

**Homily**  
**29<sup>th</sup> Sunday OT - B**

Rev. Peter G. Jankowski  
October 16-17, 2021

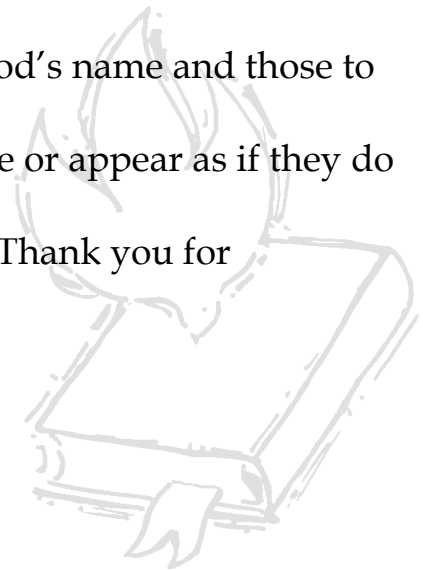
Is 53: 10-11  
Ps 33: 4-5, 18-19, 20, 22  
Heb 4: 14-16  
Mk 10: 35-45

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*I have come not to be served, but to serve and to give my life a ransom for many. – Mark 10: 45*

I really love that passage because in my way of thinking and why my way of ministry, I realize that until I humble myself and take care of all of you, I have no business to be up here. Christian service is not about cocktail parties; it is not about climbing the ladder. Christian service is not aspiring to greater things. Christian service is about lowering myself to say that you are more important than I am, in the same way that Christ does for me.

To be honest, I have no idea how the grace works or who is affected by it. Sometimes I pour out whatever I can in God's name and those to whom I minister either do not seem appreciative or appear as if they do not care. Sometimes you hear people that say, "Thank you for



celebrating the Masses” or “Thank you for this homily.” Many folks in the parish and online have thanked me for the Gilligan’s Island homily and how the characters from the show parallel the seven capital sins. I very much appreciate that those who pay attention grasp on to the metaphors I present in God’s name because if someone can remember the image of what I am preaching and the message it conveys, then I was able to take the gospel message and apply it to something that’s accessible.

In my twenty-five years of ministry, I have been blessed that God has afforded me the opportunities to offer this ministry through every continent except Antarctica to serve in the name of the Lord. I have visited the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, Russia. I have swum with the stingrays in the Caribbean. I have visited Sea Otters in South America. In the Online Mass I celebrated, I wore a chasuble given to me by Holy Land Pilgrims. My Holy Land trip in December was canceled because Israel has a seven-day quarantine for anyone entering the country; with

a twelve-day trip we originally scheduled, there was no way we were going spend over half of it segregated from the world.

Last week, I did not expect to get a letter from a certain part of the world that I have visited more than once and had really affected me. Last week, I received an email from a woman who has been watching these liturgies across the world, in, all places... **MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA!** I have been privileged to minister both in Melbourne, Sydney and even in New Zealand throughout my travels. Some years back I was with Bishop Roger Kaffer and I was helping him at World Youth Day in 2008. At the time, Bishop Kaffer was not doing so well. He was suffering from many ailments and this trip turned out to be his last sojourn in ministry before he was institutionalized.

During this trip, I literally had to carry him and push him in wheelchairs everywhere we went. There was one time when we were in Auckland, New Zealand where we were going up a lift at the airport. I was trying to push Bishop Kaffer and negotiate our luggage when I placed the good bishop outside the lift to collect our things. As I was

going to get our luggage, I realized that I forgot to lock the bishop's wheelchair, which I placed on a steep incline. It was at this moment that I moved the fastest in my life to save the auxiliary Bishop of the Joliet Diocese, before word got back to the ordinary of what I had done.

Sydney is a wonderful place. Melbourne is a wonderful place. The Australian opera house to the Aborigine people to throwing boomerangs and visiting the kangaroos and koalas in Australia was a wonderful experience for me because it was something I had not experienced before.

On this trip, Cardinal George Pell gave all of us a stole with the Southern cross on it. Those are little stars in the sky that very much are associated with the country of Australia, I gift which I have in my possession some thirteen years later. I feel for Cardinal Pell - unjustly accused of sexual abuse, the good cardinal spent time in prison before he was exonerated and released. Whenever I wear this stole, I often pray for Cardinal Pell and his health.

So this particular individual decided to write me a letter, from Melbourne, Australia. I guess Mary was surfing the internet and all of a sudden she came upon the Online Masses I celebrate, so she decided to write me the following letter for which I am exceedingly grateful. She wrote...

Father Pete

Thank you for your online Masses.

I am from a rural part 50 km (about 30 miles) NNE of Melbourne, Australia. We live on 11 acres that I am trying to turn into a big garden. Melbourne is now the most locked down city in the world . This has included little 'in person' church attendance for the best part of two years.

I accidentally found your masses in early 2020 and have been 'attending' ever since. This was a happy mistake when I tried to find our local services on a Saturday, when I thought it was Sunday. Of course there were none of our 'live' services but my googling happened upon yours.

I belong to the "Christ the Light" parish, which takes in the small cities of Mernda, Whittlesea and the very rural Kinglake. We brought up our children in the potato growing district around Kinglake.

When we moved to 'the big smoke' (about 1,000 in Mernda1996) the church was a small 'bluestone' church. (bluestone is sometimes called Basalt). The church held about 80 people and so this was a very close

community. The church was built by workers from the local Yan Yean reservoir being constructed in the 1800s. Workers of all faiths used their day off to build it.

We have good friends in the USA, in Pocatello and Reno. Next time we are allowed to travel we will swing by your place as part of our trip.

*Note: You are always welcome to the border town parishes, Southwest of Chicago.*

This whole time locked in our homes. (well, to be honest I spend five hours a day in the garden) We missed our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in 2020. We were in lock down again for the 51<sup>st</sup>. In the meantime, our parish priest (Fr. Martin Ashe) has been elevated to Auxiliary Bishop ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzBB11\\_L16I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzBB11_L16I))

*By the way, at the parishes I serve on the first Sunday of each month, we honor those couples who celebrate wedding anniversaries. And if you have a milestone wedding anniversary, there is a website that the Vatican offers where you can acquire a papal blessing in honor, of those momentous occasions, 10 years, twenty-five, fifty, sixty or even the first day of your marriage; we very much want to offer that to the people of my area. To acquire a papal blessing, you can go to the link <https://www.elemosineria.va/papal-blessing-parchments/>.*

*The letter continues...*

Your Mums Meatloaf is like my chocolate cake. The kids ask, “what’s hidden in it?” as I include Zucchini, Pumpkin and sometimes Beetroot in addition to the walnuts. Makes it moist and healthy!

The beetroot version is the most requested at the Squash club. The cake I actually like most is the Genoa cake I make with lots of pumpkin. The latest experiment is pumpkin ice cream. While the flavour is terrific I am not happy with the texture yet as it freezes too hard to serve easily. The wide use of pumpkin (outside roast dinners) including Pumpkin Paste and pumpkin and ginger jam which tastes like apricot jam means we grow heaps each year and keep most of the neighbours well fed for the 8 months or so that our Jarrahdale pumpkins last.

*By the way, what is with pumpkin, everything in this country, we have stores that want to do pumpkin, your lotto, pumpkin coffee, pumpkin spice. I like it when they do the bacon, you know, like bacon pancakes, bacon desserts, bacon, bacon, bacon, who does not like bacon. Mary continues...*

Thanks for the Gilligan’s Island story. That got a good laugh here. My 95-year-old friend missed the point as they did not have TV until the late 70s, but the discussion of deadly sins brought back memories.

*By the way that Australians are watching Gilligan's art island is a sad testimony to all of us who enjoyed bad television in the sixties and seventies.*

Thanks again for your sermons. As the Bishop stole our priest and the online service is very late in the morning you have become my temporary parish priest. Online Masses have made me realise how important the sermon is. Your sermons with practical application appeal to me. I think this may be because you are talking to a rural audience, or perhaps just talent.

*By the way, Christ talked to a rural audience as well. Most of his analogies and his parables are agricultural nature based on the community to which he was serving.*

I also like the fact you can pause and look up a reference during an online sermon. This Sunday there will be at least one Aussie sitting in your congregation.

Mary Davey  
Doreen, Victoria, Australia

Now, what was interesting is when I mentioned this to a few of my colleagues, to a few of the people I serve, I actually received a response



from someone whose daughter is actually in this quarantine in  
Australia. This person wrote me back. Her name is Marisue...

Father,

This is an amazing letter . We have been aware of the unbelievable strictness in Australia as we have not seen Natalya for two years . She went to Sydney (December 2019) to take post-undergrad work in marketing. She completed and started a contract job with the idea of returning to visit in June 2020 and move home in December 2020. Well, she has not been able to leave and as well has met someone serious... who is actually not from AU but is English (from Island of Jersey, in the English Channel). IF LOCKDOWN IS LIFTED, she will come home in December and will see Christiana & Steve's new baby and Evalina again. Our granddaughter is two now and the new baby is due November 19<sup>th</sup>. Hopefully Sam will join and we will meet him . It's BEEN SO HARD for the AU CITIZENS. You are a gift to soooooo many. Have a wonderful day! - sending hugs, Marisue

In the world of ministry, you never know who you affect. You never realize the people who often need the prayers; there are always folks that are seeking God's love. Last week, I had the honor of visiting parishioner Rick Preston who was caring for his wife, Carol, in the hospital (she has since been released). From her bedside, Rick was able to get all kinds of sponsors to help at the parish. The sister of Fr. Dennis Settles (a priest who died a few years ago) asked me to visit her for a confession so that she could be good with God. So many folks in our

area have called me and have written me and asked me for prayers... and their response has been absolutely spectacular.

I received this letter in the mail last week from a woman who also has been watching these online Masses. And to be honest, this particular individual has been so, so generous to the communities I serve that I am deeply indebted to her. I just want to read a little bit of what she had to write...

I just want to let you know that I have read your email that you sent. I'm grateful. You have invested your own resources at both St Anne's and Saint Pat's churches was told some time ago that I'd been Catholic for quite a long time. I do not recollect a pastor being financially involved by contributing his own money towards keeping up the parish.

*I'm going to tell you this. There are a lot of parishes, a lot of pastors who do just that. The attitude that we have is if we invest ourselves with you, that's the gospel from a week or two ago. The woman continued...*

From my perspective, you have contributed to our churches by purchasing a truck used by our maintenance man. That means you have given \$10,000 to St. Anne's and \$10,000 to St. Pats. I didn't know

you had assumed the cost of the songbooks at St. Anne's as well but thank you very much for that.

Look, I get it. We all have talents. We all have gifts. We all have vocations, whatever they are. I go back to St. Paul's admonition to folks like me who want to serve when he writes in Colossians 3: 17...

"Whatever you do and word and in work, do it in the name of the Lord. Jesus." Whatever our vocation is, whatever *my* vocation is, may we all be guided by the Holy Spirit to do good work in God's name. Let us give ourselves to other in Christian service, because by doing so, it is then we live the gospel message.

I will do what I can for you keep doing what you can for each other. Pray for the folks who are locked up in Australia; pray for the folks in the Holy Land who are suffering. Pray for the folks around the world who are not recognized and certainly need the prayers both at home, away, and here at the online Mass. Please know that I'm praying for you and that I will do the best I can to bring God's grace to the people that I meet. This is our prayer.