



Alstonville
Anglicans

Sunday 22nd October 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

22nd October – 29th October

22 nd October	9am	Sunday Holy Communion
	4pm	Messy Church
23 rd October		Monday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	10am	Anam Cara
	10am	Deadline for bulletin items
24 th October		Tuesday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Closed
25 th October		Wednesday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am	Anam Cara
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
26 th October		Thursday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	9am-3pm	Op Shop
	9.30am	Play Place
	6pm	Anam Cara
27 th October		Friday
	9am-12pm	Parish Office Open
	10am	Holy Communion
28 th October		Saturday
29 th October		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](#)

Messy Church



Rainbow Treasure Hunt?

Messy Church

End of year
celebration BBQ!

Sunday 22nd Oct 4-6pm

Ken & Margaret Brown's home
343 Wardell Rd
RSVP: Jenny 0400 361 059
by 18th Oct

Meat supplied. Please bring a salad or sweet
to share and drinks, plates and cutlery.

Pastoral Care

If you are in hospital or are aware of any parishioners who are in hospital and would like to be visited, please let the office know. Make sure that you inform the hospital that you would be happy to receive visitors from the church.

Anam Cara

Robyn Fitzgerald will be leading 3 Wednesday Advent Meditations on the 1st, 8th and 15th of November at 9am. We look forward to welcoming Robyn. Everyone is welcome to attend.

To Make you Smile



**How do you make
seven even?**

Drop the 's'.

Sermon Notes Sunday 15th October

Doug Bannerman

Pentecost 20 Matthew 22.1-14

The majority should have had the grace to deliver
for the minority.

But we failed the grace test. (Katherine Murphy)

I am in profound disagreement with today's gospel, and I disagree with the inclusion of this parable in what purports to be good news, a parable that exemplifies the Roman Empire in every way.

Empire bespeaks a centralized social power structure of hierarchy, violence, slavery, poverty, injustice; absolute values imposed absolutely. It bespeaks a voiceless, oppressed, population which has been subjugated for so long, that it is, by and large, unconscious of its situation. Think TikTok, or any of the social platforms that promulgate misinformation.

Three points.

This gospel encourages us to regard *all* synagogues as places of hypocrisy and violence, Jewish leaders as hypocrites and murderers. (4.1-11; 12.34; 16.1-14; 19.3).

This gospel predominantly focuses on men; and although Matthew does reject patriarchy (19.3-12; 23.8-12), his frequent use of the phrase 'God the Father' strongly suggests a divine patriarchy ruled by God.

This gospel *does* explicitly resist and expose the violent oppression of the Empire (Chs 2; 14.1-12; 20.20-28; 22.15-22); however, the alternative to Rome's Empire, God's Empire, uses the identical term, *Empire*, together with the concept of supreme power.

So, Matthew imitates precisely what he rejects. In its enforcement of God's will to solicit compliance (do it or else), God's empire resembles Rome's use of power. And Matthew's treatment of these issues of ethnicity, gender, and power, assumes the audience will go along with the story, accept its violence, hatred and oppression; and accept the value that opponents are simply impediments to be overcome by whatever means.

Now, in theory, democracy is much the better way. So, citizens of democracy might consider opponents to be uninformed, mistaken, unwise, or naïve; overly cautious or needlessly impatient; or perhaps that they are animated by a different hierarchy of values, that yields a moral intensity distinct from, but nonetheless commensurate with, our own. But, in practice, there seems to be considerable reluctance in Australian society to consider what it might mean to proceed together meaningfully as partners in shared democratic projects.



We value free speech; but what makes speech truly free is the possibility of disagreement without enmity. Yet again, in practice, opponents come to regard each other as bigoted, toxic, dangerous, malignant, wilfully ignorant, cynically self-interested, fundamentally dishonest, inferior – and hence incapable of good-faith disagreement.

Consequently, opponents become symbols to be appropriated for the prosecution of our own politics. And what matters then, is not what our opponents actually say or do, but rather what we have decided they stand for.

Democracy is not just a form of government. It is also the moral aspiration for a society of self-governing political equals. Citizens are called on to be active democratic participants, but they must also acknowledge one another's political equality. Democracy thus involves an ethic of civility among opposed citizens, in which it is OK to disagree about a choice of actions to take.

Furthermore, as Robert Talisse wrote, 'democracy is the proposition that a stable and decent society can be maintained in the absence of lords, masters, sovereigns, superiors, and kings. Democracy is the rejection of political hierarchy.

This insight imagines society as a dynamic organism in which people are open to changing their preferences and interests in the light of their interactions with others. Not merely a process of assertion and grudging compromise, but one of being mutually influenced as equal participants in a common effort; thereby cultivating the moral dispositions of sympathy, generosity, forbearance and mutual trust, qualities on which true democratic life depend.

In short, democracy lives by and through acknowledgements of the moral reality of other persons. No democratic society can long withstand the corrosive effect of widespread envy, disdain, disgust, resentment, grudgingness, spitefulness and contempt.

The greatest danger to the stability of democratic life is not when disagreements become interminable, but when they become *incommensurable*, with no common standard of measurement – which is to say, when both parties get caught in a state of mutual incomprehension. Contempt thins out democracy until finally it reaches the point of dysfunction.

Contemporary political contempt tends to arise before moral consensus is achieved and tries to set new norms through intimidation, so as to redefine society's moral parameters by brute force. Moralism without any of the hard work of moral persuasion. As Scot Stephens and Waleed Ali have noted,

Over the last decade, we've watched this dynamic play itself out repeatedly within and between opposing sides around such matters as sexual harassment and abuse, racial injustice, police brutality, climate change, membership of the European Union, vaccine hesitancy, LGBTIQ discrimination, religious freedom, and abortion. On each count, worthy goals of mutual consideration and common pursuit have been either brought undone or had their broader appeal severely compromised by the "hashtag politics" of moral intransigence – think (#GetBrexitDone, #BlackLivesMatter, #DefundthePolice, #SilenceIsViolence, #StayWoke, #ThereIsNoPlanetB, #IGotVaccinated, #SaveRoe, et cetera).

Declaration and posturing take the place of persuasion, claims of moral superiority undermine the hard work of gradual consensus-building, and the vigilante impulse for summary judgment rules out the possibility of complexity, ambiguity, degrees of complicity, or doubt.

In the middle of last Thursday night, when silence reigned and phantasies danced in my half-awake mind, I wondered if this is what Jesus would preach in this day and age about the democratic experiment that is Australia?

When Jesus announced the realm of God, he envisioned a society governed by love – more peaceful, more compassionate, more equitable, and more just. And I believe that planted deep in our hearts, this dream defines our mission as a Church community. We are called



to transform the hearts, minds, and politics of our cities and towns, our states, our nations, and the entire global community.

A final word from the field of ethics ...

It's important to keep in mind that ethical, dilemmas do not necessarily have simple solutions that will satisfy everybody. Even reasonable people can disagree about what

course of action to take in a given situation. That's fine. The important bit is not really the answer you come to, but the reasons you give to support it. That's what ethics is all about: finding good reasons to act the way we do.

The path to grace.

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Resources:

Scott Stephens, Waleed Ali 'Uncivil Wars: How Contempt Is Corroding Democracy' (Quarterly Essay 87, 2022)

Robert Talisse *Sustaining Democracy* (Oxford University Press 2021)

<https://ethics.org.au/how-ethical-dilemmas-strengthen-our-moral-muscle/>

Sentence of the Day

Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. Matthew 22.21

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
in Christ you have revealed your glory among the nations:
grant that your Church throughout the world
may persevere with steadfast faith
in proclaiming the cross to be the way that leads to life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Matthew 22:15-33

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. ¹⁶ So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?' ¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, 'Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for the tax.' And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰ Then he said to them, 'Whose head is this, and whose title?' ²¹ They answered, 'The emperor's.' Then he said to them, 'Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.' ²² When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away. ²³ The same day some Sadducees came to him, saying there is no resurrection; and they asked him a question, saying, ²⁴ 'Teacher, Moses said, "If a man dies childless, his brother shall marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother." ²⁵ Now there were seven brothers among us; the first married, and died childless, leaving the widow to his brother. ²⁶ The second did the same, so also the third, down to the seventh. ²⁷ Last of all, the woman herself died. ²⁸ In the resurrection, then, whose wife of the seven will she be? For all of them had married her.' ²⁹ Jesus answered them, 'You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. ³¹ And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, ³² "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"? He is God not of the dead, but of the living.' ³³ And when the crowd heard it, they were astounded at his teaching.

