



Wednesday 1st September 2021
twenty-second week in Ordinary Time Year 1

First Reading

Col 1:1-8

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians

The Good News which has reached you is spreading all over the world.

From Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy to the saints in Colossae, our faithful brothers in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

We have never failed to remember you in our prayers and to give thanks for you to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever since we heard about your faith in Christ and the love that you show towards all the saints because of the hope which is stored up for you in heaven. It is only recently that you heard of this, when it was announced in the message of the truth. The Good News which has reached you is spreading all over the world and producing the same results as it has among you ever since the day when you heard about God's grace and understood what this really is. Epaphras, who taught you, is one of our closest fellow workers and a faithful deputy for us as Christ's servant, and it was he who told us all about your love in the Spirit.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 51:10-11. R. v.10

(R.) I trust in the kindness of God for ever.

1. I am like a growing olive tree
in the house of God.
I trust in the goodness of God
for ever and ever. (R.)
2. I will thank you for evermore;
for this is your doing.
I will proclaim that your name is good,
in the presence of your friends. (R.)

Gospel

Lk 4:38-44

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

I must preach the Good News to other towns as well, because that is what I was sent to do.

Leaving the synagogue Jesus went to Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever and they asked him to do something for her. Leaning over her he rebuked the fever and it left her. And she immediately got up and began to wait on them.

At sunset all those who had friends suffering from diseases of one kind or another brought them to him, and laying his hands on each he cured them. Devils too came out of many people, howling, 'You are the Son of God.' But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak because they knew that he was the Christ.

When daylight came he left the house and made his way to a lonely place. The crowds went to look for him, and when they had caught up with him they wanted to prevent him leaving them, but he answered, 'I must proclaim the Good News of the kingdom of God to the other towns too, because that is what I was sent to do.' And he continued his preaching in the synagogues of Judaea.

Reflection By Fr John Lovell

Our Gospel today raises a number of interesting questions. If Simon had a wife (since Jesus cured his mother-in-law), who looked after her when Simon left his fishing business to follow Jesus? Did Simon have children old enough to continue his business and look after their mother and grandmother? Or was Simon's wife part of that group of women who went on to accompany Jesus and His disciples on their missionary journeys around Galilee and beyond?

St Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians also implies Simon Peter had a living spouse when he wrote about Cephas (Greek for Peter) along with the 'brothers of Jesus' and the other Apostles having the right to be accompanied by a Christian woman. Paul himself, however, preferred to remain single.

The question of whether Catholic priests in our day ought to be bound by a traditional vow of mandatory celibacy has been raised by numerous respondents to the Plenary Council and our local Diocesan Synod. The scriptures tell us it is not good for a man to be alone. In the past when we had many more priests, many parish priests would live with a least one or two assistant priests, meaning they were living in community. Nowadays, many must live on their own. Other questions around this issue would also have to include: could a parish financially support both a priest and his spouse, and children, along with the costs of raising them? Would a priest with a family have sufficient time to care for them as well as the rest of his flock?

This is just one of many challenging questions our Church will be discerning in the Synod and Plenary Council over months and years ahead. If you'd like to be part of these discernment conversations, please feel free to join in our Thursday night zoom sessions between now and the 30th September. To register click in the link below: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/plenary-council-lead-up-conversations-tickets-168063956819>