

# Nuts and Bolts of Matthew's Gospel

- Matthew's gospel was most likely written between 80 and 85CE.
- It was written by a Jewish Christian scribe who was familiar with the Old Testament prophecies and laws, which are referenced throughout the gospel.
- The author believed that Jesus was the Messiah.
- Matthew's gospel was written for a community based in Antioch, Syria where they were facing persecution from the Romans and also from local Jews. They were living in exile from Jerusalem after the Fall of the Temple.
- The gospel of Matthew is a teaching gospel and contains many lessons for the original community about how to be Church in a new place and how to include people of all different faiths. It is also an encouraging gospel, for those facing identity issues and displacement, elitism, persecution, heresy, and embracing mission.
- Key messages that were important to Matthew's community and also remain relevant for us today, include teachings about forgiveness and care of the poor and vulnerable.



## Key message of Forgiveness

- Forgiveness is an integral part of the Catholic faith and is applied to Church teaching and the way we live our lives in several ways. This key message comes from several key scripture passages in Matthew.
- Matthew's community needed the message of forgiveness as they learnt how to treat all people no matter their background or faith with respect, whilst undergoing prejudice. Like the Antioch Syrian community, we aren't always perfect and occasionally struggle to be kind to all people. The messages of Matthew's gospel are relevant to us when in a situation where we are at odds with someone or a group of people.
- Important passages about forgiveness in Matthew's gospel show us an image of a forgiving and merciful God who loves us unconditionally. However these messages also remind us of our obligation to extend mercy and forgiveness to those who hurt us and to work to make peace in our world.
- Beatitude - Matthew 5:7- Blessed are the merciful for they shall be shown mercy
- Parable of the lost sheep - If a shepherd has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains, and go in search of the one that went astray? - Matthew 18: 10-14
- The Lord's prayer – For if you forgive others their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive, but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. - Matthew 6:14-15

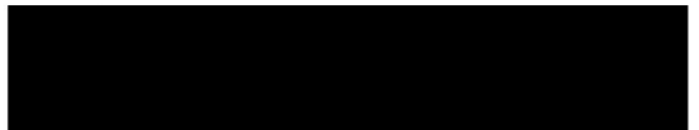
# Forgiveness in Catholicism

- As human beings we often fail to live in ways that are loving and our actions separate us from ourselves, others and God.
- Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, God forgives our sins and welcomes us home in mercy.
- We are making peace and restoring the relationships with those who have been impacted by our poor choices.
- Through this sacrament the Catholic Church asks us to truly express our sorrow in a meaningful way.
- We then have to make reparations for what we have done, resolving to do better in the future, and are free to forgive ourselves and move on.
- We are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year.
- Jesus showed us how to forgive through his teachings displayed in Matthew's Gospel. His teachings are applied to Catholic teaching to follow by example.



## How is the Key Message of forgiveness applied to Catholicism today?

- Meaningful forgiveness is important when someone has been significantly impacted by the actions of another.
- Several Catholic schools have implemented a restorative justice system modelled on Christ's teachings of forgiveness and reconciliation.
- The Code of Ethics for New Zealand Catholic Schools states that 'We endeavour to exercise restorative justice in resolving discipline issues.'
- Restorative justice in schools allows students to meet with those hurt, alongside family and staff. It provides a way of forgiveness, by making the student/s to take responsibility for their actions and work towards repairing their wrongdoings.
- Restorative justice is a meeting between a victim and offender to give victims a voice and helps offenders to recognise the consequences of their actions on other people. It is a way to facilitate forgiveness - a willingness of each party to begin relating to the other under a recognition of what each desires, as opposed to punishing the offender without providing a safe place to .



- [Redacted] uses restorative justice procedure with the belief that forgiveness is an integral part of being a Catholic School every student has the potential to make a mends and build up broken relationships.
- We also see Catholics applying forgiveness to their daily lives, even during life's hardest moments. Father Marcel Uwineza, was only 14 years old when he lost his whole family in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Later in life, he met with the person who killed his family, to forgive them. He describes this as a miracle which set him free.

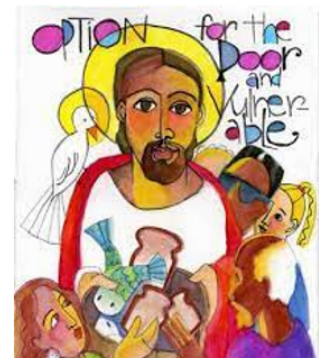
## Key Message of Care for the Poor and Vulnerable in Matthew's Gospel

- Care for the Poor and Vulnerable is at the very heart of Catholicism. Jesus showed great love for the poor. Therefore, as Catholics we are encouraged to apply this key value in our daily lives and support others to do the same. This includes supporting Catholic and non-Catholic organisations dedicated to helping the poor and vulnerable e.g. Caritas, the Mercy Hospice and St Vincent De Paul. This key message comes from several key scripture passages in Matthew.
- Matthew's community needed the key message of Care for the poor and vulnerable as they were a diverse community living in exile. The community likely included the poor, widows, the old and the sick. Like Matthew's community we are encouraged to keep these groups in the forefront of our mind when making decisions.
- Matthew 23: 11-12 - "The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."
- Matthew 5:3 *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- 5:4 *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*
- Matthew 25: 35-36, 40 - For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me ... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me



## Care for the Poor and Vulnerable – Catholic Social Teaching 101 and Papal message

- Catholic Social Teaching provides us with a social commitment to the poor, inspiring us to help enable everyone to share and contribute to society. The Church teaches that we should always consider the impact of our decisions and actions on the poor.
- The tradition and key message of caring for the poor is drawn from Matthew's Gospel through Jesus' own poverty and his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount including the Beatitudes and the [Upside Down Kingdom](#).
- Catholics believe that through the counter cultural values of the [Upside Down Kingdom](#), we must help the poor and vulnerable putting them before others in [anyway](#) we can.
- This could be through support and involvement in organisations who work with the most vulnerable and poor, including Caritas and the Mercy Hospice.
- Pope Francis initiated the World Day of the Poor as a way of putting the spotlight on poverty and the plight of the poor. On November 14th, 2021, the Catholic Church celebrated the first World Day of the Poor. The theme was "The poor you will always have with you" (Mark 14:7). This shows that the Church believes we need to both remember the poor and take practical action to help them.



# How is the Key Message of Care for the Poor and Vulnerable applied to Catholicism today?

- Caritas was formed to care for people who are disadvantaged and living in poverty no matter their religion. Their work is inspired by Catholic Social Teaching, and Scripture. Working in the world's poorest countries, they act upon Jesus' teachings displayed in Matthew's Gospel as the Upside-down Kingdom. As part of the Aotearoa Catholic community we are encouraged to support Caritas through making donations collected by our parish church particularly during the liturgical seasons of Advent and Lent.
- Alongside the Government in Aotearoa, Caritas is working to address issues the poor and vulnerable including migration, housing
- In 2015 they submitted a Support for Children in Hardship Bill which provided an increase to the benefit for families. Children and solo parents are among the most vulnerable in our community, particularly during a national cost of living crisis.
- Caritas is a founding member of the emergency alliance which allows New Zealand donors to help in an International Humanitarian Emergency.
- Through the support of donors, Caritas continues to help the people of Syria since the beginning of Syria's civil war in 2011. They have provided food, shelter, healthcare, counselling and educational support for Syrian refugees. This shows Catholics embracing people of all faiths and help those living in exile and facing strife. This echoes the struggle of Matthew's original community.

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