



# The Parish of Saint Anthony Glen Huntly

74 Grange Road, Glen Huntly VIC 3163

☎ Telephone: (03) 9401 6336

✉ [glenhuntly@cam.org.au](mailto:glenhuntly@cam.org.au)

[www.cam.org.au/glenhuntly](http://www.cam.org.au/glenhuntly)

ABN: 70548 570 366

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## Homily at Mass 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C – 8 September 2019

46 young people will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation this Thursday through the ministry of Fr Brendan Hayes whom Archbishop Comensoli has appointed to oversee the southern region of Melbourne while we wait for Pope Francis to name a new auxiliary bishop for this area.

It is usual for a bishop to administer Confirmation and to confer Holy Orders. But it is possible for priests to administer Confirmation if delegated by the bishop, or at Easter when adults are baptised and received into the Church, and in emergency situations, eg a little baby born with small prospect of survival or seriously sick.

Our 46 candidates have chosen a large variety of saints for their Confirmation name. Top of the list is St Sebastian, the Roman soldier-martyr famous for being shot with arrows. 6 candidates have chosen him. 2 have chosen St Anthony of Padua. Included amongst the female saints chosen by our Confirmation candidates are St Anne, mother of Our Lady, and other ancient saints like Cecilia and Christina of Bolsena and Philomena; and some have chosen more recent saints like Mother Teresa and Sr Lucia dos Santos, one of the 3 Fatima children to whom Our Lady appeared in 1917.

I often say to those preparing for Confirmation that the saint chooses you rather than you choosing them. Some saints stand out for their courage and strength – that’s probably the attraction of saints like St Sebastian and St Maximilian Kolbe who perished at Auschwitz in August 1941. Some saints are heroes of prayer and the spiritual life – like St Ignatius of Loyola and St Scholastica. Some saints are champions of the poor like St Vincent de Paul, Mother Teresa, St Elizabeth of Hungary and St John of God. Some were innovative missionaries and preachers like St Isaac Jogues, St Dominic and the Irish saints Jarlath and Patrick. Amongst the saints are outstanding priests and deacons like St Francis of Assisi, St Kevin, St John Bosco, St Louigi Scrosoppi, and religious like St Catherine of Siena and St Catherine of Bologna. Saints that step out from the pages of the Bible include the Apostle James and Archangel Michael.

The quality common to each of these saints is **holiness**. Each of these saints were shaped and formed in God’s hands by grace. Few if any of the saints travelled an easy and uncomplicated path in life. Some saints could speak of their slow conversion from a life far from God to a life lived in God’s friendship and light. Each of the saints discovered that the path to heaven, the path to sainthood, was the challenge Jesus sets before all of us today:

“Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple”

Pre-eminent amongst the saints is Our Lady whose birthday occurs today, 8 September. The Litany honours her as Queen of all the saints. You and I love her as our queen and mother. Her life is familiar to us – born the daughter of Sts Joachim and Anne, she was conceived and born without the burden of Original Sin with which you and I struggle every day. St Augustine says that Mary conceived Christ in her heart before he was conceived in her womb. This is how close Mary was to God all her life. One of our beautiful stained glass windows depicts the Annunciation, when the Angel Gabriel asked Mary to be the Mother of God. All of them speak to us of Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus. When we look to the Cross we see Mary standing there beside her Son, her soul pierced with a sword as the old man Simeon predicted in the Temple. Our windows also depict Mary enthroned in the glory of Heaven. We hope to join her one day as we pray each day of this life: “Mary, Mother of God, pray for us now and at the hour of our death”.

Let's honour Our Lady

Mother of God

Mother of the Church

Spouse of the Holy Spirit

Queen of the saints

Hail Mary full of grace,

The Lord is with thee

Blessed art thou amongst women

And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God

Pray for us sinners now,

And at the hour of our death. Amen.