



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

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year C

14th July 2019

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 9.00am-4.00pm Tue 1.00pm-5.00pm

Wed—Thurs 9.00am-5.00pm Friday 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: 8099 7800

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/ Bookkeeper:

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

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	0400 441 257
Stephen Fernandes	0439 743 533
Amy Honrade	03 9747 0078
Natalie Howard	0410 478 046
Villy Julita	0403 751 343
Rose Ma'ae	0431 386 473
Marthese Mercieca	0421 378 691
Kim Nguyen	0431 035 980
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
Moira Ross	0400 675 056
Aaron Russell	0401 927 502
Emillio Scalzo	5366 5800
John Thorne	5310 6692
James Waters	0403 822 795
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

If you need a Priest in the case of an emergency please call 0403 435 471

MASS AND DEVOTIONS

ST ANTHONY'S MELTON SOUTH

MASS TIMES : 15th July—21st July

Monday:	7.45am	FFS
Tuesday morning:	9.15am	FJP
Tuesday evening:	6.30pm	FJP
Wednesday:	7.45am	FJP
	9.15am	FFS
Thursday:	7.45am	FPB
	9.15am	FJP
Friday:	9.15am	FJP
Saturday Vigil:	5.30pm	FJP
Sunday:	8.30am	FJP
	10.30am	FJP

INDIVIDUAL RECONCILIATION

Saturday: 4.45pm and before and after weekday Mass.

ROSARY:

Prayed at 9.00am before every weekday Mass.



ADORATION:

30 min. before and 30 min. after every weekday Mass.

CRC MELTON CHAPEL: 8.00am

Mass held on Fridays during school term.

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS KOROBEIT

MASS TIME:

Saturday Vigil:	6.30pm	FPB
------------------------	--------	-----

ST BERNARD'S BACCHUS MARSH

MASS TIMES : 15th July– 21st July

All weekday Masses (except Thursday) will be held in the Chapel

Monday :	No Mass	
Tuesday	5.30pm	FPB
Wednesday :	9.30am	FPB
Thursday :	9.30am	FFS
Friday:	9.30am	FFS
Senior's Mass	10.30am	FJP
Saturday Vigil :	5.00pm	FFS
Sunday :	8:30am	FFS
	10.00am	FFS

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 : **Friday 2nd August**

ADORATION:

30 minutes before every weekday Mass.

Adoration is held every first Friday

10.00am until 4.00pm

Next Date: **Friday 2nd August**

PROVIDENCE MASS

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

The Village 5-7 Griffith St, Maddingley.

Next Mass: **Friday 9th August**

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: **Friday 19th July**



NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE

CATHEDRAL HALL

Saturday 27 July, 10am–3.45pm

22 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy

Guides will provide stories and information on the building's rich history; enjoy historic photographic displays and take the opportunity to visit the museum of Dr Sr Mary Glowrey, Australia's second person on the path to sainthood.

Guided and self-guided tours depart every 10 minutes, running 15 minutes in groups of 10. Suitable for all ages. The building is fully accessible and toilets available.

Cost: Free entry

PARISH EVENTS & NOTICES

FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

An RCIA program will commence on the Sunday 28th July. If you:

.. are interested in finding out more about the Catholic faith,

.. wish to become a Catholic,

.. didn't receive all your sacraments as a child and you would like to receive them, and,

.. are interested in deepening your faith, the way you worship, and want to understand the fruits for Christian life required of a Catholic, then join us on this journey. Venue, time and dates to be advised.

Please register your interest with the Parish Office.

ANNUAL PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH APPEAL—NEXT WEEKEND

Next weekend we will be conducting the Annual Propagation of the Faith Appeal. This appeal supports the work of Catholic Mission in their work in underprivileged countries around the world. This year's Appeal is focusing on Ghana.

Please give generously. Thank you.

CATHOLIC MUSEUM OPEN DAY

The Catholic Museum will be open at the old Convent on **Friday 9th August 2019** from 11:00am till 1:00pm.
88 Main Street West, Convent Lane, Bacchus Marsh.

NEWS FROM THE PARISH OFFICES

ST ANTHONY'S

DONATIONS FOR HEATING AND COOLING FOR CHURCH

If you would like to make a direct online donation to the heating and cooling fund you can do so with the following details

Account Name: St Anthony's Parish Annual Appeals

Account No: 083347/025471925

Reference: 110116461. Thank You.

READERS & EUCHARIST MINISTERS WORKSHOP

- **Saturday, 20th July 2019**

All Readers and Eucharist Ministers are required to attend this workshop scheduled for **Saturday, 20th July 2019 at 9:00am** in the Church. New Volunteers who are interested to perform this role, please attend this workshop. Kindly leave your contact details on the clipboard that is at the back of the Church.

PRIME TIMERS

This month's outing will be "Christmas In July"

Venue: Bacchus Marsh Golf Club, Links Rd, Bacchus Marsh

Date: Tuesday 30th July, 2019

Time: 12noon

Cost: \$20.00 per head Main: Turkey, Dessert: Plum Pudding

Please wear something Christmassy.

RSVP Ineke 0400 120 401 or

email ineke49@yahoo.com by 27/7/19.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed to assist with Our Lady of Fatima Statues on a weekly basis. Volunteers are also needed to assist with leading the Rosary at Estia Health on Tuesdays at 1.30pm. Please contact Gordon Clarke 9747 8302 or 0402 021 435 for further details. Thank you.

THANK YOU – FILIPINO COMMUNITY

The Fund Raising Committee would like to thank the Filipino Community for raising \$3004.00 at their "Christmas in July" event last Saturday. Special thanks to all those who supported this event. The proceeds will go towards the extension of the Church.

ST BERNARD'S

TWO HEARTS PRAYER GROUP

Every fortnight on Thursday evenings 7.15pm - 9.15pm. Prayers in Church followed by fellowship in the Parish Centre.

Next date: **18th July**

ST VINCENT DE PAUL COLLECTION

Bacchus Marsh St Vincent de Paul Conference would like to thank parishioners who donated to our Annual Winter Appeal. \$723.00 was collected.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you suffered for my sake every kind of bitterness the world has to offer, and by your passion you turned it all into sweetness for my soul.

Let me follow you in the path of firm devotion to your Father.

Amen.

WORSHIP NEWS

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

ST ANTHONY'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 20th & 21st July MINISTERS OF THE WORD

5.30pm : Stephen Fernandes
8.30am: Dolores Turcsan
10.30am: Leonia Jessop

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.30pm: Lorraine Tellis (P) & Gavin Pereira
8.30am: Geoff Sutton (P), Lois Brewis
& Lillian Christian
10.30am: Elaine Lacey (P) & George Bonello

If you are unavailable for these dates please contact the emergency minister on the roster. Thank you

MASS COORDINATORS

5.30pm: Godwin Barton & Pat Fernandez
8.30am: Natalie Howard & Ron Howard
10.30am: Anthea Scerri & Josephine German

ALTAR SERVERS

5.30pm: Kieran Grech & Jedi Anyayahan
8.30am: Nixon, Thytus & Aaron Ben
10.30am: Anakin Anderson & Nick Taunuu

If you are unavailable please contact Ben Kratochvil 0423 076 305

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the death anniversary at this time of:

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, Margaret Hall, Judy Layton, Peter Manicaro, Veronica Michael, Wanda Novak, John Osborne, Irene Rahilly, Catherine Roberts, Peter Roberts, Pat Roberts, Charlie Spiteri, 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)

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Father we lift up all those who are facing illness. We ask that You bring healing, comfort and peace to their bodies. Calm their fears and let them experience the healing power of your love. Amen



ST BERNARD'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 20th & 21st July MINISTERS OF THE WORD

5.00pm: Vikki Benson
8.30am: Moira Ross & Marj Tung
10.00am: Sr Mary Fermio

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Colin Remedios
8.30am: **Volunteer Please**
10.00am: **Volunteer Please**

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ROSTER

July Josephite Associates

ALTAR SERVERS

5.00pm: Roster Pending
8.30am: **Volunteers Please**
10.00am: Thank you

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

SPIRIT OF THE TWO HEARTS YOUTH GROUP

Experience faith, friendship and fun.

Age group: 11-30years When: Every Thursday fortnight, 7:15pm - 9:15pm Where: St. Bernard's

Chapel and Parish Hall 61 Lerderderg Street, Bacchus Marsh
Next Youth Group: **18th July**

Contact: Sister Clare 0415 806 217 or

Email : twoheartscentre@bigpond.com

Website: www.missionariesofloveandpeace.com

'Coordinated by the Missionaries of Love and Peace of the Most Blessed Trinity of the Pilgrimage of the Two Hearts'

We pray for the recently deceased:

Patricia Wittick

We pray for the death anniversary at this time of:

Damian Condon, Frank Condon, Lorna Condo, Br Jason Duck, Kitty Marshall, Hector Papworth, Jack Papworth, Sophie Papworth, John Spice & Leonard Trask

Please pray for the Sick:

Terry Sims, 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, 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, Paul Mullin, Arthur Pape, Michael Paterson, Georgia Peacock, Bev Pickett, Mitchell Prendergast, Peter Roberts, Ken Shaw, Marian Smith, Frank & Elizabeth Stehmann, Susan Trist, Hayden Tung, Mitchell Tung, Stephen Van Eede, 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: 20th & 21st July

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

5.30pm: Liza Fernandes
8.30am: Edwina La Rose
10.30am: Indika Silva



CUPPA ROSTER

Cuppa Weekend: **27th & 28th July**

5.30pm: Zarb Family
8.30am: Chris Fitzgerald & Graziella Corcoran
10.30am: Anne Nappi & Doris Bonello

CHURCH FLOWERS—July

Ana Taunuu & Roperta Mavaega



CLEANING ROSTER: Thursday

Lorelle Porter

Volunteers would be appreciated as well.

SERVICE AND COMMUNITY QUADRANT

Volunteers are required for the following groups:
Piety Stall & Social Committee.

Contact:

Natalie Howard	0410 478 046,
Amy Honrade	0457 042 695
Lillian Christian	0400 441 257

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

Welfare Number: 1800 305 330

The Melton South Conference meet every 3rd Tuesday morning in the Holy Family Room 10.30am.

New members most welcome, training provided.

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

ST BERNARD'S

VOLUNTEERS WEEKEND : 20th & 21st July

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

Saturday: Carmel Shea
Sunday: Jan Farmelo

MORNING TEA ROSTER

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

Next Morning Tea: **4th August**

Host: Baptism Preparation Team



CHURCH FLOWERS

Deborah Hosking



COUNTING TEAM # 8

Colm Carragher
Maggie Carragher
Jill Braithwaite
Marj Tung

PRESBYTERY & CHURCH GROUNDS- (July)

Front Garden:	Volunteer Please
Back/Side Garden:	Volunteer Please
Parish Centre:	John Tung
Carpark/Pines:	John Tung
Back Paddock:	Ron Geurts

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY:

Welfare Number is 1800 305 330.

The Vinnies Store is located at 8 Grant Street, Bacchus Marsh. The store is open 7 days a week. If you are able to volunteer and would like some more information, please contact the Store Manager on 8199 4205.

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

SOUL FOOD

Soul Food provides a free community meal each Wednesday (excluding school holidays), in the Uniting Church Hall, Gisborne Rd, Bacchus Marsh. Meals are served up at 12noon. All are welcome and this is a free event. No need to book, just come along.

Contact: Jenny Kearney 0408 104 155

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 25th July**

Baptisms are held on the 1st and 3rd

Sunday of the month: **4th & 18th August**

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: **Uili & Lagi Maiava** 0405 330 160

Group 2: **Angelo & Rita Harinos** 0434 368 221

Group 3: **Joseph & Carmen Cilia** 9747 1594



ST BERNARD'S

BAPTISM PREPARATION PROGRAM

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

Next program: **Sunday 28th July**

Baptisms are held on the 1st and 3rd

Sunday of the month: **4th & 18th August**

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 : Kate & Danny

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 PROCESSION

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

FIRST READING Deuteronomy 30:10-14

Moses said to the people: 'Obey the voice of the Lord your God, keeping those commandments and laws of his that are written in the Book of this Law, and you shall return to the Lord your God with all your heart and soul.

'For this Law that I enjoin on you today is not beyond your strength or beyond your reach. It is not in heaven, so that you need to wonder, "Who will go up to heaven for us and bring it down to us, so that we may hear it and keep it?" Nor is it beyond the seas, so that you need to wonder, "Who will cross the seas for us and bring it back to us, so that we may hear it and keep it?" No, the Word is very near to you, it is in your mouth and in your heart for your observance.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 68

Comm: Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live.

All: Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live.

This is my prayer to you,
my prayer for your favour.
In your great love, answer me, O God,
with your help that never fails:
Lord, answer, for your love is kind;
in your compassion, turn towards me.

As for me in my poverty and pain
let your help, O God, lift me up.
I will praise God's name with a song;
I will glorify him with thanksgiving.

The poor when they see it will be glad
and God-seeking hearts will revive;
for the Lord listens to the needy
and does not spurn his servants in their chains.

For God will bring help to Zion
and rebuild the cities of Judah.
The sons of his servants shall inherit it;
those who love his name shall dwell there.

All: Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS –

16th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

First Reading: Gen 18:1-10;

Second Reading: Col 1:24-28;

Gospel: Lk 10:38-42



SECOND READING Colossians 1:15-20

Christ Jesus is the image of the unseen God
and the first-born of all creation,
for in him were created
all things in heaven and on earth:
everything visible and everything invisible,
Thrones, Dominations, Sovereignities, Powers -
all things were created through him and for him.
Before anything was created, he existed,
and he holds all things in unity.
Now the Church is his body,
he is its head.
As he is the Beginning,
he was first to be born from the dead,
so that he should be first in every way;
because God wanted all perfection
to be found in him
and all things to be reconciled through him and for him,
everything in heaven and everything on earth,
when he made peace
by his death on the cross.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Your words, Lord, are spirit and life;
you have the words of everlasting life.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Luke 10:25-37

There was a lawyer who, to disconcert Jesus, stood up and said to him, 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? What do you read there?' He replied, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.' 'You have answered right,' said Jesus. 'Do this and life is yours.'
But the man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of brigands; they took all he had, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead. Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him on to his own mount, carried him to the inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said "and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have." Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the brigands' hands?' 'The one who took pity on him' he replied. Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do the same yourself.'

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 Catholic family: Raising children in a secular world XXXII

For marriage and country

These days it often feels that the world around us is getting more hysterical about things we once would have taken in our stride. A misspoken word, a misplaced or even misinterpreted word in jest, or even a look the wrong way, can set off a storm of outrage—triggered, apparently.

Even congratulating or wishing someone well can seem to be problematic should it be perceived as potentially excluding someone else. So “Merry Christmas” becomes the beige “Happy Holidays” and participation awards are now the norm.

Talking about this the other morning, we reflected that there is a great parallel between what happens in a marriage and in a community.

No marriage is perfect; you only have to look at ours to know that. It is perhaps a great irony, but should not be surprising, that the deeper and more committed a relationship, the greater the capacity to hurt and disappoint each other.

It's entirely natural that we expect more from those whom we love than from people we have never met. Sometimes those expectations are fair and reasonable, and sometimes they are not; but either way they are always greater for those with whom we are in real relationships.

Of course, the greater our expectations, the more likely they are not to be met.

Like many things in life, it is how we deal with our failures, pain and tragedy that helps us grow and build resilience. At these moments we always have choices. Do we choose to respond constructively or destructively? Do we take responsibility or shift blame? Do we sink into self-pity or do we take positive action? Do we assume ill-intention or allow for the possibility of unawareness or distraction?

Our feelings of disappointment and pain are real, so there is no point in pretending otherwise, but do we let emotion overwhelm our ability to be generous, reflective and intentional?

All too often our human nature takes us in the wrong direction at these moments. We feel wronged, we become righteous and we demand amends. Right or wrong, set in this mindset we will be much less loving and, frankly, less likeable.

The great lesson from marriage is that we can, and indeed do, see through and learn from these situations. We can choose to be loving in our response to the other, change our behaviours where we understand them to be unhelpful or harmful, and gently help each other see those behaviours in ourselves.

Resilient marriages are not a result of perfect people, but rather imperfect people who together seek to be better for each other.

The Catholic Church in the United States ran TV ads for some years that posed the question: “What have you done for your marriage today?” The candid responses, which were a delightful insight into married life, were a great reminder that a good marriage, like any relationship, requires intentional proactive investment from both parties.

Every day we have the capacity to let each other down at some level. However, at that very moment we always have the choice. Do I bring out the “Problems I Have with You” book and add yet another failure to the list? Or do I look through the situation and find a more positive and constructive response? The advice we give to our children in how to handle similar situations is always the latter.

Marriages are always stronger when a couple are looking forward to building a better future together by learning from their mistakes, rather than backward looking and focused on past failings of the other. Failures are a norm in every marriage and are not to be ignored, but the aim is to learn from them, not wallow in them.

Intentional marriages are ones where the will governs equally with the emotions; where we use our reason and self-discipline to tame and direct our desires towards the good of our spouse and our marriage.

Wedding anniversaries are one opportune occasion to remind us of this. A bit like a New Year, they are best used to focus on who we want to become together rather than just a nostalgic walk down memory lane, yet alone a day to reflect on our litany of failures.

We live in a land of tremendous natural resources: we have delightful diversity in our community, and we have the freedom to choose who we want to become. In a land of extreme climate, with droughts, floods and raging fires a regular feature, there will be many occasions of crisis and stress. Sounds a lot like aspects of our marriage! And yes, we have our historic failures and, just as in a marriage, we are in need of real and meaningful reconciliation.

But at the end of the day, the choice is ours: we can choose to stay in a permanent place of discontent, or we can focus on who we want to become and put our energy into that.

Sounds like good advice for any married couple, and perhaps too for our nation.

By Byron and Francine Piroia, from the SmartLoving series