



Alstonville Anglicans

Sunday 19th February 2023

Welcome



Sharing the Good Life

We acknowledge the Bundjalung people, traditional custodians of the Land.

Our doors are open: LGBTQIA+ welcome here.

Streaming licence: CCLI 102220

Alstonville Anglicans are committed to ensuring that all people who participate in our worship, programs and ministries have a safe and rewarding experience.

Tel: 66280231 www.anglicans.live

Bank account: BSB 705 077 / Acc:00032931

Dates 19th February to 26th February

19 th Feb		Sunday
	9am	Holy Communion
	10.30am	AGM
20 th Feb		Monday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	4pm	Fete Planning Meeting
21 st Feb		Tuesday
		Parish Office Closed
22 nd Feb		Wednesday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am	Anam Cara
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	6pm	Ash Wednesday
23 rd Feb		Thursday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	9.30am	Play Place
	4pm	Life Group Facilitators Meeting
	6pm	Anam Cara
24 th Feb		Friday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	10am	Holy Communion
25 th Feb		Saturday
	12-4pm	Parish Council & Leaders Meeting
26 th Feb		Sunday
	9am	Holy Communion

This bulletin contains current announcements and the week's calendar and the sermon notes from the previous Sunday. Use our welcome booklet for info and contact details for regular activities. Keep it as a reference tool. We welcome any feedback on the booklet. [../././welcomeBooklet_v3.pdf](#)

Lenten Life Groups



Commencing 1st week in March. Facilitators meeting Thurs 23rd Feb 4pm. Contact Greg Ezzy : 0412 660 742.

Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday 22nd February 6pm

World Day of Prayer

Friday 3rd March 1.30pm

Uniting Church, crn Main St & Bugden Ave, Alstonville.
For more information contact Olwen King 6628 0522.

Bishop's Visit

Sunday 5th March

Parish Council & Leaders Meeting

Saturday 25th February 12-4pm

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Saturday 25th February 12-4pm

Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

Bishop-in-Council has resolved to establish a Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and is seeking expressions of interest from people within our parishes and ministry units for membership. No prior experience with RAPs is necessary. **Reconciliation Australia** has resources that can provide you with further information. To express interest, please email admin@graftondiocese.org.au with name, contact details and some information about the person who is expressing interest, by Friday 10 March.

Community Engagement







**KEEP
CALM
AND
PICNIC**

**Meet at
Rocky Creek Dam**
on Sunday 5th
March 11.30am

BYO picnic & chairs

66280231
anglicans.live



Worship & Spirituality



Rainforest Labyrinth Experience

**'Brockley' 1385 Bruxner Highway
Lindendale**
9am and 4pm Arrive and welcome
9.15am and 4.15pm
'About the Labyrinth'
Short talk about its history, features,
practice and
time to experience the Labyrinth and its
peaceful surroundings.

Sat 18th Feb
9-11am
Sun 19th Feb
4-5.30pm

Numbers limited
RSVP Jenny 0400 361 059

All welcome. Bring a friend.

Refreshments available-
donation appreciated.



SWIM PARTY

Messy Church
Sunday 26th February 4pm

Carol & Anthony's
10 Higgins Place Cumbalum

Bring swimmers & sunscreen BYO nibbles

Phone: 66280231
anglicans.live

Sermon Notes

Matthew 5:21-37 12th February 2023



In November 1895 Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen accidentally discovered the x-ray. Few inventions have had such an immediate impact on human wellbeing. Within a year of Roentgen's discovery, x-rays were an established part of medical practice. One of the first x-rays that Wilhelm took was of his wife's hand. Anna Bertha Roentgen was so upset by the image of her skeleton complete with wedding and engagement rings, that she said to him: "I have seen my death". I doubt she would ever have stepped into his lab again.

In Matthew 5. 21-37 it is as if Jesus is performing an x-ray on a selection of commandments. By putting these laws under the x-ray, we can see through to the bones of what each law means in practice. The x-rays are startling. In the same way that x-rays can reveal disease hidden to the human eye, so too does Jesus' x-ray examination of Judaic law reveal the disease that causes the law to be needed in the first place.

The opening example has to do with murder. "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you..." Jesus then points to the root cause of murder, anger, which is the tumour that can cause murder. Anger against another is also liable to judgement because anger is the germ from which murder breeds.

To be clear, it is not anger in and of itself that is a problem. We are to discern between holy anger and unholy anger. There is a perception that Christianity prohibits anger. Suppressing or not acknowledging anger is unhealthy. In fact, an holy anger can be our greatest spiritual gift, anger can be a form of spiritual direction. Holy anger is often linked to justice; it is the energy that empowers us to rebalance the scales of injustice. Anger can come as a teacher. If we fear anger, suppress it, or feed it, we lose the opportunity to hear what anger's message is. However, it takes a whole, integrated, holy person to wield the force of anger. The kind of anger that is death dealing to oneself, one's relationships and in extreme cases to other people, is anger that is allowed to lie rancid, unused,

unacknowledged, simmering away, turning its owner bitter. It is for this reason that Jesus takes even anger and puts it under the x-ray too.

Deeper than anger is contempt that lies beneath it: "Whoever shall say to his brother or sister, 'Raca,' shall be liable to more serious judgement." Raca is an Aramaic expression of contempt. The attitude that gives rise to contempt is the refusal to give others the sort of respect that is due all members of our family. This final x-ray seems to have the worse punishment of all, eternal damnation. Whoever murders is liable to judgement, but whoever says 'raca' to a brother or sister is liable to serious judgement, but excluding others is liable to eternal damnation.

In other words, Jesus has x-rayed murder and examined the anger that causes murder. In performing an x-ray on anger, Jesus uncovers the contempt that causes anger in the first place. In looking deeper through contempt Jesus reveals exclusion, the assumption that another has little to contribute and should not be taken seriously. Our law even today expects that murder is a crime that should be punished. However, Jesus sees murder as only the last in a series of immoralities. Jesus affords the greatest punishment not to anger that gives rise to murder, not to the contempt that gives rise to anger, but to an **attitude**.

A lawyer may rightly argue that the escalating sanctions are ridiculous. How can we hope to understand what Jesus is trying to teach where murder is only judged, but anger is more seriously judged while exclusion is liable to eternal damnation? We shall explore an answer to why Jesus radicalises the law at the end, for now let us look at some other laws Jesus scrutinises.

Thus far we have put murder under the x-ray, and I understood it in the light of the microscopic analysis that follows. Similarly, we place adultery under the x-ray and make sense of lust – the point at which (in the view of Jesus) adultery actually begins. David McKay:

"If I have committed myself to you, heart and soul, to live and die together, each for the good of the other, and I look at another with accepted and relished desire, I have surely violated that commitment. If my unfaithfulness goes as far as divorce, then I make your covenant null and void as well as mine. The Church is compassionate with



divorce and remarriage because we believe that God is compassionate... and also because, according to the view of Jesus, the heartbreak of divorce is simply the end result of an initial betrayal that began before and has gotten out of control. Condemnation and punishment of divorce is like closing the stable doors after the horses have bolted."

We come to the end of our reflection and in placing all our x-rays on a light box we ask why Jesus uses the triplet of worsening punishments, where murder contracts a simple judgement and exclusion of another acquires damnation. The scale of worsening punishments makes sense in the context of covenant, our covenant with God and our covenant with each other, our love connection with God and love connection with each other. In the context of our love connection with God and each other the betrayal of trust is a greater evil than anything it might lead to. The first betrayal is the one that counts, what follows is like a set of falling dominoes.

It is that seriousness and wholeheartedness of commitment that is to be protected at all costs, because once it is lost, the whole relationship begins to disintegrate and fall apart – this doesn't always end in separation – but it does mean that instead of being salt and light the relationship will lose its taste of heaven and will fail to shine with the splendour of the love of God –it will be a travesty, a deception, masquerading as something it is not. This is why the Judaism of Jesus' day was in such trouble – instead of being a vehicle for the fullness of God's blessing, preparatory to the arrival of the Messiah, it had become a vehicle for nothing more than its own pretentious self-image, and in consequence more of a curse than a blessing – as Paul says, citing the prophet Isaiah, "*For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."*" In this context we must ask about the Church. The following wisdom of an unknown source but attributed to Gandhi summarises the intention behind Christ's teaching:

Watch your thoughts, they become words. Watch your words, they become actions. Watch your actions, they become habits. Watch your habits, they become your character. Watch your character, it becomes your destiny.

(Sources used: McKay, David: 2013. Glimpses of Jesus in Matthew. St Boniface Press: Bunbury).

Sentence of the Day

'Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you,' says the Lord. Isaiah 49.15

Collect

O God,
before whose face we are not made righteous
even by being right:
free us from the need to justify ourselves
by our own anxious striving,
that we may be abandoned to faith in you alone;
through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Matthew 17.1-9

¹ Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³ Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' ⁵ While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!' ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, 'Get up and do not be afraid.' ⁸ And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. ⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, 'Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.'