



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

3rd Sunday of Easter

Year A

26th April 2020

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Fabian Smith

ASSISTANT PRIESTS: Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint /Father Marcus Goulding

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Lesley Morffew
Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson
Parish Office Hours: See Page 3
Father Fabian 0403 435 471
Fr Lucas 0478 768 141

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
Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson
Sacramental Coordinator/ Bookkeeper: Naim Chdid
Parish Office Hours: Tue/Thu/Fri 10.00am-1.00pm
Father Fabian 0403 435 471
Fr Lucas 0478 768 141

Email: bacchusmarsh@cam.org.au
Website: http://pol.org.au/bacchusmarsh/Home.aspx

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
Moira 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 735 449)

Officers: Aloysious Dacunha, 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.

PARISH EVENTS & NOTICES

FATHER MARCUS GOULDING

St Anthony's and St Bernard's Parishes welcomes Father Marcus Goulding.



Fr Marcus Goulding
New Assistant Priest

I began at the parishes of St Anthony of Padua and St Bernard's on Wednesday, 22nd April, 2020 after having served at St Francis Xavier and St Clare, Box Hill for two and a half years. I'm the oldest of three boys – my younger brothers are Nick and Tom – to Fran and John.

Growing up, we moved around a little bit but generally always stayed within the north-eastern suburbs. I attended primary school at St Martin of Tours in Rosanna and secondary school at Viewbank College.

My awareness of my priestly vocation developed gradually. One Sunday in 2003, when I was in grade six, I was altar serving at what was then my home parish, St Martin of Tours in Macleod. I remember looking up at the consecrated host during the elevation and thinking very clearly: 'I wonder if I could do that?' Over the following years, this simple thought gathered strength, snowballing into a lingering question and eventually into a deep conviction. Nevertheless, this process was not guaranteed or automatic. It was only possible because, through God's grace, I was able to respond openly and freely to God's vocational gift. Family, the Mass, adoration, personal prayer, retreats, confession, the Rosary, spiritual direction and the witness of many priests were all important factors that enabled me to understand and freely embrace God's gift.

The strength of my vocation was such that I entered the seminary in 2010 at the age of eighteen, having just completed year twelve. Seminary was an indispensable dimension of my formation for priesthood. It was complimented by my pastoral placements, especially at Sacred Heart, St Albans in 2013 and at Flemington and Kensington in 2017.

Following my priestly ordination in 2017 I was appointed assistant priest to St Francis Xavier and St Clare in Box Hill. Though smaller than Holy Trinity, St Francis and St Clare kept me very busy! We provided chaplaincy to two major hospitals and several nursing homes, as well as our parish school. For the last eighteen months I directed our parish's music program, was heavily involved in our RCIA, and ran a very successful youth group for teenagers on a weekly basis.

I am grateful to Archbishop Comensoli for appointing me to the Parishes and to Fr Fabian for accepting me as his assistant priest. St John Vianney, the patron saint of parish priests, described the priesthood as "the love of the heart of Jesus." It is this love that I hope I can bring you during my time with you.

PROJECT COMPASSION BOXES

Parishioners please note you can return your Project Compassion Boxes to the Parish Office:

St Anthony's: Tue-Thu 9am-4.00pm & Friday 10.00am-1.00pm

St Bernard's: Tue/Thu/Fri 10am-1pm

Thank you.



PARISH EVENTS & NOTICES

RECONCILIATION/ANOINTING OF THE SICK

St Anthony's Parish—Father Fabian/ Father Marcus are available for Reconciliation Tue-Friday 10.00am-1.00pm, also you can arrange a time to see them for Reconciliation outside these hours just give Father Fabian a call.

St Bernard's Parish—Father Lucas is available for Reconciliation Tue-Friday 10.00am-1.00pm, also you can arrange a time to see him outside these hours for Reconciliation, just give him a call.

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.

MASSES AVAILABLE ON LIVE STREAMING

Masses are now being live streamed from the St Anthony's Parish. You can watch Masses by going to the website: stanthonypadua.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).

MASS TIMES—LIVE STREAMING FROM ST ANTHONY'S CHURCH

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

Sunday: 9.30am Mass

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES/RECENT DEATHS & THE SICK

The list of our sick Parishioners and the Death Anniversaries will be placed on the Altar for every Mass, at both Parishes. If you know of anyone who is ill and you would like to add their name to the sick list or if you have recently lost a loved one and would like to add their name to be mentioned at the Mass that is being live streamed please send a text or leave a message for Judy Johnson 0414 007 009 or email judyparishnews@gmail.com.

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.

MASS AT ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL

The 11am Sunday Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral will be televised every week during the COVID-19 restrictions, on Channel 31 (often listed as Channel 44 on digital TVs). Also 'Mass for you at Home' is televised on channel 10 every Sunday at 6am. Please share this news with friends and family who might be limited to TV viewing. Please check you TV guides for changes.

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH OFFICE HOURS- THIS WEEK

Monday- Thursday 9.00am-4.00pm & Friday 10.00am-1.00pm

ST BERNARD'S PARISH OFFICE HOURS-THIS WEEK

Tue/Thu/Fri- 10.00am-1.00pm

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

Email: judyparishnews@gmail.com

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:

George Bonello, Nina Bugeja, Tony Carberry, John Debrincat, Bernie Lavery, Honorato Miranda, Kenneth & Eil Rule, Anne Singleton, Alan Christopher & John Tovia

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)

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:

Muriel Burt, Angela Kuute Minja, Patrick Leonard, Paul Micallef & Margaret Rose.

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, Mary Wadeson, 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)

FATIMA STATUE

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

- Group 1: **Lorraine Tellis** **0437 658 423**
- Group 2: **Gavin & Alison Pereira** **0423 960 538**
- Group 3: **Aubrey & Doreen Smith** **0433 003 322**



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

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.

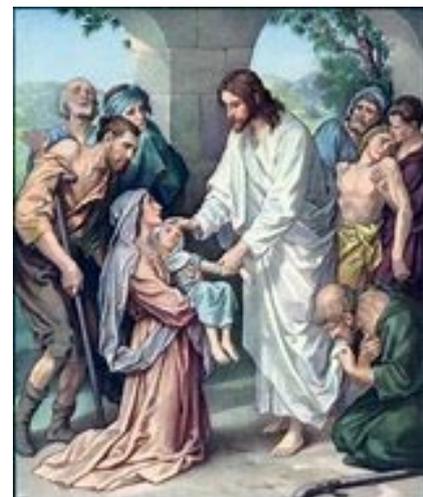
Jesus Christ, healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow.

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.



Along the track

Daily Resurrection

In his book *The Cellist of Sarajevo*, Steven Galloway recounts the story of a man who for twenty-two days, played Adagio in memory of the dead. He played in the same place at the same time each day, in the middle of a war ravaged street where mortars fell and snipers fired unchecked. In the middle of fear and suffering this act of courage raised the spirits of those who lived in this precarious place.

What could this man possibly accomplish by playing in the street? It would not bring anyone back from the dead, wouldn't feed anyone, wouldn't replace one brick. It was a foolish gesture, a pointless exercise. He stares at the cellist and feels himself relax as the music seeps into him... the cellist's dirty tuxedo becomes clean, shoes polished bright as mirrors. The building behind the cellist repairs itself. The scars of bullets and shrapnel are covered by plaster and paint, windows reassemble, clarify and sparkle as the sun reflects off glass. He watches as the city heals itself around him.

None of this happens while he plays of course, but this courageous gesture did bring life and warmth back in the midst of the coldness of hatred and destruction. For this brief time people remembered what was and what could be again. They came to experience hope and where there is hope, there is love and where there is love there is forgiveness, then what has been lost and torn apart can be restored.

Forgiveness is a powerful and transformative force. For both parties. It is an integral part of redemption. Jesus often forgave people when he healed them. That was what was needed, rather than physical relief. Jesus forgave His persecutors on the Cross. That was truly extraordinary. He forgave the thief crucified with him. The resurrected Jesus gave the assembled apostles the power to forgive, even though they were disheartened and planning how to get away. The message of the resurrection is not just about being raised from the dead but about how forgiveness brings new life and hope in times of hurt, disappointment, bitterness, anger and even hatred.

Forgiveness takes courage. Sometimes it is very, very hard to forgive. And one party may not be ready to give or receive. The Cellist risked everything, even life to bring this moment of hope to his city. It was a city divided by hatred and racial as well as

religious tension. As the Cellist played, the writer says, *people around him stand up taller, their faces put on weight and colour, clothes gain lost thread, brighten, smooth out their wrinkles. The city heals itself around him.*

If we just consider the resurrection to be an event in the past or even something we hope and pray for in the future, we miss its true significance. It is an everyday event. We are called to give it life every day, in ourselves and in those around us. We too can make people stand taller, we can bring back colour and movement and wonder and peace to the lives of those around us who need it. Whenever we strive to change sadness into happiness, when we do something to try to heal the broken hearted, to bring hope to those who feel bitter and wronged, to those who feel they have been treated unfairly, to those who have been bruised by those who have lied or treated them without dignity or compassion, we bring the resurrection to life. When we work to bring a little more peace through acts of justice (however mundane they may consider them to be) or assist the sick and the weak, we meet the God of the resurrection and introduce that God to others. And so often they are in desperate need of finding the God of comfort and peace.

We all feel inadequate to the task. We have all failed in what we have done and in what we have chosen not to do. We have inflicted hurt on others, knowingly or unknowingly. We have made mistakes and treated others unfairly. The God of the resurrection offers us forgiveness every day, a new start, a new beginning. The resurrection isn't an historical event – it is rather a life giving force that awakens us to redemption every day.

The cellist stands, picks up his stool and turns away from the street, enters a doorway and is gone. And those who look on know that they will be the ones who rebuild Sarajevo when the time comes. They will put every brick back, replace every window, patch every hole.

And they did. I saw it.

Regards
Jim Quillinan

Email: jquillinan@dcsi.net.au

LITURGY OF THE WORD

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

Cry out with joy to God, all the earth;
O sing to the glory of his name.
O render him glorious praise, alleluia.

FIRST READING Acts 2:14, 22-33

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

It was impossible for him to be held by the power of Hades.

On the day of Pentecost Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed the crowd in a loud voice: 'Men of Israel, listen to what I am going to say: Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God by the miracles and portents and signs that God worked through him when he was among you, as you all know. This man, who was put into your power by the deliberate intention and foreknowledge of God, you took and had crucified by men outside the Law. You killed him, but God raised him to life, freeing him from the pangs of Hades; for it was impossible for him to be held in its power since, as David says of him: I saw the Lord before me always, for with him at my right hand nothing can shake me. So my heart was glad

and my tongue cried out with joy: my body, too, will rest in the hope that you will not abandon my soul to Hades nor allow your holy one to experience corruption. You have made known the way of life to me, you will fill me with gladness through your presence.' 'Brothers, no one can deny that the patriarch David himself is dead and buried: his tomb is still with us. But since he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn him an oath to make one of his descendants succeed him on the throne, what he foresaw and spoke about was the resurrection of the Christ: he is the one who was not abandoned to Hades, and whose body did not experience corruption. God raised this man Jesus to life, and all of us are witness to that. Now raised to the heights by God's right hand, he has received from the Father the Holy Spirit, who was promised, and what you see and hear is the outpouring of that Spirit.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 15

Response: Lord, you will show us the path of life.

All: Lord, you will show us the path of life.

Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.
I say to the Lord: 'You are my God.
O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;
it is you yourself who are my prize.' **R.**

I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart.
I keep the Lord ever in my sight:
since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm. **R.**

And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;
even my body shall rest in safety.
For you will not leave my soul among the dead,
nor let your beloved know decay. **R.**

You will show me the path of life,
and the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand happiness for ever. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 Peter 1:17-21

A reading from the first letter of St Peter

The ransom that was paid to free you was the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ.

If you are acknowledging as your Father one who has no favourites and judges everyone according to what he has done, you must be scrupulously careful as long as you are living away from your home. Remember, the ransom that was paid to free you from the useless way of life your ancestors handed down was not paid in anything corruptible, neither in silver nor gold, but in the precious blood of a lamb without spot or stain, namely Christ; who, though known since before the world was made, has been revealed only in our time, the end of the ages, for your sake. Through him you now have faith in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory for that very reason - so that you would have faith and hope in God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



LITURGY OF THE WORD

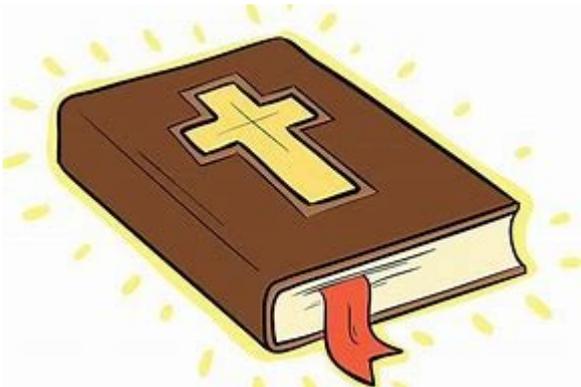
GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Lord Jesus, make your word plain to us:
make our hearts burn with love when you speak.
Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The disciples recognised the Lord Jesus
in the breaking of the bread, alleluia.



NEXT WEEK'S READING-FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

First Reading: Acts 2:14,36-41;
Second Reading: 1 Pet 2:20-25;
Gospel: Jn 10:1-10

GOSPEL Luke 24:13-35

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke
They recognised him at the breaking of the bread.

Two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them, 'What matters are you discussing as you walk along?' They stopped short, their faces downcast. Then one of them, called Cleopas answered him, 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.' 'What things?' he asked. 'All about Jesus of Nazareth' they answered 'who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.' Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?' Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself. When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening' they said 'and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them at the table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?' They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, 'Yes it is true, The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The life of Catholic worship and piety XIV

Ten Misconceptions about the Rosary

4. There is too much to memorise

There's a kind of prejudice against the discipline of prayer these days: Jesus is my best friend, and that's not how I talk to my friends, some people say. But prayer, the Catechism reminds us, always presupposes effort (no. 2725). That means that you can learn how to pray, which is why the Apostles themselves asked Christ to teach them (Luke 11:1). It also means that there are right ways to pray, and wrong ways. And while there is nothing wrong with spontaneous prayer, it is definitely a mistake to go through life without growing in the whole spectrum of skills that prayer at its best demands.

There are hundreds of good books about the skills of prayer that help the soul climb up to God, many written by great saints. No matter when they were written, though, they are all remarkably consistent. You can hardly tell, from what they say and the way they say it, whether a saint wrote in the fifth century or the 15th, the first or the last. That's because the skills of Christian prayer, and the techniques that Christians use to acquire them, haven't changed since the beginning.

These skills become habitual with practice, and they open up whole new horizons of understanding and whole new levels of intimacy with Christ that you can't really get otherwise. And as you get better at prayer, as the graces that you ask for come down more abundantly, you gradually become a better Christian. Learning the skills of prayer is definitely worth the effort.

5. It takes too long

You'd be surprised. Repeating the vocal prayers thoughtfully while meditating deeply on the mysteries does not take all that long, by the clock, once you get the knack of quickly putting aside the busyness of the day and getting down to the business of prayer.

On the other hand, people who get really good at meditative prayer can lose all track of time. The hours glide past like minutes, St John Vianney used to say. A soul transfixed in its meditation on God's goodness never wants to turn its gaze away from Him and back into this

world. In fact, bells were invented in the West in about the fourth century for calling monks and nuns out of recollection. The word bell is from the Anglo-Saxon *bellan*, to bellow, and the bellow of the bells has regulated the times of Christian prayer ever since.

The quietest and most effective way to regulate personal meditative prayer, though, is simply to count the vocal prayers that lead you into meditation. The earliest monks and nuns found that while their hands automatically tossed away a certain number of pebbles, their attention stayed focused on the words of the prayers that they were addressing to heaven, to the exclusion of the world around them, while their minds stayed free to meditate on God's goodness. Later, people started using strings of beads, which eventually took the form of the rosary beads we know today. Passing a bead through your fingers at every repetition helps ensure that you don't get lost in hours of meditation, and running out of beads gives you a gentle signal that its time to get back to another kind of daily prayer, the prayer of work.

6. The beads are just superstition

Only if you use them incorrectly. Rosary beads are perfectly acceptable sacramentals: material aids to prayer. By drawing us to more and better prayer, the proper use of sacramentals offers actual graces, protection from evil spirits, health of body, and material blessings. Through the constant prayers of the Church, those who use sacramentals properly can also obtain forgiveness of venial sins, as well as remission of temporal punishment. But, as with any sacramental, the power to do good is in you, not in the sacramental itself.

You don't really need the beads, anyway. None of the Church's official texts about the Rosary mentions beads: The Rosary is a set of vocal prayers that accompany meditative prayer. Besides, God designed us with a rosary included; and a good many people use their own 10 fingers to pray a Rosary whenever they have to wait in line or are stuck in traffic. Still, rosary beads have stood the test of time as the best way to free your mind from mechanical tasks like counting, so that you can concentrate on the meditative prayer itself.

Continued next Sunday