



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 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A

23rd 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 9.00—12 noon

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 : 24th February-1st March

| | | |
|---|---------|-----|
| Monday: | 7.45am | FFS |
| Tuesday am: | 9.15am | FLM |
| Tuesday pm: | 6.30pm | FLM |
| Wednesday: <u>Ash Wednesday</u> | 7.45am | FLM |
| | 9.15am | FLM |
| | 7.30pm | FAA |
| Thursday: | 7.45am | FAA |
| | 9.15am | FLM |
| Friday: | 7.45am | FFS |
| | 9.15am | FAA |
| Stations of the Cross | 12.30pm | |
| Adoration and Confession | 6.00pm | |
| Stations of the Cross | 7.00pm | |
| Saturday: | 8.30am | FFS |
| Saturday Vigil: School Mass All Welcome | 5.30pm | FAA |
| 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 : 24th February- 1st March
All weekday Masses (except Thursday) will be held in the Chapel

| | | |
|---|---------|-----|
| Monday : | No Mass | |
| Tuesday: | 5.30pm | FAA |
| Wednesday : <u>Ash Wednesday</u> | 9.30am | FFS |
| | 7.00pm | FFS |
| Thursday : | 9.30am | FFS |
| Friday: | 9.30am | FLM |
| Saturday Vigil : | 5.00pm | FLM |
| 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: **Friday 20th March**

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS KOROBET

| | | |
|------------------------|--------|-----|
| MASS TIME | | |
| Saturday Vigil: | 6.30pm | FLM |

NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE

THE JOURNEY CATHOLIC RADIO PROGRAM – AIRS 23 FEBRUARY 2020

This week on the Journey we have a STELLAR show lined up for you!

Your favourites, Mother Hilda Scott with another terrific talk on Remember Me as Loving, and you'll also hear from Marilyn Rodrigues and Pete Gilmore.

Go to WWW.jcr.org.au or www.itunes.jcr.org.au and to ensure that you never miss a show

it can be sent to you each week as a podcast via email – for free.

If you love the show, let your local radio station know that you'd like to hear it broadcasted locally each week.



PARISH EVENTS & NOTICES

LENTEN CALENDAR

Lenten Calendars are available for collection at the foyer/back of the Church.

HOUSE VISITS/BLESSINGS

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

WORLD DAY PRAYER- COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND

This weekend we will have a collection to support the World Day Prayer 2020. Zimbabwe is the host country this year and the Melton Uniting Church is the host Church this year. You are most welcome to attend the Prayer Service at the Melton Uniting Church 15-17 Yuille St, Melton, Friday 6th March 11am. A light lunch will be provided after the service. Children are welcome. Please give generously.

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.

LENTEN PRAYER GROUP

The Lenten Prayer Group will meet on Monday mornings at 10.30am in the Holy Family Room. If you would like to attend the Prayer Group but are unable to attend on Mondays at this time please contact Marion Muller 0400 007 286

NEW PARISHIONER BLESSING-NEXT WEEKEND

If you are new to our Parish and would like to receive a blessing you will be invited to stand and receive a blessing during Masses next weekend.

BINGO

Every Tuesday evening we

have 3 sessions per evening with a cost

of \$3.00 a book. Eyes down at 7.00pm.

Finish time is 9.45pm. Come and have a

great social evening, have some fun

and maybe get lucky too.

Coffee and tea is provided and there are canteen services

available. Remember you have to be in it to win it!

Venue: St Anthony's Padua Hall.



ST BERNARD'S

LENTEN REFLECTION

Beginning on Tuesday 25th February 10.30am to 11.30am at St Joseph's Convent 68 Lerderberg St and for the following 5 Tuesdays. Please contact Sr Mary 5367 2078 if coming.

GETTING TO KNOW MARY MACKILLOP

Next gathering on Thursday 5th March 10.30 am at St Joseph's Convent 68 Lerderberg St Topic: Mary's devotion to St Joseph

READERS

Readers please note an updated version of the Reading Notes has been prepared and emailed. If you are not on email you can collect a copy from the Sacristy.

CATHOLIC MUSEUM/ ROTARY CLUB BALLARAT STH

COMMUNITY FUND RAISING RESULTS

1st Prize ticket no. 127486 2nd Prize ticket no. 105584

Winners have been notified.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 30TH JANUARY 2020

SUMMARY OF POINTS RAISED

- Parish Directory publication delayed by staff illness
- Catholic Education Melbourne has advised Fr Fabian that a property at Joan Court in Bacchus Marsh has been purchased for the Dominican Sisters of St Cecilia to be their Convent. The land previously required to build the convent on parish grounds is no longer required.
- Fr Fabian asked the Parish Council to begin thinking strategically about the advancement of Parish Life. Council Members suggested three ways of advancement
 - (i) Engagement- just how do we encourage Parish members to become more involved in the Parish.
 - (ii) Recruitment- how to recruit more involvement from the people.
 - (iii) Future Financial planning (together with the Finance Committee)
- School report: building programme needs to be replanned due to changes in the Diocese operation. Enrolments are strong.

BAKING DAY FOR SCHOOL FETE

Thursday 12th of March – Parish Centre 8.30am – 2.30pm

Come for as little or as long as you like! Little people welcome.

The plan for the day is to cook for the cake stall at the fete! We are thinking slices, cookies, truffles etc. – open to suggestions. Anyone that is **unable to help on the day**, you can donate baking ingredients such as: eggs, lemons, biscuits, cocoa, icing sugar, butter, or vouchers to purchase ingredients, or paper plates, labels, freezer bags. You are also welcome to cook from home – **your items must clearly be labelled with ingredients**. Anyone that would like to bake some **gluten free options** – we would love your assistance. Anyone that can **man the cake stall at the fete**, please let us know. Goods can be delivered to the hall on Thursday between 9-2 or to the school on Friday. Any questions, please contact:

Jac – 0428 678 686 Linda – 0447 969 391

Lord, enlighten the eyes of my mind, so that I can understand your Word. Make me worthy to be not only a hearer, but also a doer of your Word, so that, yielding good fruit, I may at last be worthy of the Kingdom of heaven.

WORSHIP NEWS

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

ST ANTHONY'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 29th Feb & 1st March MINISTERS OF THE WORD

5.30pm : Gavin Pereira
8.30am: Kim Nguyen
10.30am: Susan Malinov

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.30pm: Lorraine Tellis & Ann Tennakoon
8.30am: Michael Higgins, Villy Julita
& Edwina La Rose
10.30am: Elaine Lacey & Sally Markulin

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

MASS COORDINATORS

5.30pm: Godwin Barton & Josephine German
8.30am: Lina Calleja & Julie Seufatu
10.30am: Godwin Barton & Leonia Jessop

ALTAR SERVERS

5.30pm: Jedi Anyayahan & Mason Azzopardi
8.30am: Nixon, Thytus, Aaron Ben
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 recent death of:

Helen Lazo, David Spiteri & Daniel Whelan

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

Leslie Levett & Francis Xaviour Micallef

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: 29th Feb & 1st March MINISTERS OF THE WORD

5.00pm: Miesen Family
8.30am: Gerard Harrington & Jenny Hooper
10.00am: Erin Phillips

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Stuart Robertson
8.30am: Peter Lafranchi
10.00am: James Waters

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ROSTER

March: Dianne Corro

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 **5th March**

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

Freddie Borg, Rini Dominquez, Emmanuel (Lily) Freeman, Chris Heslington, Stanley McGonegal, Eileen Mullane, Carmela Pinti, & Nell Shelly

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

WEEKEND VOLUNTEERS: 29th Feb & 1st March

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

5.30pm: Marthese Mercieca

8.30am: Pat Chiles

10.30am: John Scerri

CUPPA ROSTER

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



CHURCH FLOWERS

Lent— No Flowers



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

WEEKEND VOLUNTEERS : 29th Feb & 1st March

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

Saturday: Carmel Shea

Sunday: Jan Farnelo

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

Lent—No Flowers



COUNTING TEAM # 2

John Tung

Lucille Wheelahan

PRESBYTERY & CHURCH GROUNDS- (March)

Front Garden: Stuart Robertson

Back/Side Garden: Volunteer Please

Parish Centre: Ron Geurts

Carpark/Pines: Ron Geurts

Back Paddock: Colm Carragher

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: **Ben & Joan Antony** 9743 8154

Group 2: **Gerard & Anakin Anderson** 0433 690 902

Group 3: **Amy & Ronald Honrade** 9747 0078



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

LITURGY OF THE WORD

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

O Lord, I trust in your merciful love.
My heart will rejoice in your salvation.
I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful with me.

FIRST READING Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18

The Lord spoke to Moses; he said: 'Speak to the whole community of the sons of Israel and say to them: "Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy."
"You must not bear hatred for your brother in your heart. You must openly tell him, your neighbour, of his offence; this way you will not take a sin upon yourself. You must not exact vengeance, nor must you bear a grudge against the children of your people. You must love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord.'

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM : 102

Comm: The Lord is kind and merciful.

All: The Lord is kind and merciful.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord,
all my being, bless his holy name.
My soul, give thanks to the Lord
and never forget all his blessings.

It is he who forgives all your guilt,
who heals every one of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grave,
who crowns you with love and compassion.

The Lord is compassion and love,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.
He does not treat us according to our sins
nor repay us according to our faults.

As far as the east is from the west
so far does he remove our sins.
As a father has compassion on his sons,
the Lord has pity on those who fear him.

All: The Lord is kind and merciful.

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 3:16-23

Didn't you realise that you were God's temple and that the Spirit of God was living among you? If anybody should destroy the temple of God, God will destroy him, because the temple of God is sacred; and you are that temple.

Make no mistake about it; if any one of you thinks of himself as wise, in the ordinary sense of the word, then he must learn to be a fool before he really can be wise. Why? Because the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. As scripture says: The Lord knows wise men's thoughts: he knows how useless they are; or again: God is not convinced by the arguments of the wise. So there is nothing to boast about in anything human: Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life and death, the present and the future, are all your servants; but you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Whoever keeps the word of Christ,
grows perfect in the love of God.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 5:38-48

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You have learnt how it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say this to you: offer the wicked man no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; if a man takes you to law and would have your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone orders you to go one mile, go two miles with him. Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

'You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest men alike. For if you love those who love you, what right have you to claim any credit? Even the tax collectors do as much, do they not? And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do as much, do they not? You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

I will recount all your wonders,
I will rejoice in you and be glad,
and sing psalms to your name, O Most High.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS – FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

First Reading: Gen 2:7-9, 3:1-7;
Second Reading: Rom 5:12-19;
Gospel: Mt 4:1-11



Catholic worship and piety: Lent 2020 I

Ash Wednesday

Many years ago, among the Wurundjeri people in Victoria, it was the task of the women in the tribe during the grey, wet winter months to carry the fire. Fire meant life.

In the drizzle and the damp of the winter months, it was, of course, not possible to start fires at every new campsite. The fire had to be carried. This was achieved by maintaining hot coals in shell cones bartered from the coastal people, like the Bun Narong. Upon setting up camp, the coals could be enflamed into life. It is not difficult to imagine what a vital duty it was to carry those shells with the coals inside them.

At times, those coals must have looked like nothing but ash. The challenge to breathe life into the embers must have seemed almost impossible. We can imagine the anxious hope those women must have experienced as they looked for the tiniest spark that could be coaxed into a glow and then into a fire so that their family and kin might have light and warmth and sustenance.

The ashes that mark the beginning of Lent, the charcoal that we will have placed on our head, are surely the sign of how most of us feel at times. We have the ash of fear, the ash of anger and bitterness, the ash of resentment and regret, the ash of hurt and pain, the ash of shame, the ash of loneliness.

We feel the desolation of the bush after a mighty fire has raged through it, and all seems lost. We are left dazed, confused, wondering how on earth can anything be rebuilt. And do we even want to? Yet, Lent is the season whose very invitation strips us of our pretences, and our illusions, and our defences, so that we might live with hearts more open in a self-giving to one another.

As German martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, the call of Jesus when he encounters us is, "Come and die". We die to something in order to rise to something. We cannot follow Jesus without being prepared to die. Something must die if we are to follow him. And what must die? What must die is a life lived in the "illusion of self-sufficiency", to quote Pope Benedict XVI several years ago. What must die is a life that is guarded, defended, self-protected. What must die is a life enclosed in on itself, a life that places self-preservation and self promotion as the means to happiness.

In the way of Jesus, happiness can only be achieved when we forget about ourselves — even for a moment — yes, even when, and especially when, everything would have us turn inside ourselves and enclose ourselves in protection and defence, and when we become alive to the needs of the one who stands before me. Our future lies in the freedom to be able to listen to another, and the freedom to give myself to others.

By Fr David Ranson, Diocese of Broken Bay

Freedom is never the experience of freedom *from* something. Christian freedom is always a freedom *for* something — ultimately, the freedom to be able truly to love, and to be able to continue to make the decisions to love, to hope, and to trust even in the face of all that would threaten to negate such choices. In so doing, we turn away from the places of captivity in our life and turn towards the places which liberate our hearts. We turn from what holds us in the grip of fear and stretch out to the horizon of possibility; we turn from the somnolence that covers our days like a pall and we awaken to fresh energy and purposefulness. We say "no" to that which leads us into the pain of isolation and say "yes" to that which offers the prospect of communion with others. We turn from death to life.

This is a pathway into vulnerability and through vulnerability into a radical hospitality to one another. For it is when our vulnerability becomes a place of hospitality that we enter the saving mystery of Jesus' life and mission. This paradox is at the centre of the Christian perspective. It is a difficult prospect, as difficult as taking a cross upon our shoulders and dying.

Lent, therefore, is not just a time to wallow in our ashes. Lent is the time to stand before the desolation of the fire that has ravaged our hopes and our confidence, and to wonder at how we might rebuild. It is a time to sift through the ash to look for the spark of fire which is still there.

How do we keep breathing life into this glowing coal, so that from it many fires can yet still be sparked? That spark of fire is our hope, our desire to keep moving forward, what remains of our trust, our courage, our faith. Lent urges us to retrieve this spark and to kindle it anew. That coal we protect, we keep working with until it springs a flame; we fan it. This is the true significance of repentance.

We are guardians of a life still burning within the coals we carry. The life of Jesus of Nazareth — fire for our world, purifying and warming fire. But, just as coals won't keep alight on their own, we can never presume on the vitality we nurse. Sometimes, painfully and all too late, we discover that the maintenance of the hot coals requires that we must sacrifice all that would make us forget them.

This is the invitation of the Spirit given to us at Lent. If we can enter the possibility of Lent for which the symbol of ash is central, then the flame that bursts forth on Easter night in six weeks' time will have profound meaning for us. It will be the sign of the fire rekindled from the ashes in our life: the Fire of the Risen Christ that, even as the shadows encircle it, no darkness can extinguish. We will need that Fire as we move through the subsequent winters of our life as a community of Catholic Faith to warm and sustain us. May those women of ancient years teach us in our own time of Lent our responsibility and our possibility.