



LAUNCH OUT LETTERS (LOL)

When he had finished eating, he said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch".

Luke 5: 4

March 2021

Welcome to the March issue. This month we have Lisa Beech leading the reflection on the last Sunday of March, which happens to be Passion Sunday. I am moved by her wisdom on putting ourselves in the place of the crowd calling for Jesus' crucifixion. How many times have I moved with the crowd because I was afraid to stand alone? Or too lazy to dig deeper into what it is I believe and listen to the uncomfortable invitation to conversion? I grew up in a collective society. The price of not going with the crowd is steep. J.K. Rowling puts it succinctly "it is harder to stand up to your friends than it is to your enemies". And there are many moments of that, especially when I have to challenge strongly held views by my culture. The fundamental challenge however, is standing up first to that crowd inside my head before I can stand up to the crowd before me. It is in prayer where I can let God hold my hand as God speaks to the crowd within me, so that God can speak through me, to the crowd before me. It is also in prayer that I am made aware I do not stand or go alone.

In this issue Bridget takes on some early church history on the role and place of the Clergy and Lay. The Online Resources section provides videos underpinning the tensions surrounding the distinction between the ministerial and baptismal priesthoods. We also share Anne Powell's synthesis on Theological Reflection. Happy reading and enjoy the remaining sunshine before Winter.

— *Maya Bernardo, Launch Out Formator and Manager*

Reflection on the Gospel for Passion Sunday (28 March 2021)

By Lisa Beech
Launch Out Candidate

The suffering, death and resurrection of Christ is central to our faith. Sometimes I can focus so much on the joy of the resurrection that I'm tempted to gloss over the crucifixion, and at other times I dwell so much on Jesus's suffering that I can lose sight of the resurrection that follows.

Mark's account of the Passion of Christ (Mark 14:1-15:47), the version we use this year, is the earliest and oldest of the Gospels. For me, shorn of the theological reflections which accompany John's account, Mark's Passion draws me starkly into the abuse of Jesus the human being. The man being arrested, betrayed and deserted by his friends, dragged through religious and civil courts, tortured, humiliated, and finally executed feeling completely abandoned by God – this seems so far from the divine Christ walking on water, calming the storm or healing the crowds. He is someone accepting the worst that can be done to human flesh and emotions.



To be continued on next page...

Copied from <https://www.ifiwalkedwithjesus.com/mark-156-15-crucify-him/>

Among the many characters in the Gospel account is the crowd. On Passion Sunday, we meet the crowd at the Gospel reading heard at the opening of the Mass, the crowd accompanying his journey into Jerusalem with cries of: "Hosanna". But within a few days the cheers have turned into condemnation: "Crucify him".

The crowd thought at the beginning of the week that Jesus would lead them to liberation from Roman colonial occupation. They were wrong about that. By the end of the week, the crowd was ready to see Jesus as blasphemer and criminal. They were wrong about that too.

Perhaps they were misled because they were too far from the reality of Jesus, easily swept up by the beliefs and feelings of people around them, joining the majority view of the moment. Perhaps their expectations were so firmly set that they wanted to cast Jesus in a role, rather than to listen to him and change. Perhaps they trusted political and religious leaders to an extent that they couldn't see how they themselves were becoming used as one of many weapons hitting out at an innocent man.

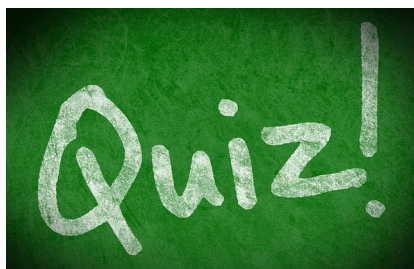
In these present days, when the views of the crowd can be expressed virtually, through "likes" or emojis, through thumbs up or thumbs down on a video, or through the mindless passing on of gossip through social media posts, let's take a moment to stop and reflect where we are in the "crowd".

Are we shaping our responses to opinions around us, rather than because we have stopped to listen and learn? Are we putting too much trust in some political and religious leaders whose motives may not be as pure as we wish? Are we shouting "Hosanna" one day and "Crucify him" the next as innocent people too far away from us to know them personally are abused, betrayed, unfairly tried in biased courts, humiliated, punished and even killed?



Copied from <https://cvdapc.org/peer-pressure-social-media/>

I'd like to think I'm not one of the crowd. I'd prefer to think of myself at the foot of the cross, loyally accompanying Christ to the end, burying his body, and awaiting his resurrection. But the crowd in the Gospel of the Passion stirs me to question my assumptions, and to look in this Holy Week at what I have done and failed to do as Christ suffers as one of us, in our human history, now and always.



1. In the New Testament who does the word 'priest' refer to?
2. When were Christian leaders first called priests?
3. There are two types of deacons. Do you know what they are?

See Page 4 for the answers

The early church— Lay and/or priest?

By Bridget Taumoepeau
Launch Out Mentor



In the many books about lay ministry, it is rare to find reference to the early church communities. However, the Acts of the Apostles and various Epistles give us a description of how the communities developed and conducted themselves. Acts 1:13-14 notes that the disciples, along with women, including Mary, devoted themselves to prayer. Acts goes on to describe communal life, including prayer, the breaking of bread, teaching, holding all things in common, praising God and, being rewarded by God with an increase in their numbers. There are further

descriptions of some followers selling their property and contributing to the community so that none would be needy.

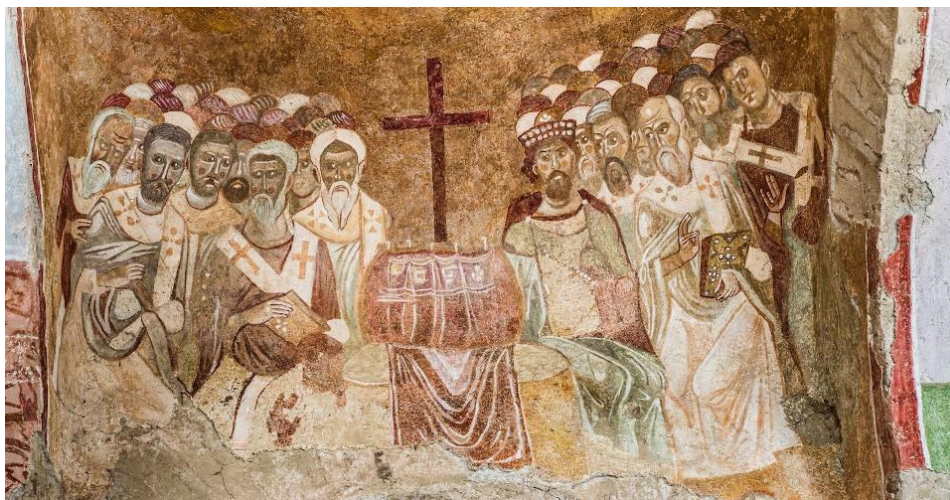
So, we see lay people – the disciples and their followers - leading the church and performing miracles. We know little of their domestic circumstances, although as Peter's mother-in-law is mentioned in the Gospels, we know that he was married. There are numerous references to the increase in numbers of believers.

Clearly leadership emerges with Peter having been designated by Jesus, and other apostles undertaking evangelisation in various parts of the known world. Paul's missionary journeys are well documented; the church in the east takes Andrew as its founder, while India attributes the spread of the Gospel there to Thomas.

At one point the disciples recognised that they will need more helpers to assist with the work, especially to the poor and needy, and they appointed seven men, laying hands on them. These men are often considered to be the first deacons.

Acts 15 recounts what is considered to be the first Church Council, when Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem to consult with the 'apostles and presbyters' regarding whether or not circumcision was required for converts.

The New Testament mentions various offices such as evangelists, prophets, apostles, pastors as well as *episkopos*, (Greek for bishop, meaning shepherd), *diakonos* (servant) and *presbyters*, (probably older people respected for their wisdom). The emphasis for all of these people, however, was on service rather than authority or status.



<https://summeruniversity.ceu.edu/political-theology-2020>

As in all institutions or movements there was a gradual development of a structure and organisation in the church. This included the position of priests, who took on sacramental and leadership roles. In future LOL's, we will at how priesthood and laity developed over the years.

Answers to the QUIZ

Copied from <https://harlowallianceparty.org/answers-to-quiz-3>

1. Jewish priests (members of the tribe of Levi). No Christians are called Priests in the New Testament. Jesus is referred to a 'Great high priest' in Hebrews.
2. The beginning of the 2nd Century, when the roles of bishops, priests and deacons were being developed, particularly in relation to the celebration of the Eucharist.
3. Transitional Deacons are those men who are training as priests. They are ordained first as deacons and usually about a year later are ordained priests. Permanent deacons are lay men, who can be married, who are ordained as deacons and can undertake some sacramental duties although eucharist, reconciliation and anointing of the sick are only performed by priests.

Online Resources

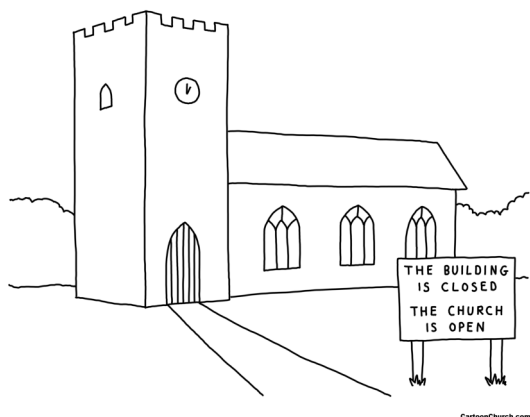
Chris Walkerdine and I enrolled in a paper by Boston College "Grace and Commitment" which was about the vocation of Lay. Below are some videos from that course we would like to share:

- [The Heart's Calling: Personal Vocation and Social Conscience | John Neafsey | September 30, 2010 - YouTube](#)
- [Faithful and Free: Yves Congar on the Vocation and Mission of the Laity | October 1, 2010 - YouTube](#)
- [Does Vatican II's Theology of the Laity have a Future? - YouTube](#)
- [The Vocation of the Church: One Calling, Many Roles | October 28, 2010 - YouTube](#)
- [Our Vocation: The Call to Discipleship Today | April 29, 2010 - YouTube](#)

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference published a study on lay ministers in 2018 "[Faithful Stewards of Grace. Lay Pastoral Ministries in the Church in Australia](#)" (click this link to get a free copy or you can order online).



Copied from <http://beamcountypriaryschool.org/online-subjects>



Copied from <https://cartoonchurch.com/>



I want to see the church get closer to the people. I want to get rid of clericalism, the mundane, this closing ourselves off within ourselves, in our parishes, schools or structures. Because these need to get out!

— Pope Francis —

AZ QUOTES

Copied from <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/851409>

UPDATES



The (former) Parish Leadership Team, celebrated the years of togetherness and the gifts of service of **Mary-Ann Greaney, Sharon Penny and Ann Williams** at St Anthony's church in Eastbourne. **Msgr Charles Cooper** presided the mass on 19 February.



Farewell mass from the Parish of the Wairarapa to **Sharon Penny** last 13 February 2021, at the Vigil mass in St. Patrick's Church, Masterton. The event was attended by members of the Parish Pastoral Council, Sharon's family and the Launch Out family. Below is Sharon giving her speech and behind her is Fr Bruce England who said, he'll miss Sharon's feminine presence and leadership in the parish. We look forward to hearing Sharon's reflection on her time as LPL in a future issue of LOL.



The **Presentation Sisters** celebrated their 70th year of arriving in New Zealand in 21 Feb. at St. Michael's Church, Taita. It was followed by a film showing on the history of the sisters which is as much as the history of the Hutt Valley itself. "*The furthest lantern*" is sold on DVD, get in touch with Regina Daly or any of the Presentation Sisters for a copy.

Making waves in the Oceania. **Joe Green**, was one of the speakers in a webinar organised by the **Pastoral Ministry Network** on the topic of Lay Leadership last 16 February 2021. The Archdiocese of Wellington is extolled as among the most progressive models of Lay Leadership in the world.

The Launch Out Candidates, joined by mentors Bridget and Kevin had a **Learning Day on doing Theological Reflection by Anne Powell, RC** at the Home of Compassion last 27 February 2021. It is also as much as a day of Prayer as well.



Cross-stitch in Crombie: In the Crombie Prayer Room, you'll see the Way of the Cross in cross-stitch. Guess who made those? Our dear **Bridget**! She laboured to complete it for 15 years. Have a look next time you are in the Home of Compassion.



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BIRTHDAYS

March

20 Debbie Matheson

31 Catherine Gibbs

Doing Theological Reflection—In a Nutshell

Last 27 February, the Launch Out Candidates held a Learning Day with Anne Powell on how to do Theological Reflection. Theological Reflection is a core competency of Pastoral Leadership. It achieves the following:

- It helps us clarify our **ministerial identity**—what are we called to do in view of the gifts we have, the needs of the world that we are drawn to respond to, and where our discernment is leading us.
- It is the **basis of homiletics** along with knowledge of scripture and theology. Our homiletics may not necessarily be within the pulpit of the mass but in situations we are called to preach, e.g.: parish newsletters, leading prayers.
- It is a **framework for discernment**, particularly for deciding on a pastoral response—e.g. How do you respond to a parishioner who wants to have an abortion? The key here is PASTORAL RESPONSE— you may have a moral decision on the issue but how you respond to the needs of that person would rely on your theological reflection.

Below is a synthesis of the model Anne used during the day.

Exercise 1

Recall a significant pastoral experience in your ministry as a Launch Out Candidate.

Telling the story

Exercise 2

What does your story tell you of how God relates?

Personal space

Telling the story

Exercise 3

Find a gospel text or picture which relates to your experience.

Allow God to be revealed in it.

Personal space

Telling the story

Exercise 4

Reflect on your experience in the light of the Christian community, Church teaching, cultures.

Telling the story

Exercise 5

Revisit your original pastoral experience.

What is changed for you? How are you transformed?

What sense of call is there for you now? Where are you being led?

Key points

Ignatian dynamic of personal experience/ reflected on/shared

Telling the story is central to this faith integration process.

Listening to stories from Scripture or other traditions, from life experience, we dialogue with them.

In the encounters of prayer, reflection, and telling the story, we experience the wisdom of God.

This is my own adaptation of John Shea's process of theological reflection which he bases on narrative storytelling.

Anne Powell
Cenacle Sisters