of culture, convention and tradition, toward those who are most vulnerable.

God is on the side of the "little ones" no matter what has caused their littleness. Whenever we feel little; whenever we feel vulnerable let's be encouraged to know that God really cares.

ANGLICAN PARISH OF ALSTONVILLE

Ministers all the baptised!

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The Anglican Op Shop

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Dates 10th October to 17th October

10th October Sunday 9am Holy Communion
Sunday 10am St Peter and St Paul's

11th October Monday 10am Anam Cara Praying for You
Parish Office open 9am-12pm
Op Shop open 9am-3pm

12th October Tuesday Parish Office closed (Please avoid going to the office)

13th October Wednesday 9am Anam Cara
Parish Office open 9am-12pm
Op Shop open 9am-3pm
Anam Cara Vigil Planning Meeting 11am

14th October Parish Office open 9am-12pm
Op Shop open 9am-3pm
Thursday Anam Cara 6pm

15th October Friday 10am Holy Communion
Parish Office open 9am-12pm

17th October Sunday 9am Holy Communion
Sunday 5pm Messy Life Church!?