**CONNECTING WITH LIFE: GLOBAL APPLICATION**Overcoming evil with good - the good of love - is a seemingly naïve approach to injustice in our world, yet there are so many powerful examples of people who did exactly this. Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Mother Teresa - the list is long and challenging. There is much evil to be confronted in our world – this goes without saying – and it takes strength and boldness to stand against it. But, as Henri Nouwen said, “If, in order to overcome the beast, we in turn become the beast, the beast has won.”
Herein lies the problem of Christians who take on a dominating and aggressive view of Christian influence in the world - seeking to overcome terrorism through war, violence and “shock and awe” tactics, seeking to overcome the structures of wealth and power that lead to poverty and oppression through argument, slander, corporate warfare and public attack, seeking to stop abortion by killing those who practice it, or seeking to “protect” heterosexual marriage by attacking gay marriage. In all of these situations, our actions are not those of love, or of Christlike goodness, but are those of the very systems we seek to change. We cannot bring peace by declaring war, we cannot heal poverty by destroying the rich, or empower the weak by disempowering the strong. We cannot protect our children by killing adults, or bring security to our nation by embracing violence against the violent. We cannot protect “our” relationships by undermining those of others (irrespective of how we may feel about the morality of those relationships). No, as we seek to bring peace, justice, community, equality and responsibility into our world, we must embody the principles we preach, by loving those we oppose and seeking their well-being as well as our own and that of those we defend. And, lest we fall prey to “us and them” thinking, let us heed the challenge of Jesus to face the conflicts and disagreements we have in the Church with grace, love and compassion, even as we stand strongly against the evil that lives within us and within our brothers and sisters. It is not an easy task, nor, usually, a pleasant one, but the Gospel’s call is both an invitation and a confrontation, and our journey into Christ-likeness is about learning to embrace and proclaim both of these elements even as Jesus did. *(Source: John van de Laar, Sacredise)*

**COCU 55A Readings**

Summary of readings

**Exodus 12:1-14**God gives Moses and Aaron the instructions for the Passover meal – for the animal that must be chosen, sacrificed and eaten, how it is to be prepared, and the way the Israelites must eat it, with urgency and ready to travel. The blood of the animal is to be placed on the doorposts of their homes so that the plague of death which comes on the Egyptians will not harm the Israelites.

**Psalm 149**An exhortation for God’s people to praise God both publicly (in the assembly) and privately (on their beds) and through their praises to proclaim and establish God’s reign and overcome wicked kings and nations (Note: The sword image is a metaphorical reference to the power of the praise expressed by God’s people, not a literal call to religious violence).

**Romans 13: 8-14**Paul exhorts the believers to owe no debt to anyone except the ongoing debt of love, which fulfils the law. Because of the urgency of their hope, Paul encourages the believers to live pure lives, free from the dark deeds to which they may be tempted.

**Matthew 18:15-20**Jesus teaches his followers a gracious process for making right with those who have hurt them – going first to the individual, then, if necessary, taking along a couple of witnesses, and finally, taking the matter to the church. Then he encourages his followers to agree, for in doing so, they find power in prayer and Christ’s presence in their gathering.

*(Source: John van de Laar, Sacredise)*

**Exodus 12:1-14**

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbour in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

**Psalm 149**

Praise the Source of life!
**Sing to the Holy One a new song.**

Praise the one we name God among the communion of saints.

**Let the people of God rejoice in their creator.**

Let them praise the Source of all that is with dance,

and celebrate with musical instruments,

**because God delights in them,**

**and adorns the despairing with welfare.**

Let all the saints jump for joy;

**let them cry out with gladness where they rest.**

Let high praises of Divine be in their throats:

**word and song that overcome injustice,**

**binding rulers in chains and the powerful in iron shackles;**

**bringing justice to them, and honour to all God’s faithful.**

**Praise the Source of all that is!***(Jeff Shrowder, The Billabong, 2017)*
**Romans 13:8-14**

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

**Matthew 18:15-20**

“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”