



St Anthony's Parish



St Bernard's Parish

67-74 EXFORD ROAD, MELTON SOUTH, 3338.

P.O BOX 2152 MELTON SOUTH 3338

TEL: 9747 9692 FAX: 9746 0422

61 LERDERBERG STREET, BACCHUS MARSH 3340

TEL: 5367 2069 FAX: 5367 4863

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, KOROBET

309 MYRNIONG-KOROBET ROAD 3341

20th Sunday In Ordinary Time

Year B

19th August 2018

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Fabian Smith

ASSISTANT PRIESTS: Fr Patrick Bradford & Fr Joseph Panackal IV Dei

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Lesley Morffew

Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson

Parish Office Hours:

Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri 9.00am—4.00pm

Email: meltonsouth@cam.org.au

Website: stanthonysmeltonsouth.wordpress.com

St Anthony's School Principal: Damien Schuster

Wilson Road, Melton South 3338

Phone: 9743 1401

Email: principal@sameltonsth.catholic.edu.au

Website: www.sameltonsth.catholic.edu.au

Catholic Regional College - Melton (Years 7-12)

Principal: Mr Mark Sheehan **Phone:** 8099 6000

Website: www.crcmelton.com.au

ST BERNARD'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Dolores Turcsan

Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson

Sacramental Coordinator/ Book Keeper:

Naim Chdid Fri 10.00am—3.00pm

Parish Office Hours: Tue –Thurs 9.00am-1.00pm

Email: bacchusmarsh@cam.org.au

Website: http://pol.org.au/bacchusmarsh/Home.aspx

St Bernard's School Principal: Emilio Scalzo

Gisborne Rd, Bacchus Marsh VIC 3340

Phone: (03) 5366 5800

Email: principal@sbbacchusmarsh.catholic.edu.au

Website: www.sbbacchusmarsh.catholic.edu.au

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Sue Alexander | 0400 171 843 |
| Naim Chdid | 0437 004 790 |
| Lillian Christian | 0400 441 257 |
| Stephan Fernandes | 0439 743 533 |
| Amy Honrade | 03 9747 0078 |
| Natalie Howard | 0410 478 046 |
| Rose Ma'ae | 0431 386 473 |
| Marthese Mercieca | 0421 378 691 |

EX-OFFICIO:

Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Patrick Bradford, Fr Joseph Panackal and Damien Schuster Council Secretary: Judy Johnson

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| Cathy Belcher | 0431 082 886 |
| Shane Cook | 0419 999 052 |
| Peter Farren | 0418 594 501 |
| David Loxley | 0459 974 960 |
| Maira Ross | 0400 675 056 |
| Emillio Scalzo | 5366 5800 |
| James Walters | 0403 974 960 |

EX-OFFICIO:

Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Patrick Bradford, Fr Joseph Panackal and Emilio Scalzo

CHILD SAFETY OFFICERS

Coordinator: Godwin Barton (0425 734 449)

Officers: Aloysious Dacunha, Karina Dunne & Lorraine Tellis

Please contact Judy Johnson for any Parish news you would like published in the Newsletter

Articles must be received by midday Tuesdays. Email: judyparishnews@gmail.com

For appointments with Father Fabian please call Judy on 0414 007 009

MASS AND DEVOTIONS

ST ANTHONY'S

MASS TIMES :

| | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----|
| Monday : | No Mass | |
| Tuesday morning: | 9.15am | FJP |
| Tuesday evening: | 6.30pm | FJP |
| Wednesday: | 9.15am | FFS |
| Thursday: | 9.15am | FJP |
| Friday: | 9.15am | FJP |
| Saturday Vigil : | 5.30pm Mass | FFS |
| Sunday : | 8.30am Mass | FFS |
| | 10.30am Mass | FFS |

INDIVIDUAL RECONCILIATION

Saturday: 4.45pm and before and after weekday Mass

ROSARY:

Prayed at 9.00am before every weekday Mass.

ADORATION:

30 minutes before and 30 minutes after every weekday Mass.



ST BERNARD'S

MASS TIMES :

| | | |
|--------------------|----------------|-----|
| Monday : | No Mass | |
| Tuesday : | 5.30pm | FPB |
| Wednesday : | 9.30am | FPB |
| Thursday : | 9.30am | FFS |
| Friday : | 9.30am | FPB |
| Saturday : | 5:00pm Mass | FPB |
| Sunday : | 8:30am Mass | FPB |
| | 10:00am Mass | FJP |

INDIVIDUAL RECONCILIATION

Saturday: 4.30pm and before and after weekday Mass

ROSARY:

Prayed every Monday at 7.30pm with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for one hour.

Rosary is also held on the first Friday of the month following morning mass.

Next Date : **7th September**

ADORATION:

1 hour before every weekday Mass.

SENIOR PARISHIONER'S MASS

Is held on the third Friday of the month in the Parish Centre at 10.30am. Everyone is welcome not just the seniors. Next Senior's Mass: **21st September**

PROVIDENCE MASS

Is held on the second Friday of the month at 11.00am

The Village 5-7 Griffin St, Maddingley

Next Mass: **14th September**



OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

MASS TIMES :

| | | |
|------------------|-------------|-----|
| Saturday: | 6.30pm Mass | FPB |
|------------------|-------------|-----|

NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE

THE JOURNEY CATHOLIC RADIO PROGRAM – AIRS 26 August 2018

Just a reminder, that all Journey Catholic Radio information is always a week in advance

This week on The Journey our Gospel reading is John 6:60-69. Sr Hilda from the Abbey shares her wisdom with us yet again, Fr Dave Callaghan in his God spot, encourages us to ask, "What's Under The Bonnet"? and our very own Trish McCarthy talks to us about Motivation & Discipline in her Milk and Honey segment. Our diverse music selection is such a gift to Journey Catholic Radio program, where faith, hope, love and life come together. Go to

WWW.jcr.org.au or www.itunes.jcr.org.au where you can listen anytime and subscribe to weekly shows by email.

PARISH EVENTS & NOTICES

BINGO

We have 3 sessions per evening with a cost of \$3.00 a book. Eyes down at 7.00pm. Finish time is 9.45pm. Come and have a great social evening, have some fun and maybe get lucky too. Coffee and tea is provided and there are canteen services available. Remember you have to be in it to win it!



FATHER'S DAY CELEBRATION

On Saturday 1st September, all fathers are invited for a special Mass at 7:30am, followed by a breakfast in the Parish Centre at St Bernard's, Bacchus Marsh. Also, a guest speaker has been invited to give a talk. For catering purposes, please RSVP on the clipboard at the rear of the Church. Thank you.

NEWS FROM THE PARISH OFFICES

ST ANTHONY'S

THANKSGIVING ENVELOPES

Thanksgiving envelopes can be collected at the rear of the Church. Thank you.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

The PPC met on Thursday 9th August some of the items discussed were:

- New Councillors in training Villy Julita (Pastoral) And Kim Nguyen (Worship)
- Notice of Application for Planning Permit is on display for 14 days
- Quadrant talks will be held in the month of October

The PPC minutes dated 7th June are available for collection and are on display at the rear of the Church.

NEW PARISHIONER BLESSING

We invite all our new Parishioners to receive a special Blessing at all Masses next weekend 25th & 26 August. Please join us after Mass for a cuppa and a chat.

FATHER JOSEPH HOUSE VISITS

Parishioners who have not had a House Visit in the last 2 years are able to complete a form and request a visit from Father Joseph. House Visit Forms are available at the back of the Church.

SPIT ROAST LUNCH INCLUDING DESSERT

Date : Sunday 9th September Venue: Padua Hall
12 noon Adults: \$15.00 Children under 10: \$5.00 meal pack
Tickets on sale at the end of each Mass. Come and join us for a relaxing afternoon.

PRIME TIMERS

Prime Timers next outing will be 28th August 2018. Movie day Melton Library. Movie will be Darkest Hour starring Gary Oldman as Winston Churchill. Start time 11am followed by light lunch. Please confirm if you are coming by Friday 24th for catering purposes. Enquiries contact Ineke 0400120401. If you require a lift meet in St Anthony's car park at 11.30am.

CATHOLICCARE APPEAL 2018

Last weekend we collected \$501.00 for the special collection. Thank you for your generosity.

ST BERNARD'S

FAMILY BONFIRE NIGHT

Saturday 8th September 2018 6.30pm
For a fun night, come along to Mark Farrell's Farm, 4099 Bacchus Marsh-Geelong Road, Parwan. 3 course Dinner, Guest Speaker, and Bonfire. Tickets on sale next weekend after Masses (& following weekends) or from Presbytery or School Office. Adults \$15 .00 and Children \$5.00
Enquiries – Mark 0416 251 025 or Ron 0419 156 191



KSC RACING GAME

Half way – 13 weeks of 26 week game.

Game 1

Mary Flanagan – 59 points
Jenny Kearney – 54 points
Peter Skinner)
Dianne Shelly) – 50 points

Game 2

Mark Farrell – 59 points
Colm Carragher – 54 points
Terry Casey – 50 points
Jill Geurts – 50 points

CATHOLICCARE APPEAL 2018

This weekend we will be having a special collection to support CatholicCare, this year's theme is Building Connections; Growing together.

WORSHIP NEWS

ALL VOLUNTEERS IN OUR PARISH MUST HAVE A CURRENT WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

ST ANTHONY'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 25th & 26th August

MINISTERS OF THE WORD:

5.30pm: Dolores Turcsan
8.30am: Regina Traczynski
10.30am: Joseph Ma'ae

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.30pm : Lorraine Tellis (P) & Gavin Pereira
8.30am : Michael Higgins (P), Villy Julita & Edwina La Rose
10.30am: Doris Bonello (P) & George Bonello
If you are unavailable for these dates please contact Aloysious.

ALTAR SERVERS

5.30pm:
8.30am: Roster Pending
10.30am:

MASS COORDINATORS

5.30pm: Carmen Vella & Dolores Turcsan
8.30am: Indika Silva & Lina Calleja
10.30am: Ken Dumandan & Josephine German

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the death anniversary at this time of:

Frank Barker, Anthony Buhagiar, Eric Clyne, Angelina de Guzman and Doris Trevor.

Please pray for the Sick: Jean Barnett, Nickolia & Klara Butkovic, Maria Caruana, Mary Caruana, Judy Layton, Peter Manicaro, Reg Marslen, Veronica Michael, Wanda Novak, John Osborne, Irene Rahilly, Catherine Roberts, Peter Roberts, Pat Roberts, Charlie Spiteri, Clint Abela Wadge, Michael Wright & John Xuereb and all those who have requested our prayers.

(PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED ON THIS LIST)

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

May you be wrapped up in God's love,
Found deep in his everlasting wings;
Carried and kept safe and cherished.
May the healing power of Christ be
with you.
Amen



ST BERNARD'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 25th & 26th August

MINISTERS OF THE WORD:

5.00pm: Sandra Ibrahim
8.30am: Moira Ross & Volunteer
10.00am: Jennifer Taylor & Carmel Shea

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Stuart Robertson
8.30am: Peter Lafranchi
10.00am: James Waters

ALTAR SERVERS

5.00pm:
8.30am: Roster Pending
10.00am:

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased:

Ian Charles Dominguez

We pray for the death anniversary at this time of:

Bobby Abraham, Kevin Blackmore Senior, Martin Bolger, Derrick Cariaga, Ern Dexter, Ivy Jane Eccles, Pam Hayden, Adam Lancaster, Sheri Martin, John McDonald, Mary Morgan, John O'Leary and Mark Stone.

Please pray for the Sick:

John Anderson, Noah Barlow, Dudley Baddeley, Michael Barrett, Peter Bennett, Steven Braszel, Kevin Bridges, John Canty, Fred Capuano, Gary Ching, Ted Cooling, Lindsay & Kathleen Dally, Judy Delahey, Jack DeLuca, Ian Dominquez, Allison Evans, Helen Evans, Justin Fernandez, Pasquale Gagliarbi, Mario Galea, Cynthia Goodyear, Gwen Green, Joe Gristi, Brian Harrison, Adam Hillier, Elle Hillman, Kiahni Holamotutama, Alicia Holborn, Matthew Jansen, David Kasprzak, Loretta Kervin, Marie Maloney, Patricia Marechal, Debbie Marshall, Jordanis Maryo, Pauline McDonald, Ian McKechnie, Marcus Meno, Paul Mullin, Arthur Pape, Michael Paterson, Georgia Peacock, Arabella Periera, Bev Pickett, Mitchell Prendergast, Peter Roberts, Julie Scott, Ken Shaw, Marian Smith, Frank & Elizabeth Stehmann, Susan Trist, Mitchell Tung, John Van Orsouw, Angela Vicum, Louis Vogels, Barry Walsh, Mary Walsh, Carol Wells, Cath Wheelahan, Jayne Wilkins, Nils Wyren, Patricia Yazbek, Betty Young, Hannah Young.

(PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED ON THIS LIST)

SERVICE / COMMUNITY

ST ANTHONY'S

VOLUNTEERS WEEKEND: 25th & 26th August

PIETY STALLS VOLUNTEERS

5.30pm: Anne Peramuna
8.30am: Judy Johnson
10.30am: Kim Barton

CUPPA ROSTER

Next Cuppa Weekend: **25th & 26th August**

5.30pm: Josephine Sultana
& Margaret Coghlan

8.30am: Volunteers please
10.30am: Rose Ma'ae & family



CHURCH FLOWERS

Rosabella Tuala



CLEANING ROSTER: Thursday

Lorelle Porter

Volunteers would be appreciated as well.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

Welfare Number: 1800 305 330

The Melton South Conference meet every 3rd Tuesday morning in the Holy Family Room 10.00am.

New members most welcome.

Non perishable items within the use by date can be left in the 'drop box' at the back of the Church. Thank you.

COMBINED CHURCHES CARING MELTON INC

CCCM's aim is to supply free food to help people in our local community in need and walk alongside them to reduce dependency through friendship and education.

Address: 100 Coburn Road Melton South 9747 6811

Hours: Mon- Thurs: 10.00am-3.00pm

Friday: 10.00am-12.15pm

School Holidays: 10.00am-12.30pm

FUNDRAISING & SOCIAL COMMITTEE DATES

9th September : Spit Roast Lunch
19th Oct: Parish & School Fete
11th Nov: Family Day
31st December: New Year's Eve Dance
Aspendale Gardens
Fundraiser for New Chapel

ST BERNARD'S

VOLUNTEERS WEEKEND : 25th & 26th August

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

18th August: Carmel Shea

19th August: Jan Farmelo

MORNING TEA

Is held on the the first Sunday of the month in the Parish Centre after 10.00am Mass.

Next Morning Tea: **2nd September**

Host: Baptism Preparation Team

CHURCH FLOWERS

Bernadette Kearney



COUNTING TEAM # 3

Cheryl Rogers

Lyn Shea

Graham Hooper

Michael Love

Sean Gianì

Margaret Love

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

Welfare Number: 1800 305 330

The Vinnies Store is located at 8 Grant Street, Bacchus Marsh. We are calling for more volunteers. If you would like more information please ring 5310 6322.

PRESBYTERY & CHURCH GROUNDS- (AUGUST)

Front Garden:

Back/Side Garden: Sean Gianì

Parish Centre: Ron Gerts

Carpark/Pines: Ron Gerts

Back Paddock: Henry Gasior

THE NEIGHBOURS PLACE

Emergency Foodbank and Hospitality centre

Address: 77 Main Street Bacchus Marsh

Open: Monday/Wednesday/Friday 9.30am-3.00pm

Email: neighbourspl@iinet.net.au

Our committee consists of two representatives from each of the participating churches who normally are nominated and appointed at our Annual General Meeting which was held in May.

Currently we only have one representative from the Catholic church and we are calling for a volunteer from St Bernard's Parish to take up this position on The Neighbour's Place Committee of Management. We only meet once a month and it provides two-way communication of information, ideas and opinions on our outreach work.

Contact: Fr Fabian 5367 2069

PARISH CENTRE BOOKING

Tel: 5367 3427

Mon-Fri 9.00am to 6.00pm

Hall Managers: Marie & Terry Casey

FAITH FORMATION

ST ANTHONY'S

BAPTISM PREPARATION PROGRAM

Held on the fourth Thursday of the month in the Church 6.30pm-7.45pm.

Next preparation : **Thursday 23rd Aug**

Baptisms are held on the 1st and 3rd

Sunday of the month: **Sunday 2nd & 16th September**

See details on Parish Homepage as listed on front page and download forms. Forms are also available from the Parish Office or from the Sacristy after Mass from Father.

Both parents are required to attend these meetings. We kindly request adults only and a copy of the birth certificate.

Contact Fr Fabian, Fr Patrick, Fr Joseph or the Parish Office for queries.

BAPTISM TEAM: Karina Dunne & Judy Johnson

ADULT PREPARATION for the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist or Confirmation are through the R.C.I.A Program. Please see Fr Fabian, Fr Patrick or Fr Joseph

CHILDREN'S LITURGY Is held during Saturday evening Vigil Mass and Sunday 10.30am Mass.

DIVINE MERCY: 1st Sunday of the month at 3pm .

FATIMA STATUE

(These families are praying together for the mission of the Parish)

Group 1: **Josephine German 0407 469 159**

Group 2: **Andrew & Lorelle Porter 0409 939 002**

LITURGY Is held during Saturday evening Vigil Mass and Sunday 10.30am Mass.



ST BERNARD'S

BAPTISM PREPARATION PROGRAM

Held on the fourth Sunday of the month in the Parish Centre at 11:15am.

Next program: **Sunday 26th August**

Baptisms are held on the 1st and 3rd

Sunday of the month: **Sunday 2nd & 16th September**

Registration forms can be downloaded from our website www.pol.cam.org.au/bacchusmarsh. Bring completed Registration Form with a copy of Birth Certificate to the program.

Please note: Both parents are required to attend the program.

Contact Fr Fabian, Fr Patrick, Fr Joseph or the Parish Office for queries.

COORDINATORS : Steve & Geraldine

ADULT PREPARATION for the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist or Confirmation are through the R.C.I.A Program. Please see Fr Fabian, Fr Patrick or Fr Joseph.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY Is held every Sunday during 10.00am Mass in the meeting room in the Parish Centre.



PRAYER TO ST MICHAEL

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil;
may God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl through the world seeking the ruin of souls.

Amen.



NICENO-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

[bow during the next line]

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen

WEEKLY PRAYERS & READINGS

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Turn your eyes, O God, our shield;
and look on the face of your anointed one;
one day within your courts
is better than a thousand elsewhere.

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of Proverbs

Come and eat my bread; drink the wine I have prepared.

Wisdom has built herself a house,
she has erected her seven pillars,
she has slaughtered her beasts, prepared her wine,
she has laid her table.

She has despatched her maidservants
and proclaimed from the city's heights:
'Who is ignorant? Let him step this way.'

To the fool she says,

'Come and eat my bread,

drink the wine I have prepared!

Leave your folly and you will live,
walk in the ways of perception.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 33

Comm: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

All: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad.

Revere the Lord, you his saints.
They lack nothing, those who revere him.
Strong lions suffer want and go hungry
but those who seek the Lord lack no blessing.

Come, children, and hear me
that I may teach you the fear of the Lord.
Who is he who longs for life
and many days, to enjoy his prosperity?

Then keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from speaking deceit.
Turn aside from evil and do good;
seek and strive after peace.

All: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

Be watchful that you may know the will of God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

All who eat my flesh and drink my blood
live in me and I in them, says the Lord.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.

Jesus said to the crowd:

'I am the living bread which has come down from
heaven.

Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever;
and the bread that I shall give
is my flesh, for the life of the world.'

Then the Jews started arguing with one another: 'How can
this man give us his flesh to eat?' they said. Jesus replied:

'I tell you most solemnly,
if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man
and drink his blood,
you will not have life in you.
Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood
has eternal life,

and I shall raise him up on the last day.

For my flesh is real food
and my blood is real drink.

He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood
lives in me
and I live in him.

As I, who am sent by the living Father,
myself draw life from the Father,
so whoever eats me will draw life from me.

This is the bread come down from heaven;
not like the bread our ancestors ate:

they are dead,

but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

With the Lord there is mercy;
in him is plentiful redemption.

NEXT WEEKS READINGS

First Reading: Joshua 24:1-2, 15-18;

Second Reading: Eph 5:21-32;

Gospel: Jn 6:60-69

2018 the Year of Youth:

World Youth Day Madrid, Spain, August 2011

In August 2011, the 26th World Youth Day was convened in the Spanish capital Madrid. On Sunday August 21, Pope Benedict XVI celebrated Mass at the Cuatro Vientos (Four Winds) Air Base. We present here, in two parts, the homily His Holiness gave at that Mass.

At the beginning of the Mass, the Holy Father remarked on the rain that had cut short the vigil prayer the night before. We preface the homily with those remarks.

The theme of WYD Madrid was: "Planted and built up in Jesus Christ, firm in the faith" (1 Colossians 2:7).

Dear Young Friends:

I have been thinking a lot about you during this time in which we have been separated. I hope you have been able to get some sleep in spite of the weather. I am sure that since dawn you have raised up your eyes more than once, and not only your eyes but above all your hearts, turning this occasion into prayer. God turns all things into good. With this confidence and trusting in the Lord who never abandons us, let us begin our Eucharistic celebration, full of enthusiasm and strong in our faith.

Dear Young People,

In this celebration of the Eucharist we have reached the high point of this World Youth Day. Seeing you here, gathered in such great numbers from all parts of the world, fills my heart with joy. I think of the special love with which Jesus is looking upon you. Yes, the Lord loves you and calls you his friends (cf. John 15:15). He goes out to meet you and he wants to accompany you on your journey, to open the door to a life of fulfilment and to give you a share in his own closeness to the Father.

For our part, we have come to know the immensity of his love and we want to respond generously to his love by sharing with others the joy we have received. Certainly, there are many people today who feel attracted by the figure of Christ and want to know him better. They realise that he is the answer to so many of our deepest concerns. But who is he really? How can someone who lived on this earth so long ago have anything in common with me today?

The Gospel we have just heard (Matthew 16:13-20) suggests two different ways of knowing Christ. The first is an impersonal knowledge, one based on current opinion.

When Jesus asks: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" the disciples answer: "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets". In other words, Christ is seen as yet another religious figure, like those who came before him. Then Jesus turns to the disciples and asks them: "But who do you say that I am?" Peter responds with what is the first confession of faith: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God". Faith is more than just empirical or historical facts; it is an ability to grasp the mystery of Christ's person in all its depth.

Yet faith is not the result of human effort, of human reasoning, but rather a gift of God: "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven". Faith starts with God, who opens his heart to us and invites us to share in his own divine life. Faith does not simply provide information about who Christ is; rather, it entails a personal relationship with Christ, a surrender of our whole person, with all our understanding, will and feelings, to God's self-revelation. So Jesus' question: "But who do you say that I am?", is ultimately a challenge to the disciples to make a personal decision in his regard. Faith in Christ and discipleship are strictly interconnected.

And, since faith involves following the Master, it must become constantly stronger, deeper and more mature, to the extent that it leads to a closer and more intense relationship with Jesus. Peter and the other disciples also had to grow in this way, until their encounter with the Risen Lord opened their eyes to the fullness of faith.

Dear young people, today Christ is asking you the same question which he asked the Apostles: "Who do you say that I am?" Respond to him with generosity and courage, as befits young hearts like your own. Say to him: "Jesus, I know that you are the Son of God, who have given your life for me. I want to follow you faithfully and to be led by your word. You know me and you love me. I place my trust in you and I put my whole life into your hands. I want you to be the power that strengthens me and the joy which never leaves me."

Jesus responds to Peter's confession by speaking of the Church: "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church." Jesus builds the Church on the rock of the faith of Peter, who confesses that Christ is God.