



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

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year C

8th September 2019

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Fabian Smith

ASSISTANT PRIESTS: Fr Patrick Bradford & Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint

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 –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 Patrick Bradford, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint and Damien Schuster Council Secretary: Judy Johnson	

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

Cathy Belcher - Vice Chair	0431 082 886
Shane Cook -School Advisory Board	0419 999 052
Peter Farren	0418 594 501
Moira Ross	0400 675 056
Aaron Russell	0401 927 502
Emillio Scalzo	5366 5800
John Thorne - Secretary	5310 6692
James Waters - Chair	0403 822 795
EX-OFFICIO:	
Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Patrick Bradford, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint 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 : 9th—15th September

Monday:	7.45am	FFS
Tuesday:		
morning:	9.15am	FLM
evening:	6.30pm	FLM
Wednesday:	7.45am	FLM
	9.15am	FFS
Thursday:	7.45am	FPB
	9.15am	FLM
Friday:	St John Chrysostom Memorial	
	9.15am	FLM
Saturday:	The Exaltation of the Holy Cross	Feast
Saturday Vigil:	School Mass All Welcome	5.30pm FFS/FMB
Sunday:	8.30am	FPB
	10.30am	FPB

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.



ST BERNARD'S BACCHUS MARSH

MASS TIMES : 9th—15th September
 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:	St John Chrysostom Memorial	
	9.30am	FPB
Saturday:	The Exaltation of the Holy Cross	Feast
Saturday Vigil :	5.00pm	FPB
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 4th October**

ADORATION: 30 minutes before every weekday Mass. Adoration is held every first Friday 10.00am until 4.00pm
 Next Date: **Friday 4th October**

PROVIDENCE MASS Is held on the second Friday of the month at 11.00am The Village 5-7 Griffith St, Maddingley.
 Next Mass: **Friday 13th September**

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 September**

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS KOROBEIT

MASS TIME:

Saturday Vigil:	6.30pm	FLM
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NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE

GREAT DATE NIGHT 2019
Friday 20 September, 7–9pm Oaks on Market, 60 Market Street, Melbourne
 Enjoy a night of fine food and fellowship at the Great Date Night, with international guest presenter Fr Leo Patalinghug. Drawing from his experience of working with couples for marriage preparation and his penchant for creating culinary masterpieces, Fr Leo will offer a fresh message to couples filled with inspiration, hope and God's love. **Cost:** \$70 per person **Enquiries:** the Life, Marriage & Family Office on 9287 5587 or lmf@cam.org.au
Registrations: by Thursday 12 September www.trybooking.com/BDVVJ

PARISH EVENTS & NOTICES

PARISH DATABASE UPDATE

A census will be held at all Masses over this weekend and next so we can update our parish database records. This is an important process so we can be assured we have the current contact details of our parish families. The census cards will be distributed as you arrive for Mass and only one card per family is required. We thank you in advance for your assistance with this important process.

A JOURNEY OF FAITH TO JERUSALEM WITH FR FABIAN SMITH

Dates : 20th Oct– 2 Nov 2019 Price: \$5690 per person. For further details contact Fr Fabian 0403 435 471.

THE PRIEST RETIREMENT FUND – SPECIAL COLLECTION

Last weekend we collected \$703.05 at St Anthony's and \$805.00 at St Bernard's for the Priest Retirement Fund. We thank you for your generosity.

JOINING TOGETHER FOR PEACE 2019

The United Nations Day of Peace will be held on Sunday 22nd September. The Moorabool Interfaith Group is holding a half hour peace vigil at the Peace Pole at the Eddie Toole Rotunda, Main St, Bacchus Marsh at 7.45am. The emphasis will be on positive things which can bring our many Faiths closer together. Please join us.

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.

ORDINATION TO PRIESTHOOD– MICHAEL BUCK

Deacon Buck will be ordained on the 7th September.

He will be celebrating the 5.30pm Mass on Saturday 14th September at St Anthony's. Please bring a plate to share for a gathering after Mass.

PRIME TIMERS

Our next outing will be on WEDNESDAY 25th September for Mass with Fr Martin at St Ambrose Church Woodend. Mass at 11 am followed by lunch at the Victoria Hotel Woodend at 1 pm. RSVP Monday 23rd. Ineke 0400120401 or ineke49@yahoo.com

MILA AND JOHN LITTLE

Dear Friends of St Anthony's,

It seems that we have disappeared from St Anthony's parish. Not really our intention! We underestimated the work involved in emptying a farm by Oct 1st and resettling in town. That plus the normal challenges that life brings us. At times all a bit overwhelming. Still we think of you all with gratitude and our times together both at the farm and St Anthony's. We would like to invite you to a Thanksgiving Mass at 11.00 at the farm on Sat 21st September followed by lunch. We do hope that many of our friends will join us. Please leave your names at the back of the church for catering purpose.

God Bless. Mila/John Little

PARISH OFFICE

The Parish Office will be closed this Friday, 13th September.

ST BERNARD'S

APOLOGY - SEPTEMBER MORNING TEA

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to apologise to all for the absence of morning tea after 10am mass last Sunday. Due to a roster change, the Parish Council were unaware that we were scheduled hosts and were working to our regular spots of first and last months in the annual roster. We apologise for any inconvenience caused. The Parish Council will be reviewing the current roster process so this doesn't occur again.

James Waters, Parish Council Chair

COLUMBAN CALENDARS 2019

Now available from the Piety Stall - \$9.00 each.



ST. BERNARD'S PARISH PICNIC

Sunday 6th October from 11.00am

At St. Bernard's' Primary School

Sausages and bread provided by St. Bernard's Parish

Please bring a salad and sweet to share.

BYO plates, cups, cutlery, chairs, running shoes and competitive spirit

Races, games and great fun provided!



WORSHIP NEWS

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

ST ANTHONY'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 14th & 15th September
MINISTERS OF THE WORD

5.30pm : Pat Fernandes
8.30am: Ineke Allen
10.30am: Leonia Jessop

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.30pm: Doloes Turcsan (P) & Philip Anyayahan
8.30am: Geoff Sutton (P), Lois Brewis
& Edwina La Rose
10.30am: Sally Markulin (P) & Elaine Lacey

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

MASS COORDINATORS

5.30pm: Godwin Barton & Dolores Turcsan
8.30am: Natalie Howard & Ron Howard
10.30am: Godwin Barton & 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:

A. N. Antony, James Cabrerros, Concetta Chircop, Dorothy Davis, Emanuel Debrincat, Richard D'Souza, Helen Mary Hurtis, Mavis McBain & Genoveffa Micallef.

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)

ST BERNARD'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 14th & 15th September
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

September: Sr Mary Fermio

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the death anniversary at this time of:

Angelina Baiti, Hormankia Grixti, Rosa Pollino, Peg Shanahan, Monica Steele, & Jim White.

Please pray for the Sick:

Noah Barlow, Dudley Baddeley, Michael Barrett, Peter Bennett, Steven Braszel, Kevin Bridges, Tina Bower, 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 Johnson 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, Terry Sims, Marian Smith, Elizabeth Stehmann, Susan Trist, Hayden Tung, Mitchell Tung, Stephen Van Eede, John Van Orsouw, Angela Vicum, Louis Vogels, Barry Walsh, Mary Walsh, 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)

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



SERVICE / COMMUNITY

ST ANTHONY'S

VOLUNTEERS WEEKEND: 14th & 15th September

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

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

CUPPA ROSTER

Cuppa Weekend: 28th & 29th September

5.30pm: Judy Van Hoos & Gladys Clarke
8.30am: Sam & Pat Chiles
10.30am: Rose Ma'ae & Family



CHURCH FLOWERS—September

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 : 14th & 15th September

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: 6th October

Host: Parents & Friends



CHURCH FLOWERS—September

Francis McDaid



COUNTING TEAM # 6

Jill Geurts
Ron Geurts

PRESBYTERY & CHURCH GROUNDS- (September)

Front Garden:	Volunteer Please
Back/Side Garden:	Volunteer Please
Parish Centre:	Volunteer Please
Carpark/Pines:	Sean Giani
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 26th Sept**

Baptisms are held on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month: **6th & 20th 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 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 Patrick 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: **Da Rocha Family** 0421 854 711

Group 2: **Alfreda Parnis-Cassar** 0416 250 490

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 22nd September**

Baptisms are held on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month: **6th & 20th 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 Lucas 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 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

You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right;
treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

FIRST READING Wisdom 9:13-18

What man can know the intentions of God?
Who can divine the will of the Lord?
The reasonings of mortals are unsure
and our intentions unstable;
for a perishable body presses down the soul,
and this tent of clay weighs down the teeming mind.
It is hard enough for us to work out what is on earth,
laborious to know what lies within our reach;
who, then, can discover what is in the heavens?
As for your intention, who could have learnt it, had you not
granted Wisdom
and sent your holy spirit from above?
Thus have the paths of those on earth been straightened
and men been taught what pleases you,
and saved, by Wisdom.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 89

Comm: In every age, O Lord, you have been our
refuge.

All: In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.

You turn men back in to dust
and say: 'Go back, sons of men.'
To your eyes a thousand years
are like yesterday, come and gone,
no more than a watch in the night.

You sweep men away like a dream,
like grass which springs up in the morning.
In the morning it springs up and flowers:
by evening it withers and fades.

Make us know the shortness of our life
that we may gain wisdom of heart.
Lord, relent! Is your anger for ever?
Show pity to your servants.

In the morning, fill us with your love;
we shall exult and rejoice all our days.
Let the favour of the Lord be upon us:
give success to the work of our hands.

All: In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.

SECOND READING Philemon 1: 9-10, 12-17

This is Paul writing, an old man now and, what is more, still a
prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for a child of mine,
whose father I became while wearing these chains: I mean
Onesimus. I am sending him back to you, and with him - I could
say - a part of my own self. I should have liked to keep him with
me; he could have been a substitute for you, to help me while I am
in the chains that the Good News has brought me. However, I did
not want to do anything without your consent; it would have been
forcing your act of kindness, which should be spontaneous. I know
you have been deprived of Onesimus for a time, but it was only so
that you could have him back for ever, not as a slave any more,
but something much better than a slave, a dear brother; especially
dear to me, but how much more to you, as a blood-brother as well
as a brother in the Lord. So if all that we have in common means
anything to you, welcome him as you would me.
The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Let your face shine on your servant,
and teach me your laws.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Luke 14:25-33

Great crowds accompanied Jesus on his way and he turned and
spoke to them. 'If any man comes to me without hating his father,
mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes, and his own life too,
he cannot be my disciple. Anyone who does not carry his cross
and come after me cannot be my disciple.
'And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would
not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to
complete it? Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found
himself unable to finish the work, the onlookers would all start
making fun of him and saying, "Here is a man who started to build
and was unable to finish." Or again, what king marching to war
against another king would not first sit down and consider whether
with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who
advanced against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the
other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for
peace. So in the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless
he gives up all his possessions.'
The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Like the deer that yearns for running streams,
so my soul is yearning for you, my God;
my soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS –

24th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

First Reading: Ex 32:7-11,13-14;
Second Reading: 1 Tim 1:12-17;
Gospel: Lk 15:1-32



The Catholic family: Raising children in a secular world XL

My kids had technology-free birthdays—and didn't hate it

If you visit most birthday party establishments these days, kids are inundated with video games, laser tag, escape rooms, and various other tech-dependent activities. Kids' activities are becoming more digitally based, with less interaction.

Birthday parties consumed with technology seem counterintuitive: The whole goal is to interact with others. But my daughters (ages 13, 11, and six), like other kids in Australia, want to have access to technology in some capacity (YouTube, mobile phones, iPads).

As parents, my husband and I are realistic about the benefits of technology, but also try hard to reduce its use how and when we can so that our kids aren't dependent on it to interact. So, when my two older girls wanted to have slumber parties for their birthdays, I didn't think it a big deal. Until, that is, I realised just how much technology has changed most kid interactions.

My 13-year-old was the first to have a slumber party this past year. Most of her friends already had mobile phones. I wasn't prepared for the lack of initial interaction, with kids texting other kids (who, while invited, weren't in attendance) or posting on social media. My initial reaction was, "I don't want my living room blasted on social media." Plus the goal of a slumber party is to keep the bonding of the girls specific to those at the party.

So I texted all the parents that I would respectfully collect all the mobile phones so the girls could just bond and have time to interact with each other. I told the girls they would get them back the next morning and, if they needed to call their parents, they were most welcome to use my phone.

While my 13-year-old thought I was the absolute worst mum and I felt like one in that moment, I also knew this was for the best, because it forced her friends to interact with each other. It also kept my living room from being blasted on social media, it removed outside teenage drama from kids who didn't attend, and allowed conversations to take place so that the girls could actually enjoy each other's company in the moment.

By Andrea Bear, www.catholicmom.com

The girls weren't thrilled at the idea, but they complied. There were moments of boredom, but they soon found ways of occupying their time. When I gave back their phones the next morning, they looked like they had been deprived for a week. They hardly talked to each other until their parents picked them up.

So, when it came time for my 11-year-old's birthday, I kindly informed the parents before the party to keep the media devices at home so the girls could interact and enjoy each other's company. Needless to say, some of the girls weren't thrilled, but at least it was handled before the party and I had parental support in the home.

We also planned activities that the kids weren't used to doing because, well, frankly technology often took the place of them. We had a water balloon fight and many games in the backyard; we roasted marshmallows and we watched an outdoor movie (so not completely technology-free but at least it wasn't YouTube) and we had games that the girls played where they had to talk to each other.

At the beginning of the night the girls said, "I'm bored" but, at the end of the party the next morning, the girls commented that it was one of the best parties they had ever attended. In between those boring moments where nothing was planned, the girls had to use their imagination — and they didn't hate it. The moments of boredom allowed them to find new ways to explore and be creative, come up with games, and talk about things that they might not otherwise have talked about.

They played a game called "warm fuzzies" where each girl had to write a positive message to someone else at the party. They had to put these messages in a cup, and by the end of the game each girl had a cup full of positive messages just for her. A simple game like that allowed them to think about each other and enjoy each other's company.

I'm not against technology, it has its place, but if we use it for every facet of our lives it starts to replace some of our interactions and most importantly how our kids practise being kids. We have to let our kids be bored and use their imagination. We can show our kids how to not depend on technology for every means of entertainment or interaction.