

# St Joseph's Catholic Parish

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ord. Time  
Year C, 11 September, 2022

Embracing the communities of  
Cherbourg, Goomeri, Murgon,  
Proston and Wondai



*Unity in Diversity ... being one in Christ through Baptism!*

## The little Lost Sheep – Pope Francis

We are all familiar with the image of the Good Shepherd with the little lost lamb on his shoulders. This icon has always been an expression of Jesus' care for sinners and of the mercy of God who never resigns himself to the loss of anyone. The parable is told by Jesus to make us understand that his closeness to sinners should not scandalize us, but on the contrary it should call us all to serious reflection on how we live our faith. The narrative sees, on the one hand, the sinners who approach Jesus in order to listen to him and, on the other, the suspicious doctors of the law and scribes who move away from him because of his behaviour. They move away because Jesus approaches the sinners. These men were proud, arrogant, believed themselves to be just.

Our parable unfolds around three characters: the shepherd, the lost sheep and the rest of the flock. The one who acts, however, is only the shepherd not the sheep. The Shepherd, then, is the only real protagonist and everything depends on him. The parable opens with a question: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it?" (Lk 15:4). It is a paradox that arouses doubt about the action of the Shepherd: is it wise to abandon the ninety-nine for one single sheep? And what's more, not in the safety of a pen but in the desert? According to biblical tradition, the desert is a place of death where it is hard to find food and water, shelterless and where one is at the mercy of wild beasts and thieves. What are the ninety-nine defenceless sheep supposed to do? The paradox continues, in any case, saying that the shepherd, having found the sheep, "lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me" (15:5-6). It seems then that the shepherd didn't go back to the desert to recover

the rest of the flock! Reaching out to that single sheep he seems to forget the other ninety-nine. But it's not like that really. The lesson that Jesus wants us to learn is, rather, that not a single one of us can be lost. The Lord cannot accept the fact that a single person can be lost. God's action is that of one who goes out seeking his lost children and then rejoices and celebrates with everyone at their recovery. It is a burning desire: not even ninety-nine sheep could stop the shepherd and keep him enclosed in the fold. He might reason like this: "Let me do the sum: If I have ninety-nine of them, I have lost one, but that's no great loss". Nevertheless, he goes looking for that one, because every one is very important to him and that one is in the most need, is the most abandoned, most discarded; and he goes to look for it. We are all warned: mercy to sinners is the style with which God acts and to this mercy he is absolutely faithful: nothing and no one can distract him from his saving will. God does not share our current throw-away culture; it doesn't count to God. God throws no one away; God loves everyone, looks for everyone: one by one! He doesn't know what "throwing people away" means, because he is entirely love, entirely mercy.

The Lord's flock is always on the move: it does not possess the Lord, it cannot hope to imprison him in its structures and strategies. The Shepherd will be found wherever the lost sheep is. The Lord, then, should be sought precisely where he wants to find us, not where we presume to find him! There is no other way to reassemble the flock except by following the path outlined by the mercy of the shepherd. While he is looking for the lost sheep, he challenges the ninety-nine to participate in the reunification of the flock. Then, not only the lamb on his shoulders, but the whole flock will follow the shepherd to his home to celebrate with "friends and neighbours".

We should reflect on this parable often, for in the Christian community there is always someone who is missing and if that person is gone, a place is left empty.

*continued on next page ...*

## September is the month of the Seven Dolors of Mary, The Sorrowful Mother

Pope's Prayer Intention:

**For the abolition of the death penalty:** We pray that the death penalty, which attacks the dignity of the human person, may be legally abolished in every country.

## Mass Times Next Week

**Tuesday, 13 September**

Gayndah, 12 noon

**Wednesday, 14 September**

Wondai, 5.00pm

**Thursday, 15 September**

Murgon, 5.00pm

**Friday, 16 September**

Castra, 9.00am

**Saturday, 17 September**

Proston, 9.00am

Wondai, 5.00pm

**Sunday, 18 September**

Murgon, 8.00am

Gayndah, 10.30am

Goomeri, 6.00pm

## Today's readings

Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14

1 Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-32

*Response:*

I will rise and go to my father.

*Gospel Acclamation:*

Alleluia, alleluia! God was in Christ, to reconcile the world to himself; and the Good News of reconciliation he has entrusted to us. Alleluia!

Next Sunday: Amos 8:4-7;

1 Timothy 2:1-8; Luke 16:1-13

...continued from previous page

Sometimes this is daunting and leads us to believe that a loss is inevitable, like an incurable disease. That is how we run the risk of shutting ourselves in the pen, where there won't be the odour of the sheep but the stench of enclosure! And Christians? We must not be closed in or we will smell like stale things. Never! We need to go forth, not close in on ourselves, in our little communities, in the parish, holding ourselves to be 'righteous'. This happens when there is a lack of the missionary zeal that leads us to encounter others. In Jesus' vision there are no sheep that are definitively lost, but only sheep that must be found again. We need to understand this well: to God no one is definitively lost. Never! To the last moment, God is searching for us. Think of the good thief; only in the eyes of Jesus no one is definitively lost. For his perspective is entirely dynamic, open, challenging and creative. It urges us to go forth in search of a path to brotherhood. No distance can keep the shepherd away; and no flock can renounce a brother. To find the one who is lost is the joy of the shepherd and of God, but it is also the joy of the flock as a whole! We are all sheep who have been retrieved and brought back by the mercy of the Lord, and we are called to gather the whole flock to the Lord!



## Saint Robert Bellarmine – 17th September

When Robert Bellarmine was ordained in 1570, the study of Church history and the fathers of the Church was in a sad state of neglect. A promising scholar from his youth in Tuscany, he devoted his energy to these two subjects, as well as to Scripture, in order to systematise Church doctrine against the attacks of the Protestant Reformers.

He was the first Jesuit to become a professor at Louvain.

His most famous work is his three-volume *Disputations on the Controversies of the Christian Faith*. Particularly noteworthy are the sections on the temporal power of the pope and the role of the laity. Bellarmine incurred the anger of monarchists in England and France by showing the divine-right-of-kings theory untenable. He developed the theory of the indirect power of the pope in temporal affairs; although he was defending the pope against the Scottish philosopher Barclay, he also incurred the ire of Pope Sixtus V.

Bellarmino was made a cardinal by Pope Clement VIII on the grounds that "he had not his equal for learning." While he occupied apartments in the Vatican, Bellarmine relaxed none of his former austerities. He limited his household expenses to what was barely essential, eating only the food available to the poor. He was known to have ransomed a soldier who had deserted from the army and he used the hangings of his rooms to clothe poor people, remarking, "The walls won't catch cold."

Among many activities, Bellarmine became theologian to Pope Clement VIII, preparing two catechisms which have had great influence in the Church.

The last major controversy of Bellarmine's life came in 1616 when he had to admonish his friend Galileo, whom he admired. He delivered the admonition on behalf of the Holy Office, which had decided that the heliocentric theory of Copernicus was contrary to Scripture. The admonition amounted to a caution against putting forward—other than as a hypothesis—theories not yet fully proven. This shows that saints are not infallible.

Robert Bellarmine died on September 17, 1621. The process for his canonisation was begun in 1627, but was delayed until 1930 for political reasons, stemming from his writings. In 1930, Pope Pius XI canonised him, and the next year declared him a doctor of the Church.

**Please get your BOTTLES in by the last Sunday in September for our Parish Bottle Stall. Bottles can be glass/plastic and contain anything that will fit into a bottle. Please check the 'use by' dates.**



## Parish Directory, Saint Joseph's Parish

Parish Priest: Rev Fr Bryan Pipins SJ  
Tel: Parish Office, **0499 006 959**  
Parish e-mail: [murgon@bne.catholic.net.au](mailto:murgon@bne.catholic.net.au)  
24 Angel Avenue, MURGON  
PO Box 60 Murgon 4605  
Parish website:  
[murgon.brisbanecatholic.org.au](http://murgon.brisbanecatholic.org.au)

## Safeguarding

If you have experienced abuse or misconduct, you can ring the help line, **1300 304 550**. Information can be shared anonymously.

## We pray for those who are sick:

Bevan Barsby; Cira; Renee Elliott;  
Scottie Ewart; Justine Forde;  
Val Iacono; Annette McCorry .

## Collection for 4/9/2022

Loose..... \$209.60  
Planned Giving..... \$295  
Total..... \$504.60

**Direct Debit** BSB 064-786  
Account 100011987

## Reflection

The renewal in the Church sought by Vatican II was difficult for many Catholics. In the course of change, many felt a lack of firm guidance from those in authority. They yearned for the stone columns of orthodoxy and an iron command with clearly defined lines of authority. Vatican II assures us in *The Church in the Modern World*: "There are many realities which do not change and which have their ultimate foundation in Christ, who is the same yesterday and today, yes, and forever" (#10, quoting Hebrews 13:8).

Robert Bellarmine devoted his life to the study of Scripture and Catholic doctrine. His writings help us understand that the real source of our faith is not merely a set of doctrines, but rather the person of Jesus still living in the Church today.