

The formation of the Gospels happened through three stages over a long time. The first stage was Jesus's life on earth when he was walking among us preaching, performing Miricale's, and teaching people about the wonder of God. *This is shown in the Bible Mark 1:40-45 "Be clean! Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed."* He performs a Miricale showing the people that he is truly the son of God and that all his teachings are true. The second stage, also known as the oral tradition, was after Jesus was crucified and the apostles took it upon themselves to continue spreading the word of God. However, the apostles were scared that they would end up at the same fate. So, at Pentecost, at the start of the second stage, God sent down the Holy Spirit to give them courage. This is shown in the Bible in *Acts 4:31 "When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness."* This means that God knew they were in a time of need, so he sent down the Holy Spirit to give them the strength they needed to continue Jesus's mission. The third stage (also called the writing tradition) was when almost all the eyewitnesses to Jesus's public ministry had died out. This meant his teachings needed to be written down so they could be preserved for generations to come. The four Gospel writers Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John gathered to combine their eyewitness accounts to create the 4 gospels. These were written between 70-100 AD and were all included in the New Testament of the Bible as they all have a unique take on Jesus's teachings. The evidence for this stage is quite literally the Gospels as without Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John writing them they would not exist showing us that they truly wrote them.

Luke was an evangelist who wrote the gospel of Luke and Acts inspired by God. He wrote the Gospel of Luke to his friends and especially for the Gentiles as they were treated like outcasts by the Jews. He lived a humble life and was trained as a Greek doctor. Historians believe Luke traveled and listened to the stories of people who had witnessed Jesus as he wasn't an eyewitness himself to Jesus's ministry. Neither was he an apostle, but his friend Paul was an apostle whom he was mentored by and joined on multiple missionary journeys. Without Luke writing down these accounts of Jesus's Teachings they would have been lost to history. The main messages in Luke's Gospel are embracing the poor and vulnerable and forgiving those who have sinned against you. These are key teachings that Jesus taught us while he was on earth, and we as Catholics should live our lives by them.

Luke's Gospel expresses Jesus's love for God and loving your Neighbour through the two most important commandments. This is shown in the Bible in *Luke 10:27 "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself"* This shows us how Jesus taught us to embrace and love everyone especially the outcasts which translates to the key message in Luke's Gospel which is caring for the poor and vulnerable. No matter whether people are Gentile

or Jew, Rich, or Poor, Female or Male it makes no difference as we are all made in the likeness of God. This means everyone is deserving of our respect and to uphold their dignity. This message is still relevant today as there are still outcasts in our society who need to be treated with love and kindness. Catholics live out Jesus's teaching of loving the outcasts by holding community meals where those in need can receive a free meal as well as connect with others. Filling them up both physically and spiritually. Catholics also live out the message by funding and creating charities like Caritas and St Vincent De Paul Society which strive to better the lives of those facing hardship and embrace those who are rejected by society. As I have shown the message of embracing outcasts which Jesus taught us is applied by Catholics through their beliefs and daily lives.

Luke's Gospel also expresses how Jesus teaches us that we should always show forgiveness to others. This is shown in the Bible in Luke 11:3 –4 *"Forgive us for our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us..."* This shows us that Jesus believed that forgiveness was an important part of being a Catholic which translates to the key message in Luke which is that everyone deserves forgiveness. This message is shown in the Bible quote Luke 23:34 *"Then Jesus said, Father forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing..."* Here Jesus even on the cross about to die for our sins still sees the goodness and innocence in others, forgiving even those who sold him to be crucified. Jesus sets us the highest example and shows us how forgiveness is most important even above our self-preservation. This message is still relevant today and we should be following Jesus's example through our actions by forgiving those who have wronged us. This is what it means to be Catholic and is an important practice and value in the catholic faith. Catholics practice forgiveness through reconciliation which is where we can be forgiven for our sins by the priest through God. This is important as we can renew our relationship with God and turn away from sin. An example of a Catholic showing forgiveness is Pope John Paul II who forgave the person who attempted to assassinate him. This is an excellent example of Catholics practicing forgiveness and living their lives by this belief.

Catholics aim to live their lives by the gospel of Luke and to live out Jesus's Teachings. One of the key messages of Luke is embracing the outcasts. Catholics live out this teaching through funding and creating charities such as Caritas and St Vincent De Paul Society. Caritas is New Zealand and Oceania's Catholic Charity; they are the second-largest organization in the world that works for the better of others. They help instill hope and transform the lives of those facing hardship or unjust. Evidence of this is found in their vision statement *"We aim to enable lives of dignity and hope by eliminating injustice and poverty, inspired and guided by the gospels of Jesus and catholic Social teachings."* They do this by funding people in need, giving them life skills, and offering climate change resilience. An example of them living out their vision is in Papa New Guinea where women are not seen as equals to men, disregarded, and treated like outcasts.

Caritas has helped create a safe place for them by funding the Lujan Home for Girls. Women

flee from unsafe situations such as abuse, forced marriage, poverty or not having access to vital human needs, and find safety in the home. Through the home, they learn essential life skills and are empowered and filled with hope that the future is brighter for them. Bridget, one of the girls in the home said, *"Life before I came to the Lujan home was very difficult for me, I enjoy staying with the sisters because this house is safe to me."* This shows us how Caritas lifted her from a dangerous situation and gave her a safe place where she can grow and learn without constantly fearing what might happen to her or when her next meal will be. Through doing this Caritas is showing love to the outcasts by welcoming the women who are outsiders and rejected by society with open arms, Bridget also said, *"In the future, I would like to be a doctor"* This shows us how Caritas has helped turn her life around and showed her that she can achieve her dreams. Before she would have never have even dreamt that she would have a chance to become a doctor. But, because Caritas has instilled hope in her by teaching and nurturing her, her future is looking brighter. By creating this home for Girls and embracing women who are seen as outcasts Caritas is living out Luke's message of looking after the poor and vulnerable. As well as the Catholic Social Teaching of Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable as they are putting first the needs of others less fortunate and caring for and helping them. Just like Caritas, we as Catholics should also be striving to live out Jesus's teaching of embracing the outcasts. We should be inclusive and not discriminate against anyone in society; loving all people. In our school community, we live out Luke's gospel message through the Caritas canteen. This creates an opportunity for students to become actively involved through organizing and selling the food. As well as the students who are buying the food as they are helping to fund those in need. By supporting this cause we are showing love and compassion towards those less fortunate, which is the key message of Luke.

Another example of Catholics living out the Gospel of Luke is through the St Vincent De Paul society. They are a Global catholic organization that relies on the generosity of others through donations and volunteer work. They strive to live out the Gospel by aiding those in need. This is shown through their vision statement *"To live the gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice, hope and joy, and working to shape a more just and compassionate society."* (St Vincent De Paul 2021) They live out their vision in [REDACTED] by holding community meals which are where those facing hardship can receive a free meal which is very appreciated by those struggling to put food on the table. The meals also give people an opportunity to connect with others and help make them feel like valued members of the community. This means people are being filled up not only physically by receiving food but are also spiritually nourished through human connection. Adults and students together generously give up their time to help out and give back to the community at these meals. Through doing this St Vinnies is also living out the Catholic Social Teaching of Human Dignity by allowing people to uphold their dignity by not letting them beg for help but instead giving it freely and willingly.

The second key message in Luke's Gospel is forgiving others. Catholics believe that everyone

is worthy of forgiveness as Jesus himself taught us this through the Gospel of Luke. Because God himself forgives us for our sins it means we must then forgive others for theirs. Everyone is worthy of forgiveness no matter the crime or how bad they have hurt someone. An example of forgiveness is Pope John Paul II who was the former Pope and believed wholeheartedly that everyone was deserving of forgiveness. He was attempted to be assassinated and was shot twice. He lived and forgave his would-be assassinator saying, *"I pray for the brother who struck me, whom I have sincerely forgiven."* These were the first words he uttered in his hospital bed after almost facing death. Just like Jesus who in his pain on the cross forgave those who crucified him, the Pope also thought first not of his own preservation, but instead forgave the man who tried to assassinate him. By forgiving him instead of holding onto the bitterness he let go of the grudge and allowed the person to let go of their guilt as well. Through forgiving his persecutor, he follows Jesus's Teachings and the message of Luke. He is also living out the Catholic social teaching of the Promotion of Peace by not retaliating or responding with anger instead he makes peace with his persecutor.

In our community today we practice forgiveness through the sacrament of reconciliation. This is where Catholics can be absolved of their sins against God by the priest who is a channel of God's Forgiveness. This shows us how God is merciful and ever-loving, no matter how many times we sin or how terrible they are God will never stop loving us and will never leave us in the darkness that sin is. Everyone sins at some point and we all can be forgiven by God. This quote from the [REDACTED] shows this *"We all participate in the sin system and experience ourselves at times trapped in the grasp of darkness."* This means that none of us are perfect and if we admit this and ask for forgiveness through reconciliation, we can become closer to God. This is because reconciliation frees us from the darkness and brings our spirit back into the light. This is especially important today as we are in Lent, which is a time for repentance and reflection. Also, it is a time to strengthen our relationship with God which we can do through reconciliation

The gospels were formed in three stages. Luke's Gospel values are timeless meaning they were relevant in Jesus's time when he taught them and are still relevant in our society today and will be forever. Catholics live their lives by these teachings and do this by living out the key messages of loving everyone, especially the outcasts, and forgiving those who have hurt us. Catholics do this through supporting catholic charities like Caritas and St Vincent De Paul, having community meals, and regularly going to the sacrament of reconciliation.