



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 FAX: 5367 4863
OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, KOROBET
309 MYRNIONG-KOROBET ROAD 3341

25th Sunday In Ordinary Time

Year B

23rd September 2018

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, Wed, Thurs, Fri 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: 9743 1401
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
Naim Chdid	0437 004 790
Lillian Christian	0400 441 257
Stephen Fernandes	0439 743 533
Amy Honrade	03 9747 0078
Natalie Howard	0410 478 046
Rose Ma'ae	0431 386 473
Marthese Mercieca	0421 378 691

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
David Loxley	0459 974 960
Maira Ross	0400 675 056
Emillio Scalzo	5366 5800
James Walters	0403 974 960

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

For urgent matters only please call Fr Fabian on 0403 435 471

MASS AND DEVOTIONS

ST ANTHONY'S MELTON SOUTH

MASS TIMES :

Monday :	No Mass	
Tuesday morning:	9.15am	FJP
Tuesday evening:	6.30pm	FFS
Wednesday:	9.15am	FFS
Thursday:	9.15am	FJP
Youth Mass:	7.30pm	FJP
Friday:	9.15am	FFS
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 minutes before and 30 minutes after every weekday Mass.

During School Term Mass on Mon/Wed/Thurs/Fri
at CRC Melton Chapel: 8.00am
Resumes Monday 8th October

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS KOROBET

MASS TIMES :

Saturday: 6.30pm Mass FFS

ST BERNARD'S BACCHUS MARSH

MASS TIMES :

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

Monday :	No Mass	
Tuesday :	5.30pm	FJP
Wednesday :	9.30am	FJP
Thursday :	9.30am	FFS
Friday :	9.30am	FJP
Saturday :	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 : 5th October

ADORATION:

1 hour before every weekday Mass.

PROVIDENCE MASS

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

Next Mass: 12th October

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: 19th October



NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE

THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF ST PETER CLAVER—ANNUAL MISSION FAIR

The Missionary Sisters of St Peter Claver will hold their Annual Mission Fair on Saturday 13th October 9.00am—3.00pm at 154 Cotham Road, Kew. This year the proceeds will go to help provide primary education and health services for 150 poor girls and 100 poor boys in the Catholic Sohag Diocese, Egypt. Enquiries Phone: 9817 3715.

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2018-2019

We celebrate Social Justice Sunday on 30 September. This year, the Australian Bishops' Social Justice Statement is titled: 'A Place to Call Home: Making a home for everyone in our land'. The statement challenges us all to confront Australia's growing rate of homelessness and unaffordable housing.

For further details about the Social Justice Statement, visit the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council website www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au or call (02) 8306 3499.

PARISH EVENTS & NOTICES

SPIRIT OF THE TWO HEARTS YOUTH GROUP

Sharing the Spirit of God through Faith, Friendship and Fun. Experience faith, friendship and fun through: Praise and worship, Music, Trivia nights, Game nights, Movie nights, Team building activities, Outdoor activities, BBQ's, Bush walks, Bonfire nights, Camps, and much more.... **Age group:** 11 years +



When: Every 4th Thursday of the month, 7:00pm - 9:00pm Starting in September 2018

Where: Two Hearts Centre , 274 La Cote Road, Greendale, Vic 3341 **Contact:** Sister Clare

Mobile: 0415 806 217 or **Email:** twoheartscentre@bigpond.com

BINGO

We have 3 sessions each Tuesday 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 provided

and there are canteen services available. Remember you have to be in it to win it!

Held at St Anthony's Padua Hall.



NEWS FROM THE PARISH OFFICES

ST ANTHONY'S

YOUNG MEN'S (YMG) AND YOUNG WOMEN'S GROUPS (YWG)

Thank you to all who came to the first meet and greet for the Young Women's Group. Our next session will be on the first Sunday of October, **the 7th of October from 6-7pm**, and will be run in parallel (but separately) to the Young Men's Group. We are starting a series of sessions to explore and discuss true masculinity (YMG)/true femininity (YWG) as well as the virtue of chastity (yes, relevant to married people too!) guided by the **True Strength (YMG)/True Beauty (YWG)** 4-DVD series.

We will be watching the first DVD on our next session: **The Heart of a Man (YMG)/The Heart of a Woman (YWG)**. Come and join in fellowship with like-minded brothers/sisters in Christ! For more information contact Kim (YMG) at 0431035980 or Villy (YWG) at 0403751343.

MERCY PALLIATIVE CARE

This weekend we have a speaker from Mercy Palliative Care . Palliative care is a range of services that support people with advanced disease when cure is no longer possible . We will be having a special collection this weekend to support this important service.

JOSEPH MA'AE

The St Anthony's Parish would like to thank Joseph Ma'ae for all his help and support he has given to the Church Community and Bingo. We would like to wish him all the best as he discerns his vocation in the Priesthood in Samoa.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Lesley will be on long service leave for the next 3 weeks
The Parish Office will be open over the next 3 weeks
Monday to Friday 9am -1pm. The Office will be closed
Friday 28th September (Public Holiday) Thank you.

ST BERNARD'S

MOORABOOL LIGHT ORCHESTRA

The next orchestral Concert by the Moorabool Light Orchestra, based at Bacchus Marsh, will be its Spring celebration to take place on **Sunday afternoon 23rd September 2018 at 2pm** in the Bacchus Marsh Public Hall. 40+ members of the MLO plus special guest artists will present a delightful Pleasant Sunday Afternoon of "Masters of Classical Music – Great Symphony Classics and Favourite Overtures".

Tickets: \$25 Adults General Admission, Children under 16 **Free**, and are available at the door on the day of performance from 1pm.

Pre-sales from Bacchus Marsh Florist & Nursery, 185 Main Street, Bacchus Marsh.

BONFIRE NIGHT

What a great night and what a bonfire!

Thank you to everyone who came along and supported the night. There was over 120 there enjoying the night. The food, guest speaker, Brother Eric from De la Salle, were all fantastic. The KSC handed over a cheque for \$1,000 to help the missionary work of Br Eric in Papua New Guinea.

KSC RACING GAME

Update – 18th Week of the 26 Week Game
Game 1

Mary Flanagan – 77 points

Marie Casey – 72 points

Peter Skinner – 62 points

Game 2

Mark Farrell – 77 points

Pat O'Leary – 72 points

Terry Casey – 62 points

8 weeks to go. Good luck.

WORSHIP NEWS

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

ST ANTHONY'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 29th & 30th September

MINISTERS OF THE WORD:

5.30pm: Mila Little
8.30am: Anthea Scerri
10.30am: Elaine Lacey

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.30pm : Gavin Pereira (P) & Lorraine Tellis
8.30am : Lillian Christian (P), Sue Alexander & Michael Higgins

10.30am: George Bonello (P) & Doris Bonello

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

MASS COORDINATORS

5.30pm: Dolores Turcsan & Alina Tsakonas
8.30am: Natalie Howard & Ron Howard
10.30am: Godwin Barton & Carmen Vella

ALTAR SERVERS

5.30pm: Ethan Porter & Mason Azzopardi
8.30am: Andre Oqueli
10.30am: Anakin Anderson & Josh Djie-Spiteri
If you are unavailable please contact Ben Kratochvil 0423 076 305

ST BERNARD'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 29th & 30th September

MINISTERS OF THE WORD:

5.00pm: John Thorne
8.30am: Jan Carragher & Allan Comrie
10.00am: Sr Mary Fermio & Baddeley's

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Colin Remedios
8.30am: Brendan Harrison
10.00am: Jenny Kearney

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ROSTER

September: Sr Mary Fermio

ALTAR SERVERS

5.00pm:
8.30am: Roster Pending
10.00am:

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased:

John Montgomery, Tjiang Danu Yudhi Pramono & Vianita Pramono

We pray for the death anniversary at this time of:

Fay Blake, Angelo Borg, Leslie Butler, Emmanuel Caruana, Christopher John Doyle, Mavis Ferreira, John Galea & Darren Grech,

Please pray for the Sick: Jean Barnett, Nickolia &

Klara Butkovic, Maria Caruana, Mary Caruana, Judy Layton, Peter Manicaro, Veronica Michael, Wanda Novak, John Osborne, Howard Parr, Irene Rahilly, Catherine Roberts, Peter Roberts, Pat Roberts, Charlie Spiteri, Clint Abela Wadge, Michael Wright & 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

May you be wrapped up in God's love,
Found deep in his everlasting wings;
Carried and kept safe and cherished.
May the healing power of Christ be with you.
Amen



ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the death anniversary at this time of:

Moses Abraham, Frances Azzopardi, Cyril Brook, Sr Xavier Claire, Gino Dalleore, Janet Demondston & Christa Gohler.

Please pray for the Sick:

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, Marie Maloney, Patricia Marechal, Debbie Marshall, Jordanis Maryo, Pauline McDonald, Ian McKechnie, Marcus Meno, Paul Mullin, Arthur Pape, Michael Paterson, Georgia Peacock, Arabella Periera, Bev Pickett, Mitchell Prendergast, Peter Roberts, Julie Scott, Ken Shaw, Marian Smith, Frank & Elizabeth Stehmann, Susan Trist, Mitchell Tung, Kevin O'Gorman 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: 29th & 30th September

PIETY STALLS VOLUNTEERS

5.30pm: Anne Peramuna
8.30am: Judy Johnson
10.30am: Kim Barton

CUPPA ROSTER

Next Cuppa Weekend: **22nd & 23rd September**

5.30pm: Judy Van Hoos & Gladys Clarke
8.30am: Geoff Sutton & Skye James
10.30am: Mangala Rowell & Doris Bonello



CHURCH FLOWERS

Doris Bonello &
Josephine German



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 10.00am.

New members most welcome.

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

FUNDRAISING & SOCIAL COMMITTEE DATES

19th Oct: Parish & School Fete

11th Nov: Family Day

31st December: New Year's Eve Dance
Aspendale Gardens
Fundraiser for New Chapel

ST BERNARD'S

VOLUNTEERS WEEKEND : 29th & 30th September

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

Saturday: Jan Farmelo
Sunday: Carmel Shea

MORNING TEA

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

Next Morning Tea: **7th October**

Host: St Vincent de Paul Society



CHURCH FLOWERS

Bernadette Kearney



COUNTING TEAM # 8

Colm Carragher
Maggie Carragher
Jill Braithwaite
Marj Tung

PRESBYTERY & CHURCH GROUNDS- (September)

Front Garden: Volunteer Please

Back/Side Garden: Volunteer Please

Parish Centre: Volunteer Please

Carpark/Pines: Volunteer Please

Back Paddock: Colm Carragher

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

Welfare Number: 1800 305 330

The Vinnies Store is located at 8 Grant Street, Bacchus Marsh. We are calling for more volunteers. If you would like more information please ring 5310 6322.

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

Our committee consists of two representatives from each of the participating churches who normally are nominated and appointed at our Annual General Meeting which was held in May.

Currently we only have one representative from the Catholic church and we are calling for a volunteer from St Bernard's Parish to take up this position on The Neighbour's Place Committee of Management. We only meet once a month and it provides two-way communication of information, ideas and opinions on our outreach work.

Contact: Fr Fabian 5367 2069

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 Sept**

Baptisms are held on the 1st and 3rd

Sunday of the month: **Sunday 7th & 21st October.**

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: **Wayne & Marian Muller** **0400 007 286**

Group 2: **Tune & Epi Kepu** **0426 593 722**



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 September**

Baptisms are held on the 1st and 3rd

Sunday of the month: **Sunday 7th & 21st October**

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 : Justin & Katie

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 ANTIPHON

I am the salvation of the people, says the Lord.
Should they cry to me in any distress,
I will hear them, and I will be their Lord for ever.

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of Wisdom

Let us condemn him to a most shameful death.

The godless say to themselves,
'Let us lie in wait for the virtuous man, since he annoys
us
and opposes our way of life,
reproaches us for our breaches of the law
and accuses us of playing false to our upbringing.
Let us see if what he says is true,
let us observe what kind of end he himself will have.
If the virtuous man is God's son, God will take his part
and rescue him from the clutches of his enemies.
Let us test him with cruelty and with torture,
and thus explore this gentleness of his
and put his endurance to the proof.
Let us condemn him to a shameful death
since he will be looked after - we have his word for it.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 53

Comm: The Lord upholds my life.

All: The Lord upholds my life.

O God, save me by your name;
by your power, uphold my cause.
O God, hear my prayer;
listen to the words of my mouth.

For proud men have risen against me,
ruthless men seek my life.
They have no regard for God.

But I have God for my help.
The Lord upholds my life.
I will sacrifice to you with willing heart
and praise your name for it is good.

All: The Lord upholds my life.

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St James

Justice is the harvest of peacemakers from seeds sown in a spirit of peace.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

God has called us with the gospel
to share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Alleluia!.

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

*The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of humanity
... All who wish to be first must make themselves the
servants of all.*

After leaving the mountain Jesus and his disciples made their way through Galilee; and he did not want anyone to know, because he was instructing his disciples; he was telling them, 'The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men; they will put him to death; and three days after he has been put to death he will rise again.' But they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him.

They came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the road?' They said nothing because they had been arguing which of them was the greatest. So he sat down, called the Twelve to him and said, 'If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all.' He then took a little child, set him in front of them, put his arms round him, and said to them, 'Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

You have laid down your precepts to be carefully kept;
may my ways be firm in keeping your statutes.

NEXT WEEKS READINGS

First Reading:	Num 11:25-29;
Second Reading:	James 5:1-6
Gospel:	Mk 9:38-43, 45,47-48

2018 the Year of Youth: World Youth Day Cracow, Poland, July 2016 III

The 31st World Youth Day was held in the Polish city of Cracow. This is the first part of Pope Francis' homily at the closing Mass for the pilgrims on Sunday, July 31, 2016.

Dear young people, you have come to Krakow to meet Jesus. Today's Gospel speaks to us of just such a meeting between Jesus and a man named Zacchaeus, in Jericho (Luke 19:1-10). There Jesus does not simply preach or greet people; as the Evangelist tells us, he *passed through* the city. In other words, Jesus wants to draw near to us personally, to accompany our journey to its end, so that his life and our life can truly meet.

An amazing encounter then takes place, with Zacchaeus, the chief "publican" or tax collector. Zacchaeus was thus a wealthy collaborator of the hated Roman occupiers, someone who exploited his own people, someone who, because of his ill repute, could not even approach the Master. His encounter with Jesus changed his life, just as it has changed, and can daily still change, each of our lives. But Zacchaeus had to face a *number of obstacles* in order to meet Jesus. It was not easy for him. *At least three of these* can also say something to us.

The first obstacle is smallness of stature. Zacchaeus couldn't see the Master because he was little. Even today we can risk not getting close to Jesus because we don't feel big enough, because we don't think ourselves worthy. This is a great temptation; it has to do not only with self-esteem, but with faith itself. For faith tells us that we are "children of God ... that is what we are".

We have been created in God's own image; Jesus has taken upon himself our humanity and his heart will never be separated from us; the Holy Spirit wants to dwell within us. We have been called to be happy for ever with God!

That is our real "stature", our spiritual identity: we are God's beloved children, always. So, you can see that not to accept ourselves, to live glumly, to be negative, means not to recognise our deepest identity. It is like walking away when God wants to look at me, trying to spoil his dream for me. God loves us the way we are, and no sin, fault or mistake of ours makes him change his mind. As far as Jesus is concerned—as the Gospel shows—no one is unworthy of, or far from, his thoughts.

The theme of WYD Cracow was the text: "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

No one is insignificant. He loves all of us with a special love; for him all of us are important: *you* are important! God counts on you for what you are, not for what you possess. In his eyes the clothes you wear or the kind of mobile phone you use are of absolutely no concern. He doesn't care whether you are stylish or not; he cares about you, just as you are! In his eyes, you are precious, and your value is inestimable.

At times in our lives, we aim lower rather than higher. At those times, it is good to realise that God remains faithful, even obstinate, in his love for us. The fact is, he loves us even more than we love ourselves. He believes in us even more than we believe in ourselves. He is always "cheering us on"; he is our biggest fan.

He is there for us, waiting with patience and hope, even when we turn in on ourselves and brood over our troubles and past injuries. But such brooding is unworthy of our spiritual stature! It is a kind of *virus* infecting and blocking everything; it closes doors and prevents us from getting up and starting over. God, on the other hand, is hopelessly hopeful! He believes that we can always get up, and he hates to see us glum and gloomy.

It is sad to see young people who are glum. Because we are always his beloved sons and daughters. Let us be mindful of this at the dawn of each new day. It will do us good to pray every morning: "Lord, I thank you for loving me; I am sure that you love me; help me to be in love with my own life!" Not with my faults, that need to be corrected, but with life itself, which is a great gift, for it is a time to love and to be loved.

Zacchaeus faced a *second* obstacle in meeting Jesus: *the paralysis of shame*. We can imagine what was going on in his heart before he climbed that sycamore. It must have been quite a struggle: on one hand, a healthy curiosity and desire to know Jesus; on the other, the risk of appearing completely ridiculous.

Zacchaeus was public figure, a man of power, but deeply hated. He knew that, in trying to climb that tree, he would have become a laughingstock to all. Yet he mastered his shame, because the attraction of Jesus was more powerful.

You know what happens when someone is so attractive that we fall in love with them: we end up ready to do things we would never have even thought of doing. Something similar took place in the heart of Zacchaeus, when he realised that Jesus was so important that he would do anything for him, since Jesus alone could pull him out of the mire of sin and discontent.

The paralysis of shame did not have the upper hand. The Gospel tells us that Zacchaeus "ran ahead", "climbed" the tree, and then, when Jesus called him, he "hurried down". He took a risk, he put his life on the line.

For us too, this is the secret of joy: not to stifle a healthy curiosity, but to take a risk, because life is not meant to be tucked away. When it comes to Jesus, we cannot sit around waiting with arms folded; he offers us life—we can't respond by thinking about it or "texting" a few words!