



St Anthony's Parish



St Bernard's Parish

67-75 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
OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, KOROBET
309 MYRNIONG-KOROBET ROAD 3341

The 15th Sunday In Ordinary Time

Year A

12th July 2020

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Fabian Smith

ASSISTANT PRIESTS: Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint /Father Marcus Goulding

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Lesley Morffew Mon Tue Wed & Fri 9am-4pm

Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson Tue-Thu 10am-2pm

Parish Office Hours: phone/email contact only

Father Fabian 0403 435 471

Fr Lucas 0478 768 141 /Fr Marcus 0468 367 893

Email: meltonsouth@cam.org.au

Website: www.stanthonyofpadua.com.au

St Anthony's School Principal: Damien Schuster

Wilson Road, Melton South 3338

Phone: 8099 7800

Email: principal@sameltonsth.catholic.edu.au

Website: www.sameltonsth.catholic.edu.au

Catholic Regional College - Melton (Years 7-12)

Principal: Marlene Jorgensen **Phone:** 8099 6000

Website: www.crcmelton.com.au

ST BERNARD'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Dolores Turcsan Wed-Fri 9am-1pm

Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson Tue-Thu 10am-2pm

Sacramental Coordinator/ Bookkeeper: Naim Chdid

Tue & Fri 10am-1pm

Parish Office Hours: phone/email contact only

Father Fabian 0403 435 471

Fr Lucas 0478 768 141/Fr Marcus 0468 367 893

Email: bacchusmarsh@cam.org.au

Website: www.stbernardsbacchusmarsh.com.au

St Bernard's School Principal: Emilio Scalzo

19a 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
Lillian Christian - Vice Chair	0400 441 257
Stephen Fernandes	0439 743 533
Amy Honrade	03 9747 0078
Natalie Howard - Chair	0410 478 046
Villy Julita	0403 751 343
Rose Ma'ae	0431 386 473
Kim Nguyen	0431 035 980

EX-OFFICIO:

Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint, Fr Marcus Goulding
and Damien Schuster Council Secretary: Judy Johnson

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

Cathy Belcher - Vice Chair	0431 082 886
Shane Cook -School Advisory Board	0419 999 052
Peter Farren	0418 594 501
Moir Ross	0400 675 056
Aaron Russell	0401 927 502
John Thorne - Secretary	5310 6692
James Waters - Chair	0403 822 795

EX-OFFICIO:

Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint, Fr Marcus Goulding
and Emilio Scalzo

CHILD SAFETY OFFICERS

Coordinator: Godwin Barton (0425 734 449)

Officers: Karina Dunne & Lorraine Tellis

[PARISHIONER'S FIRST COLLECTION/SECOND COLLECTION](#)

Parishioners who normally give cash each weekend for the collections, if they wish to donate, are now able to go to the link below and make their payments online.

The link to the St Anthony's Parish is: [CDFpay for St Anthony's Parish, Melton South](#)

The link to the St Bernard's Parish is: [CDFpay for St Bernard's Parish, Bacchus Marsh](#)

Please put your name and thanksgiving number if you know it as a reference. Thank you.

MASS AND DEVOTIONS

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Anointing of the sick can be organised with the Priests directly, please call them.

Phone numbers for the Priests are listed on the front page of the newsletter.

MASS TIMES—LIVE STREAMING FROM ST ANTHONY'S CHURCH

Monday-Saturday: 5.30pm Adoration/Rosary/Benediction
6.00pm Mass

Sunday: 10.30am Mass

MASSES AVAILABLE ON LIVE STREAMING— FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE

St Anthony's Parish are live streaming Masses on YouTube.

The Masses are also being live streamed on Facebook. You can watch Masses by going to the website: stanthonyofpadua.com.au. Click the link for Live Masses. The Masses are coming through the St Anthony's Facebook page—St Anthony of Padua Catholic Church Melton South (you will need to have a Facebook account to be able to view the Masses).

ST ANTHONY'S FACEBOOK

Please visit our Facebook page.:

[St Anthony of Padua](#)

[Catholic Church Melton South Live](#)

Masses streaming from St
Anthony's daily.



PARISHIONER'S FIRST COLLECTION/SECOND COLLECTION OR PARISH APPEALS

Parishioners who normally give cash each weekend for the collections, if they wish to donate, are now able to go to the link below and make their payments online.

Parishioners are able to make quick and easy recurring thanksgiving payments or can choose a one-off offering from the comfort of their own home.

When making an offertory online, parishioners have the option to choose which collection they would like to partake in, as they usually would during Sunday Mass - first collection, second collection or a parish appeal.

The link to the St Anthony's Parish is: [CDFpay for St Anthony's Parish, Melton South](#)

The link to the St Bernard's Parish is: [CDFpay for St Bernard's Parish, Bacchus Marsh](#)

Please put your name and thanksgiving number if you know it as a reference. Thank you.

EXTRAORDINARY FORM MASS (1962 LATIN)

Thank you to all those who have responded to our survey about the possibility of scheduling a regular Extraordinary Form Mass. The overwhelming majority of responses have been extremely positive and enthusiastic; nevertheless, we want to take time to address the concerns some people have raised. We will continue to consider this pastoral initiative over the weeks ahead. Stay tuned.

A CORONAVIRUS HEALING PRAYER

Jesus Christ, you travelled through towns and villages "curing every disease and illness". At your command, the sick were made well.

Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love.

Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care.

Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbours from helping one another.

Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders.

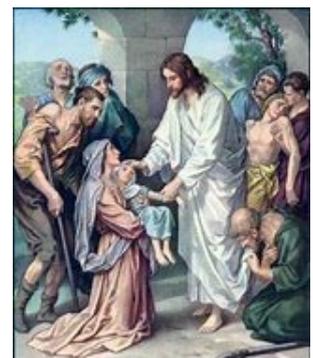
Jesus Christ, healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow.

Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection and peace.

Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare.

In place of our anxiety, give us your peace.

Jesus Christ, heal us. Amen.



Source: Divine Mercy Publications Pty Ltd



St Anthony's Parish

Dear Parishioners,

We are living through extraordinary times. Each day is a changing reality, and your continued patience and strength in these difficult times is greatly appreciated. Care of our people is of utmost importance as we enter into a six-week lockdown. Please know that I am praying for each of you at this time. You are remembered at the altar every day when I am offering mass. I am here for you, so please do not hesitate to contact me on 0403 435 471 when you need to speak to me. Please remember me in your prayers.

With our church closed again for a period of six weeks we will continue to live stream masses seven days a week. Monday – Saturday. We will be having exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 5.30pm while praying the Rosary which will be followed with Benediction and Mass at 6pm. Sunday mass will be at 10.30am.

Despite these challenges, we cannot lose heart. We must continue to bring to the Lord in prayer all those who suffer the consequences of the current pandemic, that God may grant health to the sick, strength to those who care for them, comfort to families and salvation to all the victims who have died.

I will be available in the Parish office at St Anthony's Tuesday – Saturday from 9.30am to 1pm. St Anthony's parish staff will be working their usual hours from home.

Bacchus Marsh is not part of metropolitan Melbourne and therefore not currently subject to the lock down. Masses will therefore continue to be celebrated at St Bernard's and the parish of St Bernard's will continue to operate as it has been to date.

Fr Marcus is now residing at St Bernard's with Fr Lucas. From Tuesday 14th July 2020, two Masses will be offered from Tuesday to Friday.

To ensure we comply with Archdiocesan and Government safety measures, Mass attendees will be required to produce their license or other document indicating their place of residence to be admitted entrance to the Church. **People from locked-down suburbs cannot be admitted entrance and should not attempt to book for Mass.**

May the Peace of Christ be with you

Fr Fabian

Parish Priest

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH OFFICE

Parishioners please be advised that the St Anthony's Parish Office will be closed during the COVID-19 Stage 3 lockdown. The Parish Staff will be working from home. Please contact us for any assistance you need.

Lesley Morffew Parish Secretary **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9.00am-4.00pm**

Email Lesley: meltonsouth@cam.org.au or call 9747 9692

Judy Johnson Admin Assistant **Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 10.00am-2.00pm**

Email Judy: judyparishnews@gmail.com or call 0414 007 009

St Bernard's
Parish



MASSES CONTINUE AT ST BERNARD'S, BACCHUS MARSH

Dear Parishioners,

Bacchus Marsh is not part of metropolitan Melbourne and therefore not currently subject to the lock down. Masses will therefore continue to be celebrated at St Bernard's and the parish of St Bernard's will continue to operate as it has been to date. Fr Marcus is now residing at St Bernard's with Fr Lucas. From Tuesday 14th July 2020, two Masses will be offered from Tuesday to Friday.

To ensure we comply with Archdiocesan and Government safety measures, Mass attendees may be required to produce their license or other document indicating their place of residence to be admitted entrance to the Church. People from locked-down suburbs cannot be admitted entrance and should not attempt to book for Mass.

We continue to be able to accommodate 20 people at each Mass. Registration for Mass is still required and can be done at www.stbernardsbacchusmarsh.com.au or on 0432 055 992 for those who cannot access the internet. Parishioners are welcome to attend Mass once per day. Confessions will be heard half an hour before Mass.

From Tuesday, 14th July 2020 Masses are being offered at St Bernard's at the following times:

Sunday	8.30am & 10.00am
Tuesday	7.30am & 6.00pm
Wednesday	7.30am & 9.30am
Thursday	7.30am & 6.00pm
Friday	7.30am & 9.30am
Saturday	5.00pm (Vigil of Sunday)

We thank you for your cooperation during this very challenging time. We ask your continued prayers for those of us in lockdown. Please continue to bring to the Lord in prayer all those who suffer the consequences of the current pandemic, that God may grant health to the sick, strength to those who care for them, comfort to families and salvation to all the victims who have died.

As Dolores and Naim live in the metropolitan area and are subject to the lockdown they will be working their usual office hours from home.

May the Peace of Christ be with you

Fr Fabian

Parish Priest

ST BERNARD'S PARISH OFFICE

Parishioners please be advised that the St Bernard's Parish Office will be closed during the COVID-19 Stage 3 lockdown. The Parish Staff will be working from home. Please contact us for any assistance you need.

Dolores Turcsan Parish Secretary **Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 9.00am-1.00pm**
Email Dolores bacchusmarsh@cam.org.au or call **0432 055 992**.

Naim Chdid Sacramental Coordinator/ Bookkeeper **Tuesday & Friday 10.00am-1.00pm**
Email Naim bacchusmarsh@cam.org.au

Judy Johnson Admin Assistant **Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 10.00am-2.00pm**
Email Judy: judyparishnews@gmail.com or call 0414 007 009

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

ST ANTHONY'S

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for those whose death anniversaries occur at this time:

Salvina Azzopardi, John Burton, Clive La Rose, Charlie Magri, Lawrens Tanti Snr, Grace Vella & Mary Abela Wadge.

Please pray for the Sick:

Jean Barnett, Nickolia & Klara Butkovic, Maria Caruana, Mary Caruana, Liza Fernandes, Judy Layton, Peter Manicaro, Reg Marslen, Kevin Michael, Veronica Michael, Wanda Novak, John Osborne, Peter Poole, Irene Rahilly, Catherine Roberts, Peter Roberts, Pat Roberts, Charlie Spiteri, Dolores Turcsan, Clint Abela Wadge, & 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)

FATIMA STATUE

These families are praying together for the mission of the Parish:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| Group 1: Paul & Sonia Zarb | 0477 813 272 |
| Group 2: Ben & Geetha | 0431 572 577 |
| Group 3: Indika & Mangala Silva | 0410 677 692 |



ST BERNARD'S

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

FAITH ON FIRE PRAYER GROUP

Every fortnight on Thursday at 7.00pm. We pray the Rosary, Stations of the cross, Divine Mercy chaplet and do a Bible reading and discussion.

Next meeting **To be advised**

We pray for those whose death anniversaries occur at this time:

Kevin Barry, Brother Jason Duck, Victor Carter, Kitty Marshall, John Spice & Leonard Trask.

Please pray for the Sick:

Noah Barlow, Chaiel Balcombe, Michael Barrett, Peter Bennett, Steven Braszel, Kevin Bridges, Tina Bower, John Canty, Fred Capuano, Gary Ching, Josephine Cilia, Robyn Cola, Ted Cooling, Marianne Cuskelly, Lindsay & Kathleen Dally, Judy Delahey, Jack DeLuca, Allison Evans, Helen Evans, Justin Fernandez, Pasquale Gagliarbi, Mario Galea, Cynthia Goodyear, Gwen Green, Joe Gristi, Adam Hillier, Elle Hillman, Kiahni Holamotutama, Alicia Holborn, Chaiel Jackson, Matthew Jansen, David Johnson, David Kasprzak, Michael Larkin, Marie Maloney, Patricia Marechal, Debbie Marshall, Jordanis Mary Pauline McDonald, Ian McKechnie, Marcus Meno, Paul Mullin, Arthur Pape, Michael Paterson, Georgia Peacock, Bev Pickett, Mitchell Prendergast, Peter Roberts, Ken Shaw, Terry Sims, Marian Smith, Elizabeth Stehmann, Susan Trist, Dolores Turcsan, Stephen Van Eede, John Van Orsouw, Angela Vicum, Louis Vogels, Barry Walsh, Mary Walsh, Cath Wheelahan, Jayne Wilkins, Patricia Yazbek, & Betty Young.

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

NEO-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

Along the track

Whoever has ears, let them hear

(Matthew 11: 15)

Jesus spoke to a variety of people who could not or did not want to hear. It was not only the Scribes and Pharisees who came with their own agendas, wanting to trap him, to discount or disprove what he was saying, to quibble over words. They were ready with the answer before He had time to speak. Even some of those who had followed Jesus found what he was saying just too hard to hear and they walked away (Jn 6:66). Hence the 'whoever has ears', whoever is open to listening, open to new ways of understanding. Many weren't. "Therefore", Jesus said "I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear.... Matt 13:13"

I wonder how we would go if we were part of that audience two thousand years ago. Would we have the ears to hear? Would we be open to 'understand'?

When you look around, almost everyone seems to be 'listening' these days. Go for a walk or ride on public transport, so many people are connected to some listening device. But are they hearing? Can you remember the last conversation you had when you didn't check or respond to your texts or wonder what you are going to have for dinner tonight or look over the shoulder of the other to check who's around, or wonder when you could get back to what you were doing?

The busy-ness of our lives today makes us perennially preoccupied and often we don't give proper attention to the person who is talking. Do you ever notice people looking around when someone is talking to them, impatient to find someone else to talk to or rehearsing what they are going to say in response. Do you find yourself or the one you are talking to saying "yes, but...?" Do you find yourself wanting to jump in with advice, a possible solution perhaps? Body language, tone of voice, posture and gestures convey just about as much as the words. What did Jesus do when people tried to trick him; for example when some wished to stone the woman accused of adultery?

"Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?" They were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground..Jn 8:6"

Writers and preachers still speculate as to what he was writing – what is more important is how powerful was that gesture of disinterest. The 'conversation' was over – they walked away.

People have always wanted someone to listen but genuine listening means hearing and understanding as well. But no-one is 'the perfect listener'. Our prejudices and preconceptions can get in the road. Consider how some people reacted to Pope Francis' statement "who am I to judge?" or to his messages about the causes of poverty or climate change! "He just doesn't understand how the system works", or "He's been hijacked by the left" are not uncommon responses. Active listening asks us, as far as humanly possible, to leave aside for the moment our own point of view and to be open to the other person, to 'tune in'

to the other. That doesn't mean we always agree but it does mean we make a genuine attempt to hear what she or he is saying and why, to show some empathy. That is a great gift – to the person talking but also to the one listening. We can be changed, our understanding of the other enhanced, we may even see the situation from quite another perspective.

Genuine listening doesn't always come easily – it takes practice. The Listening Centre in California (did you ever think we would need one of those!?) recommends that we be silent for at least a few minutes every day. Intentional silence it is called. Just take some time out, stop and let the mind roam free. Then try to blot 'stuff' out and enjoy the peace. That's not new – such moments of silence have been a feature of life for hundreds of years for those in places of religious formation (nuns, brothers and priests). That didn't always make them good listeners though. It takes a certain attitude, a daily commitment. Those who try this say not only does it become a restful moment in the day, it can help us resolve our own problems.

So here's some free advice!

- If we are to become genuine listeners and maybe even hearers, being patient is the first priority. Good listening takes time – not everyone is as articulate or concise as we are!
- Being present to the other is an essential ingredient in this encounter – that means we stop talking and avoid interrupting, even when we feel we have the solution. Often we haven't heard the full story yet! Pausing before speaking is a good discipline to learn. Asking 'is there anything else?' can make us take more time to listen.
- Don't be afraid of silence in any conversation
- Making sure our body language shows we are listening is a big help. People can be very sensitive at these times and our body language needs to be too.
- We listen to understand, we don't need to agree. It's a tough call to try to put aside our own preconceived notions, our solutions, our prejudices, our tendency to judge the other. Listening with an open mind is not easy – that too takes practice.
- It's always good to ask yourself, what did I learn from this conversation? About the other? About myself, my ideas, my beliefs, perhaps even my prejudices?
- Remember that listen and silent have the same letters.

St James offered this advice:

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and even slower to become angry (James 1:19).

Regards
Jim Quillinan

Email: jquillinan@dcsi.net.au

LITURGY OF THE WORD

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

As for me, in justice I shall behold your face;
I shall be filled with the vision of your glory.

FIRST READING Isaiah 55:10-11

Thus says the Lord: 'As the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 64

Comm: The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

All: The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

You care for the earth, give it water,
you fill it with riches.

Your river in heaven brims over
to provide its grain.

And thus you provide for the earth;
you drench its furrows,
you level it, soften it with showers,
you bless its growth.

You crown the year with your goodness.
Abundance flows in your steps,
in the pastures of the wilderness it flows.

The hills are girded with joy,
the meadows covered with flocks,
the valleys are decked with wheat,
They shout for joy, yes, they sing.

All: The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

SECOND READING Romans 8:18-23

I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God. From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

NEXT WEEK'S READING

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Wis 12:13, 16-19;

Second Reading: Rom 8:26-27

Gospel: Mt 13:24-43



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower;
all who come to him will live for ever.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 13:1-23

Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the beach, and he told them many things in parables. He said, 'Imagine a sower going out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth of earth; but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Listen, anyone who has ears!'

Then the disciples went up to him and asked, 'Why do you talk to them in parables?' 'Because' he replied 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed to you, but they are not revealed to them. For anyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. The reason I talk to them in parables is that they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding. So in their case this prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled:

You will listen and listen again, but not understand,
see and see again, but not perceive.

For the heart of this nation has grown coarse,
their ears are dull of hearing, and they have shut their eyes,
for fear they should see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their heart,
and be converted
and be healed by me.

'But happy are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear! I tell you solemnly, many prophets and holy men longed to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it.

'You, therefore, are to hear the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom without understanding, the evil one comes and carries off what was sown in his heart: this is the man who received the seed on the edge of the path. The one who received it on patches of rock is the man who hears the word and welcomes it at once with joy. But he has no root in him, he does not last; let some trial come, or some persecution on account of the word, and he falls away at once. The one who received the seed in thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this world and the lure of riches choke the word and so he produces nothing. And the one who received the seed in rich soil is the man who hears the word and understands it; he is the one who yields a harvest and produces now a hundredfold, now sixty, now thirty.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for her young;
by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.
Blessed are they who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.

The life of Catholic worship and piety XXV

Signs and Symbols in the Mass

Consider the objects that we use at Mass. We begin with the altar, which represents the body of Christ. The white cloth that covers the altar is Christ's burial garment. When the priest kisses the altar, he is kissing Christ faithfully in contradiction to the kiss of Judas.

The altar is a strong symbol of the meal aspect of the Mass, because the Mass is a sacrificial meal as the Last Supper was. But the altar also looks like a tomb because it holds the relic of a saint. The ancient Christians celebrated Mass over the tombs of the saints and martyrs to unite themselves with them, to ask for their intercession, that they too would be just as faithful as the saints and martyrs had been. That tradition continues today by putting small relics of saints into our altars.

The candles that we use at Mass represent Christ, Who is the light of the world. So, we have candles on the altar where the bread and wine become His body and blood, soul and divinity. We have a candle by the tabernacle where Christ is reposed. And the only other place where we have candles is at the ambo during the reading of the Gospel. The candles remind us that these are the words of Christ and not just words about Christ.

The only two days of the year when we do not have candles at the ambo for the reading of the Gospel are Good Friday and Palm Sunday, and that is because on those two days we read about the passion and death of Christ.

The ambo is a place reserved for the reading of the Sacred Scriptures. It is only from the ambo or from the chair that the priest is normally allowed to preach his homily. He preaches from the ambo because this is where the word of God has just been proclaimed and the homily is an exposition of the word of God. It is intended to be an extension of the word of God, because the priest preaching is standing in the person of Christ.

The reason why the chair is the other appropriate place from which to preach is that the chair is a symbol of authority. That is why kings have thrones. The Latin word for chair is *cathedra*. The cathedral is called such because it houses the bishop's *cathedra*, his chair, his symbol of authority. When a priest is preaching, he is exercising his authority as one ordained to carry out the three-fold work of the Church: to teach, govern, and sanctify.

And though not the last in the rich symbolism present in our liturgy, the last for this discussion are the vestments of the priest. A sure sign that one is at a very formal, ritualised prayer is when one sees a man processing in preceded by a cross and

candles and wearing clothes that one would never see him wearing in the streets. That tells us that something out of the ordinary, something extraordinary, is going to happen here.

As a priest vests for Mass, he is praying certain prayers that remind him of the significance of each vestment. The priest begins by putting on an amice. It goes around his neck and is called his helmet of salvation. It helps him to fight off the temptations of Satan as he is offering the Mass.

Next, he puts on an alb, which derives from the Latin word for "white". This is why the alb is always white. It is a symbol of the priest's purity, so it covers his whole body.

Then the priest puts on a cincture, which is a cord that goes around his waist. This is a sign of his chastity.

You will sometimes see a priest wear a maniple. It hangs from his left arm and is now optional, so it is not often seen anymore. However, the maniple derived from a cloth that the priest would have used to wipe sweat from his brow; so, it symbolises the labour that the priest does in his ministry. Also, since the priest is to imitate the sacrifice of Christ, it is used to wipe the symbolic blood that is a product of that sacrifice.

Then the priest puts on a stole. The stole is a symbol of the priest's authority. It represents the yoke of Christ that the priest carries around his shoulders. A priest always wears a stole when he is exercising his priestly ministry, which is why you see the priests wearing stoles as they come out to distribute Holy Communion, when they baptise, and when they are hearing confessions.

And, finally, the priest puts on a chasuble. The chasuble covers everything else, because the chasuble is a symbol of the priest's charity, which must cover everything else that he does. While his authority exists and is present, it is always cloaked with charity.

All of these signs and symbols remind us that ours is an incarnational religion. The Word became flesh so that we might experience God with all of our senses. As human beings, creatures that are a soul/body composite, the things of the body matter to us. Physical realities are important to our understanding, not just of the natural order, but also of the supernatural order. Our Creator obviously understood that because He made us. So, the invisible God became visible through Jesus Christ. And He continues to help us experience Him, understand Him, see Him, touch Him, taste Him, smell Him, through the eternal Mass that we participate in here on earth.