

Let us remember in our prayers ...

Recently deceased: Noel Garry, Dorothy Gugich, Tony Rennick

Anniversaries: Domenica Cannavo, Paul Carmen, Brendan Jarvis

Sick: Chris Lee, Rob Ferreira, Graham Bessell-Browne, Con Schneider

HAPPINESS HAS BECOME AN INDUSTRY THAT IS SELLING ALL OF US A LIE by Richard Leonard SJ

Barry Larkin committed suicide in 1995. No one in his family or among his friends knew he was chronically depressed. His son, Gavin, was so shocked by his much-loved father’s death that it eventually led him to co-found the R U O K? movement.

On the second Thursday in September, Australians are encouraged to contact someone they know who might be going through a difficult patch and ask: “Are you OK?” The simplicity of the challenge combined with the complexity of our contemporary mental health culture has struck a chord. R U O K? has taken off, and not just on one day of the year.

Last year, as the promotion for the campaign ramped up, I called two friends, both aged under 30, who I knew were struggling, one with a bitter divorce, the other with ill health. The friend battling cancer was in better spirits and had good family support. Within seconds of asking my friend going through a difficult divorce if he was OK, he burst into tears and sobbed. Only the thought of leaving his children fatherless was stopping him from ending his life. Although it wasn’t a bad start, my friend needed more than a phone call. He needed a lot of help.

It is a shocking reality that the greatest cause of death in young people under 30 in the developed world is not the abuse of drugs or alcohol or misadventure, but suicide. Young adults living in the countries with the highest standards of living and with the greatest educational opportunities, in theory, should have the most to live for. Yet, in a generation that is sometimes described as the most socially connected ever, the feeling of isolation appears like a pandemic. Many contemporary young people are *not* OK.

The reasons for this poor state of mental health, the increase in suicide (or ‘self-delivery’, as suicide is now sometimes called) and attempted suicide, are many and complex. However, as Hugh Mackay argues in *The Good Life*, happiness has become an industry that is selling all of us a lie.

“I don’t mind people being happy – but the idea that everything we do is part of the pursuit of happiness seems to me a really dangerous idea and has led to a contemporary disease in Western society, which is fear of sadness,” Mackay writes. “We’re kind of teaching our kids that happiness is the default position – it’s rubbish. Wholeness is what we ought to be striving for and part of that is sadness, disappointment, frustration, failure; all of those things which make us who we are ... I’d like just for a year to have a moratorium on the word ‘happiness’ and to replace it with the word ‘wholeness’.”

Mackay is not on his own. I have lost count of the number of parents who tell me: “I don’t care what my kids do, as long as they’re happy.” Although it may be just a casual throwaway line, it is symptom of a deeper anxiety. Why are we setting our children up for such failure? Why don’t Christian parents say: “I want my children to be faithful, hopeful, loving, just and good.” Living those virtues will not always lead to happiness – but it will bring something more valuable and precious. Joy.

Joy is one of the great themes in the teaching of Pope Francis. Christian joy is not the same as happiness. Christian joy celebrates that we know where we have come from, why we are here and where we are going. It moves away from trying to find the easy side of life to confronting the inevitable tough moments in our lives, and to embracing suffering as an inescapable reality of the human condition. It seeks to be resilient in the face of adversity by embodying Jesus’ call to love God and our neighbour as we love ourselves. And it tells us that we are not meant to live isolated lives like “rocks and islands”, as the Simon and Garfunkel song has it. There was a good reason why Jesus sent the disciples out in twos.

Gavin Larkin’s wife, Maryanne, found out how tragic and unhappy life can truly be. Gavin died of lymphoma at the age of 42 in 2011, 16 years after his father’s suicide. Their son, Gus, died from brain cancer at the age of 15 in 2013. I hope people call Maryanne to ask her if she is OK.

We need to do the same for someone we know who may be struggling, especially if he or she is young, because so many young people have been sold a lie. Now that life is not as happy as they were promised it would be, some find they have no hope for the future.

Living Christian joy is not easy or straightforward. But setting out on this path might be the way to be more than OK.

MASS TIMES	
Monday	5.30pm
Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday	9am
Friday	7am
Saturday Reconciliation	5.15 - 5.45pm
Saturday Vigil	6pm
Sunday	8am, 10am, 6pm

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JANUARY WEEKDAY MASSES

15-19 January		
Mon 15	5.30pm	
Tues 16	9am	
Wed 17	9am	St Anthony, Abbot, <i>Memorial</i>
Thurs 18	9am	
Fri 19	7am	

22-26 January		
Mon 22	5.30pm	
Tues 23	9am	
Wed 24	9am	St Francis de Sales, Bishop, Doctor, <i>Memorial</i>
Thurs 25	9am	Conversion of St Paul, Apostle, <i>Feast</i>
Fri 26	9am	Australia Day

WELCOME
We welcome Most Reverend Monsignor Harry Entwistle PA, Father Stephen Ochola and Father Tung Vu to celebrate our weekend Masses with us.

ADVANCE NOTICE ... AUSTRALIA DAY
On Friday 26 January, there will be no 7am Mass. Mass will be at 9am – the only Mass in our church on that day.

FROM THE LITURGY TEAM
The Christmas Manger, you will notice, is still with us. This is to honour the 800-year-old custom introduced by St Francis of Assisi, of leaving the Manger for the full 40-day cycle between the Birth of Jesus on 25 December and the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple on 2 February. While our lives go back to usual routines and the summer vacation draws to a close, we are reminded that for the Faithful, there's another cycle-of-life going on ... that the story of God-With-Us in Jesus, continues to grow, to develop quietly within us in often hidden ways.
The next part of the liturgical cycle is **Lent** and it is almost upon us.
In preparation for the beginning of Lent - Ash Wednesday (14 February) - we invite all parishioners **to return your Palm Sunday crosses and palms next weekend (Saturday 20 January/Sunday 21 January)**. Please leave your old palms in the marked baskets in the front foyer. After the 6pm Mass you might like to join us out on the Piazza when we will use the Church's ancient ritual to burn the palms, turning them into the ashes which will be used to mark our foreheads on Ash Wednesday. It's a simple reminder, though a stark one, that through our weaknesses, our sin and our human shortcomings, the alleluias of one year very easily turn into the dust of the next. That is the underlying reality when we hear the Celebrant's challenge at the steps of the sanctuary: “Remember that you are dust and unto dust you shall return - turn away from sin and believe the Gospel.”

CENTRE FOR FAITH ENRICHMENT
Term One Daytime Program

- **Exploring Faith:** 10am, Wednesdays, 14 February - 4 April
- **A Journey Through the Gospel of Matthew:** 10am, Fridays, 16 February - 23 March
- **Walking the Way of the Cross:** 10am, Tuesdays, 20 February - 27 March
- **An Introduction to the Sacraments and Spiritual Life:** 10am, Thursdays, 1 March – 5 April

Lenten Sessions

- **Rediscovering the meaning of Baptism and Confirmation:** 9.30am-12.30pm, Thursday 15 Feb with Fr Vincent Glynn
- **Initiated and Sent: How Sacraments Transform Us:** 7 -9pm, Wednesday 14 March with Fr Greg Donovan

For further information, visit cfe@perthcatholic.org.au.

DIGITAL DISPLAY: ILLUMINATING THE WORLD OF THE ROTHSCHILD PRAYER BOOK
The Nook at the State Theatre of Western Australia **9am-5pm, 24 January – 25 February 2018**
Discover the secrets of the Rothschild Prayer Book, one of the world’s most important medieval illuminated manuscripts. The illuminations are presented page by page using the most detailed digital reproduction techniques. Accompanying the interactive digital display will be a showcase of handmade books and printed publications, with several very early printed bibles from the State Library’s collection. Proudly presented in partnership with the Kerry Stokes Collection. Free exhibition.
For more information visit: www.slwa.wa.gov.au.

PARISH DIARY		
Sunday 14 January	11.15am 11.45am	Sunday, Week 2 in Ordinary Time Baptism: <i>Ruby Podwinski</i> Baptism: <i>Sarah Corrigan</i> <i>Father Tung Vu</i> <i>Father Tung Vu</i>
Monday 15	5.30pm	Monday, Week 2 in Ordinary Time Mass
Tuesday 16	9am 6pm	Tuesday, Week 2 in Ordinary Time Communion Service Upper Room: <i>St Vincent de Paul Meeting</i>
Wednesday 17	9am 5.30pm	St Anthony, Abbott, Memorial Communion Service Tribune Chapel: <i>Centering Prayer</i>
Thursday 18	9am	Thursday, Week 2 in Ordinary Time Mass
Friday 19	7am	Friday, Week 2 in Ordinary Time Mass
Saturday 20	5.15pm 6pm	St Fabian and St Sebastian, Memorial Reconciliation Vigil Mass