



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

4th Sunday of Easter

Year A

3rd May 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 10.00am-1.00pm

Father Fabian 0403 435 471

Fr Lucas 0478 768 141

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

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.

PARISH EVENTS & NOTICES

RECONCILIATION/ANOINTING OF THE SICK

St Anthony's Parish—Father Fabian/ Father Marcus are available for Reconciliation Tue-Friday 10.00am-1.00pm, also you can arrange a time to see them for Reconciliation outside these hours just give Father Fabian a call.

St Bernard's Parish—Father Lucas is available for Reconciliation Tue-Friday 10.00am-1.00pm, also you can arrange a time to see him outside these hours for Reconciliation, just give him a call.

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

Masses are now being live streamed from the St Anthony's Parish. You can watch Masses by going to the website: 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: 9.30am Mass

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES/RECENT DEATHS & THE SICK

The list of our sick Parishioners and the Death Anniversaries will be placed on the Altar for every Mass, at both Parishes. If you know of anyone who is ill and you would like to add their name to the sick list or if you have recently lost a loved one and would like to add their name to be mentioned at the Mass that is being live streamed please send a text or leave a message for Judy Johnson 0414 007 009 or email judyparishnews@gmail.com.

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.

MASS AT ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL

The 11am Sunday Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral will be televised every week during the COVID-19 restrictions, on Channel 31 (often listed as Channel 44 on digital TVs). Also 'Mass for you at Home' is televised on channel 10 every Sunday at 6am. Please share this news with friends and family who might be limited to TV viewing. Please check you TV guides for changes.

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH OFFICE HOURS- THIS WEEK

Monday– Friday 10.00am-1.00pm

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

PARISH EVENTS & NOTICES

5 MILLION PRAYERS FOR PEACE

This year, Fr. Chris Alar, MIC, the director of the Association of Marian Helpers, is teaming up with the international World Apostolate of Fatima (WAF) and Children of the Eucharist to invite prayer warriors around the globe to join in on a bold new mission.

It's called "World Rosary 2020." The goal is to collect 5 million Rosaries (prayers, that is, not beads) into a "spiritual bouquet." This bouquet of prayers will be offered at Masses on May 13 and Oct. 13 at the Chapel of Apparitions in Fatima, Portugal, by Fr. Carlos Cabecinaas, rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary.

We invite the entire world, those near and far, to visit [WorldRosary2020.org]: Clergy, parishes, schools, families, journalists, organizations and youth groups throughout the world, and don't forget the children. Everybody is invited to visit to submit your gift of ongoing prayers to Our Lady of Fatima's Immaculate Heart.



Source: marian.org

GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY-3rd May 2020

Today is the World Day of Vocations. Pope Francis tells us: *Every vocation is born of that gaze of love with which the Lord came to meet us, perhaps even at a time when our boat was being battered by the storm. We will succeed in discovering and embracing our vocation once we open our hearts in gratitude and perceive the passage of God in our lives.* Let us pray for the young people in our community, and in our families and circle of friends. May our prayers and presence reflect the gaze of love from the Lord to help them discover their vocation.

Pope Francis – Message for 2020 World Day of Vocations *‘Take heart, do not be afraid! Jesus is at our side, and if we acknowledge him as the one Lord of our lives, he will stretch out his hand, take hold of us, and save us.’*

‘The Lord knows that a fundamental life choice - like marriage or special consecration to his service - calls for courage. He knows the questions, doubts and difficulties that toss the boat of our heart, and so he reassures us: “Take heart, it is I; have no fear”. ‘Dear friends, on this day in particular, but also in the ordinary pastoral life of our communities, I ask the Church to continue to promote vocations.’

What can I do? Each one of us can do something for the future of the Church in our nation. We all want and need more vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. What can I do? The most important and essential thing that each of us can do is to pray. Intentionally, regularly, insistently. Make a decision today to include a prayer for vocations in your daily prayers.

PROJECT COMPASSION BOXES

Parishioners please note you can return your Project Compassion Boxes to the Parish Office:

St Anthony's: Mon –Fri 10.00am-1.00pm

St Bernard's: Tue/Thu/Fri 10.00am-1.00pm

Thank you.



PROJECT COMPASSION
FOR A JUST FUTURE

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:

Karen Austin, Annie Fernandes, Walter German, George Mercieca, Georgia Mercieca, Phyllis Michael, Fandro Respondino & Frank Xiberra

Please pray for the Sick:

Jean Barnett, Nickolia & Klara Butkovic, Maria Caruana, Mary Caruana, Liza Fernandes, Judy Layton, Peter Manicaró, 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)

FATIMA STATUE

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

Group 1: Allen & Ellen Johnson	0418 200 144
Group 2: Andrew & Lorelle Porter	0409 939 002
Group 3: John & Anthea Scerri	0444 516 192



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:

Joan Blood, Carmen Calvitto, Jeffrey Galea, Lee O'Hehir, Joan O'Keefe Val Ratkowski, Kath Coburn and Neville Thompson.

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, Mary Wadeson, 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)

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

PRAYER DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

(Adopted from the USCCB)

Mary, Help of Christians, we fly to you today as your beloved children. We ask you to intercede for us with your Son, as you did at the wedding in Cana.

Pray for us, loving Mother, and gain for our nation and world, and for all our families and loved ones, the protection of God's holy angels, that we may be spared the worst of this illness.

For those already afflicted, we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance. Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful, wipe away their tears and help them to trust.

In this time of trial and testing, teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be patient and kind. Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.

We come to you with confidence, knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother, health of the sick and cause of our joy.

Shelter us under the mantle of your protection, keep us in the embrace of your arms, help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus.

Amen

Source: Aid to the Church in Need



Along the track

Staying at Home

And so we stay at home, if we are not required to go out. Kathleen O'Meara from Wisconsin described this time:

And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.

Worth thinking about, isn't it! We couldn't celebrate Easter in the usual way, but as we remember the Resurrection and look forward to Pentecost, we pray, as we usually do, that the Spirit will renew the face of the earth, and us too. In these times we are offered the chance of renewal and transformation like never before.

As we move through this time, not knowing how long it will last or even when we might be over the worst of it, we do have a rare opportunity to think differently, to listen deeply, to pray and envision a better future, of new ways to live and work together. How will we change after this isolation? What will we learn from it? Will we grow in our awareness and gratitude for the safety we enjoy in this country, the abundance it provides, the freedom that, even in these times, we enjoy and that we so often take for granted?

What brings this home starkly is that we cannot gather with family and friends to farewell a loved one. There will be many memorials to go to when this is all over but in the meantime we must learn to treasure every moment with those we hold near and dear. Will our experience of uncertainty and powerlessness, frustration, sadness and our fear transform us and make us think differently so that we will identify with those who are lonely, or homeless or poor or the chronically ill whose suffering does not end after a few months of quarantine? We will learn a new appreciation and understanding for those who seek safety and a new life in our land? They are our brothers and sisters who share with us this same short moment of life.

Already we are seeing signs of new life. Sometimes we may feel helpless in the face of this pandemic but that makes us look for good news every day, for some signs of progress. Acts of kindness are increasing, people are reaching out in new and creative ways - shopping and cooking for others, taking time to be present to ourselves and our loved ones which has not always been possible in our once busy lives. Nature has reminded us again that everything is not always under our control. Will this time of thinking more deeply inspire us to find ways to permanently change our habits to save our ailing planet so that the earth can begin to heal?

Will we cease living so focused on self and find ways to be more in harmony with our earth and everyone in it? There is a new appreciation for the gift of land. In the past few weeks, nurseries are struggling to keep fruit and vegetable seeds and plants on the shelves. Chooks are literally 'walking out the door.' Will we find new reverence for our Earth that sustains us throughout this crisis with food and water, and, yes, even toilet paper? Will we learn that hoarding doesn't give us control, it only deprives others?

The way we go about things is changing. We are beginning to explore new ways of being together, new ways of thinking, perhaps ways that we had never thought before. We have no option. People are joining together across the world to support each other, to make sure others are safe, that those who cannot fend for themselves are cared for. There are hundreds of such stories each day in the media. The generosity and sacrifices of others, and the commitment of those in the front line have been inspiring. We serve God by serving our neighbour. But something new is taking root here. These last weeks have taught us that it doesn't have to be like it was before. Or will we be tempted to revert to pursuing our own ends and goals and wealth? For the fortunate among us, there will be the temptation to follow the easy and familiar paths of personal ambition and financial success, but like it or not, we live in times of great uncertainty. We have the chance offered to few generations, to build a new and better society.

Today, Governments of all persuasions are applying funds to programs they had resisted in the past, seeking ways to keep jobs safe and businesses open or waiting for us at the end. So it can be done. There is a more concerted effort to care for the vulnerable, public and private hospitals are working together. But will this action survive the pandemic? Each of us can work to bring about change. It may sound trite, but start in small ways. In this time of the resurrection, small things matter. Just being positive is one. Sharing anecdotes about kindnesses that are occurring quietly throughout our community is always welcome. Make allowances for each other's behaviour. Most people are doing the best they can in the circumstances, including you. And try not to take other people's thoughtfulness and kindness for granted.

In Pope Francis' words: "We need to rediscover the concreteness of small things, the small acts of kindness shown to those who are close to us, family, friends. We need to realise that our treasure lies in small things. There are tiny gestures that sometimes get lost in the routine of everyday life, gestures of tenderness, affection, compassion, that are nevertheless decisive, important."

Regards
Jim Quillinan

Email: jquillinan@dcsi.net.au

LITURGY OF THE WORD

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

The merciful love of the Lord fills the earth;
by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, alleluia.

FIRST READING Acts 2:14, 36-41

On the day of Pentecost Peter stood up with the eleven and addressed the crowd with a loud voice: 'The whole House of Israel can be certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.'

Hearing this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the apostles, 'What must we do, brothers?' 'You must repent,' Peter answered 'and every one of you must be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise that was made is for you and your children, and for all those who are far away, for all those whom the Lord our God will call to himself.' He spoke to them for a long time using many arguments, and he urged them, 'Save yourselves from this perverse generation.' They were convinced by his arguments, and they accepted what he said and were baptised. That very day about three thousand were added to their number.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 22

Response: The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.

All: The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit. **R.**

He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort. **R.**

You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. **R.**

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever. **R.**

NEXT WEEK'S READING-FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

First Reading: Acts 6:1-7;

Second Reading: 1 Pet 2:4-9;

Gospel: Jn 14:1-12



SECOND READING 1 Peter 2:20-25

The merit, in the sight of God, is in bearing punishment patiently when you are punished after doing your duty.

This, in fact, is what you were called to do, because Christ suffered for you and left an example for you to follow the way he took. He had not done anything wrong, and there had been no perjury in his mouth. He was insulted and did not retaliate with insults; when he was tortured he made no threats but he put his trust in the righteous judge. He was bearing our faults in his own body on the cross, so that we might die to our faults and live for holiness; through his wounds you have been healed. You had gone astray like sheep but now you have come back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord;
I know my sheep, and mine know me.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL John 10:1-10

Jesus said: 'I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers.'

Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to them.

So Jesus spoke to them again:

'I tell you most solemnly,
I am the gate of the sheepfold.
All others who have come
are thieves and brigands;
but the sheep took no notice of them.
I am the gate.

Anyone who enters through me will be safe:

he will go freely in and out
and be sure of finding pasture.

The thief comes
only to steal and kill and destroy.

I have come
so that they may have life
and have it to the full.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Good Shepherd has risen,
who laid down his life for his sheep
and willingly died for his flock, alleluia.

The life of Catholic worship and piety XV

Ten Misconceptions about the Rosary

7. It's not in the Bible

Yes, it is. Devotional prayer of this kind is as old as Christianity; as old as Judaism, in fact. The present form of the Rosary developed directly from the practices of the Apostles, who gathered to say psalms at certain hours of the day or night (Acts 3:1; 10:9, 30; 16:25). This is really just a continuation of Jewish practice, as you can see in passages like 1 Kings 10:5 or Psalm 119:164, or the prescriptions for the services of the Temple in Exodus and Deuteronomy. There is no time in the memory of Christianity when Christians did not do this.

Gradually, as distinctively Christian ways of life took shape, this practice became the Liturgy of the Hours, also called the Divine Office or the Great Office. Since earliest times, this prayer was obligatory for clergy, and it was embraced eagerly by the laity.

The most popular and most effective form of this devotion was the Psalter of the Blessed Virgin, and the Rosary is "a branch sprung from that ancient trunk of Christian liturgy by which the humble were associated in the Church's hymn of praise and universal intercession", Pope Paul VI recalled. Its roots are intertwined with those of every other Christian devotion, reaching all the way back through the New Testament to Genesis, by way of the prophets and Psalms.

In fact, because the Rosary consists of meditations on the chief episodes of the lives of Mary and Jesus, it can't be understood at all apart from the Bible: the Gospels that preserve the best accounts of those mysteries; the prophecies that explain them; and the epistles that show you how to apply their meanings in daily life. Indeed, the constant practice of the Rosary is one of the best ways to gain a thorough understanding of the Bible.

8. Vatican II got rid of all those things

No! The Council urged a renaissance of the Rosary in *Lumen Gentium*, and the popes since Vatican II have unanimously urged us to take up our beads and learn again the skills of meditative prayer. Pope John XXIII wrote lovingly of the Rosary, and he declared for the record that he prayed it himself, every day, in its entirety.

Pope Paul VI wrote: "We call upon all of the Church's sons and daughters ... to pray ardently to our most merciful mother Mary by saying the Rosary." He commended the prayer as most pleasing to the Mother of God, and most effective in gaining heavens blessings.

No pope in history has been more persistent in this than Pope John Paul II, the Pope of the Rosary. He has written urgently about the Rosary, calling it the privileged instrument for avoiding the peril of war and obtaining from God the gift of peace, and noting that Our Lady's Rosary helps us ask God for reconciliation and peace for all of humanity. He also recorded reflections on each of the mysteries for distribution as tapes and compact discs in seven different languages! Clearly, after Vatican II, the Rosary is still the Church's foremost devotion.

9. It helps if I say the Rosary at Mass

Absolutely not! It is a mistake to recite the Rosary during Mass, Pope Paul VI warned, although unfortunately this practice still persists here and there. The Rosary is a pattern of devotional prayer, and the Mass — the Sacrament of the Eucharist — is the highest form of liturgical prayer, and liturgical prayer outranks devotional prayer. If you say the Rosary at Mass, you are turning your attention from a higher form of prayer to a lower; from the Presence of Christ, in fact. There's no better place to pray than before the Blessed Sacrament, but no devotional practice should ever divert you from the Mass, and none should ever usurp the Sacrament's rightful place.

10. I can be a perfectly good Christian without the Rosary

Strictly speaking, that's true. But you can't be a perfectly good Christian unless you pray daily and many times a day. So, if you pray daily, and if you wish to improve your skills at prayer, sooner or later you'll want to advance to meditative prayer. "Of all spiritual exercises, meditative prayer is the most profound for the learned, and the simplest for the unlettered," wrote Venerable Luis de Granada. And the Rosary is the easiest way to attain that skill.

In this light, Venerable Luis quoted St Bernard of Clairvaux: "To meditate on these things has been my wisdom, and here I have found everything that was necessary or profitable for me to know. ... I always bear these mysteries in my mouth and always preach them, as you know; I am always meditating on them in my heart, as God knows. And of these things I always write, as everybody can see. For this is and always will be my loftiest philosophy: to know Jesus, and Him crucified."

"What else is there to say," Luis concluded, "but to ask all who truly desire to advance in the spiritual life to use this holy practice, and to ask all masters and teachers of the spiritual life to require it of those subject to them?"