



ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC PARISH

52 Yarra Street

HEIDELBERG

We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which our parish stands, the Wurundjeri-Balluk clan of the Woi wurrung people in the Kulin Nation. We respectfully recognise elders, both past and present, and join in a silent prayer for healing of the pains caused by our ancestors.

Central to the mission of St John's Parish is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

30TH / 31ST MARCH, 4TH SUNDAY IN LENT, YEAR C

Dear Parishioners, Visitors and Friends

In the second part of our season of Lent, we are invited to reflect on three important themes. Last week Jesus invited us to repent and turn back to God, this week we are asked to reflect on forgiveness, and next week we will be thinking about God's mercy. These themes are intended to lead us to the Easter celebrations when we renew our baptism vows and a re-commit to our personal faith journey.

This Sunday we reflect on the beautiful parable of the lost sons and the forgiving father. The wealthy father agrees to give the younger son his share of the property, which the son quickly squanders, ending up having to look after pigs to earn a living. Within a Jewish context, this detail implies the most disgusting and lowest type of activity one could do. The Jewish Talmud utters a curse be the one who would breed swine!

The climax of the story is the narration of the heart-warming welcome the father offers his estranged son. He runs to him, falls on his neck in a fatherly embrace, kisses him and fully reinstates him to his former glory as a son. The story then moves us on to consider the older, faithful son, who stayed on the property working with the father. When the older son learns that his younger sibling has returned home, he is very angry and refuses to join in the celebrations, but the father goes out of his way to plead with the older son. When we consider the way the older son speaks to his father, we wonder about the type of relationship that exists between the two.

As we reflect on this parable, we are invited to ask: who am I in this story. Some of us identify with the younger son, deciding to distance themselves from the father. It is very reassuring knowing that the father—God—does not dwell on the nature of the sin committed, but is prompt to welcome us back! In the parable he is pictured as being constantly on the look-out recognising his son even while still a long way away!

I am sure that many times we identify with the older son, feeling angry at the way the father forgives and celebrates the return of the wayward sibling. The parable shows us that while the older son remains faithful to his father, he certainly does not share his magnanimity and forgiveness. He may have stayed with the father for the duration of the brother's absence, but he does not appreciate that he is sharing the fullness of life the father gives. This can also be an accurate image of our own relationship with God.

We have our own faith journey we need to commit and respond to. The Father invites us to share in his life but we are free to choose how to respond to this invitation. Both sons sin against the Father, one by squandering his money, the other by squandering his love! Both in turn need the Father's mercy and forgiveness, which the Father is very happy to extend to us all.

Our faith journey also requires our connectedness with our sisters and brothers. We show our faithfulness to our God not by slavishly obeying his commands, as the older son claims to do, but by imitating his merciful love and forgiveness towards our sisters and brothers, remembering that we all, equally, require God's infinite mercy and that we are all sinners on a faith journey towards a loving God.

... Mario

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Mario Zammit
PARISH SECRETARY: Mary Peeris
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL CHAIR:
Christopher Ratnayake
CHILD SAFETY OFFICER:
Michelle Robertson m:0409 533 100

PARISH OFFICE:
52 Yarra Street Heidelberg 3084
t: 9457 1066
e: heidelberg@cam.org.au
w: cam.org.au/heidelberg
facebook/stjohnheidelberg
OFFICE HOURS:
Mo, Tu, Th, Fr; 9:30am to 2:30pm

MASS TIMES:
WEEKEND: Saturday: 6:00pm
Sunday: 8:30am, 10:30am, 5:00pm
AUSTIN HOSPITAL:
3rd Sunday of the Month at 9:30am
WEEKDAYS: 9:15am

RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION):
Saturdays at 9:45am & 5:30pm
or by appointment
BAPTISMS: Sundays at 11:45am, by
appointment
BAPTISM INFORMATION EVENING:
Last Thursday of each month at
7:30pm in the parish house, except
Dec and Jan
WEDDINGS: By appointment
**FIRST RECONCILIATION,
FIRST COMMUNION, CONFIRMATION:**
Parish Secretary (9457 1066)

ROSARY: Monday to Saturday after
morning Mass
EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT:
Wednesday: 7:30pm - 9:00pm;
Thursday: 9:40am - 11:00am,
Friday: 8:00am - 9:00am

LECTIO DIVINA: Every second and
fourth Monday of the month at
7:00pm, in the parish house
LEGION OF MARY: Every Tuesday night
at 7:00pm in the parish house;
contact Sue 9459 8604
PARISH PILGRIM STATUE OF MARY:
To have the statue of Mary in your
home for one week contact Marj
McBroom m: 0414 289 304

ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC PARISH PRIMARY:
PRINCIPAL: Maureen Stella
ADDRESS:
55 Cape St Heidelberg 3084
t: 9459 2963;
office@sjheidelberg.catholic.edu.au

HALL HIRE:
Fran Gasior: m:0417972317
10:00am-5:00pm; Mon-Fri only

NEW PARISHIONERS WELCOME:
Please contact parish office to
introduce yourself

PARISH PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we the parishioners of St John's are grateful for all we have received from the men, women and children of our past. Help us to cherish and maintain our parish heritage. Most of all, enable us to be people who welcome the stranger, the needy, the sick and the lonely. Like St John, our patron saint, may we be people who love others, as your Son Jesus, asked us to do. We make this prayer, through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

SAVE THE DATE: Parish Mission, from Monday 20th May to Wednesday 22nd May. A morning session at St Pius X, Heidelberg West (9:30am) and a repeat evening session at St Clement's, Bulleen (7:30pm) are provided. The mission is a joint venture by the Heidelberg, Heidelberg West, Ivanhoe, Bulleen and Rosanna parishes. Fr Richard Leonard, a Jesuit priest, will be leading the parish mission. All welcome.

WEST HEIDELBERG READING CLUB:
Education = Opportunity, come put your faith into action. You can make a difference in the lives of tomorrow's young people by helping them learn to love reading today. Volunteer with Vinnies' Reading Club every Tuesday afternoon. Contact: Rachel 0418145985, Westheidelberg. reading@svdp-vic.org.au

ANNUAL CANTERBURY ROADER'S LUNCH: Thursday 11th April at Marcellin College, 11:30am for Mass in the chapel, 12:30pm for a college tour/drinks on the balcony and 1:00pm seated for lunch in the functions room. Bookings now open for Marcellin Old Collegians. \$60 per person includes a two-course lunch and drinks. Bookings at www.trybooking.com/474287 or call the Marcellin Foundation Office on 9851 1464.

CELEBRATING THE MERCY OF GOD

Jesus tells the parable of the Lost Son as a defence against criticism of the welcome he gives 'tax collectors (social outcasts) and sinners' and his 'eating with them' – that is, his festive celebration with them of the mercy of God.

The parable powerfully depicts the dehumanisation of a young man who had callously requested his inheritance from his father and who subsequently squanders it. Reduced to wanting to eat what pigs eat – what could be worse for a Jew? – the young man 'comes to his senses.' This may be a painful moment of growth in self-knowledge. It does not, however, represent much of a conversion: he remains calculating: 'I can't go back as a son. But at least if I get in as a servant, I'll be clothed and fed.'

On his return, his father does not let him finish his prepared speech about coming back as a servant. Instead, overcome with compassion, he welcomes the boy and orders a big family celebration. Why? Because the son who was dead has come back to life; the lost one has been found.

The hostile reaction of the older brother is a key focus and challenge of the parable. We never in fact learn whether he goes in and shares in the music and dancing or whether he remains outside, locked in anger and resentment.

The parable seems to describe two kinds of sinfulness—and to suggest that one is much easier for God to deal with than the other? Is there perhaps a bit of both kinds in me?

Fr Brendan Byrne sj

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

THE SICK: Jenny Ferriere, Cliff Jones, Elizabeth Larkin, Cederick (Ced) Legg, Francis Micallef, Joyce Quinn, Cheryl Stern, Paul Sullivan, Noline Zerna.

ANNIVERSARIES: Maxwell Ingram.

RECENTLY DECEASED: Rita Anthony.

*Names on the sick list remain for six weeks, unless otherwise advised.
Please submit any items for the newsletter, including sick, recently deceased and anniversaries, by **Thursday morning** latest. Thank you.*

30 Mar / 31 Mar	Sat 6:00pm	Sun 8:30am	Sun 10:30am	Sun 5:00pm
1st Reader	Peter Penson	Karen Frost	Robyn Laurie	Leela Cherubim
2 nd Reader	Pamela Smith	Ronnie Maloney	Adele Boyle	Mary Kotefski
Communion	Lorraine Mascarenhas	Christopher Ratnayake	Adrian Daly	Jenny Hollaway
	Sue Lew-Kee	Pauline Griffiths	Ann Domaingue	Sally Tramontana
	Maria Basilone	Fiona Curry	Yannick Jonas	Des O'Brien
	Michelle Penson	Leo Hernandez	Brian McIntosh	TBA
6 Apr / 7 Apr	Sat 6:00pm	Sun 8:30am	Sun 10:30am	Sun 5:00pm
1st Reader	Moira Di Cesare	Peter Penson	Karen Frost	Matthew Sanders
2 nd Reader	Michael Leonard	Garry Sproules	TBA	Sharon D'Souza
Communion	Jeanette O'Sullivan	Margaret Bradley	Mary Furlan	Matthew Sanders
	Marco Di Cesare	Val Wallis	Elizabeth Williamson	Olivia Sanders
	Leela Cherubim	Ronnie Maloney	Doris Schembri	TBA
	TBA	Alice Wong	TBA	TBA

Counters **31 Mar:** Garry Sproules, Janice McGrath, Giuseppe Amoroso & **7 Apr:** Graeme Foote, Michael Tilley.

Collection Weekly Average for February				Heidelcare Co-Ordinator	
Parish		Presbytery		March: Joan 0490 254 928	
Stewardship	\$3,324.98	Stewardship	\$581.54	April: Rosemary 0490 254 928	
Loose	\$584.77	Loose	\$312.50	Morning Tea, 7th April: Wendy & Barbara	

Thank you for supporting St John's financially. Please advise if your credit card is lost/stolen or the expiry date has changed.

GOLD COIN COLLECTION: at all Masses this weekend.

MORNING TEA & SAUSAGE SIZZLE: After 10:30am Mass next Sunday 7th April. All welcome. Gold coin donation to cover expenses of sausage sizzle, appreciated.

MASSES WITH THE SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Thursday 4th April (*Please note change of date*) we invite parishioners, especially the sick and the elderly, for Mass with the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick at the 9:15am, followed by morning tea at Francis Xavier meeting room in the parish house, hosted by the Year 6 students, and at 11:30am, followed by light lunch. Parishioners in need of transport please contact parish office.

HOLY THURSDAY, WASHING OF THE FEET: Part of the Holy Thursday celebration includes the washing of the feet of twelve parishioners. Anyone who would like to participate in this celebration please put down your name on the sheet in the foyer or speak to Fr Mario.

ST JOHN'S WALKING GROUP: This Monday, 1st April meeting at 10:00am to leave for a walk through Darebin Creek Forest Park. On our return walk we will detour for coffee in Northland. Please feel welcome to join us. Contact Jan (0423 478 504).

GEMS 50+ (AND FRIENDS): Tuesday 2nd April, from 10:00am to 12:00noon. Join us for an Italian themed morning and a cuppa. Francis Xavier meeting room at the back of the parish house. For information, contact Elizabeth (0447195553).

THE GEMS will take a two week break, therefore there are **no** gatherings on **Tuesday April 9th and 16th**. We resume again on Tuesday April 23rd.

FOOD TRAIN: We are looking to start a 'food train' to provide meals to families currently affected by a chronic illness or death. Presently we have two families with mothers suffering from breast cancer. If you can help please contact Jessica McKirkle (0428 086 375).

HEIDELCARE MEETING: 7:30pm Monday 1st April, in the parish house Francis Xavier meeting room. Enter via the back door. All welcome

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER CELEBRATIONS

PALM SUNDAY: Saturday 13 April, 6:00pm Blessing of the palms in front of parish house garages followed by procession and Mass; Sunday 14 April, 8:30am Mass; 10:30am Blessing of the palms in front of parish house garages followed by procession and Mass; 5:00pm Mass.

RECONCILIATION: Monday 15 April, 7:30pm.

HOLY THURSDAY: 18 April 7:30pm: Mass of the Lord's Supper and Washing of the Feet followed by Adoration in the parish hall. Evening Prayer at 10:00pm.

GOOD FRIDAY: 19 April, 10:30am: Stations of the Cross in the church and school grounds; 3:00pm: Solemn Liturgy of the Lord's Passion at the OLMC new Nalleijerring Centre.

HOLY SATURDAY: 20 April 9:00am: Morning Prayer; 8:00pm: Easter Vigil.

EASTER SUNDAY 21 April, Masses at 7:00am, 8:30am and 10:30am (No Evening Mass).

PROJECT COMPASSION: Michaela is a 21-year-old trainee at Purple House, a dialysis center in the Central Desert for people suffering from kidney disease. With the support of Caritas partners, Michaela is helping to build a social enterprise, a connection to culture and a new outlook for the chronically ill. Please donate to help provide essential health care, employment and training for First Australians like Michaela. Donate through boxes / envelopes / 1800 024 413 / www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion.

OLMC Heidelberg Conversations: Thursday 4th April, 7:30pm, Topic- Asylum Seekers, Australia's response and the place of compassion and what this means for us. Key note speakers - Mireille Kayeye and Josh Lourensz from Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum. Funds raised support CAPSA. Enquiries Marie Jenkins 9455 7596. Tickets \$20 adults, \$10 students, bookings at <https://www.trybooking.com/BBNSA>

FIRST READING

Joshua 5:9-12

The Lord said to Joshua, 'Today I have taken the shame of Egypt away from you.' The Israelites pitched their camp at Gilgal and kept the Passover there on the fourteenth day of the month, at evening in the plain of Jericho. On the morrow of the Passover they tasted the produce of that country, unleavened bread and roasted ears of corn, that same day. From that time, from their first eating of the produce of that country, the manna stopped falling. And having manna no longer, the Israelites fed from that year onwards on what the land of Canaan yielded.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 33:2-7

TOGETHER: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord. .

LEFT SIDE (AMBO SIDE)

I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad.

RIGHT SIDE (PRIEST'S SIDE)

Glorify the Lord with me.
Together let us praise his name.
I sought the Lord and he answered me;
from all my terrors he set me free. .

LEFT SIDE (AMBO SIDE)

Look towards him and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.
This poor man called; the Lord heard him
and rescued him from all his distress.

TOGETHER: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

For anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone, and now the new one is here. It is all God's work. It was God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the work of handing on his reconciliation. In other words, God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not holding men's faults against them, and he has entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled. So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the goodness of God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ!
I will rise and go to my Father and tell him:
Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.
Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

GOSPEL

Luke 15:1-3. 11-32

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained. 'This man' they said 'welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So he spoke this parable to them:

'A man had two sons. The younger said to his father, "Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me." So the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery.

'When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants." So he left the place and went back to his father.

'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly. Then his son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found." And they began to celebrate.

'Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about. "Your brother has come" replied the servant "and your father has killed the calf we had fattened because he has got him back safe and sound." He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out to plead with him; but he answered his father, "Look, all these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. But for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property – he and his women – you kill the calf we had been fattening."

'The father said, "My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. But it is only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found.'"