



# 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 Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ**

**Year A**

**14th June 2020**

**PARISH PRIEST:** Fr Fabian Smith

**ASSISTANT PRIESTS:** Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint /Father Marcus Goulding

### ST ANTHONY'S PARISH

**Parish Secretary:** Lesley Morffew

**Admin Assistant:** Judy Johnson

**Parish Office Hours:** Mon-Fri 9.30am-1.30pm

Father Fabian 0403 435 471

Fr Lucas 0478 768 141 /Fr Marcus 0468 367 893

**Email:** meltonsouth@cam.org.au

**Website:** www.stanthonyofpadua.com.au

**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

**Parish Office Hours:** Tue/Thu/Fri 10.00am-1.00pm

Father Fabian 0403 435 471

Fr Lucas 0478 768 141 /Fr Marcus 0468 367 893

**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
Kim Nguyen	0431 035 980

EX-OFFICIO:

Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint, Fr Marcus Goulding  
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
Moir 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 Marcus Goulding  
and Emilio Scalzo

### **CHILD SAFETY OFFICERS**

Coordinator: Godwin Barton (0425 735 449)

Officers: Aloysious Dacunha, Karina Dunne & Lorraine Tellis

### [PARISHIONER'S FIRST COLLECTION/SECOND COLLECTION](#)

Parishioners who normally give cash each weekend for the collections, if they wish to donate, are now able to go to the link below and make their payments online.

The link to the St Anthony's Parish is: [CDFpay for St Anthony's Parish, Melton South](#)

The link to the St Bernard's Parish is: [CDFpay for St Bernard's Parish, Bacchus Marsh](#)

**Please put your name and thanksgiving number if you know it as a reference. Thank you.**



## St Anthony's Parish

Dear Parishioners of St Anthony's

We are pleased to be able to celebrate public Masses at St Anthony's subject to the temporary conditions laid down by the Victorian Government and the Archbishop of Melbourne. We can accommodate twenty people at Mass in addition to those required for the celebration of Mass.

We had 650 parishioners attending mass before the lockdown. Celebrating 14 masses per week will enable 280 parishioners the opportunity to participate in mass at St Anthony's church. To ensure everyone has the opportunity to come to Mass, parishioners have been contacted by a parishioner of St Anthony's Care Team over the past three weeks. Those who have been contacted have been able to attend mass already. Some are scheduled to attend mass in the coming weeks according to their work schedule.

There are however many parishioners whose details are outdated and therefore have not been able to be reached. In order to reach out these parishioners we are doing some door knocking and letter dropping next week.

**If you have not had the opportunity yet to come to mass** please email Judy Johnson on [judyparishnews@gmail.com](mailto:judyparishnews@gmail.com) or SMS Judy on 0414 007 009 with the names of those who wish to attend mass.

**Mass Monday to Saturday 9.30am & 6pm** (Rosary will begin 25 mins before mass Monday to Saturday).  
**Mass Sunday 8.30am & 10.30am**  
**Confessions 9am & 6.30pm**

**Please note:** All evening masses are Live- Streamed so we need it to be conducive for Live-Streaming. If you have children under four years of age can you please book in to come to the morning masses Monday to Saturday at 9.30am or Sunday 8.30am.

**To ensure all safety requirements are met for the wellbeing of all in attendance, only those who are allocated a time and day will be admitted entrance to the church for Mass. The more flexible you are with your day and time the easier it will be for you to attend mass. Entry will be closed 10mins before mass begins.**

# St Bernard's Parish



## REGISTER TO ATTEND MASS AT ST BERNARD'S BY TRYBOOKING OR PHONE

Dear parishioners of St Bernard's,

We are pleased to be able to celebrate public Masses at St Bernard's subject to the temporary conditions laid down by the Victorian Government and the Archbishop of Melbourne. We can accommodate 20 people at Mass (from 1st June 2020) in addition to those required for the celebration of Mass.

We are now using Trybooking to facilitate registration for Masses at St Bernard's. To book for Mass, visit [www.trybooking.com/BJVHO](http://www.trybooking.com/BJVHO). Alternately, visit our parish website [www.pol.org.au/bacchusmarsh](http://www.pol.org.au/bacchusmarsh) and follow the link to Trybooking. Parishioners who do not have access to the internet can continue to register for Mass using our dedicated registration phone number **0432 055 992**.

Parishioners are welcome to attend Mass **twice a week**. You are welcome to register for additional Masses only if, within three hours of the scheduled start of a Mass, Trybooking indicates that there are still vacancies for that Mass.

Confessions will be heard for half an hour prior to the start of each Mass.

Masses are being offered at St Bernard's at the following times:

Sunday | 8.30am & 10.00am

Tuesday | 6.00pm

Wednesday | 10.00am

Thursday | 6.00pm

Friday | 10.00am

Saturday | 6.00pm (Vigil)

Only those people who have registered by Trybooking or Phone will be admitted entrance to the Church for Mass. We look forward to seeing you back at St Bernard's.

## PARISH EVENTS & NOTICES

### RECONCILIATION/ANOINTING OF THE SICK

**St Anthony's Parish**—Reconciliation will be heard 30 minutes prior to morning Masses Mon-Sat and for up to 30 minutes after evening Masses Mon-Sat.

**St Bernard's Parish**—Reconciliation will be heard 30 minutes prior to the start of each Mass.

Anointing of the sick can be organised with the Priests directly, please call them.

*Phone numbers for the Priests are listed on the front page of the newsletter.*

### MASSES AVAILABLE ON LIVE STREAMING– FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE

St Anthony's Parish are live streaming Masses on YouTube [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1MHR7tf4-7qIFeikXU6l\\_w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1MHR7tf4-7qIFeikXU6l_w)

The Masses are also being live streamed on Facebook. You can watch Masses by going to the website: [stanthonypadua.com.au](http://stanthonypadua.com.au). Click the link for Live Masses. The Masses are coming through the St Anthony's Facebook page– St Anthony of Padua Catholic Church Melton South (you will need to have a Facebook account to be able to view the Masses).

### MASS TIMES—LIVE STREAMING FROM ST ANTHONY'S CHURCH

**Monday-Saturday:** 5.30pm Adoration/Rosary/Benediction  
6.00pm Mass

**Sunday:** 10.30am Mass

### ST ANTHONY'S FACEBOOK

Please visit our Facebook page.:

[St Anthony of Padua Catholic Church Melton South](#)



Live Masses streaming from St Anthony's daily.

### PARISHIONER'S FIRST COLLECTION/SECOND COLLECTION OR PARISH APPEALS

Parishioners who normally give cash each weekend for the collections, if they wish to donate, are now able to go to the link below and make their payments online.

Parishioners are able to make quick and easy recurring thanksgiving payments or can choose a one-off offering from the comfort of their own home.

When making an offertory online, parishioners have the option to choose which collection they would like to partake in, as they usually would during Sunday Mass - first collection, second collection or a parish appeal.

The link to the St Anthony's Parish is: [CDFpay for St Anthony's Parish, Melton South](#)

The link to the St Bernard's Parish is: [CDFpay for St Bernard's Parish, Bacchus Marsh](#)

**Please put your name and thanksgiving number if you know it as a reference. Thank you.**

### ST ANTHONY'S PARISH OFFICE HOURS– THIS WEEK

Monday– Friday 9.30am-1.30pm

### ST BERNARD'S PARISH OFFICE HOURS-THIS WEEK

Tue/Thu/Fri– 10.00am-1.00pm

*Please contact Judy Johnson for any Parish news you would like published in the Newsletter*

*Email: [judyparishnews@gmail.com](mailto:judyparishnews@gmail.com)*

## PARISH EVENTS & NOTICES

### **MORNING MASSES TIME CHANGE— [ST ANTHONY'S](#)**

St Anthony's Morning Masses **Monday—Saturday** will now be held at 9.30am. The change to Mass times is to help with the school traffic congestion.

### **BAPTISMS—[ST ANTHONY'S AND ST BERNARD'S](#)**

Baptisms will be held on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month. Parents and Godparents must attend a Baptism Preparation meeting. Current government restrictions on gatherings will be adhered to for both the Preparation Meetings and the Baptism Services. Please contact Judy Johnson 0414 007 009 or email [judyparishnews@gmail.com](mailto:judyparishnews@gmail.com). If you have any queries. Judy's Parish Office Hours are Tue-Thu 10.00am-1.00pm. **Please note we need a minimum of 4 weeks notice before the Baptism.**

### **SOUL FOOD UPDATE—[ST BERNARD'S PARISH](#)**

Soul Food provides a free community meal each Wednesday (excluding school holidays), Soul Food has resumed provision of meals and food on Wednesdays at 12 noon, this is **now being held at St. Bernard's Church hall**, for Take Away containers of meals. Contact: Jenny Kearney 0408 104 155

## **SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS— FRIDAY 19th JUNE 2020**

### **♥ Prayer of Thanksgiving and Praise to the Sacred Heart**

*Lord, you deserve all honor and praise,  
because your love is perfect and your heart sublime.  
My heart is filled to overflowing with gratitude  
for the many blessings and graces you have bestowed  
upon me and those whom I love.  
Forever undeserving, may I always be attentive  
and never take for granted the gifts of mercy and love  
that flow so freely and generously from your Sacred Heart.  
Heart of Jesus, I adore you.  
Heart of Jesus, I praise you.  
Heart of Jesus, I thank you.  
Heart of Jesus, I love you forever and always.  
Amen.*



Source: [www.franciscanmedia.org](http://www.franciscanmedia.org) › [prayers-to-the-sacred-heart](#)

# Save the date

Catholic Regional College Melton  
is celebrating 40 years as a college on

**Sunday 30 August**

More details will be provided  
closer to the date.

# 40 YEARS

*in the making*



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

**ST ANTHONY'S**

**ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE**

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

Marya Assunta Borg, John Church, Frank Consiglio, Phyllis Gilder, Margherita Grech, Salvina Pace & Sergio Pin

**Please pray for the Sick:**

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

**ST BERNARD'S**

**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 **To be advised**

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

Kathleen Cox, Anna Falzon, Jack O'Donohue, Sophie Parsons & Evelyn Walsh.

**Please pray for the Sick:**

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

**FATIMA STATUE**

These families are praying together for the mission of the Parish:

- |                                           |                     |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Group 1: <b>Wayne &amp; Marian Muller</b> | <b>0400 007 286</b> |
| Group 2: <b>Kim &amp; Villy Nguyen</b>    | <b>0403 751 343</b> |
| Group 3: <b>Anthony &amp; Mary Saliba</b> | <b>9746 1470</b>    |



**NEO-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

# Along the track

## Winter

*For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater. Isaiah 55:10*

The footy season is on us and passions run high. Will this be 'our' year? Will our team get closer to the top, giving us a chance of success next year? Winter is a time of hope, of planning, of strategizing, of dreaming what might be.

The brightness of the summer sun is dimmed and the light is softer. Days are shorter, darkness is longer, the weather is cold, many trees are bare, and sometimes snow is on the ground. The plants are resting and the seeds beneath the earth are waiting patiently for the first warm rays of spring. Many birds have flown north seeking warmer times - only the tough and hardy take on the winter. All around us the season seems to reach a standstill — a point of repose.

Some of us want to miss winter and hurry from autumn to spring, to avoid the long dark days, the fading light and months of colder temperatures. Our spirits tire of the endless grey skies and the bleakness of land. We long for the colours of spring, the warmth of other seasons. Rather than taking time to hibernate, to bunker down, we travel to warmer places.

But Winter is gifted to us by a loving Creator. As the book of Ecclesiastes reminds us:

*There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens*  
Eccles 3:3

It has its own purpose and brings its own blessings (rain for example) and challenges, its own joys and reminders to our heart and soul. It is, in its own way, a beautiful season of intimacy and reflection that gives us the opportunity to stay inside and look inside.

Winter is the time for slow cooking, for soups and stews, for hot pies and curries. It is time for comfort food for both the body and the soul.

We hurry from work to the warmth of home. Times by the fire offer precious moments of quiet for the soul and, like the seeds deep in the ground outside,

time for dreams to germinate and come to life. Winter invites times of peaceful quiet and reflection. While Winter calls us to be mindful of the changes around us, it also encourages change within.

Without the cold, there wouldn't be an opportunity to appreciate the little things, like warmth, a good weather day, the smells of winter cooking, the time for peaceful quiet, the joy of a warm home. It teaches us to make slowness a priority — to appreciate what's right in front of us because we have the time to notice that it's there.

In winter, we do the last of the pruning before the coming of spring, so that the blossom will bloom and fresh fruit will emerge. Winter asks us what needs pruning in our own lives; it offers time to ask honestly if some things we do, some responsibilities, are bearing fruit or just sapping energy. What is helping us make progress or what are we holding on to for no real purpose? Winter gifts us with time, opportunities to re-imagine our lives as they really should be, to know what matters most and what doesn't.

When we take the time to pray do we give God instructions, trying to limit God to our plans and purposes, instead of recognising that God has dreams and visions for us that are far bigger than we can even possibly imagine or dream of? Are we open to them?

When we grumble about Winter, spare a thought for those who are suffering the Winter of the Heart, for those experiencing pain and loss, for those who are grieving, for those who are angry or struggling to cope with guilt, for those who are in darkness and waiting for the light, for new growth. Winter also teaches us that the sun will always reappear. Even though the winter cold and grey seems to drag on forever, the sun will come again, warmth will return and nature will revive and blossom. New life will begin again.

Be grateful for the wisdom of winter, that withdrawal and peaceful reflection are essential to growth and renewal. God, the Wise Creator of all Seasons, we give thanks for the gift of winter.

Regards  
**Jim Quillinan**

Email: [jquillinan@dcsi.net.au](mailto:jquillinan@dcsi.net.au)



## **A CORONAVIRUS HEALING PRAYER**

*Jesus Christ, you travelled through towns and villages “curing every disease and illness”. At your command, the sick were made well.*

*Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love.*

*Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care.*

*Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbours from helping one another.*

*Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders.*

*Jesus Christ, healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow.*

*Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection and peace.*

*Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare.*

*In place of our anxiety, give us your peace.*

*Jesus Christ, heal us . Amen.*



## LITURGY OF THE WORD

### **ENTRANCE PROCESSION**

He fed them with the finest wheat  
and satisfied them with honey from the rock.

### **FIRST READING** Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14-16

Moses said to the people: 'Remember how the Lord your God led you for forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, to test you and know your inmost heart - whether you would keep his commandments or not. He humbled you, he made you feel hunger, he fed you with manna which neither you nor your fathers had known, to make you understand that man does not live on bread alone but that man lives on everything that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

'Do not then forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery: who guided you through this vast and dreadful wilderness, a land of fiery serpents, scorpions, thirst; who in this waterless place brought you water from the hardest rock; who in this wilderness fed you with manna that your fathers had not known.'

**The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.**

### **RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** 147

**Response** Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

**All:** Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!  
Zion, praise your God!  
He has strengthened the bars of your gates,  
he has blessed the children within you. **R.**

He established peace on your borders,  
he feeds you with finest wheat.  
He sends out his word to the earth  
and swiftly runs his command. **R.**

He makes his word known to Jacob,  
to Israel his laws and decrees.  
He has not dealt thus with other nations;  
he has not taught them his decrees. **R.**

### **NEXT WEEK'S READING— 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**First Reading:** Jer 20:10-13;

**Second Reading:** Rom 5:12-15;

**Gospel:** Mt 10:26-33



### **SECOND READING** 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

The blessing-cup that we bless is a communion with the blood of Christ, and the bread that we break is a communion with the body of Christ. The fact that there is only one loaf means that, though there are many of us, we form a single body because we all have a share in this one loaf.

**The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.**

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the living bread from heaven, says the Lord;  
whoever eats this bread will live for ever.  
Alleluia!

### **GOSPEL** John 6:51-58

Jesus said to the Jews:

'I am the living bread which has come down from heaven.

Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever;  
and the bread that I shall give  
is my flesh, for the life of the world.'

Then the Jews started arguing with one another: 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' they said. Jesus replied:

'I tell you most solemnly,

if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man  
and drink his blood,

you will not have life in you.

Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood  
has eternal life,

and I shall raise him up on the last day.

For my flesh is real food  
and my blood is real drink.

He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood  
lives in me

and I live in him.

As I, who am sent by the living Father,  
myself draw life from the Father,

so whoever eats me will draw life from me.

This is the bread come down from heaven;

not like the bread our ancestors ate:  
they are dead,

but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.'

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

### **COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood  
remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.

# The life of Catholic worship and piety XXI

## Gestures of Worship: Our Ritual Language (1)

When our daughter Alexandra was a toddler, we attended the Methodist church with my parents one Sunday morning. She preceded us down the aisle and genuflected deeply and crossed herself before entering the pew, as she did every Sunday at church eliciting amused smiles from the grownups.

But, of course, it had never occurred to her not to genuflect before entering the pew. It was a habit she learned early, even if she did not understand the reason for her gesture of reverence.

On another occasion, a cousin was visiting us with her two little girls, and we were all kneeling in our pew before Mass began, praying the Rosary. The two-year-old knelt with us, and suddenly began to cry. I had a hunch what was the matter — so I handed her a Rosary. She was instantly calm, and began to finger the beads, her head bowed reverently. Though she was far too young to know what the Rosary was, or the reason we were kneeling in prayer before Mass, she did understand that it was important, and she wanted to be a part of it.

These tiny children did not and could not understand fully the symbolism of what they did, of course. Nevertheless, their desire to express reverence as they had seen others do was beyond question. If inchoate, their acts of worship were no less powerfully expressive.

## Ritual signs and gestures

In *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Pope Benedict XVI stressed the need for formation and instruction about the Sacred Mysteries of the Eucharist (what is called “mystagogical catechesis”), so that Catholic people will more fully understand and be able to unite themselves interiorly with the action of the Eucharist.

The Holy Father specifically mentioned signs and gestures: “The Church’s great liturgical tradition teaches us that fruitful participation in the liturgy requires that one be personally conformed to the mystery being celebrated, offering one’s life to God in unity with the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of the whole world.

“For this reason, the Synod of Bishops asked that the faithful be helped to make their interior dispositions correspond to their gestures and words. Otherwise, however carefully planned and executed our liturgies may be, they would risk falling into a certain ritualism. Hence the need to provide an education in Eucharistic faith capable of enabling the faithful to live personally what they celebrate.” (§64)

Part of this instruction about the mystery of the Eucharist, Pope Benedict wrote, involves the meaning of ritual gestures: “A mystagogical catechesis must also be concerned with presenting the meaning of the signs contained in the rites. This is particularly important in a highly technological age like our own, which risks losing the ability to appreciate signs and symbols. More than simply conveying information, a mystagogical catechesis

should be capable of making the faithful more sensitive to the language of signs and gestures which, together with the word, make up the rite.” (§64)

One of the mistakes in implementing the liturgical changes following the Second Vatican Council was downplaying, often eliminating, traditional gestures of Catholic ritual — physical actions that express our faith.

Exactly why this happened is not easy to explain, but one reason was a kind of super-rational approach to worship that prevailed in the years following the Council. Some thought that such ritual gestures as kneeling, genuflecting, bowing, making the sign of the cross, and striking the breast were mindless habits without real meaning, empty gestures possibly tainted with superstition.

Many liturgists (and priests and catechists) stressed understanding the “why” of everything we do in worship — which is a good idea in itself, but when overemphasised it can (and often did) lead to rejecting anything one does not completely understand: “If I don’t get it, I won’t do it.” According to this view, the rational always trumps the ritual.

Some liturgists viewed the bodily actions that had traditionally accompanied Catholic worship as examples of the “vain repetition” that Protestants criticised (another example is the Rosary, with its repeated prayers), so eliminating the “meaningless” bodily actions of Catholic worship was considered a nod toward ecumenism.

A misguided view of updating Catholic worship also led to the elimination of these distinctive symbolic actions, which were no longer seen as an integration of body and soul in authentic worship. Lost in all this was the idea that these bodily actions express both a personal and communal response to the Mystery of Faith and to the sacramental world the liturgy represents — and that these actions are a means of uniting all believers with the sacramental life of the Church.

Instead, they were thought to be prompted only by subjective piety and an overly sentimental sense of devotion. Many liturgists had come to regard these ritual gestures as liturgical debris accumulated over the centuries — debris that obscured the pure form of Christian worship and that needed to be removed.

Another contributing factor was that before the Council some gestures — such as striking the breast during the Confiteor (“mea culpa” — “through my fault”) or at the “Domine non sum dignus” (“Lord, I am not worthy”) just before Communion — were not made by the congregation. These prayers were said inaudibly by clergy and altar servers only, and only they made these gestures.

After the Council, when the vernacular translation changed these prayers and eliminated the triple repetitions, the accompanying gestures were simply discontinued, even those explicitly indicated in the rubrics. Thus, lacking the example of the priests and servers, the people in the congregation never took up this practice.