



SEASONS

Newsletter of the Catholic Parish of St. Thomas More, Mount Eliza

7th Sunday in Ordinary Time—Year A

19th February 2023

SVDP

Monday Feb 20th 7.30pm

Ash Wednesday School/Parish

Wednesday Feb 21st 10.00am

PPLT Meeting

Saturday Feb 25th 1.30pm

**313 Canadian Bay Rd
Mount Eliza Vic. 3930
Phone: 9787 7777**

Email: MountEliza@cam.org.au

Website: <http://pol.org.au/mounteliza>

Office Days/Hours:

Wednesday 9.30am to 4pm

Friday 9.30am to 4pm

Pastoral Leadership Team

Fr Patrick Bradford

Ruth Hilton

Paul Keane

Sandra Taylor

Joe Sayah

Emma Chapple

Kathy Raccanello

Church Services:

This Week

from 20th February

Tuesday Adoration 6.00 pm

Tuesday Mass 7.00 pm

Wednesday* Mass 10.00am

Mass 7.00pm

Thursday* Mass 10.00am

Friday Mass 10.00am

Sunday Mass

Saturday Vigil 5.00 pm

Sunday 8.00 am

Sunday 10.00 am

Reconciliation

Tuesday 6.30pm –7.00pm

Friday 9.30am –10.00am

Saturday 4.30pm - 5.00pm

St Thomas More acknowledges the Traditional Land owners, the Bunurong people on which we live, work and worship. We pay our respects to the Elders, past, present and emerging.

Reflection: Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday tends to get a bad rap. At first glance, the beginning of Lent each year doesn't seem to have a very uplifting message. When we receive ashes on our foreheads, we are reminded that we are dust and to dust we shall return. But "returning to dust" doesn't sound all that positive, does it? Death isn't something we like to think about, much less celebrate, in our liturgy and prayer.

If we take a closer look, though, we find that the message of Ash Wednesday has far more to do with life than with death. It's much more about what it means to be human—on this side of death's door, not only beyond. Being human means being both blessed and broken, and Ash Wednesday is a special invitation to look at our own brokenness in a way that can bring healing, strength, and courage.

Embracing Vulnerability

Vulnerability has become something of a buzzword in recent years. A simple online search of the word turns up countless videos, articles, and book titles. But what does it really mean?

To be vulnerable is to be exposed, to be open. Being vulnerable means that the parts of ourselves that are not strong and beautiful are visible to others. Brene Brown, research professor at the University of Houston and best-selling author, has become something of a cultural icon as a "vulnerability guru." In her words, vulnerability is "having the courage to show up and be seen when we have no control over the outcome."

Have you ever tried something new without being sure it would turn out OK? Then you have been vulnerable because you allowed failure to be a real possibility. Have you ever forgiven someone who betrayed you? Then you have been vulnerable because you opened yourself to being hurt again.

Have you ever asked for help? You have been vulnerable because you risked hav-

ing your weaknesses exposed. Have you ever loved another person? You have been vulnerable because you took a chance on the

other person not returning that love.

We are thrown into a terrible, frightening vulnerability when our closest friend moves far away, when our kid drops out of school, when we learn about the affair, when the biopsy results come back positive. Never in a million years would we choose these or many other challenges thrust upon us.

Jesus had a lot to say about this kind of vulnerability. In fact, the beatitudes are the blueprint he laid out to help us honor our broken parts as a means of growth and transformation. He taught that being vulnerable—in other words, being poor or meek, feeling sorrowful or persecuted—is an opportunity to encounter the divine.

Suffering has a way of stripping us of our ego and false notions of self-sufficiency, which makes room for an experience of the divine. In accepting our faults, challenges, and pain, we create a space for God's grace to work its inscrutable magic in our lives. Being vulnerable is the door through which we must travel to become the best, most authentic versions of ourselves.

Allowing ourselves to be vulnerable is how we accept our brokenness. The dust of Ash Wednesday is a powerful reminder of the vulnerability that is part of our spiritual DNA as human beings.

Rethinking Repentance

If Ash Wednesday today can remind us less about death and more about the mystery of vulnerability in life, then does the traditional focus on repentance still make sense? Absolutely! But it may call us to rethink its purpose.



**We
pray
for.....**

Those who have passed away recently...



Those whose anniversaries fall at this time..

Helene Seymore, Catherine Kost, Wilma Coffey, Alex Hamilton, Faye Fitzgerald,

The sick... Maureen Mirabella, Adrian & Maree Gobel, Caroline Herbert, April Morrissey, John Spirason, Thomas Parrish, Rodney Abbatangelo, Bev Johnstone, Kate Matheson, John Xavier Clifton, Michael Leonard, Liz Spurdle, John Spurdle, Evonne Paddison, Maree Bracken, Bill Luscombe, Brigitte Rohner, Eileen O'Beirne, Ava Macias, Michael MacKenzie, Betty Corke, Maria Kelly, Elizabeth Ware, Althea Greeff, Michael Blick, Maureen Anstey, Rosalie McKiernan, Julian Collins, Sue Emerton, Jimmy and Gary Lakeman, Anneliese Rose and all of the sick at the George Vowell Centre and the parishioners of St Thomas More Parish, Tequinomata, East Timor, St Therese Parish, Bathurst Island and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish, Alice Springs.

The Parish Welfare officers for February are Tom and Maree Shelton 0428337950

the Baptist preached repentance, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is near." It's easy to see his prophecy as an apocalyptic warning of imminent damnation if we don't get our collective act together.

But repentance is as much about warning as it is about promise. John's message doesn't have to be his way of threatening us into good behavior a New Testament version of "Wait till your father gets home!" Instead, it can be an invitation to make room in our hearts and lives for a God who wants to fill up our empty spaces and doesn't take no for an answer.

Repentance isn't all about feeling guilt and shame for our shortcomings. The word's Latin root, paenitentia, has several nuanced shades of meaning, but they all boil down to one thing—a sense of "lacking." Repentance, then, is an acceptance of the fact that we do not hold all the cards, that we are not "enough" all on our own. Put another way, it's a way of embracing our vulnerability and brokenness. The dust of Ash Wednesday reminds us that life is larger than our individual experiences of it. We are not in control.

A Focus on Giving

Being broken means that healing is needed, so the age-old Lenten practices of fasting, almsgiving, and prayer are not only relevant today but also perhaps more needed than ever. It's in giving up our reliance on those things we don't absolutely need, giving to those in greater need than ourselves, and giving in to God's presence in our lives that we are able to look our own "lacking" straight in the eye. It's how we become aware of both the blessing and the brokenness of our human condition.

Giving up: Fasting, a spiritual practice that has declined in popularity over the years, has made a comeback in a less-than-spiritual way. "Intermittent fasting" is all the rage lately on nutrition websites and in best-selling books. But when fasting is understood not as a weight-loss technique but as a way of letting go of our reliance on things we don't actually need, it can be a powerful form of prayer. It's fine to give up desserts for Lent if that helps us reflect on the things we can do

ful, though, to "fast" from gossip or unnecessary spending or an insistence on having the last word. Fasting is a way to experience our own "lacking" in a transformative way.

Giving to: Almsgiving, which means the giving of money or food to those in need, is another traditional Lenten practice. This, too, is relevant for us today during Lent—and all year long—because it is how we recognize that we aren't the only ones who are vulnerable. The world is full of others just like us in our lacking. They may be vulnerable in different ways than we are, but by reaching out to them in their need, we

bear witness to their pain. By standing in solidarity with their brokenness, we take steps toward being healed of our own.

Giving in: Prayer as a spiritual practice never goes out of style. Not only during Lent but throughout the entire year, prayer is a powerful way of participating in divine community. By lifting our own broken pieces and those of others in prayer, we attest to—rather than run from—the vulnerable parts of our lives. Prayer connects us with each other and with God. This sacred unity connects our individual broken pieces with those of others, creating a beautiful new kind of wholeness.

Our Lenten Invitation

too often, we approach Ash Wednesday with liturgical gloom and doom. It's the "black sheep" of the family of dark solemnities in the liturgical calendar, failing even to garner status as a holy day of obligation. But when painted in this light, it's easy to miss its beautiful invitation to claim our brokenness, embrace our vulnerability, and stand in solidarity with all those who do the same.

God is ready to heal our woundedness, to make us more whole than ever before. Ash Wednesday is our call to make room for the divine dance to work its sacred magic within us.

Women's Fellowship Group

Let's get together ladies! Every first Friday of the month from 7pm to 9pm (after dinner) for women 18 - 100 years plus! A chance to connect, chat, laugh and share.

Our first get together will be Friday 3 March.

Where: at my home - Please email me for details if you're interested in attending (raccanellokathy@gmail.com)

If you can, please bring something to share with everyone.
Hope you can come!



BISHOP ROBERT RABBAT'S

SYRIAN EARTHQUAKE APPEAL

PLEASE DONATE NOW

The recent Syrian earthquake has hit people who were already displaced in a region that has been devastated by more than a decade of civil war. Yet again, we are seeing people fleeing and desperate for shelter in freezing winter conditions. We want to help provide that light in the deepest darkness, to get through this devastating disaster.

MCF DGR ACCOUNT
Ref: Syrian Appeal
BSB: 062784
Account: 100011493

All donations are Tax Deductible.
For a receipt please email mcf@melkite.org.au or contact on (02) 9750 5514

Melkite iCare

Melkite
Charitable Foundation

Project Compassion Sunday 18 & 19 February

Please take home a Project Compassion box or a set of donation envelopes to support Caritas Australia this Lenten season and help support vulnerable people around the world, now and **For All Future Generations**. With your support, Caritas Australia has been able to support vulnerable communities around the world to tackle poverty, food security, education, water and sanitation and disaster risk reduction to build a better future for all.

Building Access and Security

As we begin 2023, the Parish has conducted a review of security and access to buildings onsite. It has been more than twenty years since the current locks were installed and a number of keys were unaccounted for, it was determined that a new key system needed to be installed. This will ensure that we secure access to the parish buildings and simplify the issuing of new keys in the future. Last year, following a number of vandalism attacks on Churches around the Peninsula, lighting around our property was repaired and upgraded so that the top carpark is lit each evening while the Church and Offices have lights which activate automatically. We have also ensured that the Church now has safe exits and lighting in case of a fire or other emergency. The review further identified the need for surveillance for those accessing the Church after hours, as well as inside the Sacristy. Privacy remains an important consideration to be protected. Visitors who attend regular scheduled Masses, those using the reconciliation room or any other areas within the Church are not recorded with the exception of those who enter the sacristy. All data will be collected and used in accordance with our privacy policy. The open access policy for the Parish Community Centre continues as this is a welcoming space for informal gatherings, but access will now be by keycard. Any parishioner is welcome to have FOB to access this area. Please contact the Parish Office to gain access or a speak to member of PPLT for any further information.

Fr Patrick Bradford PP

Youth Discipleship and Catechesis & Baptism and Confirmation Prep

St Thomas More Parish is offering a programme for youth aged 12 to 16 to explore their faith and the "big questions". This is open to anyone whether they are Catholic or not. The first meeting **begins on Tuesday, 28th of March at 5pm** in the Parish Community Centre. Meetings begin with dinner, then we watch a short video, followed by group discussion. Topics include Jesus: who is he? How can I have faith? How do I pray? How can I make the most of my life?

Through our weeks together we will use the Youth Alpha programme which is being used at Churches around the world. Those who attend the programme will have the opportunity to make their baptism and confirmation in May. For more details please contact Faye Sayah— 0421443632

World Youth Day

World Youth Day is scheduled for August 1st to August 6th, 2023. Fr Patrick will be a chaplain to a group of young adults from St Thomas More and neighbouring Parishes who will spend time at the shrine of Fatima, and then onto Lisbon to spend six days together in prayer, catechesis and fellowship. The week culminates in a 15 km pilgrimage walk to the final venue for an open air Mass with Pope Francis, expected to be attended by more than two million pilgrims from around the world. If you (or someone you know) aged 16-35 is interested in attending, registrations will close in Mid March. Please contact the Parish office or speak with Fr Patrick for more information.

Entrance Antiphon

Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

Penitential Act

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,

And, striking their breast, they say:
through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God. Amen

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of good will. we praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, We give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

First Reading **Sirach 15:15-20**
He never commanded anyone to be godless.

Responsorial Psalm:

Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord!

Second reading **I Corinthians 2:6-10**
God in his wisdom predestined our glory before the ages began.

Gospel Acclamation **Matthew 11:25**

Alleluia, alleluia!

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom. Alleluia!

Gospel **Matthew 5:17-37**

Such was said to your ancestors; but I say to you.

Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

The mystery of faith

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Communion Antiphon

They ate and had their fill, and what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.



Next Sunday's Readings for Mass during the day.
19th February - 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18
2nd Reading: I Corinthians 3: 16-23
Gospel: Matthew 5: 38-48