

**READINGS AND REFLECTION
FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS**

<http://cms.usccb.org/bible/readings/092720.cfm>

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF REVELATION 7: 2-4, 9-14

I, John, saw another angel come up from the East,
holding the seal of the living God.
He cried out in a loud voice to the four angels
who were given power to damage the land and the sea,
“Do not damage the land or the sea or the trees
until we put the seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.”
I heard the number of those who had been marked with the seal,
one hundred and forty-four thousand marked
from every tribe of the children of Israel.

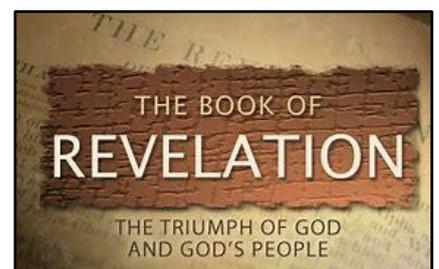
After this I had a vision of a great multitude which no one could count,
from every nation, race, people, and tongue.
They stood before the throne and before the Lamb,
wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands.
They cried out in a loud voice:
“Salvation comes from our God, who is seated on the throne,
and from the Lamb.”

All the angels stood around the throne
and around the elders and the four living creatures.
They prostrated themselves before the throne,
worshiped God, and exclaimed:

“Amen. Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving,
honour, power, and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

Then one of the elders spoke up and said to me,
“Who are these wearing white robes, and where did they come from?”
I said to him, “My lord, you are the one who knows.”
He said to me,
“These are the ones who have survived the time of
great distress;
they have washed their robes
and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.”

The Word of the Lord.



RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 24:1-6

The LORD's are the earth and its fullness;
the world and those who dwell in it.
For he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers.

LORD, THIS IS THE PEOPLE THAT LONGS TO SEE YOUR FACE.

Who can ascend the mountain of the LORD?
or who may stand in his holy place?
One whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean,
who desires not what is vain.

LORD, THIS IS THE PEOPLE THAT LONGS TO SEE YOUR FACE.

He shall receive a blessing from the LORD,
a reward from God his savior.
Such is the race that seeks him,
that seeks the face of the God of Jacob.

LORD, THIS IS THE PEOPLE THAT LONGS TO SEE YOUR FACE.

A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF ST JOHN 3: 1-3

Beloved:

See what love the Father has bestowed on us
that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are.

The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Beloved, we are God's children now;
what we shall be has not yet been revealed.

We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him,
for we shall see him as he is.

Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure,
as he is pure.

The Word of the Lord.



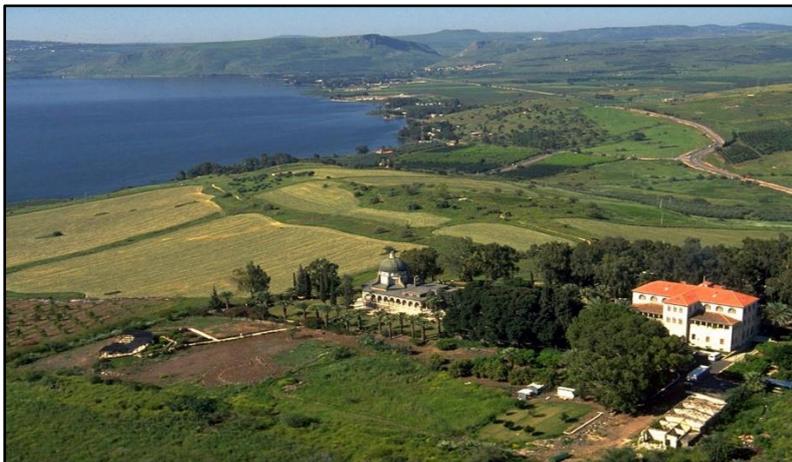
Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened,
and I will give you rest, says the Lord. Matthew 11:28

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the land.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the clean of heart
for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you
and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me.
Rejoice and be glad,
for your reward will be great in heaven.”

The Gospel of the Lord.



The Sea of Galilee
Mount of the Beatitudes

REFLECTION

Today we reprint Archbishop Coleridge's Foreward of the Bishops' 2020 Social Justice Statement for you to revise key ideas. Please Google *Social Justice Statement 2020*.

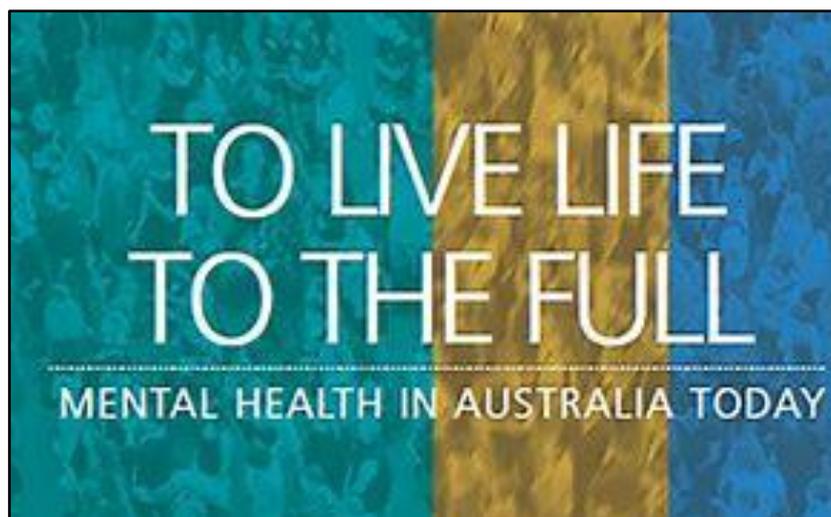
COVID-19 has pressured people's mental health in ways, seen and unseen. People – workers, businesses, people isolated, those suffering family strife or in care - have been at high risk. Decision-makers have had to balance care for public health, social connection, the economy and other essential activities, including worship.

Mental health may be a problem for us some time in our lives. People of any age or socioeconomic background can be unwell. They are not 'other' people; they are 'us'. The Bishops encourage faith communities, governments and all of us, to make mental health a priority.

Mental ill-health is not a moral failure, a lack of faith, or weakness in will. Jesus was labelled mad (Mark 3:21; John 10:19). He suffered psychological distress (Luke 22:44; Matt 26:37; Mark 14:33; John 12:27).

Gaps in the system need to be addressed. Vulnerable and disadvantaged people are at greater risk of falling through gaps in the system. We thank the staff and volunteers of Catholic organizations who can support you.

A commitment to the common good means attending to the good of all of us, including the overlooked, sidelined or excluded. It is time for us to make mental health a real priority, so that all people may know the fullness of life which Jesus offers (John 10:10).



REFLECTION

Throughout the next weeks, sections of the Australian Bishops Social Justice Statement 2020-21, released 19 August, 2020, will be printed for your appreciation.

The Statement reflected on ***MENTAL HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA TODAY***

Today, please read key ideas from the *Foreward* by Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane
President, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

COVID-19 pandemic is a threat in many ways – physical, social, political and economic. It is putting pressure on the mental health of many people in ways both seen and unseen.

Those who are at high risk, and those who love them, may be especially anxious. The loss of jobs and income from businesses, together with underemployment and insecure work, place enormous pressure on people trying to provide for themselves and their families.

Isolation has been difficult for many, and dangerous for people suffering family strife and domestic violence. Decision-makers are balancing care for both public health and safety and for social connection, the economy and other essential activities, including worship.

Many of us will experience a mental health problem at some time in our lives – and this may well be the time. In this Statement, the Bishops encourage faith communities, governments and each one of us, to make mental health a priority.

We want to say clearly that mental ill-health is not a moral failure, the result of a lack of faith, or of weak will. Jesus himself was labelled mad (Mark 3:21; John 10:19) and, like us, he suffered psychological distress (Luke 22:44; Matt 26:37; Mark 14:33; John 12:27). **People experiencing mental ill-health are not some ‘other’ people, they are ‘us’.**

People are suffering mental ill-health – and they can be of any age or socioeconomic background. Whoever and whatever they are, they need our understanding and support.

We commend the mental health support provided by volunteers and staff of Catholic organisations, hospitals, schools, and community health services, and we encourage you to reach out to them if you or your loved ones need support.

Gaps in the mental health system need to be addressed. **Social determinants including poverty, living conditions, and personal security are significant contributors to mental ill-health.** People who are vulnerable or disadvantaged are at greater risk of ill-health and of falling through gaps in the system.

A call during this pandemic has been “we are all in this together”. The quality of our care for the most vulnerable or disadvantaged will be the test of whether or not this is true.

A commitment to the common good means attending to the good of all of us, without exception. It means paying special attention to those who are most often overlooked, sidelined or excluded. It is surely time for us to make mental health a real priority, so that all people may know the fullness of life which Jesus offers (John 10:10).

<https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/2020/07/03/social-justice-statement-2020-21/>

What does your mental health mean to you?

- ♣ Mental health is about our capacity to participate in the fullness of life to which Jesus invites us.
- ♣ We need the bonds of family, friends and the broader community; we need the economic means to live well and plan for the future; we need culture to make sense of the world; we need connection and relationship with God to flourish.

The Mental Health of our People and Communities

- ♣ Just under a quarter of the population are at risk of experiencing a mental illness.
- ♣ Though much more visible in our health care system, there is still a stigma attached to those who are living with mental ill-health.
- ♣ Young people: Mental illness typically emerges in adolescence and early adulthood; three quarters of people develop ill-health first experience its symptoms before the age of 25. Of the 3,000 people sadly lost to suicide each year, young people aged 15-24 years of age are most vulnerable.
- ♣ Older people: Older Australians have the best mental health across the lifespan; despite this, the experience of social isolation can cause depression; grief for deceased spouses, loss of independence and change can increase distress; people aged over 75 receive some of the lowest levels of mental health care.
- ♣ Family life: Many social stresses can have an impact on family life. These include increasing demands of work, economic hardship, relationship difficulty, mental and emotional impact of separation and divorce, and domestic violence.
- ♣ Communities and crises: In the space of one-year, Australians have faced tumultuous upheavals, unprecedented in our times. These include prolonged drought (suicide rates in remote communities are 66% higher than major cities), devastating bushfires, and the COVID-19 pandemic which has caused workplaces and churches to close, people to be isolated from others, and a prolonged period of anxiety and fear with no promise of an end. The number of people at risk of mental ill-health has increased during this period.
- ♣ The real cost of mental ill-health: While the economic impact is significant, the real cost of mental illness is felt in the stigma and discrimination experienced by the most vulnerable, which denies a person's human dignity and their membership in the Body of Christ.
- ♣ Members of the Body of Christ: Our parishes, organisations and communities should be places of acceptance, care, and healing, not places of rejection or judgement. Jesus Christ actively draws near to those who are sick, poor, have disabilities, are marginalised or despised. Like Jesus, we need to attend carefully to human frailty, recognise Christ in all people, and welcome and value those who are suffering.

The Great Project of Community Integration

The program of 'deinstitutionalisation' ♣ In the late twentieth century, Australia began closing its mental health hospitals and institutions and reintegrating people into the community.

- ♣ The aim was to foster a supportive community, where mental health was de-stigmatised and social integration and opportunity for advancement were guaranteed.
- ♣ This however relied upon a major redirection of funding from institutions to the development of community services which has never been fully achieved.
- ♣ There is still a severe lack of specialist community mental health services and around the clock care which means many people are falling through the gaps.
- ♣ Catholic organisations have gone a long way to bridging this gap over the years, but still more is needed.
- ♣ The gap has also been filled by informal carers – often family and mostly women who have given much devotion, relationship and care but have often themselves as a result, been subject to high levels of psychological distress. Carers experience clinical levels of depression at a rate over 75% higher than the general population.

♣ Two groups most vulnerable to mental ill-health are the homeless and those in prison. These are the ones most likely to fall through the system.

Caring for the whole person-in-community

♣ Suffering from mental ill-health is not a sign of lack of faith or weak will. Jesus himself suffered psychological distress (Luke 22:44; Matthew 26:37; Mark 14:33; John 12:27). In the Old Testament some great figures also suffered in this way such as Elijah, Naomi, and Ruth.

♣ A holistic approach is often needed because human beings are a unity of body, mind, and spirit, we are persons-in-community. People experiencing mental ill-health need to be accompanied in their experience. In so doing we will notice the action of God in their lives and learn what they have to teach us. The well, the sick and the suffering are all called to be witnesses in their own way.

We are all in this together

♣ As the COVID-19 pandemic has made painfully clear, we are one human family.

♣ The test of our society's commitment to the common good is the care we show for the people who are most vulnerable or disadvantaged.

♣ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities continue to be over-represented in disadvantage including lower life expectancy, poverty, imprisonment, and ill-health, both physical and mental.

♣ Refugees and asylum seekers are especially at risk of mental ill-health and demand a more humane and compassionate response from the Australian community.

Moving forward as Church and as a Society

♣ Poverty, discrimination, trauma, and violence frequently result in or contribute to mental ill-health.

♣ The leaders of the Church say sorry for the failings to protect and care for children and vulnerable adults through the trauma of sexual abuse, and the treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and commit to share in the responsibility to address these situations.

♣ Together as a Church we commit to building up structures that might better mediate God's grace as part of our mission to transform the world.

Called to Live Life to the Full

♣ It is through connection with God, and the quality of relationship into which this calls us, that we will experience the fullness of life in body, mind, and spirit, both personally and communally.

♣ We are called to restore the Body of Christ by making mental health a key priority, acknowledging and including people living with mental ill-health within our communion and the heart of Australian society.

"Whoever suffers from mental illness always bears God's image and likeness in themselves, as does every human being. In addition, they always have the inalienable right not only to be considered as an image of God and therefore as a person, but also to be treated as such."