

This Week's Liturgy of the Word

1 Samuel 3:3-10, 19; 1 Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20;
John 1:35-42

Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! We have found the Messiah: Jesus Christ,
who brings us truth and grace. Alleluia!

Gospel

John 1:35-42

'We have found the Messiah'

As John stood with two of his disciples, Jesus passed, and John stared hard at him and said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God.' Hearing this, the two disciples followed Jesus. Jesus turned round, saw them following and said, 'What do you want?' They answered, 'Rabbi,' – which means Teacher – 'where do you live?'

'Come and see' he replied; so they went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him the rest of that day. It was about the tenth hour.

One of these two who became followers of Jesus after hearing what John had said was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. Early next morning, Andrew met his brother and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' – which means the Christ – and he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked hard at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John; you are to be called Cephas' – meaning Rock.

The Gospel of the Lord

Your Weekly Offering

► Direct Deposit:

Details for monastery church deposits
BSB 036044 Acc.No. 128369

► **Envelope:** You will find envelopes in the pews. Please place your offering in the brown envelope. Again, a big thanks to each of you and your families for your generosity. These are far from easy times, yet you remain generous in supporting the church and the monastery. *Gratias!*

Bulletin via Email

If you wish to receive the Bulletin via your email please let us know by emailing cssrperth.secretary@gmail.com.



At the Monastery

BAPTISM & WEDDINGS

During this time of social distancing please make arrangements personally for ...

- RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults)
- Infant Baptism preparation
- Celebration of Marriage

CONTACTS

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MONDAY AFTERNOON CRAFT GROUP

The Craft Group normally meets on Monday afternoons but is now in recess until early February. Consider if joining the Craft Group might be something you might enjoy

MONDAY EVENING MEDITATION GROUP

The Meditation Group normally meets on Monday evenings. The meetings are in recess until February 5, 2024

COVID 19 in keeping with health guidelines, kindly take your personal copy of the Bulletin home with you.

Commentators and Readers

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year B

Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 24: 1

Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

21 January 2024

07.00 am	David B & Debbie D
09.00 am	Peggy T & Mary P
10.30 am	Wendy C, Sheila D & Anna N
06.00 pm	Patrick D & Tim B

Mass Intentions for this week

Monday	06.30am	Thelma Lopez, S/I
Tuesday	06.30 am	To the faithful departed
	11.00 am	Fr Joe Carroll, RIP
Wednesday	06.30 am	Redemptorists Volunteers
	11.00 am	Vincezo Cordico, P/D
Thursday	06.30 am	Jack Williams, S/I
	11.00 am	Marina Saviel ,Thanksgiving
Friday	06.30 am	Special Intentions
	11.00 am	The late Fr Brian Russell, S/I



We are on Facebook. Please search 'Redemptorist Monastery', check out our page



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REDEMPTORIST MONASTERY

NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

JANUARY 14, 2024



LISTENING TO THE LORD



What are we looking for? What is it we want? They're good questions to ask ourselves occasionally, or indeed, have put to us. It's what Jesus asks Andrew and his friend in the gospel. They respond with another question: 'where do you live?' It seems they want to learn from him, but implicit in their question are other questions like, who are you and what are you on about, and where do you abide? Jesus responds saying, 'come and see'. They're pretty much the first words spoken by Jesus in John's gospel and it's an invitation: we're invited to do the same.

We might invite those looking for some meaning in their lives to come and see us. Come and see how we relate to one another and welcome newcomers into our church. Are we able to see him in how we relate to one another? Does Jesus abide with us, because this is his promise, if only we are open to it. The next day Andrew goes to tell his bother Simon that he has met the Messiah. The day before he had addressed Jesus as Rabbi, now he unexpectedly discovers the truth in what John the Baptist has said, that Jesus is the anointed one, the one on whom the Spirit rests. It's not Peter who calls Jesus the Messiah but Andrew. He's the one who brings people to Jesus; he has the gift of inviting us to come and see. Indeed, the only time he's mentioned in the gospels is in the company of others. We might recognise him in the life of the parish.

Then, when Andrew brings Simon to Jesus he gives him a new name! It indicates a real change in his life, a new relationship with God, a new purpose. However, the 'rock' doesn't emerge till much later because he's as impetuous as ever throughout the gospels, but Jesus sees in him a steadfastness, and similarly, in each one of us. It's the transforming power of God at work in our lives. In the first reading the Lord comes to the young Samuel who, aided by Eli, is enabled to hear him and take to heart his word. He doesn't dismiss what he hears, but listens to the Lord. Like Jesus, he is the one who listens.

As ever, it's the Lord who takes the initiative in coming to us and we have only to respond to his call, wherever we hear it, however unexpectedly. Finally, in the second reading, Paul lays great store by the body. Our bodies matter to him. Indeed, they're the temple of the Holy Spirit he says, for where else could we experience the Spirit but, in the body, which means not just our own bodies but together in the Church, the body of Christ, we are enabled to do the will of the Lord and, in doing so, to follow him and abide with him. In this is our promise of glory.

DAMIAN COLERIDGE

Sourced from the Redemptorists - Majellan Media, Melbourne

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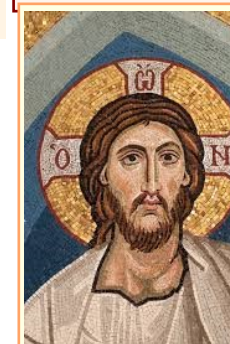
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**Wadjuk People
Noongar Nation**
Custodians of the land
on which we worship



OUR MISSION TOGETHER

Our mission as Redemptorists working together with each of you is to bring the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who are struggling and who are deprived of their spiritual, familial, cultural, economic and environmental foundations ~ equality, diversity, inclusion.

Musings on a missionary Church, from the margins in Mongolia

Dear friends,

It might seem strange to be reading about the Church in Mongolia. The truth is: the fledgling Church in Mongolia may have much to teach us. Whatever of that, it is a mirror into which we can look and see our own Australian Church - either in keeping with or in contrast with the Mongolian experience

The following article from [Crux Now](#) is a solid read but it is also an interesting one. I commend it to you. *(Please consider a subscription to “Crux Now” online. Editor, John Allen, is one of the most knowledgeable journalists working on Church issues today.)*

Blessings on your week and keep (your) cool.

Fr. Edmond.



Cardinal Giorgio Marengo celebrates Mass at the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul in Ulaanbaatar Dec. 31, 2023. (Credit: Crux Photo/John Allen.)

ROME – Religion, like politics, is basically local. Faith isn’t forged in the HQs of spiritual bureaucracies and their political battles, however riveting those conflicts may be for journalists, bloggers and posters on social media.

Belief instead is won or lost in the trenches, one person, one heart and mind, at a time. In that spirit, I’d like to suggest that my wife, Elise, and I experienced the Christmas season this year in an ideal setting to taste the local nature of the faith, almost entirely untainted by ecclesiastical politics – literally on the other side of the world, in the tiny mission church of Mongolia, with a total Catholic flock of roughly 1,450 souls.

On Christmas Eve, we witnessed the baptisms of three

Mongolian converts to the faith, all women. There is simply no place else on earth where the addition of a mere three members would actually represent a statistically significant 0.2 percent jump in the national Catholic population, but there it was.

Ironically, we ended up in Ulaanbaatar, the world’s coldest capital city, despite my stated aim of spending the holidays somewhere warm.

As it happens, however, the frigid temperatures of the Mongolian capital stood in stark contrast to the warmth of the emerging Catholic culture there, under the leadership of Italian Cardinal Giorgio Marengo and an improbable band of missionaries from across the Catholic spectrum, from Cameroon to India and points beyond.

Herewith, four random musings on this remarkable missionary church – which, taken together, perhaps drive home the point that while Rome may be great theater, the real drama of Catholic life is unfolding almost everywhere else.

Missionary Zeal

While Mongolia may be about as far away from Rome as a Catholic can get in existential terms, there’s a curious way in which the two places do share something in common: They are both remarkably priest-rich.

Globally speaking, there’s roughly one priest for every 3,373 Catholics in the world, although that ratio masks serious regional discrepancies. In the United States, for example, there’s one priest for every 1,300 Catholics, whereas in Africa it’s 1-5,500 and in Latin America it’s closer to 1-7,000. One would never know there’s a priest shortage in Rome, however, and ironically, the same is true of Mongolia.

While there may be only 1,450 believers in the country, there are 25 priests plus the cardinal, which works out to a ratio of one cleric for every 56 ordinary Catholics. In addition, there are also six seminarians, 30 women religious, five religious brothers and 35 catechists hailing from 30 different countries.

All in, therefore, there are 102 ecclesiastical personnel in Mongolia, representing a ratio of one pastoral worker for every 14 believers – a stunning figure likely unmatched anywhere else on the planet. At the New Years Eve Mass this year, Marengo was joined by a robust total of 15 concelebrants, making the altar area in the cathedral almost as crowded as downtown Ulaanbaatar traffic.

Here’s the basic difference, however, between the saturation of priests in Rome and in Mongolia

In the Eternal City, the draw often is being close to the flame. In other words, priests gravitate to Rome to make a career, because it’s the best possible place to get noticed. Pretty much the opposite is true of Mongolia – on its vast steppes, you could be the Curé d’Ars and probably only about 14 people would ever know it, none of whom run Vatican dicasteries or post influential blogs.

In other words, the preponderance of personnel in such a remote setting is a reflection of basic missionary zeal, a desire to serve a young church without fanfare or reward. It’s proof that Catholicism is still capable of generating remarkable numbers of people eager to bring the Gospel to the most remote corners of the earth ... which, arguably, suggests there’s some gas left in the church’s tanks after all.

Preaching without Words

One of the striking things about a missionary church is that almost everything about it is a form of catechesis, since people there haven’t grown up in Christian culture and everything is a journey into the unknown. As a result, people pay very careful attention, not just to what’s said but also to what’s done.

A classic example came during Sunday Mass on Dec. 31 at the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul, during the distribution of communion. At one point someone accidentally dropped a host to the floor, at which point Marengo fell to his knees and began carefully picking up the crumbs from the consecrated host and putting them to his lips.



John and Elise Allen with members of the Mongolian folk metal band ‘TheHU’ (Credit: Crux photo.)

This went on a few moments, with great seriousness, until one of the missionary nuns arrived to take over so that Marengo could resume distributing communion. (Actually, it was mildly amusing to watch this elderly nun essentially muscle the 49-year-old cardinal aside, pointing brusquely for him to get back to work while she dealt with the remains of the host, whereupon Marengo immediately obeyed.)

Eventually an altar server arrived with a purifier, and, under the nun’s direction and Marengo’s watchful eye, the last remains of the host were retrieved and the area cleaned. The whole episode probably took about 10 minutes, and, from my own observation, I can report that virtually every set of eyes in the cathedral was riveted on the scene. In the end, Marengo, the sister and the server delivered a powerful lesson on Catholic reverence for the Eucharist, and they did it without uttering a single word.

As the saying often erroneously attributed to St. Francis of Assisi goes, “Preach the Gospel always, and, when necessary, use words.” The line may be apocryphal, but as the Mongolian example proves, the sentiment definitely isn’t.

Controversy and Context

We arrived in Ulaanbaatar on Dec. 24, meaning on Christmas Eve, and returned to Rome Jan. 2, right after the New Year’s Holiday. As a result, we were in town just as the furor over Fiducia Supplicans, the Vatican’s Dec. 18 declaration regarding the non-liturgical blessing of same-sex unions, was reaching a crescendo.

On Dec. 30, Elise and I sat down with Marengo over coffee at the small pastor center in Ulaanbaatar, which gave me the opportunity to confirm a hunch: To wit, according to Marengo, Fiducia Supplicans had been in circulation for 12 days by that point, making headlines all over the world, but not a single person in Mongolia had asked him about it or, for that matter, even seemed aware of its existence.

That’s not to say there aren’t tensions over LGBTQ+ issues in Mongolian society, just like everywhere else. Homosexuality was decriminalized in 1993 and the country adopted a law covering hate crimes in 2015.

Mongolian law does not recognize same-sex relationships and activists claim discrimination remains widespread.

However, the tiny Catholic community here simply doesn’t have the bandwidth yet to engage such issues, since its challenges tend to be more existential.

When you’re still trying to explain the difference between a blessing with an image of the Holy Family and the magic practiced by indigenous shamans, for example, debating the fine points of who can get such blessings just doesn’t seem a towering priority. In other words, a missionary church returns the faith to the essentials, offering a reminder that much of what we argue about back home, however important it may seem in the moment, actually is terribly secondary.

Curiosity, not Contempt

Another refreshing thing about a missionary church is that locals tend to approach the faith not with the world-weary contempt of, say, Europe and Latin America, weighed down by centuries of experience of Catholic culture.

Instead, people tend to react with genuine curiosity and even enthusiasm, charmed by the idea that somebody finds them important enough to reach out. In that context, pretty much anyone who represents this beguiling “other” becomes a de facto missionary.

For example, Elise and I spent some time in the company of a young Mongolian man named Dorjsuren, who cheerfully informed us we should call him “Doogie.” Doogie works for the car rental company we used, and, as it turns out, in Mongolia you don’t just go the rental counter at the airport and pick up your vehicle. Instead, an employee meets your flight and drives you into town, concluding the contract only at your hotel, and then drives you back to the airport when you’re done.

As a result, we had two pretty good chunks of time in the car with Doogie, and, when he found out we were connected to the Vatican, it was off to the races. Especially in light of the papal visit to Mongolia in September, which had aroused his curiosity, he was full of questions, which we did our best to answer.

My favorite query came when he asked about who actually lives in the Vatican: Are they, he wanted to know, politicians or holy men? After choking back as much laughter as I possibly could, I tried to explain that the best answer is “both,” with the ratio between political ambition and sanctity of life depending on the individual.

Once we explained what a cardinal is in the Catholic system, Doogie was alternately amazed to learn Mongolia has one, not so surprised that he turned out to be an Italian, and utterly stunned to discover that this Italian actually speaks fluent Mongolian.

Honestly, I make it even money that within a year or so, Doogie will be in an RCIA program and we may actually see him baptized on our next visit.

Visiting a missionary Church you get to watch people encounter the faith for the first time, without preconceptions or prejudices, and their general fascination is a reminder of why, over the centuries, Christianity has struck such a wide swath of the human population as good news – however much the experience of individual Christians, alas, can sometimes be more of a mixed bag.