

‘ICEBERG DEAD AHEAD CAPTAIN’

About a decade ago, we looked on in awed fascination as Leonardo di Caprio went down on the *Titanic*, after hanging onto the stern of the doomed ship and somehow miraculously surviving the enormous undertow that the ship would have created as it went under on its long fall to the bottom. Sinking and sunken ships have always been a source of fascination, currently being directed at the *HMAS Sydney* and the *Centaur*. But nothing equals the *Titanic* as an ongoing fascination trip. Ships sank, or almost sank in Old Testament times, and one nameless vessel contained not Leonardo, but a passenger called Jonah. Jonah is the star of our first reading this weekend. He was not on a pleasure trip on the Mediterranean; he was actually going in the opposite direction to the way God wanted him to go. God had asked him to head east, to Nineveh, to convert the populace there to repentance. Jonah put this in the too hard basket and headed west, on a ship, which threatened to sink in a God created storm. Jonah is unceremoniously chucked overboard, eaten by a fish and regurgitated onto the shore three days later. After that adventure, Jonah wisely decided to do as he was told and went to Nineveh. Unfortunately, those who gave us the readings each Sunday did not include all the excitement of Jonah's pre Nineveh experiences, but simply tell us that he went to Nineveh, told them to repent, and they did. Our Sunday readings might be a bit more interesting if they put more interesting bits in. On the surface –no pun intended–Jonah seemed an unlikely prophet, and God must be a slow learner because he continues to call unlikely leaders as evidenced in the Gospel this weekend where Jesus calls fishermen to form the core of his leadership team.

Maybe God continues to call unlikely leaders in 2009, i.e. you and me. We are like icebergs; most of us are out of sight with only a bit showing above the surface. This fact seemed to have taken care of *RMS Titanic* when it scraped some underwater ice. There is much about ourselves, which lie beneath the surface and therefore is largely unknown to us, even though it is our own selves. God sees all of it, of course, and loves it, and desires to harness our total energy for his Kingdom. We only see a bit of it, and often have a unhealthy sense of unworthiness to be very much use at all in the building of the Kingdom stakes. Maybe, if the virtue of Faith means anything, it is faith in God who sees and loves in us what we cannot see and love within ourselves. Maybe Faith means that I believe that I only see a bit of who I really am, and forge ahead anyway, knowing that I am in a dynamic partnership with a God who sees it all, and who trusts it (us) to do a good job with him in the building up of this Kingdom. We probably won't threaten to sink ships, on the Mediterranean or the Sea of Galilee, but the chances are, that with God at our side, we will help to steer a safe course on our own ship, leading to the port, not only of our own salvation, but the salvation of all who come into the sphere of my newly found confidence as an instrument of God's love.

THANKS

The appeal for the Little King's Movement last week netted \$1,803.80, a great result. Thanks to all who contributed.

VOLUNTEER GUIDES AND WELCOMERS AT ST. STEPHEN'S CATHEDRAL

Are you interested in the history, art works and liturgical space of St. Stephen's Cathedral and Chapel? Would you like to become involved in guiding groups through our beautiful space and/or welcoming visitors at the Cathedral's Welcome Desk? You will meet a variety of international, interstate and local tourists as well as the many school groups who visit our Cathedral every day. This rewarding ministry is seeking additional volunteers. Training courses will be held on Tuesday 17th and Tuesday 24th February 2009 at 10.30 a.m. Further information can be obtained by contacting Carmel at the Cathedral Administration Office on 3336 9112.

LENTEN PROGRAMME BOOKLETS

These are available for \$8 each from the Vinnies stall. One person has put her hand up to lead a group. These will take place at her house on Monday nights in Lent from 7-9 p.m. Please contact Tracey Laing on 3847 2436 if you would like to be part of this group. A sheet will be in the church foyer next weekend onto which people can place their names and contact details should they wish to be part of a group.

WELCOME

Over the past few weeks, three of our East Timorese priests have been in Melbourne studying in order to be more effective teachers of our young Carmelite candidates in East Timor. One of these, Fr. Augusto needs no introduction to us. The other two, another Fr. Augusto and Fr. Manuel are new to us. We will no doubt meet them over the weekend. They are having a break here for a few days on their way back home. So, welcome to Augustox2 and Manuel.

PRAYERS

We continue to pray for Trish Pareezer, Pam Brown, Jim and Clara Lazzarini, Harold Morley, Laurence Joseph Farr, Allan Stewart and Bill Hickey who have died and all who have gone before us. We pray also for those who are ill, especially Steve Clark Ryan, Alan Nightingale, Sebastian Geisler, Tim O'Neill and Tony Ng.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TRAINING DAY

Faith and Life are putting on a training day for people who minister with children and young people, especially in the area of children's liturgy and youth activities. This will take place on **Saturday, February 21st 2009 at ACU McAuley Campus in Banyo, from 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.** Morning tea and lunch is provided. There will be a keynote address by Archbishop Battersby, a choice from 28 workshops and peer networking opportunities. Cost is \$25 per person, to be met by the parish of course and the RSVP is February 6th. Contact www.ycm.org.au or 3336 9168. Please advise the parish office if you are interested in attending this day.