

SEASONS

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

Twenty - Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Year A

27th September 2020

Dear parishioners,

Soon, we will be permitted to have religious services outdoors. This is the opportunity for us to come together to celebrate the Eucharist once again after 10 weeks of returning to stages 3 and 4 of lockdown!

The outdoor gathering for religious groups is as follows:

Step1: outdoor gathering for up to 5 people along with the celebrant

Step2: outdoor gathering for up to 10 people along with the celebrant

(Might move from step 1 – step 2 very quickly)

Step 3: outdoor gathering for up to 20 people along with the celebrant

Step 4: outdoor gathering for up to 50 people along with the celebrant (around November 2020)

DHHS has given the following directives for outdoor gathering of **all** religious groups:

- ❖ Social distancing is to be observed at all times
- ❖ Wearing of a face-mask is mandatory
- ❖ Hand sanitising is to be observed at all times
- ❖ Absolutely no socialising/mingling **before and after** each ceremony.

DHHS's main concerns: 1) any physical contact between persons; 2) **mingling and socialising** even in a small group before and after each service.

Indoor gathering for religious groups (except for funerals and weddings) could still be a long way away!

I am in the process of discussing with the PPLT and parishioners about Mass and other liturgical arrangements for STM Parish during this time of restricted religious services. I hope to be able to discuss this matter further with the STM Community after the Parish Mass on Zoom this Sunday. If you would like to be part of this discussion please join us on Zoom Mass this Sunday.

In the meantime, I would like to invite any parishioner who would like to attend outdoor Mass to register your interest with the parish by phone or email. You may like to start registering to attend outdoor Mass from this Tuesday, 29 October 2020. I am hoping to draw-up a Mass Attendance Roster for the parish in order to enable people who would like to attend Mass to be able to do so at least 2 or 3 times over the next few months.

I would like to make it clear that you are the best person to make the decision for yourself about attending outdoor/indoor Mass during the time of Corona Virus.

Fr Joe Truong

STM Parish Administrator

We pray for...

**Those who have passed away recently...
Those whose anniversaries fall at this time....**

.. Ednar Gunsekera, Edward Mast, Eileen Redfern, Dr Francis J McCoy, Edna Margaret Pearson, Edward Horrigan, John Hill, Keith Marshall, Kerrie Dash, Christine Carter.

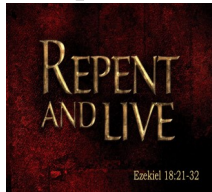
The sick... Denis Mirrabella, Michael Leonard, Peter Rodriguez, Liz Spurdle, John Spurdle, Evonne Paddison,



Joanne O'Brien, Maree Bracken, Maria Truong,, Bill Luscombe, Brigitte Rohner, Eileen O'Beirne, Helen Steinbach, Ava Macias, Michael MacKenzie, Luke Carroll, Betty Corke, Chloe, David Dole, Maria Kelly, Elizabeth Ware, Althea Greeff, Michael Blick, Maureen Anstey, Jake Steyn, Adrian Gobel, and all of the sick at the George Vowell Centre & Ranelagh Gardens Nursing home **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.**

Twenty - Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Year A

First Reading: Ezekiel 18:25-28
The sinner who decides to turn against sinfulness deserves to live



Responsorial Psalm:

Remember your mercies, O Lord.

Second Reading: Philippians 2:1-11

In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, Alleluia!

My sheep listen to my voice, says the Lord; I know them, and they follow me.

Alleluia!

Gospel: Matthew 21:28-32

He went out moved by regret. The tax collectors and prostitutes will precede you into the Kingdom of God



Next Week's Readings - 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Isaiah 5:1-7

2nd Reading: Philippians 4:6-9

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43



The Bishops of Victoria have suspended the Sunday Mass Obligation for all Catholics in Victoria until further notice. Mass is broadcast via the **Ten Network (6am, Sunday)** for any one who would like to participate.

Catholic Parish of St Thomas More

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

Email: MountEliza@cam.org.au

Web: www.stm-mteliza.org

Pastoral Leadership Team

Fr Joe Truong (Parish Administrator)

Jacinta Griffin (Chairperson)

Sue Carr Paul Stinear

Leonie Bourke Carmel Huggard

Margaret Jamieson

PPLT Email: MountEliza.PPLT@cam.org.au

Mass online

www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass

OR <http://bit.ly/MassOnDemand>

OR <https://melbournecatholic.org.au/Mass>

OR St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne. Daily and Sunday Mass is available, with the I am Mass live streamed; it is also available as a recording on-demand.

<https://melbournecatholic.org.au/Mass>



Parish Office Hours: Closed during Stage 4 of Covid 19 Restrictions
After Hours: Please leave a message on 9787 7777

Pastoral Care for STM Parish during the time of the Coronavirus Pandemic

This plan will be revised upon further easing of restrictions

1. **STM Church and Office Closed during Stage 4 restrictions**
2. **Seasons** publish online, send out by email, or by post.
3. **Pastoral visitation:** Not available during Stage 4 restrictions
4. **Anointing of the Sick, and Communion for the housebound:** Anointing of the Sick is available only for the seriously ill. The Eucharist is given as Viaticum to the dying only.
5. **Reconciliation:** Please call Fr Joe on 9787 7777 to make an appropriate arrangement.
6. **Spiritual Guidance:** Fr Joe is available from Tuesday to Sunday afternoon — by phone or **zoom video conference** only.
7. **Seasons:** Please contact the parish office if you would like to receive a copy of *Seasons* by post.
8. Mass in private (without the congregation): **Tuesday—Sunday**

CDF-Online Portal for Parishes

Dear Parishioners,

We wish to thank you for your support of our parish even during this time of health crisis and financial challenge. We wish to advise you that the Archdiocese of Melbourne and Catholic Development Fund have partnered to build an online payment portal—CDF pay for parishes. This site enables you to make quick and easy online thanksgiving payments—you can set-up a recurring payment, or you can choose a one-off offering. The St Thomas More Mount Eliza site is live and can be found via the link below:

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family every blessing from the risen Christ.

Fr Joe Truong

Financial Matters 20th September

	Actual	Pledge
Stewardship	\$ 1619	\$ 2092
Presbytery	\$ 201	

Thanks to all of you who give so generously to support our parish.

What's Happening Here ...

EAST TIMOR UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2020

The 39th shipping container, since starting our East Timor project in the year 2000, has been filled and sent to East Timor.

It was filled with 100's of desks, chairs, 4 drums of donated rice from parishioners, 100's of boxes of clothing, many Baby Boxes, a refrigerator, cupboards, gardening tools and many 100's of tubes of skin creams. Skin diseases prevail among the people.

Thanks for the generous donations from parishioners and local businesses. Also many thanks to the hard working volunteers who helped collect the goods and pack the container.

We hope to be filling the 40th container when Corona Virus restrictions are lifted.

Another project making a difference is the sponsorship of the education of dozens of school and university students. Generous parishioners sponsor the education of children, who because of poverty and not being able to afford school fees, would most likely leave school to work in the family vegetable garden.

If you would like to become a sponsor, or discover more detail on the things we are doing in East Timor look up the web site "HELPING EAST TIMOR" "lesharper.org" and speak to Les Harper.

Email: lesharper@optusnet.com.au

Or telephone 0408123562

Catholic Care Support for your parish community during COVID-19

We know that many people are suffering emotionally, socially and financially during the COVID-19 pandemic. CatholicCare has the following services to help:

Counselling - Free counselling via telephone or video conference.

Emergency Relief - For food vouchers and other financial assistance.

T: (03) 9287 5555 | W: www.ccam.org.au/covid19response | E: CatholicCare@ccam.org.au

Baptisms

All Baptism Information/Preparation - Please contact Fr Joe at the Parish Office. Not available during Stage 4 of Covid 19 Restrictions



STM Children and Young People Safeguarding Committee

At STM Catholic Parish, Mount Eliza, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our parish. For more information please call: John Natoli (Coordinator) on 0418 208 778; or Julie Carter (Banda) on 0420 923 859

STM Social Club Fun & Friendship For All

New members are always most welcome!

Membership fee is \$30.

Due to the Corona Virus pandemic, the Social Club has decided to suspend all activities until further notice.

Dear fellow members of STM Social Club,

This is just to say hello and to let you know that you are in my thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. I hope that you all are going well. I am missing our Social Club gatherings and hoping that we will be able to come together for our annual Christmas get together. Love you, **Carolyn Gascoigne**.

Community Corner

Dear fellow parishioners,

On Wednesday 23 September, 12 parishioners gathered to celebrate mass with Fr. Joe via 'Zoom' at 9.15am. I don't think any of us were sure how it would be, but, there was joy and excitement at seeing people who we haven't seen for ages. We had a commentator and a reader, we sang hymns and we prayed together. It was an uplifting experience.

Fr. Joe admitted us to the 'meeting' from 9.00, so there was chatter and smiling faces before mass, and then again afterwards people stayed chatting for several minutes.

Thank you Fr. Joe for organising this. The most difficult thing during lockdown and level 3 and 4 restrictions is not being able to gather as community, this enabled people to come together albeit via our iPads and computers. Fr. Joe will be expanding this to a Sunday mass shortly. Come and join in, if you're unsure how to, contact Fr.

Booking for Parish Zoom Account

Sunday 27 September

8:00AM Parish Mass on Zoom

Meeting ID: 434 691 8189

Passcode: 439075

Thursday 1 October 2020

7:30PM—9:30PM STM Parish Safeguarding Children and Young People Committee

Thursday 8 October 2020

7:00PM—8:30PM—STM Finance Meeting

Thursday 15 October 2020

7:30 –8:30PM— STM PPLT Meeting

Please contact the parish by phone or email if you would like to use the parish zoom account for your parish ministry group meeting.

STM PARISH MASS ON ZOOM—Wednesday 30 Sept

Mass commences at 9:15 AM. However, you may start logging on to zoom from 9:00AM.

Topic: STM Wed Parish Mass

Time: Sep 30, 2020 09:00 AM Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney

Meeting ID: 434 691 8189

Passcode: 439075

Saint Jerome, Priest, Doctor •
on Wednesday of week 26 in Ordinary Time

First reading

A reading from the book of Job.

Job spoke to his friends:

Indeed, I know it is as you say:
how can man be in the right against God?
If any were so rash as to challenge him for reasons,
one in a thousand would be more than they could answer.
His heart is wise, and his strength is great:
who then can successfully defy him?
He moves the mountains, though they do not know it;
he throws them down when he is angry.
He shakes the earth, and moves it from its place,
making all its pillars tremble.
The sun, at his command, forbears to rise,
and on the stars he sets a seal.
He and no other stretched out the skies,
and trampled the Sea's tall waves.
The Bear, Orion too, are of his making,
the Pleiades and the Mansions of the South.
His works are great, beyond all reckoning,
his marvels, past all counting.
Were he to pass me, I should not see him,
nor detect his stealthy movement.
Were he to snatch a prize, who could prevent him,
or dare to say, 'What are you doing?'
How dare I plead my cause, then,
or choose arguments against him?
Suppose I am in the right, what use is my defence?
For he whom I must sue is judge as well.
If he deigned to answer my citation,
could I be sure that he would listen to my voice?

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Let my prayer come before you, Lord.

I call to you, Lord, all the day long;
to you I stretch out my hands.

Will you work your wonders for the dead?
Will the shades stand and praise you?

Let my prayer come before you, Lord.

Will your love be told in the grave
or your faithfulness among the dead?
Will your wonders be known in the dark
or your justice in the land of oblivion?

Let my prayer come before you, Lord.

As for me, Lord, I call to you for help:
in the morning my prayer comes before you.
Lord, why do you reject me?
Why do you hide your face?

Let my prayer come before you, Lord.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

I count all things worthless but this:
to gain Jesus Christ and to be found in him.
Alleluia!

STM PARISH MASS ON ZOOM—Sunday 4 October

Mass commences at 8:00AM. However, you may start logging on to zoom from 7:45AM.

Topic: STM Parish Mass on Zoom

Time: Oct 4, 2020 08:00 AM Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney

Meeting ID: 434 691 8189

Passcode: 439075

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Let me sing to my friend
the song of his love for his vineyard.
My friend had a vineyard
on a fertile hillside.
He dug the soil, cleared it of stones
and planted choice vines in it.
In the middle he built a tower,
he dug a press there too.
He expected it to yield grapes,
but sour grapes were all that it gave.
And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem
and men of Judah,
I ask you to judge
between my vineyard and me.
What could I have done for my vineyard
that I have not done?
I expected it to yield grapes.
Why did it yield sour grapes instead?
Very well, I will tell you
what I am going to do to my vineyard:
I will take away its hedge for it to be grazed on,
and knock down its wall for it to be trampled on.
I will lay it waste, unpruned, undug;
overgrown by the brier and the thorn.
I will command the clouds
to rain no rain on it.
Yes, the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts
is the House of Israel,
and the men of Judah
that chosen plant.
He expected justice, but found bloodshed,
integrity, but only a cry of distress.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

You brought a vine out of Egypt;
to plant it you drove out the nations.
It stretched out its branches to the sea,
to the Great River it stretched out its shoots.

The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

Then why have you broken down its walls?

It is plucked by all who pass by.
It is ravaged by the boar of the forest,
devoured by the beasts of the field.

The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from heaven and see.
Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted.

The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

And we shall never forsake you again;
give us life that we may call upon your name.

God of hosts, bring us back;
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

Second reading

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians

There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honour, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise. Keep doing all the things that you learnt from me and have been taught by me and have heard or seen that I do. Then the God of peace will be with you.

The word of the Lord.

Remembering, working and praying for migrants and refugees

This [2020 World Day of Migrants and Refugees](#) (Sunday, 27 September), let's remember, pray for, and commit to working to change the horrible reality of many in 'our own backyard'. [Members of Catholic Social Services Victoria](#) and [parishes across the state](#) are making considerable efforts to assist people seeking asylum, refugees, and other migrants who hold temporary visas. Many remain in harsh circumstances in detention centres, and the majority of the [115,000](#) living in Australian community have been deemed ineligible for any federal government support payments during COVID-19, making many at risk of homelessness and despair.

Over the past couple of years, and increasingly since the COVID-19 pandemic, the work of the [Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project \(BASP\)](#) has increasingly been helping with rent and utilities payments and the provision of emergency relief money. Currently BASP are assisting about 260 people with rent and more than that with other needs. Even with discounting what BASP are paying due to some donated housing, BASP are paying about \$100,000 a month to keep people with a minimum of security. Currently, asylum seekers in Melbourne are experiencing a high level of destitution and many would be homeless without the support of groups like BASP.

CatholicCares across Victoria have seen a three times increase in the amount of people with a temporary visa seeking access to Emergency Relief over the past few months, as compared to last year. [CatholicCare Greater Melbourne, Geelong & Gippsland](#) also continues to provide other practical help to a number of asylum seeker families who receive supported housing as well as financial support for food, clothes and utility bills.



2020 Live Streamed *March for the Babies* October 10 @1 p.m.



Due to Covid 19 restrictions, the Annual March for the Babies 2020 will be a Live Streamed event @ 1p.m. Saturday October 10

Join in online www.mftb.online for Victoria's largest pro-life event in defence of the victims of Victoria's inhumane abortion laws, unborn children and their mothers. Featured speakers, powerful testimonies, music and opportunities to promote the "culture of life".





Archbishop Commensoli letter to the People and Clergy of the Archdiocese of Melbourne

Dear friends in Christ, As we now welcome the beginnings of easing in COVID-19 Restrictions in Victoria, I would like to take this opportunity to write to you, the Clergy and people of our Archdiocese. It is great news that regional Victoria will, from tonight, move into the Third Step of the Roadmap to reopening, which includes our parishes located outside the metropolitan zone. However, we have a long way to go. The deprivation in sacramental life has been a profound loss for our people. As well as all the other sufferings of the Pandemic, the sense of estrangement from the Eucharist has been a particular struggle for Catholics. The Mass is our primary means of gathering together in faith; it is the source and summit of our Christian life, and its life-giving nourishment and healing is dearly missed. In the midst of this loss, I am grateful to our Priests and Deacons for continuing to serve the faithful, for sharing a sacramental ministry even under strict conditions, and for being alongside our people and their loved ones in times of death and grief. Thank you for your faithfulness. All of us are anxious to open church doors, but I want to emphasise our need to be creative in the ways we do so, especially with the thousands of children who have been waiting for Sacraments of Initiation. Countless Catholic families are awaiting Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation for their children. Adults, too, have longed to be received into the life of the Church. We shall be exploring possibilities such as outdoor liturgies in parish and school settings to facilitate these crucial events of grace and welcome. Throughout the pandemic, I have been advocating directly with the Government, reminding authorities continually of our respectful compliance with each stage of restrictions, and seeking a fair consideration in what is permitted. The Catholic community throughout the pandemic has been constructive and positive. We have, and continue to act in a mature way, caring for the safety and vulnerability of Victorians facing great risk. Thankfully the signs of driving down COVID numbers are looking good at this moment and Catholics join other people of faith in giving thanks for this outcome and working to ensure the steps ahead do not take us backward. Now, it is essential that the Government does not treat faith communities as an afterthought to the opening up of other sectors. Our churches are locations for communities of care and essential service, and must be treated fairly and reasonably. Practically speaking, I have been in discussion with the Premier to thank him for overturning the restriction on spiritual ministry to the sick and the dying, and have assured him that the Catholic Church is able to manage restrictions (including good hygiene, face coverings, social distancing and density requirements). If pubs and restaurants can open, then places of worship should be open under similar conditions and numbers. If case numbers track well, I expect we will see larger outdoor gatherings in regional Victoria become possible over the next few weeks, and proportionate opportunities for gathering in metropolitan Melbourne. I am hopeful that this may occur sometime in October, which would be a deeply welcomed improvement on the current Roadmap indications. If we can open our churches, even for outdoor gatherings, then we should open them. The Deputy Premier and the Multicultural Affairs Minister are conducting discussions this month through the Multifaith Leaders Forum. The Archdiocese will be contributing to these meetings. In addition I will continue to engage with the Premier and Ministers directly on the Church's need for opening doors, carefully and safely. Be assured of my ongoing closeness in prayer and concern. I have heard your cry, and I am working to bring your voice to the authorities. The Lord has promised he will be with us always; let us place our hope in Him. With every grace and blessing, I remain, Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus

Social Services Sunday, 20th September – a time to reflect and give thanks

On 20th September 2020, we mark Social Services Sunday within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. On this day we are invited to give thanks and pray for all who stand with and provide support to those who are marginalised and vulnerable within our communities. We recognise with deep gratitude, those working within Catholic Social Services Victoria's 45 member organisations, the 7,000 staff and 17,000 volunteers, who together, serve more than 200,000 people in need each year. We also give thanks for all in our parishes, who are so often at the forefront of providing practical support and care to those in need within their local communities, and beyond. We call to mind the 2020/21 Social Justice Statement brought out recently by the Australian Catholic bishops, *To Live Life to the Full: Mental Health in Australia Today*, and so draw your attention to a recent event hosted by CSSV, *Counselling and Therapeutic Support in a Time of COVID*, which provided an opportunity to become more familiar with mental health services, and how to practically reach out for or point to assistance.

Prayer for Courage and Compassion

Compassionate God,

Your unconditional love for all

inspires our hearts and empowers our actions

for those who are most vulnerable.

May we boldly and humbly serve one another

and be steadfast in our work for justice for all people.

Keep our hearts open to the joys and the hopes of our world,

and our ears ready to hear your call

to truth, justice and reconciliation.

Let us continue to draw inspiration and strength

from those, like St Mary MacKillop,

on whose shoulders we stand.

We gather in Jesus' name

to be nourished and to move forward together

in hope and joy.

Amen

This prayer was the 2020 National Catholic Social Services Conference prayer held in February 2020 in Melbourne. The Conference was convened by Catholic Social Services Victoria and Catholic Social Services Australia.

Homily

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time A

This Sunday's readings give us some important guidance for our moral living and discipleship. May the words of God in today's readings guide and guard us always in our everyday life.

Once upon a time there was a saying, "parents eat sour grapes, and their children's teeth are set on edge". However, the prophet Ezekiel disagrees with this saying. In the first reading Ezekiel says that each one of us is responsible for our own conduct, and we will be judged accordingly. This is because each person has the freedom to say "yes" or "no" to God. (Freedom is an exclusive and inviolable gift from God to humanity). Since we have the freedom to choose, we all have to take personal responsibility for our every action. We can no longer sift responsibility onto other people.

There is a tendency to take responsibility away from the individual – someone else is to blame. This someone else may be one's spouse, system of government, parents, spouse, and neighbour and may even be an animal. This tendency to remove responsibility from oneself is not new – we hear about it in the Garden of Eden. Adam blames Eve; Eve blames the snake for the sin of disobedience; and the snake has nowhere to turn to... (Perhaps not taking responsibility for one's own failure is an affect of original sin?) There is no doubt that our behaviours are influenced by our upbringing, environment and so on. Yet, still we must stop blaming others, and accept responsibility for our own action! To take responsibility is not an act of weakness – it is a sign of strength, courage and humility. Unless, we can take responsibility for our action, it could be difficult for us to recognise the brokenness in our life.

When turning to the Gospel, we hear that God does not exclude anyone from the Kingdom. But, there is an essential requisite for entering into the kingdom of God - that is we must have a change of heart, break away from our old way of living, and follow in the footsteps of Jesus. In the parable, the first son represents the people (sinners and outcasts) who choose to go their own way but then repented and took God's way, and so merited the heavenly life. By contrast, the second son in the parable represents the religious leaders who promised to devote their life to labour in God's vineyard but failed to do so. Further, these religious leaders were so obstinate that they would not accept the teachings of Jesus. These religious leaders, by their own choice, excluded themselves from the Kingdom. Each one of us has to make a conscious choice for himself/herself as to whether or not he/she wants to enter into the Kingdom of God. It is never too late for us to have a change of heart. The question is- will we make a U-turn in life? The first son in today's parable, St Paul the Apostle, St Augustine of Hippo and other saints throughout history, tell us that it is never too late to turn around. We have to make this choice for ourselves – no one can do this on our behalf. At best, like St Monica (the mother of St Augustine), people can pray that our heart may be changed! The door of the eternal Kingdom remains open for anyone who wants to enter

On this weekend, let us pray for each other that the word of God will continue to nourish, purify and transform us so that we may have the courage to take responsibility for our conduct and that we will be more receptive to the way of Jesus.