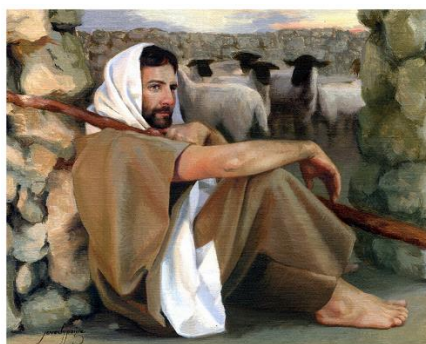


HORNSBY CATHEDRAL PARISH

Letter from Fr Peter de Souza

3 May 2020 – 4th Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday



"I am the gate of the sheepfold." - John 10:7

My dear Parishioners,

The Good Shepherd Sunday invites us to reflect on the imagery of shepherds and sheep. It is an old image, but the message is still relevant to us. By our trust in Jesus, our relationship with him is alive and personal, like the love that unites Jesus himself with the Father. The passage can also be an examination of conscience on how we are fulfilling our vocation as Parent, Teacher, Guide, Friend or Priest in our faith community. I thank you for the gift of your own personal vocation, you strengthen mine, and I thank those who have dared to share their faith journey, may you all be blessed.

God Bless

Fr Peter deSouza

What inspired me to become a Priest? – Bishop Anthony Randazzo

There are a few factors. Probably the most important one for me, is that I come from a family that's filled with faith. My parents modelled the faith, the way they lived their own married love and they were steadfast in good times and in bad. They made sure that Christ was at the very centre of our lives.

Sunday Mass was the centre of our family life. It was inconceivable in their married life, that Sunday would not be the day of worship of the Lord; it was inconceivable that we wouldn't pray as a family each day. More often than not, during the week, my mother would bundle us off and we'd go to the Church for the Sacrament of Confession that was available if we needed to and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. They were the staples of my diet, my spiritual diet growing up and that just put me in a really good place. It put me in an environment that had Jesus Christ at the very centre.

Now one aspect of that is the environment, and that's really important, but of course for me and I think for anyone who wants to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, there has to be a personal connection. It wasn't good enough for me to just float around on a Sunday, to go along in the car on a Wednesday or to rock up for daily prayer. At a certain point in time, I had to commit myself, and as a young boy (probably about the age of 10), I can very clearly remember thinking, "*This Jesus person on the Cross, is real.*" And from that moment on, I wanted to go to Mass on Sunday. I wanted to pray each evening, and I looked forward to the Sacrament of Penance when I could get to it, and certainly to visit and spend a bit of time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. So, for me it was an ongoing, an organic kind of growth. It was like a seed being planted in the right ground and my parents and their married life, provided that ground for me. For me, that was really important, and I underline that because it was a personal faith experience. It was a conversion as a young person that continued to grow.

I had an uncle who was a priest. He had an uncle who was a Carmelite Friar. Their uncle was a priest. I am seventh generation on my mother's side. I didn't know that at the time. I'm third generation on my father's side. Apparently, we are a sacerdotal family, and this all became part of my reality as I started to look into the family life, into where we came from, who we were, and it became something of what I do. It became very natural for me at some stage to respond to this call.

I had to ask the question: "*What is God wanting me to do with my life?*" I couldn't just ask it of myself. I had to ask God, "*Hey, God, what do you want me to do with my life?*" And I very clearly heard God say, "*I want you to follow me, I want you to be my priest!*" And the rest I suppose is history.

I had some very good priests in the Parish in which I lived and grew up and they kept an eye out, they noticed young people in the Parish, women and men and tried to direct them to marriage, to Religious life and to the Priesthood. The young curate in the Parish at the time when I was a young teenager, was a priest called Fr Michael McCarthy, and one day he said to me, "*Hey when are you going to the Seminary?*" And I really freaked out and inside I thought, "*Gosh, how did he even know I was thinking and praying about that?*" Anyway, the long and the short of it is, he encouraged me. He put me in contact with the Vocations Director, sent me off with a few of my mates to a vocation weekend or two, and lo and behold, I found myself a few years later in the Seminary. That wasn't the end of it. The Seminary is a means to an end. I constantly had to ask myself, "*Is this what God is asking me to do?*" "*If I become a priest*" was the question.

After about five and a half years in the Seminary, I came to a time in my formation where through prayer and discernment of the formators who were teaching me and looking after me and helping me in the journey, I finally came to a stage where I could say, "***When I become a priest.***" The ***if*** part wasn't a denial. It was an attempt on my part to just keep throwing myself into God, because only God could answer the question, "*This is what I want you to do with your life.*"

After seven years in the Seminary, my Archbishop called me forward and I was ordained a priest.

"In good times and in bad... I will love and honour you for the rest of my life..."

– Frank & Jill Bradley

Whenever I hear the word Vocation, the first thing that springs to mind is a vocation to the priesthood or the religious life. But on reflection, one realises that there are vocations to other things as well. "Nursing", "charitable works" etc. All of which have one thing in common: a call to service in one form or another. Scripture reminds us that God calls us (before we were born!) to fulfil a certain role in life. A call to the married state is one such. We are both called to serve our partner as best we can through life.

My wife and I recently celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary and those years have been so blessed and so happy! Fr Peter celebrated those 60 years with us with a special blessing in the courtyard outside the church. Yes, just the three of us! We didn't envisage that 60 years ago when we were cutting the cake! In these uncertain times, we are reminded today that Jesus is called the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. Thank you, Lord, for our vocations.

My journey to the Priesthood – Roger Delmonte

I was born on the 29 June 1981 in Cabanglasan, a Jesuit mission district in the province of Bukidnon, Southern Philippines. Baptised and inspired by an Italian Jesuit missionary who founded their parish and school in honour of Our Lady of Guadalupe, I later joined the Philippine Jesuits in Manila after 5 years of Philosophy and Theological studies at Pope John XXIII College Seminary in his home Diocese of Malaybalay.

Prior to my entrance to the Diocesan Seminary in Malaybalay City, I attended kindergarten and primary at the Ursuline sisters of the Sacred Heart, then secondary at Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe, now Fr. Leoni Memorial School in Cabanglasan. My parents, one brother and sister-in-law, my one niece and 3 nephews have always been greatly supportive of my vocation since I joined the Diocesan Seminary after high school.

Eight years after Jesuit formation, I discerned of going back to Diocesan priesthood and happily started Ministry at St Peter Parish and Shrine in Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City, as coordinator for local and national Pilgrims. Whilst in Ministry, I joined the World Youth Day 2011 in Madrid, Spain, where I also encountered Filipino Seminarians, Priests, Religious, Bishops and Missionaries from many countries across the globe. Moved by millions of dedicated and inspiring young people especially through that experience, I continued my journey to the priesthood and was accepted to come to the Lismore Diocese in Australia in 2012 to finish my Theological studies at Vianney College in Wagga Wagga, NSW.

When my training and studies in Wagga Wagga and Lismore Dioceses completed after 5 years, I applied to the Diocese of Broken Bay upon my Bishop's support and recommendation. After a month of discernment at the Parish of Epping-Carlingford and a year of Pastoral placement at the Parish of Frenchs Forest, I am now joyfully settling in here in my new home at the Hornsby Cathedral Parish.

Called to Permanent Diaconate – Deacon Peter McCulloch

I've belonged to the Hornsby Cathedral Parish for 30 years, but I've rarely visited since 2012. Why? It's because in 2012, I was ordained a Permanent Deacon and sent to work elsewhere. In all the years I attended Mass at Hornsby Cathedral Parish, I always felt I was being called to do something special for Jesus. But I never knew what it was. I raised my family there, I was involved in lots of different Ministries, but still I felt that something was missing. That was until 2008, when I repeatedly prayed to Jesus: "Tell me what you want me to do with my life, and I'll do it." To my great surprise, he answered me: "I want you to learn." He said Only 5 words, but they went straight to my heart and I knew exactly what they meant.

Jesus wanted me to start learning, *seriously* learning, about him. He wanted me to devote my whole life to him. So, I enrolled in a theology degree and after 4 years formation, I was ordained a Permanent Deacon.

Since then, I have served at several different parishes and I'm still learning. I am also serving on the Diaconal Formation team, teaching new aspirants for the Diaconate. Learning about Jesus and devoting my life to him is so satisfying! I am so grateful for this great gift he has given me. It's wonderful to be called!

Please pray for our Broken Bay Chaplains:

- Fr Vincent Trung Nguyen for the Royal North Shore Hospital and the Lower North Shore
- Fr Anselam Lakra for the SAN and Hornsby Hospitals and the Upper North Shore
- Fr Shiju Simon OSH for the Northern Beaches Hospital and the Northern Beaches Deanery
- Fr Greg Skulski SDS for Gosford Hospital and the southern part of the Central Coast
- Fr Baby Thomas CFIC for the Wyong Hospital and the northern part of the Central Coast

Month of May: Traditionally it has been a month dedicated to praying the Rosary in our homes and communities, may I request you in your families to do the same, and entrust our intentions of our Families, Communities and Nation into the care of our Blessed Mother.

Please remember in your prayers, those who are sick, and have died recently and whose anniversaries occur during this time. May I request you to keep all those who are struck with the virus, those tested positive and those in isolation in your special prayers.

Note of Gratitude: to all those Parishioners and non, who keep sending us emails, letters and making phone calls of gratitude, during this time, thanking us for being, what we can best be, and thank you for appreciating that honesty, we bring forth.

I would also like to say a big thank you to all those who are financially contributing to Parish Life, even as each of you come to terms with our own struggles. Your generosity is tremendous, and while I thank you, I assure you all of my prayers too.

Cathedral has been gifted: On behalf of all our Parishioners, I express my deepest gratitude to two Families of our Parish, that have supported us with, their generosity of Solar Panels for production of electricity, this has been a long time happening, finally we got there. That is our big bit in helping our planet. Your generosity, and blessings goes miles ahead. Thanks once again, and we pray generous blessings on your families.

Prayer Resources for Catholics at home is available on the Diocesan website: www.bbcatholic.org.au/news-events/covid-19/prayer-resources

The Charitable Works Fund – Thank you for your continued connection

We are so grateful to our community who demonstrate their love for their neighbours by generously supporting the Charitable Works Fund.

The CWF is still working by providing the funds to ensure our trained CatholicCare Pastoral Care Practitioners are available by mobile phone for those in hospitals in our Diocese. With restrictions on visitors, Pastoral Care Practitioners are needed more than ever for the patients, their families and the staff in the hospitals in our Diocese.

The CWF is still working by providing the funds to create online resources for students in public schools in our Diocese to receive Catholic Special Religious Education Classes. This vital ministry will assist parents at home continue the valuable faith formation to Catholic students in the public schools in our Diocese.

The CWF is still working by assisting St Lucy's School and St Edmund's College care for students with special needs who are still attending providing additional funds to two schools with students with special needs.

The CWF works every day by providing funds to those who are deaf or hard of hearing through the Ephpheta Centre.

When you give to the CWF, you can be assured that your donation is working for the faith and the people of the Diocese of Broken Bay. Donations \$2 and over are tax-deductible. www.givenow.com.au/cwf
"We'd like to say thank you": <https://youtu.be/NIVvTxTsDTw>

Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered to our people, even though it is *not possible to celebrate this Sacrament in the closed church*. Also note the official government regulation for physical distancing is important.

Sacrament of Anointing is available on request, and in an emergency, please feel free to call our emergency number 0458 351 843. **Please make sure if your family member is in the Hospital or Nursing Home, it should go through the hospital or nursing home authorities.**

If a Priest is needed in a matter of emergency, after hours or on the weekend, please call 0458 351 843.

Mass schedule: Daily Mass is live streamed at 7.00am. Sunday Mass is live streamed at 8.30am.

The YouTube link can be found on the parish website: www.bbcatholic.org.au/hornsby

Please note, DO NOT come to the Cathedral during these times. Thank you for your understanding.