

Catholic Parish of Bacchus Marsh

St Bernard's Bacchus Marsh / Our Lady Help of Christians, Korobeit

61 Lerderderg Street, Bacchus Marsh 3340

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St B

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Parish Priest: Fr Fabian Smith
Assistant Priests: Fr Patrick Bradford & Fr John Paul Mount
Parish Office Staff: Dolores Turcsan & Naim Chdid
Parish Office Hours: Tues–Thu 9:00am–1:00pm, Fri 10:00am–2:00pm



Third Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year B 21st January 2018

“Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.” – Mark 1:17

Jesus' call to “Follow me” is a call to all Christians! The call is in the here and now, in our present circumstances, not when we think we are “ready” or have everything in order. Good stewardship of our God-given gifts means that things aren't always going to go according to our schedule and that God has a much better plan in store for each of us.

MASS & DEVOTION TIMES THIS WEEK

Please note that due to the repairs being carried out to St Bernard's Church, all Masses and Devotions will be held in the Parish Centre over the next few weeks, until advised further.

St Bernard's

1 hour Adoration before every **weekday** Mass (except January).

Monday 22 nd	no Mass
Tuesday 23 rd	5:30pm
Wednesday 24 th	9:30am
Thursday 25 th	9:30am
Friday 26 th	9:30am Australia Day
Saturday 27 th	5:00pm Vigil
Sunday 28 th	8:30am 10:00am

Our Lady Help of Christians

Saturday 27th 6:30pm Mass

RECONCILIATION – 1ST RITE

Saturday 4:15pm St Bernard's
Saturday 4:45pm St Anthony's

ROSARY is held 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 First Friday: 2nd February 2018

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION is held on the **first Friday** of the month (except January) from 10:00am to 7:00pm. All are welcome to come along and spend some time with the Lord.
Next Adoration: 2nd February 2018

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

O sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.

FIRST READING JONAH 3:1-5, 10

The people of Nineveh renounced their evil ways.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM PSALMS 24:4-9. R. v. 4

R. Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Lord, make me know your ways. Lord, teach me your paths.

Make me walk in your truth, and teach me, for you are God my saviour.

Remember your mercy, Lord, and the love you have shown from of old. In your love remember me, because of your goodness, O Lord.

The Lord is good and upright. He shows the path to those who stray, he guides the humble in the right path; he teaches his way to the poor.

R. Teach me your ways, O Lord.

SECOND READING 1 CORINTHIANS 7:29-31

The world as we know it is passing away.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION MARK 1:15

Alleluia, Alleluia!

The kingdom of God is near: believe the Good News!

Alleluia!

GOSPEL MARK 1:14-20

Repent, and believe the Good News.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Look toward the Lord and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY is held every Sunday during 10:00am Mass (except January). Children's Liturgy will resume in February 2018.

SENIOR PARISHIONERS' MASS is held on the **third Friday** of the month (except January) in the Parish Centre at 10:30am. Everybody is welcome, not just the seniors. **Next Seniors' Mass: 16th February 2018**

PROVIDENCE MASS

The Village, 5-7 Griffith Street, Maddingley
 Mass is held on the **second Friday** of the month (except January) at 11:00am.
Next Mass: 9th February 2018

BAPTISM PREPARATION PROGRAM

is held on the **fourth Sunday** of the month in the Parish Centre at 11:15am.
Next Program: 28th January 2018
 Registration forms can be downloaded from our website: www.pol.cam.org.au/bacchusmarsh. Bring completed Registration Form with a copy of your child's Birth Certificate to the program.
Please note: Both parents and Godparents are required to attend the program.

MORNING TEA is held on the **first Sunday** of the month (except January) in the Parish Centre after 10:00am Mass.
Next Morning Tea: 4th February 2018
Host: Parish Pastoral Council

Parish Centre Bookings

Tel: 5367 3427 Mon-Fri 9:00am to 6:00pm
 Hall Managers: Marie & Terry Casey

RECENTLY DECEASED

Fr Brian Thomas Murray

ANNIVERSARIES

Michael Abraham, Hayden Butler, Barry Dean, Sally Jacobs, Gerald Shanahan, Billie Watson, Fr John Woodcock.

Prayers for the Sick & Frail

(please let us know when your loved one is no longer required on this list)

John Anderson, Noah Barlow, Dudley Baddeley, Michael Barrett, 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, Michael Larkin, Marie Maloney, Patricia Marechal, Debbie Marshall, Jordanis Maryo, Pauline McDonald, Ian McKechnie, Marcus Meno, Tess Mercieca, 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, Mitchell Tung, John Van Orsouw, Angela Vicum, Louis Vogels, Barry Walsh, Mary & Michael Walsh, Carol Wells, Cath Wheelahan, Jayne Wilkins, Nils Wyren, Patricia Yazbek, Betty Young, Hannah Young, Jessica Yue.

MINISTRIES 20 th & 21 st January 2018			
Mass Times	5:00pm Sat Vigil	8:30am Sun	10:00am Sun
Readers	John Thorne	Volunteer	Volunteer
Eucharist Ministers	Volunteer	Volunteer	Volunteer
Altar Servers	(as noted in the roster)		
Piety	20 th January 21 st January	Mandy Harrington Jan & Colm Carragher	
Counters #2	John Tung, Lucille Wheelahan, Jennifer Taylor		

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 two lines] 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

MINISTRIES 27 th & 28 th January 2018			
Mass Times	5:00pm Sat Vigil	8:30am Sun	10:00am Sun
Readers	Trish Davine	Peter Lafranchi / Margaret Love	James Waters
Eucharist Ministers	Mary Beaton	Brendan Harrison	Jenny Kearney
Altar Servers	(as noted in the roster)		
Piety	27 th January 28 th January	Carmel Shea Jan Farmelo	
Counters #3	Cheryl Rogers, Lyn Shea, Graham Hooper, Michael Love, Sean Giani, Margaret Love		
Church Grounds January	Front Garden: Volunteer Back/Side Garden: Volunteer Parish Centre/Carpark/Pines: John Tung Back Paddock: Ron Geurts		
Church Flowers		POF January	Dolores Turcsan
Readings	First Reading Deut 18:15-20	Resp. Psalm Ps 94:1-2, 6-9 R. v. 9	Second Reading 1 Cor 7:32-35

2018 is the Year of Youth: The Theological Virtues V – Love

Without qualification, without ifs, ands, or buts, God's word tells us, straight as a left jab, that love is the greatest thing there is (1 Corinthians 13: 13). "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Love is God's essence, his whole being. Everything in him is love. Even his justice is love. St Paul identifies "the justice of God" in Romans 1:17 with the most unjust event in all history, deicide, the Crucifixion: for that was God's great act of love.

But no word is more misunderstood in our society than the word love. One of the most useful books we can read is C.S. Lewis' unpretentious little masterpiece, "The Four Loves". There, he clearly distinguishes agape, the kind of love Christ taught and showed, from storge (natural affection or liking), eros (sexual desire), and philia (friendship). It is agape that is the greatest thing in the world.

The old word for agape in English was "charity". Unfortunately, that word now means to most people simply handouts to beggars. But the word "love" won't do either. It means to most people either sexual love (eros) or a feeling of affection (storge), or a vague love-in-general. Perhaps it is necessary to insist on the Greek word agape (pronounced ah-gah-pay) even at the risk of sounding snobbish or scholarly, so that we do not confuse this most important thing in the world with something else and miss it, for there is enormous misunderstanding about it in our society.

The **first** and most usual misunderstanding of agape is to confuse it with a feeling. Our feelings are precious, but agape is more precious. Feelings come to us, passively; agape comes from us, actively, by our free choice. We are not responsible for our feeling—we can't help how we feel—but we are responsible for our agape or lack of it, eternally responsible, for agape comes from us; feelings come from wind, weather, and digestion. Liking is a feeling. But agape is more than strong liking. Only a fool would command someone to feel a certain way. God commands us to love, and God is no fool.

Jesus had different feelings towards different people. But he loved them all equally and absolutely. But how can we love someone if we don't like him? Easy—we do it to ourselves all the time. We don't always have tender, comfortable feelings about ourselves; sometimes we feel foolish, stupid, asinine, or wicked. But we always love ourselves: we always seek our own good. Indeed, we feel dislike towards ourselves, we berate ourselves, precisely because we love ourselves; because we care about our good, we are impatient with our bad.

God is agape, and agape is not feeling. So God is not feeling. That does not make him or agape cold and abstract. Just the opposite: God is love itself; feeling is the dribs and drabs of love received passively. God cannot fall in love for the same reason water cannot get wet: it is wet. Love itself cannot receive love as a passivity, only spread it as an activity. God is love in action, not love in dreams. Feelings are like dreams: easy, passive, spontaneous. Agape is hard and precious like a diamond.

This brings us to a **second** and related misunderstanding. Agape's object is always the concrete individual, not the abstraction called humanity. Love of humanity is easy because humanity does make inconvenient demands. You never find humanity on your doorstep, stinking and begging.

Jesus commands us to love not humanity but our neighbour, all our neighbours, the real individuals we meet, just as he did. He died for me and for you, not for humanity. The Cross has our names on it, not the name "humanity". When Jesus called himself the Good Shepherd, he said he "calls his own sheep by name" (John 10:3). The Gospel comes to you not in a newspaper with a Xeroxed label, "Dear Occupant", but in a handwritten envelope personally addressed to you, as a love letter from God to you alone. One of the saints says that Jesus would have done everything he did and suffered everything he suffered even if you were the only person who had sinned, just for you. More than that, he did! This is no "if"; this is fact. His loving eyes saw you from the Cross. Each of his five wounds were lips speaking your name.

A **third**, related, misunderstanding about love is to confuse it with kindness, which is only one of its attributes. Kindness is the desire to relieve another's suffering. Love is the willing of another's good. A father can spank his child out of love. And God is a father. It is painfully obvious that God is not mere kindness, for he does not remove all suffering.

The more we love someone, the more our love goes beyond kindness. We are merely kind to pets, and therefore we consent that our pets be put to death, "to put them out of their misery", when they are suffering. Victoria is about to legalise euthanasia, and this evil too stems from the confusion between love and kindness. We are kind to strangers but demanding of those we love. If a stranger informed you that he was a drug addict, you would probably try to reason with him in a kind and gentle way; but if your son or daughter said that to you, you would probably do a lot of shouting and screaming.

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A **fourth** misunderstanding about love is the confusion between “God is love” and “love is God”. The worship of love instead of the worship of God involves two deadly mistakes. First, it uses the word God only as another word for love. God is thought of as a force or energy rather than as a person. Second, it divinises the love we already know instead of showing us a love we don’t know.

To understand this point, consider that “A is B” does not mean the same as “A equals B”. If A = B, then B = A, but if A is B, that does not mean that B is A. “That house is wood” does not mean “wood is that house”. “An angel is spirit” does not mean the same as “spirit is an angel”. When we say “A is B”, we begin with a subject, A, that we assume our hearer already knows, and then we add a new predicate to it. “Mother is sick” means “You know mother well. Let me tell you something you don’t know about her: she’s sick.”

So, “God is love” means: “Let me tell you something new about the God you know: he is essential love, made of love, through and through.” But “Love is God” means “Let me tell you something about the love you already know, your own human love: that is God. That is the ultimate reality. That is as far as anything can ever go. Seek no further for God.” In other words, “God is love” is the profoundest thing we have ever heard. But “love is God” is deadly nonsense.

A **fifth** misunderstanding about love is the idea that you can be in love with love. No, you cannot, any more than you can have faith in faith, or hope in hope, or see sight. Love is an act, a force, or an energy, but persons are more than that. What we love with agape can only be a person, the realest thing there is, because a person is the image of God, who is ultimate reality, and God’s name is I Am, the name for a person. If anyone says they are in love with love, that love is just a feeling.

A **sixth** misunderstanding about love is the idea that “God is love” is unrelated to dogma, especially to the doctrine of the Trinity. Everyone can agree that “God is love”, it seems, but the Trinity is a tangled dogma for an esoteric elite, isn’t it?

No. If God is not a Trinity, God is not love. For love requires three things: a lover, a beloved, and a relationship between them. If God were only one person, he could be a lover, but not love itself. The Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father, and the Spirit is the love proceeding from both, from all eternity. If that were not so, God would need us, would be incomplete without us, without someone to love. Then his creating us would not be wholly unselfish, but selfish, from his own need.

Faith is like an anchor. That’s why it must be conservative, even a “stick in the mud”, like an anchor. Hope is like a compass or a navigator. It gives us direction, and it takes its bearings from the stars. That’s why it must be forward-looking. Love is like the sail, spread to the wind. It is the actual energy of our journey. That’s why it must be liberal, open to the Spirit’s wind, generous.

Finally, there is the mind-boggling mystery of the intrinsic paradox of agape: somehow in agape you give yourself away, not just your time or work or possessions or even your body. You put yourself in your own hands and hand it over to another. And when you do this unthinkable thing, another unthinkable thing happens: you find yourself in losing yourself. You begin to be when you give yourself away. You find that a new and more real self has somehow been given to you. When you are a donor, you mysteriously find yourself a recipient—of the very gift you gave away.

There is more: nothing else is really yours. Your health, your works, your intelligence, your possessions—these are not what they seem. They are all hostage to fortune, on loan, insubstantial. You discover that when you learn who God is. Face to face with God in prayer, not just a proper concept of God, you find that you are nothing. All the saints say this: you are nothing. The closer you get to God, the more you see this, the more you shrink in size.

Those who scorn God think they’re number one. Those who have the popular idea of God think they’re “good people”. Those who have a merely mental orthodoxy know they’re real but finite creatures, made in God’s image but flawed by sin. Those who really begin to pray find that, compared with God, they are motes of dust in the sun.

Who’s right? How shall we evaluate this insight? Unless God is the Father of lies (the ultimate blasphemy), the saints are right. Our very existence is sheer gift. Think about the fact that you were created, made out of nothing. If a sculptor gives a block of marble the gift of a fine shape, the shape is a gift, but the marble’s existence is not. That is the marble’s own. But nothing is our own because we were made out of nothing. Our very existence is a gift from God to no one, for we were not there before he created us. There is no receiver of the gift distinct from the gift itself. We are God’s gifts.

So the saints are right. If I am nothing, nothing that is mine is anything. Nothing is mine by nature. But one thing is mine by my free choice: the self I give away in love. That is the thing even God cannot do for me. It is my choice. C.S. Lewis, when asked which of his many library books he thought he would have in heaven, replied: “Only the ones I gave away on earth and never got back.” The same is true of our very self. It is like a ball in a game of catch: throw it and it will come back to you; hold onto it and that ends the game.