



# Parish of Our Lady of the Way

North Sydney | Kirribilli | Lavender Bay

Under the care of the Jesuits since 1878

Sunday 4 February 2018 – Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time



## Not from the Pulpit: Andrew Bullen SJ



Among the array of ministries that occur in our parish, we offer every day via YouTube “Mass on Demand” for people who cannot attend Mass directly, especially the homebound and those in hospitals and nursing homes. We know from emails that we have viewers from all over Sydney, and Australia, and indeed around the English-speaking world (“thanks from Wisconsin”, “thanks from Lahore”).

Weekday Masses have hundreds of viewers, and Sunday Masses over 2000 (and 4000 at the Christmas Midnight Mass). So daily we welcome a digital congregation. Our parishioners exercise a service to them, and the offer us a world of care and fellowship in worship.

For many years the Masses were those at St Mary’s, but the recent upgrade of the digital and sound systems at St Francis Xavier’s, Lavender Bay have seen us move to there. My thanks to the regular community at the 7.00am weekday Mass, who have so graciously undertaken this change in their regular lives from North Sydney to Lavender Bay; likewise those who have moved to the new 8.30am Mass on Saturday. My thanks to John Yates for ensuring the car-parking arrangements have gone so smoothly. As of this weekend, the Sunday/Sabbath Mass “on Demand” will be the 5.30pm Vigil at Lavender Bay; so again my thanks to the community at the 11.00am Mass at St Mary’s who have undertaken this ministry of hospitality and fellowship for so long, and also to the community at the Vigil who now take up this responsibility.

## Parish Notices



### Reflection Mornings 2018 – “Women of Vision”

Tues 13 Feb @ 10am -12pm, The Grail Centre, North Sydney

6 pioneering women of faith as documented in the book Women of Vision”.

For more information or to register your interest, please contact: Tricia Gemmell; 9955 3053 or atpgemmell@tpg.com.au.



### Mary’s House Fundraiser – Lunch and conversation

Fri 23 Feb, 12pm Northbridge Golf Club.

Join us for lunch and conversation with Fiona Sussman, doctor and award winning author of Shifting Colours and The Last Time We Spoke. Shifting Colours is a story of secrets, love and loss. Set against the violent backdrop of apartheid South Africa and then the calm of late twentieth century Britain, the novel traces the lives of Celia and Miriam - a mother and daughter separated by land, sea and heart rending circumstance. \$65 for two course lunch and drink on arrival. All proceeds to Mary’s House. Tickets at [www.eventbrite.com.au/e/literary-lunch-tickets](http://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/literary-lunch-tickets)

#### Sunday’s Readings

##### First Reading

[Jb 7:1-4. 6-7](#)

Life is a drudgery.

##### Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 146:1-6. R. v.3](#)

Praise the Lord who heals the broken-hearted.  
or

**Alleluia!**

[Second Reading](#)

1 Cor 9:16-19. 22-23

**Paul is compelled to preach the Gospel.**

[Gospel Acclamation](#)

**Mt 8:17**

[Gospel](#)

Mk 1:29-39

Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law.

#### In Our Prayers

##### Baptisms

Matilda Callaghan, Phoebe Duckworth, Isla Wise, Samuel Reppen, Elodie Sturdy, Sophia Fry, Hugo Ingram, Gabriel Haddad,

##### Weddings

##### Sick

Ron Whitmore, Sr Natalina Todeschini, Brian McClosky, Craig Chase, Rosa Maria Santos, Vedran Simunovic, Bruce Horsfield, Tony Breslin, Gavin O’Connor, Fr Tony Smith SJ, Sharon Collins, John Fitzgerald, Sandra Tsui, Mary O’Connor, Sister Anna Ventura rsm, Domenico Cioffi, Joyce Paton

##### Recently Deceased

Joan Saunders ( Mother of Bishop Saunders), Sam Goddard, Brad Falconer, Linina Berg, Raymond Slobodniuk

##### Anniversaries

Kevin Smith (Brother of Fr Cecil Smith SJ)

# Conversations

## Volunteering: Gerroa Jack's irreplaceable gift

Andrew Hamilton SJ | Reprinted from Eureka Street with permission

Early in January I was fortunate enough to have lazy time by the sea, gazing out over a family beach and reading at leisure the daily newspapers. I had been musing the importance of unrecognised volunteers to the beach ecology when I came across a provoking article on volunteering.

The core of the argument was that as a way of helping communities, volunteering is inefficient, often harmful in its effects. It undercuts paid work and lets governments off the hook. Charitable organisations help perpetuate the conditions they were founded to eradicate. The conclusion was that the time spent in volunteering would better be devoted upstream to persuade governments and corporations to change policies or programs for the better.



My first response to this argument was one of qualified agreement. It is necessary to hold governments responsible for the common good of society, and particularly for the welfare of the poorest and most vulnerable. It is wrong for governments to shift to community organisations the cost of supporting the mentally ill, people seeking asylum and the unemployed. It is also essential to propose and advocate to the government policies that accept its responsibility and discharges it effectively.

In fact many charitable bodies have policy and media sections that carry out this role. But governments usually resist accepting their own responsibilities and often try to muzzle charitable agencies that criticise their policies. Corporates are also reluctant to criticise governments on issues marginal to them, particularly when they stand to lose money by change.

In these circumstances working upstream effectively is not easy, particularly for the vulnerable. It will be arduous, conflictual, and must deal with the economic mechanisms that divert wealth from the needs of the community to the already wealthy. And it needs to be based in grass roots experience.

The article is also right to adduce instances of counterproductive volunteering. But most of these can be addressed by reforming the programs. It may be daft for volunteers to help schools better serve children by running fairs that sell sugar-rich sweets and drinks. But there is no need to cut out the fairs — simply cut out the sugar.

My time at the beach left me with an altogether deeper appreciation of the place of volunteers. Walking along the beach very early each morning I used to meet Jack, who lived some distance away. He walks up and down the beach gathering plastic, glass and paper into plastic bags, which he puts into the roadside bins. He chats with other early risers, and before he leaves he measures the water temperature and writes it on the sand. Further up the beach that stretches for ten kilometres or so, other people, mostly retired like Jack, also do their bit to keep the beach clean.

"The service Jack offers is a gift, and is valued as such by the people who use the beach. He brings together people who chat with him and who look for the writing on the sand before it is obliterated by the tide."

It is tempting to say that Jack and his mates should cease from their work and press the local council or state government to take responsibility for cleaning the beach, so obviating the need for volunteers. The council does indeed provide and empty rubbish bins at various entry points to the beach.

But imagine what might be lost. In the first place there is a quality of care. It is hard to imagine a paid employee with the same passion for detail arriving at the beach at 6am each day of the week. It is harder still to imagine any council ever making the necessary expenditure on a single beach a high priority.

But more the quality of service would be lost. The deepest value of volunteering lies in the relationships that it fosters. The service Jack offers is a gift, and is valued as such by the people who use the beach. He brings together people who chat with him and who look for the writing on the sand before it is obliterated by the tide. Out of people's interactions with him come a deeper awareness of the fragility of the beach, a more attentive care for it and a deeper sense of the gift that beach and people are to the community.

Then, too, there is the evident happiness that his voluntary work gives to Jack and the pride that he takes in his work. His work does not replace the responsibilities of the local council; his cooperation with it makes personal the relationship between council and users of the beach.

What is true of Jack's gift is true of other volunteers. The deepest value of the work of the Vinnies volunteers, with whom I am most familiar, lies in the local and sustained relationships established with the people whom they visit. Their gift is less the food or the voucher they bring than the presence, the respect and the listening to the stories people tell. Those relationships and the wisdom that comes from them are a gift to society and ground the advocacy for better policy that the Vinnies make. Volunteers are irreplaceable.