



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 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A

16th February 2020

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Fabian Smith

ASSISTANT PRIESTS: Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint & Fr Alexander Athanas SAC

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: 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 **Fri** 10.00am—3.00pm

Parish Office Hours: Tue –Fri 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 - 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
Marthese Mercieca	0421 378 691
Kim Nguyen	0431 035 980

EX-OFFICIO:

Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint, Fr Alexander Athanas
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
Moirra 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 Alexander Athanas
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 Wednesdays. 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 : 17th-23rd February

Monday:	7.45am	FFS
Tuesday am:	9.15am	FLM
Tuesday pm:	6.30pm	FAA
Wednesday:	7.45am	FFS
	9.15am	FAA
Thursday:	7.45am	FLM
	9.15am	FLM
Friday:	7.45am	FFS
	9.15am	FAA
Saturday Vigil:	5.30pm	FLM
Sunday:	8.30am	FAA
	10.30am	FAA

INDIVIDUAL RECONCILIATION

Saturday: 4.45pm and **before** and weekday Mass.

ROSARY:

Prayed at 9.00am before every weekday Mass.

ADORATION:

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



ST BERNARD'S BACCHUS MARSH

MASS TIMES : 17th-23rd February

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

Monday :	No Mass	
Tuesday:	5.30pm	FLM
Wednesday :	9.30am	FLM
Thursday :	9.30am	FAA
Friday:	9.30am	FLM
Senior Parishioner Mass	10.30am	
Saturday Vigil :	5.00pm	FAA
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 6th March**

ADORATION: 30 minutes before every weekday Mass. Adoration is held every first Friday 10.00am until 4.00pm

Next Date: **Friday 6th March**

PROVIDENCE MASS: Is held on the second Friday of the month at 11.00am The Village 5-7 Griffith St, Maddingley.

Next Mass: **13th March**

SENIOR PARISHIONER'S MASS

Is held on the third Friday of the month in the Parish Centre at 10.30am. Everyone is welcome not just the seniors.

Next Senior's Mass: **21st February**

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS KOROBET

MASS TIME		
Saturday Vigil:	6.30pm	FAA

NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND

Invest in your most precious asset.....Your Marriage!

Married couples, come and learn how to keep/rekindle the passion in your relationship and how to keep your love growing! The weekend is based around Catholic values but couples of all faiths are welcome.

Next weekend is on 17-19 April 2020 in Melbourne

Other weekends on 17-19 July and 13-15 November 2020

Starts 7pm on Friday. Ends 5pm Sunday. Accommodation and all meals provided.

Information/Bookings: Phone Mercy & James 0409 183 676 or

Email: vicbookings@wwme.org.au Website: wwme.org.au

PARISH EVENTS & NOTICES

HOUSE VISITS/BLESSINGS

If you would like a house visit /blessing, please fill in the house visit forms at the rear/foyer of the Church or contact Judy Johnson 0414 007 009 or email judyparishnews@gmail.com

WORLD DAY PRAYER- COLLECTION NEXT WEEK

World day prayer is a global event organised by women to pray for women and children in need. The focus is always to pray for peace and for the needs of the women and children of the host country which could be related to poverty, homelessness, violence, domestic violence, abuse, lack of education, trauma and effects of war or a combination of these.

World Day of prayer is an ecumenical service. Traditionally Women from all Christian churches, and men are welcome too, come together focussing on what combines and unites us - our faith and fellowship in the One God.

Each year a particular country referred to as the host country is chosen and supported through raising awareness, prayer and financial offerings. This year for WDP 2020, the host country is Zimbabwe and the local host church is Melton Uniting Church.

We will have a leaving collection next weekend, please give generously.

PRAYER CAMPAIGN FOR THE SICK

We pray every week for our sick family and friends that are listed in the newsletter. However there are times when we know of someone under going treatment or surgery and at these times it is good to have the opportunity to pray for them especially. We will start a prayer campaign for these people in need of our prayers. Please see the Priest before Mass and add your loved ones name to a list that will be used to pray for the sick during Mass. Please note names of the sick will not be read out during Mass.

PROVIDENCE AGED CARE RESIDENCE- KNIT AND NATTER GROUP

We have had a request from the Providence Aged Care Residence, Bacchus Marsh. They have a 'Knit & Natter ' group who knit trauma teddies for the Children's Hospital and also for local charities. They are in need of 8 ply wool (any colour) to continue their work. If you are able to help please leave the wool at the Church or Parish Office for Judy to collect.

Thank You!

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.

PRIME TIMERS

The Prime Timers next outing will be held on Tuesday 25th February at the Braybrook Hotel, Ballarat Road , Braybrook.

Buffet Meal : \$20.90 (seniors).

Please RSVP by Saturday 22nd Feb Ineke: ineke49@yahoo.com or 0400 120 401

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR LENTEN PRAYER GROUP

As in past years our parish is offering the opportunity to participate in extra prayer during Lent. These groups have been instrumental in helping us reflect on the Sunday Gospel, relate it to our lives and grow in our relationship with God. If you are interested in taking part in weekly Lenten Prayer, kindly fill in the sheet provided at the back of the church. Any inquiries may be made to Marian 0400007286. They will take place in our Holy Family Room.

VALENTINE'S DAY RAFFLE

The social committee would like to thank everyone who supported the valentines raffle. We raised a total of \$233.00.

A big congratulation to Agnes Faavas who won the hamper. Enjoy.

ST BERNARD'S

PARISH OFFICE HOURS- THIS WEEK

The Parish Office will be open:

Tuesday-Thursday- 9.00am-12noon

Friday-10.00am-3.00pm

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A ALTAR SERVER

Share God's mercy and the joy of faith

**Current and new parents and children
come along to find out more and register**

**for 2020 Registration: Wednesday 19th
February, 2020**

3:30-4:30pm at St Bernard's church

Training sessions:

4th March and 11th March, 3:30-4:30pm

at St Bernard's church

Further information:

Bernadette: mob 0407 510 303



ST. BERNARD'S SENIOR PARISHIONERS' MASS

Another year has begun and the Seniors are about to commence their monthly Masses. All parishioners – one doesn't have to be a "Senior" – are welcome, and we look forward to seeing our regulars and, hopefully, some newer folk during this year.

Our first Mass for 2020 will be celebrated in the Parish Centre on **FRIDAY, 21st. FEBRUARY at 10.30 a.m.** Everyone welcome.

WORSHIP NEWS

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

ST ANTHONY'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 22nd & 23rd Feb MINISTERS OF THE WORD

5.30pm : Stephen Fernandes
8.30am: Geoff Sutton
10.30am: Rose Ma'ae

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.30pm: Philip Anyayahan & **Volunteer Please**
8.30am: Ron Howard, Ineke Allen
& **Volunteer Please**
10.30am: Richard Tuala & 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 & Stephen Fernandes
8.30am: Godwin Barton & Lina Calleja
10.30am: Godwin Barton & Josephine German

ALTAR SERVERS

5.30pm: Jonathan Dacunha & Mason Azzopardi
8.30am: Rhys Tuala, Andre Oqueli
10.30am: Nick Taunuu & Ethan Porter

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:

Tamafnata Sefo Amoa, Gina Barker
& Francisca Emilia Barton.

Please pray for the Sick:

Jean Barnett, Nickolia & Klara Butkovic, Maria Caruana, Mary Caruana, Liza Fernandes, Judy Layton, Peter Manicaro, Reg Marslen, Brendan 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)

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: 22nd & 23rd Feb MINISTERS OF THE WORD

5.00pm: Maureen Zahra
8.30am: Jan Carragher & Michael Baddeley
10.00am: Carmel Shea

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Colin Remedios
8.30am: Carol Jones
10.00am: Anne Daly

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ROSTER

February: Mary Flanagan

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 **20th February**

We pray for the death anniversary at this time of:

Sam Borg, Joseph Camilleri, Josephine Camilleri, Nina Cassar, Thelma Crowley, Denis Lennox, Jane Reilly, Martin Vrbec, Noelene Wadey & Stanely Walsh.

Please pray for the Sick:

Noah Barlow, Dudley Baddeley, Chaiel Balcombe, Michael Barrett, Peter Bennett, Steven Braszel, Kevin Bridges, Tina Bower, John Canty, Fred Capuano, Gary Ching, 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)

SERVICE / COMMUNITY

ST ANTHONY'S

VOLUNTEERS WEEKEND: 22nd & 23rd February

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

5.30pm: Kristina Scerri

8.30am: Judy Johnson

10.30am: Sally Markulin

CUPPA ROSTER

Cuppas after Mass will return after the Church Renovations are completed.



CHURCH FLOWERS-February

Rosabella Tuala



CLEANING ROSTER: Thursday

Lorelle Porter

Volunteers would be appreciated as well.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

Welfare Number: 1800 305 330

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

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

God, strengthen and sustain all those who volunteer in our Churches; that with patience and understanding they may love and care for your people; and grant that together they may follow with Jesus Christ offering to you their gifts and talents.



Amen

ST BERNARD'S

VOLUNTEERS WEEKEND : 22nd & 23rd February

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

Saturday: Mandy Harrington

Sunday: Jan & Colm

MORNING TEA ROSTER

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

Next Morning Tea: **1st March 2020**

Host: **Parent & Friends**



CHURCH FLOWERS—February

Rita Marshall



COUNTING TEAM # 1

Allan Comrie

Jim Scott

Peter Mooney

Margot Short

PRESBYTERY & CHURCH GROUNDS- (February)

Front Garden: Stephen Millington

Back/Side Garden: Volunteer Please

Parish Centre: Volunteer Please

Carpark/Pines: Sean Giani

Back Paddock: Volunteer Please

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 27th Feb**

Baptisms are held on the 1st and 3rd

Sunday of the month: **5th & 19th April**

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. **Please be advised that Baptism applications must be submitted 2 months in advance.** Contact Fr Fabian, Fr Alexander, Fr Lucas 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 Alexander or Fr Lucas .

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: **Joseph & Caroline DaRocha** 0421 854 711

Group 2: **Julius Caan Can** 0430 880 728

Group 3: **Dragica Mladen Soldo** 0466 482 035



ST BERNARD'S

BAPTISM PREPARATION PROGRAM

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

Next program: **Sunday 23rd Feb**

Baptisms are held on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month: **5th & 19th April**

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. **Please be advised that Baptism applications must be submitted 2 months in advance.** Contact Fr Fabian, Fr Alexander, Fr Lucas 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 Alexander or Fr Lucas.

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

Be my protector, O God,
a mighty stronghold to save me.
For you are my rock, my stronghold!
Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

FIRST READING Sirach 15:15-20

If you wish, you can keep the commandments,
to behave faithfully is within your power.
He has set fire and water before you;
put out your hand to whichever you prefer.
Man has life and death before him;
whichever a man likes better will be given him.
For vast is the wisdom of the Lord;
he is almighty and all-seeing.
His eyes are on those who fear him,
he notes every action of man.
He never commanded anyone to be godless,
he has given no one permission to sin.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM : 118

Comm: Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord!

All: Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord!

They are happy whose life is blameless,
who follow God's law!
They are happy those who do his will,
seeking him with all their hearts.

You have laid down your precepts
to be obeyed with care.
May my footsteps be firm
to obey your statutes.

Bless your servant and I shall live
and obey your word.
Open my eyes that I may consider
the wonders of your law.

Teach me the demands of your statutes
and I will keep them to the end.
Train me to observe your law,
to keep it with my heart.

All: Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth;
you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 5:17-37

Jesus said to his disciples: ' Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish them but to complete them. I tell you solemnly, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved. Therefore, the man who infringes even one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of heaven; but the man who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of heaven.

'For I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

'You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court; if a man calls his brother "Fool" he will answer for it before the Sanhedrin; and if a man calls him "Renegade" he will answer for it in hell fire. So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering. Come to terms with your opponent in good time while you are still on the way to the court with him, or he may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. I tell you solemnly, you will not get out till you have paid the last penny.

'You have learnt how it was said: You must not commit adultery. But I say this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye should cause you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body thrown into hell. And if your right hand should cause you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body go to hell.

'It has also been said: Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a writ of dismissal. But I say this to you: everyone who divorces his wife, except for the case of fornication, makes her an adulteress; and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

'Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not break your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. But I say this to you: do not swear at all, either by heaven, since that is God's throne; or by the earth, since that is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, since that is the city of the great king. Do not swear by your own head either, since you cannot turn a single hair white or black. All you need say is "Yes" if you mean yes, "No" if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

They ate and had their fill,
and what they craved the Lord gave them;
they were not disappointed in what they craved.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS –

THE 7TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

First Reading: Lev 19:1-2, 17-18;

Second Reading: 1 Cor 3:16-23

Gospel: Mt 5:38-48



The life of Catholic worship and piety XII

The History of Votive Candles

Before explaining the use of votive candles in particular, we have to appreciate the symbolism of light and the general usage of candles in religious practice.

In Judaism, a perpetual light was kept burning in the Temple and the synagogues not only to insure the ability to light other candles or oil lamps in the evening but also to show the presence of God (cf. Exodus 27:20-21 and Leviticus 24:2-4). Later, the Talmud prescribed a lit lamp at the Ark, where the Torah and other writings of Sacred Scripture were kept, to show reverence for the Word of God. (This practice probably influenced our own tradition of having a lit candle near the Tabernacle to indicate the presence of and to show reverence for the Blessed Sacrament.)

Roman pagan culture also used candles in religious practice. Lit candles were used in religious and military processions, showing the divine presence, aid, or favour of the gods.

Christians adapted the use of lit candles (or even oil lamps in the Eastern Roman Empire) for Mass, liturgical processions, evening prayer ceremonies, funeral processions, and, again, to show reverence to the reserved Blessed Sacrament. Moreover, there is evidence that lit candles or oil lamps were burned at the tombs of saints, particularly martyrs, by the 200s AD, and before sacred images and relics by the 300s. St Jerome (d. 420) in his *Contra Vigilantium* attested to this practice. Note, however, that this practice probably existed well before our available written evidence.

In our Catholic tradition, in early times as well as today, light has a special significance – Christ. Recall Jesus said: “I am the light of the world. No follower of mine shall ever walk in darkness; no, he shall possess the light of life” (John 8:12); and “I have come to the world as its light, to keep anyone who believes in me from remaining in the dark” (John 12:46).

Moreover, the Prologue of St John’s Gospel connects Christ and true life with the imagery of light: “Whatever came to be in Him, found life, life for the light of men”; and “The real light which gives light to every man was coming into the world” (John 1:4, 9). For this reason, in our liturgy for the Sacrament of Baptism, the priest

presents a candle lit from the Paschal candle, which in turn symbolises the Paschal mystery, and says to the newly baptised: “You have been enlightened by Christ. Walk always as children of the light and keep the flame of faith alive in your hearts. When the Lord comes, may you go out to meet him with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom.”

Light then is a symbol of faith, truth, wisdom, virtue, grace, the divine life, charity, the ardour of prayer and the sacred presence that flow from Christ Himself.

With this background, we can appreciate the usage of votive candles. Here, as in early Christian times, we light a candle before a statue or sacred image of our Lord or of a saint. Of course, we do not honour the statue or the image itself, but whom that statue or image represents. The light signifies our prayer offered in faith coming into the light of God. With the light of faith, we petition our Lord in prayer, or petition the saint to pray with us and for us to the Lord. The light also shows a special reverence and our desire to remain present to the Lord in prayer even though we may depart and go about our daily business.

In the Middle Ages, the symbolism of the votive candles was elaborated. St Radegund (d. 587) described a practice whereby a person would light a candle or several candles which equalled his own height; this was called “measuring to” such a saint. Although it may seem peculiar to us, this “measuring” actually reflects the idea of the candle representing the person in faith who has come into the light to offer his prayer.

Some Medieval spiritual writers expanded the imagery of the candle itself: beeswax symbolised the purity of Christ; the wick, the human soul of Christ; and the light, His divinity. Also, the burning candle symbolised a sacrifice, which is made in both the offering of the prayer and the acceptance of the Lord’s will.

In all, the usage of votive candles is a pious practice which continues today in many churches. The symbolism does remind us that prayer is a “coming into” the light of Christ, allowing our souls to be filled with His light, and letting that light burn on in our souls even though we may return to other activities.