

COVID-19 PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL



1-Pray for people who are infected with COVID-19 or facing quarantine.

Jesus, during Your ministry on Earth You showed Your power and caring by healing people of all ages and stations of life from physical, mental, and spiritual ailments. Be present now to people who need Your loving touch because of COVID-19. May they feel Your power of healing through the care of doctors and nurses.

Take away the fear, anxiety, and feelings of isolation from people receiving treatment or under quarantine. Give them a sense of purpose in pursuing health and protecting others from exposure to the disease. Protect their families and friends and bring peace to all who love them.

2-Pray for people at higher risk of developing the disease.

Dear Lord, we lift to You our concern for people who are more likely than others to become severely ill from COVID-19 — the elderly and people with chronic health conditions. Protect them from harm and be their comfort in this time of uncertainty and, for many, preventive isolation from loved ones.

3-Pray for medical professionals, caregivers, and researchers responsible for fighting the new coronavirus.

God, as more people get sick, healthcare workers and first responders are working longer hours with fewer supplies and with more risk of contracting the new coronavirus themselves. Renew their energy and sustain them on long shifts. Bring Your protection upon them as they work with patients. Multiply their supplies so they have the protective items needed to stay safe on the job.

Inspire and invigorate the research doctors developing better tests to diagnose the virus, create vaccines to prevent it, and identify protocols to eliminate the disease's spread.

4-Pray for leaders responsible for making decisions about the new coronavirus.

Father, we seek Your wisdom daily. Be with people making decisions that affect the lives and futures of our families, communities, countries, and the wider world. We pray that they communicate clearly, truthfully, and calmly — with each other and with the public — and that their messages are received and heeded. May truth and empathy be the touchstones of people setting policies for our protection.

5-Pray for families adjusting to new ways of life.

Holy Spirit, as families adjust to everyone being home as businesses and schools close, we ask that You guide people in their new realities. Give spouses grace for each other. Prompt worn-out parents to speak words of kindness and encouragement to their children. Help children find creative ways to experience the beauty of all You have created and continue learning.

6-Pray for business owners and families facing financial stress.

Jesus, we thank You for Your faithfulness in how you have guided and equipped people in their jobs and have provided in the past. It can be scary and overwhelming not knowing how bills and obligations will be met or to not be able to provide for families. As people feel financial strain during the uncertainty, bring them comfort and peace, reminding them that You are there for them. Provide for them in their times of need.

7-Pray for grocery store workers and delivery drivers.

Lord, we are so grateful for all the people who continue to work each day so that people are able to eat. We ask that You bless and protect them as they serve. Give them grace to handle disgruntled customers during supplies shortages. Keep their bodies healthy as they unload and stock boxes of supplies. Keep their cars and trucks running smoothly as they deliver needed supplies and food people have ordered online. And please protect them all from contracting the new coronavirus.

8-Pray for the disease to stop spreading.

Almighty God, we know that everything is in Your sovereign control. We ask that You keep this new coronavirus from continuing to spread. Give government officials the ability to safely handle people arriving from other countries. Help people decide to stay home instead of traveling or going out needlessly. Holy Spirit, remind people to wash their hands properly. And while it may be heartbreaking, comfort families as they decide to keep their distance from elderly or other high-risk family members.

9-For those who died of the COVID-19, may God grant them eternal rest, and we pray for their families, may the Lord give them strength during this time of loss.

GOSPEL*John 10:1-10*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

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 a 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.

HOMILY:

Today's Gospel comes from the first half of an entire chapter (10) the Fourth Gospel devotes to this theme. The passage builds up to Jesus' solemn claim (unfortunately not included in the reading): "I am the Good Shepherd" (v 11). Leading up to this is a series of related images, each of which presupposes an understanding of how shepherding functioned in ancient Palestine. During the day sheep grazed on the open hillsides under the watchful eyes of their shepherds. At nightfall the shepherds led them down to large communal sheepfolds, where mingled sheep from a number of flocks could remain safe for the night with just one gatekeeper to watch over them. At daybreak, when the shepherds returned, each would summon the sheep of the flock for which he was responsible. Recognising the voice of their shepherd, the sheep would follow his lead out to pasture through the gate of the fold.

HOMILY CONTINUED:

VOICE OF THE SHEPHERD: Inevitably there would be attempts to steal sheep from the fold during the night. Thieves would succeed only if they get into the fold by some means other than the gate and also only if they could get sheep to follow their call. Sheep attuned to their own shepherd's voice would not follow the call of a stranger and so would not be in danger of being removed from the fold. We can now bring this understanding to the series of images used by Jesus in the Gospel. The central idea is that of the intimate knowledge that should exist between a shepherd and sheep: he knows his sheep they recognise his voice and willingly follow his call. Jesus contrasts a 'good shepherd' like this with others who come only to steal, harass, and ultimately destroy sheep that do not belong to them. The contrast reflects the vicissitudes of the Johannine community as it struggled to free itself from the control of the Jewish synagogue and establish its own identity centred on allegiance to Jesus as its only true Shepherd. Preachers today need not stress the negative but concentrate upon the appealing image of God stemming from the positive aspect of the comparison.

FRESH DIMENSION: Within the same basic image, however, Jesus identifies himself not only with the shepherd but also with the Gate of the sheepfold: "I am the Gate of the sheepfold". This adds a fresh dimension. If the sheep are to flourish, they have to come and go through the gate of the fold; if they stay within the fold, they will decline for lack of pasture. If they do not return to the fold but stay out in the hillsides all night, they will be at risk. So daily they have to come and go through the gate, which then becomes their means of access to both protection and and growth. By describing himself as 'the Gate of the sheepfold' Jesus is indicating that only through vital and continual interaction with himself will members of the community find life and growth. In this sense he 'has come that they may have life and have it to the full', (v. 10), that is, beyond life as mere existence, to have the 'eternal life' that is a share in the undying life of God. In this sense several of the verses of Psalm 22, used as the Responsorial Psalm, become very appropriate.

Brendan Byrne, SJ,

ST PAUL'S PARISH

562 SYDNEY ROAD, COBURG. VIC 3058

Tel: 9354-1564

Email: stpaulcoburg@yahoo.com.au

Website: cam.org.au/coburg

Parish Priest: Fr. Raymond Bujeja



STEWARDSHIP:

“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ...’ (Acts 2:38)

The word “repent” means to turn from sin, to change our actions. Change that is permanent comes from within. It requires prayer, discipline, and perseverance. Change is also hard. We have to recognize that we are broken and need help. The good news - we are not alone in our journey. Ask Jesus daily for guidance and patiently listen for his response.

VOCATION VIEWS

Good Shepherd Sunday 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. (Message for World Day of Prayer for Vocations, 2020)

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.

On Line ideas

At this time when we are communicating with people on line much of the time, it is an opportunity to enter into the world of young people, and engage with them in a new way. The Masses that are being streamed may be one of the few times that they may engage with the Church; the posts on social media; the new and innovative ways of pastoral ministry – these are all opportunities to spread the message of vocation in a new way.

PARISH NOTICES

CDFpay for Parishes – Online Payment Portal

During this time, when visits to our Church are suspended, we are striving to ensure that our parishioners remain connected through new and creative pastoral programmes. While we continue to help those in our community the parish continues to incur ongoing overhead costs and we need your help.

The good news is that Catholic Development Fund (CDF) and the Archdiocese of Melbourne have partnered to build an online parish payment portal, *CDFpay for Parishes*.

This site enables you to make quick and easy online thanksgiving payments – you can set-up a recurring payment, if you haven't done so already, or you can choose a one-off offering.

The [St Paul's Catholic Church, Coburg](#) site is live and can be found via this link [CDFpay for Coburg](#)

Alternatively, I have attached a direct debit application form that you can complete and return, or those who use sacrificial giving envelopes might consider dropping their envelopes off at the Parish Office.

Thank you for your commitment to the parish. It is deeply appreciated.

Please be assured that in my daily private mass I am earnestly praying for you, your families and all parish intentions.



JOKE OF THE DAY

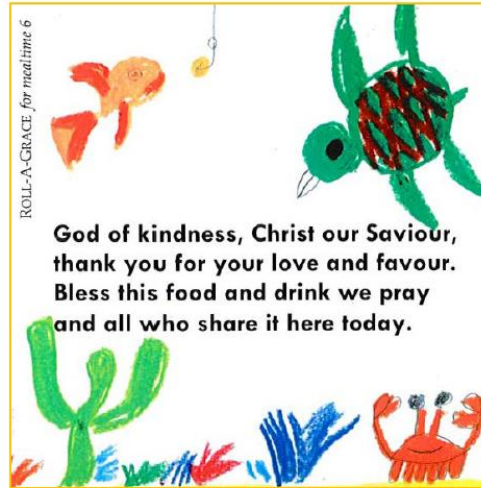


Quarantine Day 6

My wife is out getting the garden ready. Not sure what she is planting. Potatoes, maybe?

THINGS TO DO THIS WEEK

Mealtime Prayer



Family Discussion

Have you ever heard someone's voice and recognised that it belongs to someone you know?

Take turns to talk about the 'shepherds' in your lives – the people who care for, nurture, and love you. What qualities do these people have that make you think of them as 'shepherds'? What can you do to become 'shepherds' to people in your lives?

Family Activity

In the gospel, Jesus said the shepherd calls each of the sheep by name. Jesus is the Good Shepherd and knows each of us by name. Find out the story of each person's name – why their parents chose their name. Pray for each member of the family by name.



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You have already been cleansed by the word I have spoken to you (Jn 15:3).

After the Last Supper with the apostles, Jesus left the Upper Room and walked towards the Mount of Olives. The Eleven were with him: Judas Iscariot had already gone away and was soon to betray Jesus.

It was a solemn and dramatic moment. During the supper, Jesus had given a long farewell speech because he had wanted to say important things to his closest followers and deliver words not to be forgotten.

His apostles were Jews who knew the Scriptures and Jesus had reminded them of the very familiar image of the vine. In the sacred texts, this represents the Jewish people who were the object of God's care. In fact, God is an attentive and expert farmer. Now it is Jesus who speaks of himself as the vine that conveys the lifeblood of the Father's love to his disciples.¹ They must, therefore, focus above all on remaining united to him.

You have already been cleansed by the word I have spoken to you (Jn 15:3).

One way to remain united to Jesus is to welcome his Word. It allows God to enter into our hearts to make them "pure" that is, cleansed of selfishness fit to bear an abundance of quality fruit.

The Father loves us and knows better than we do what makes us feel unburdened and free from the useless weight of all the unnecessary things to which we are attached, from negative judgements, from the anxious search to make everything work to our advantage and from the illusion of keeping everything and everyone under control. In our hearts there are also positive aspirations and projects but these too could take the place of God himself and make us lose the generous momentum of evangelical life. That is why he sometimes intervenes in our life through circumstances and painful experiences, behind which there is always his gaze of love.

The fullness of joy is the fruit that the Gospel promises to those who allow themselves to be pruned and renewed by God's love.¹ This is a special joy that blossoms even in the midst of tears and overflows from the heart, flooding the surrounding soil. It is like a small foretaste of resurrection.

You have already been cleansed by the word I have spoken to you (Jn 15:3).

Living the Word makes us step outside ourselves and meet our brothers and sisters with love, beginning with those nearest to us: in our families, in our cities and in every area of life. It enables us to create friendships that form a network of positive relationships, aiming at the fulfilment of the commandment of mutual love which builds a sense of family.

Meditating on this phrase from John's Gospel, Focolare founder, Chiara Lubich wrote, *"How can we live, then, so we too can deserve Jesus' praise? We can put every Word of God into practice, feeding on it moment by moment and making our existence a work of continuous re-evangelization. Doing this, we will have the same thoughts and feelings as Jesus; we will relive him in the world and show the divine purity and transparency that the Gospel gives to a society that is often caught up in evil and sin.*

During this month, then, if it is possible (that is, if other people share our intentions), let us try, in a particular way, to put into practice that word which expresses the commandment of mutual love. For the evangelist John, [...] there is a link between the Word of Christ and the new commandment. According to him, it is in mutual love that we live the Word with its many effects - purification, holiness, sinlessness, fruitfulness and closeness to God. If we live in isolation from one another, we cannot resist the pressures of the world for long, whereas, in mutual love we find an environment capable of protecting an authentic Christian life".¹

¹ Cf. Jn. 15:11

¹ Chiara Lubich Word of Life, May 1982

"Voi siete già puri a causa della parola che vi ho annunciato" (Gv 15,3).

Dopo l'ultima cena con gli apostoli, Gesù esce dal Cenacolo e si incammina verso il Monte degli Ulivi. Con lui ci sono gli Undici: Giuda Iscariota se ne è già andato, e presto lo tradirà.

È un momento drammatico e solenne. Gesù pronuncia un lungo discorso di addio, vuole dire cose importanti ai suoi, consegnare parole da non dimenticare.

I suoi apostoli sono ebrei, che conoscono le Scritture, e ad essi ricorda un'immagine molto familiare: la pianta della vite, che nei testi sacri rappresenta il popolo ebraico, oggetto delle cure di Dio, che ne è l'agricoltore attento ed esperto. Adesso è Gesù stesso¹ che parla di sé, come della vite che trasmette la linfa vitale dell'amore del Padre ai suoi discepoli. Essi dunque devono preoccuparsi soprattutto di restare uniti a lui.

"Voi siete già puri a causa della parola che vi ho annunciato".

Una strada per restare uniti a Gesù è l'accoglienza della sua Parola. Essa permette a Dio di entrare nel nostro cuore per renderlo "puro", cioè ripulito dall'egoismo, adatto a portare frutti abbondanti e di qualità.

Il Padre ci ama e sa meglio di noi cosa ci rende leggeri, liberi di camminare senza il peso inutile dei nostri attaccamenti, dei giudizi negativi, della ricerca affannosa del nostro tornaconto, dell'illusione di tenere tutto e tutti sotto controllo. Nel nostro cuore ci sono anche aspirazioni e progetti positivi, che però potrebbero prendere il posto di Dio stesso e farci perdere lo slancio generoso della vita evangelica. Per questo Egli interviene nella nostra vita attraverso le circostanze, permettendo anche esperienze dolorose, dietro le quali c'è sempre il suo sguardo di amore.

E il frutto saporito che il Vangelo promette a chi si lascia sfrondare dall'amore di Dio è la pienezza della gioia¹. Una gioia speciale che fiorisce anche in mezzo alle lacrime e trabocca dal cuore, inondando il terreno circostante. È un piccolo anticipo di resurrezione.

"Voi siete già puri a causa della parola che vi ho annunciato".

La Parola vissuta ci fa uscire da noi stessi per incontrare con amore i fratelli, cominciando da quelli più vicini: nelle nostre città, in famiglia, in ogni ambiente di vita. È un'amicizia che si fa rete di rapporti positivi, puntando alla realizzazione del comandamento dell'amore reciproco, che costruisce la fraternità.

Chiara Lubich, meditando questa frase del Vangelo di Giovanni, ha scritto: «Come vivere, allora, onde meritare anche noi l'elogio di Gesù? Mettendo in pratica ogni Parola di Dio, nutrendocene attimo per attimo, facendo della nostra esistenza un'opera di continua rievangelizzazione. Questo per arrivare ad avere gli stessi pensieri e sentimenti di Gesù, per riviverlo nel mondo, per mostrare ad una società, spesso invischiata nel male e nel peccato, la divina purezza, la trasparenza che dona il Vangelo.

Durante questo mese, poi, se è possibile (e cioè se anche altri condividono le nostre intenzioni), vediamo di mettere in pratica in modo particolare quella parola che esprime il comandamento dell'amore reciproco. Per l'evangelista Giovanni, [...] infatti, c'è un legame tra la Parola di Cristo e il comandamento nuovo. Secondo lui, è nell'amore reciproco che si vive la parola con i suoi effetti di purificazione, di santità, di impeccabilità, di frutto, di vicinanza con Dio. L'individuo isolato è incapace di resistere a lungo alle sollecitazioni del mondo, mentre nell'amore vicendevole trova l'ambiente sano, capace di proteggere la sua esistenza cristiana autentica»¹.