

In last Sunday's homily, Jesus fed five thousand men from the five barley loaves and two fish which the disciples procured from a boy vendor. In this Sunday's gospel, Jesus refers to himself as the "bread of God ... which ... gives life to the world". This is the only food that ultimately satisfies our hunger for the God from whom we come and to whom we are going. This hunger is an inter-personal hunger which only the Person of Jesus Christ can satisfy.

The principal way in which we satisfy this core human hunger in this life is through the word and sacrament of this same Jesus Christ. Last week I quoted Pope Benedict's reference to the Sacramentality of the word of God, by which he means Jesus Christ's presence not only in the Blessed Sacrament, but also in the words of Sacred Scripture. Yes, God comes to us in word and sacrament through the living Word who is the Son of God and Jesus of Nazareth, that unique Person who is fully divine, but also fully human, sharing completely in our shared human nature.

Jesus declares elsewhere in John's gospel: "I am the way, the TRUTH and the LIFE!"

It is clear that the legislative changes for which our Seat of Sydney representative in state parliament, Alexander Greenwich, has agitated in recent years are in profound opposition to this Life and the Truth which is personified in Jesus Christ Son of God. I am referring to Mr Greenwich's political endeavours relating to the critical life issues of abortion, euthanasia and so-called marriage "equality". These changes, or proposed changes in the case of the euthanasia draft bill currently before the NSW parliament, strike at the very core of civilised society in the domains of births, deaths and marriages. Just what is Mr Greenwich's motivation for defying divine natural law in these matters God only knows. What is certain is that Mr Greenwich, like all of us, will one day have to give an account for his behaviour in a far, far greater jurisdiction than the NSW Legislative Assembly, i.e. the Kingdom of God.

There is no denying Mr Greenwich's political and strategical acumen concerning these changes to state and federal law with respect to abortion, assisted suicide (also known by the deceitful term "assisted dying") and same sex "marriage". For those who are already calling me "judgemental", it is one thing to sin by breaking the divine natural law, as we all do from time to time, and quite another to chronically oppose that same divine law and encourage others to do likewise. It would be worse still to even oblige people by force of law to co-operate in defying divine natural law. We are not speaking here only of Catholic Church laws but of natural law which obliges everyone, since it is written by the Creator into the very human nature in which we ALL share. Of course, some contemporary opinion leaders hate to see or hear the word "nature", denying that there is really any such thing as one human nature in which we all share as unique persons; but in that denial lies the way to madness.

That said, when Catholics who claim to be "pro-life", focus exclusively on the issues of abortion and euthanasia, even though they are the most important and fundamental life issues, they begin their campaigning on these fundamental issues from a barely credible base. When was the last time they also championed life issues across the board: stressed the critical importance

of the core Catholic moral teaching which is Catholic Social Teaching to help ensure that all people don't just barely stay alive, but have a decent life, enjoy justice in the workplace, a proper universal health system, clean water and clean air to breathe for heaven's sake (and relief from human causation in the ongoing destruction of our common environment and climate). It is absolutely true that if the state will not protect the right to life of innocent children in the womb and of the elderly, then all other human rights are put at risk. However, our championing of these most fundamental of human rights must extend to the whole continuum of basic human rights if we are to have any credibility in the wider society and the electorate. The whole continuum of human rights and duties is addressed in the papal social encyclicals, a body of doctrine which is addressed by the popes to the whole world as a precious gift for the right ordering of all societies. Saint Pope John Paul II insisted on multiple occasions that this teaching is also core Catholic moral teaching, not an optional extra. These social teachings are also right to LIFE matters. Conversely, other Catholics who champion other aspects of natural justice, but won't say "boo" about the taking of innocent human life at its beginning or end, mirror the exclusivity of those mentioned above and betray the integrity of the whole corpus of the Catholic moral/social teaching. To be an orthodox Catholic, to be true to the whole word of God, is to accept and appropriately announce the whole spectrum of Catholic moral teaching, including Catholic papal social teaching.

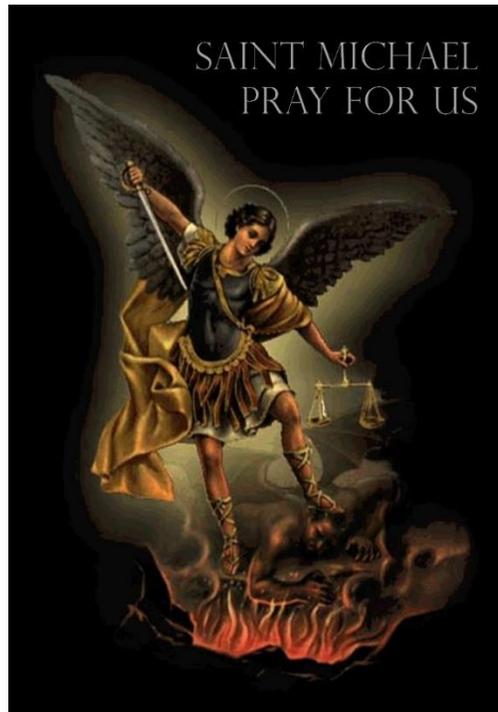
Both as revelatory Word of God and as Eucharist Jesus is for us the "Bread of Life". In the bestowing on Saint Peter the Office of the Keys, the so-called Petrine Office, which is symbolised in so many ways at Saint Peter's Church Surry Hills, Christ bestows on his Church not only the duty to "bind and unbind" Church law, but to clarify and define for the whole world, with the Light of Christ, the divine natural law, which is inscribed in the hearts and minds of all, albeit some have been blessed with a much clearer formation in this regard than others. Foremost among these natural laws is that nobody, under any circumstances, has the right to take the life of an innocent human person, from conception in their mother's womb until old age and death.

Therefore, if you have not done so already, I urge you, reiterating Archbishop Fisher's plea, to do two things:

- 1) to take literally a few seconds to use the link attached to the Bulletin and register your name on the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney petition to the NSW parliament, and
- 2) to take a few minutes to email your NSW Legislative Assembly representative to record your opposition to Mr. Greenwich's bill

In the end, most contemporary politicians only think in terms of numbers, so we need to show that there are enough concerned people to tip an election result in a particular seat or for a whole government.

In Saint Peter's Church, we have recently lit up the Saint Michael the Archangel stained glass window which looks straight up Devonshire Street towards the Surry Hills Light Rail Station. Please find below the Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel, which Pope Francis exhorts us to pray daily, for the protection of innocent life in the laws of New South Wales.



Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

**St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in the hour of battle.
be our safeguard against the wickedness
and snares of the devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God cast into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen**