

PARISH OF ASCOT VALE

ST MARY'S CHURCH, 123 ST LEONARDS ROAD, ASCOT VALE
ST MARGARET'S CHURCH, BARB STREET, MARIBYRNONG

Parish Priest:	Rev Fr Justin Ford
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Mass

Public Masses are currently suspended in lockdown areas such as our parish, until 29 July. Priests continue to offer Masses personally for the praise and worship of God, for the needs of the faithful and the world, especially the alleviation of the current crisis.

Reconciliation

(Confession)

By appointment - no name required. Arrangement will be made for the confession to be anonymous, not face-to-face, with suitable distancing.

Baptisms at St Mary’s

Our normally scheduled Baptisms on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month are still on hold. However, Baptism will be administered if there is urgent and grave need.

Baptism Information Sessions are also still on hold.

To discuss a future baptism, please ring the parish office during office hours.

Weddings at St Mary’s

6 months’ notice required.

For information on weddings please ring the parish office during office hours.

Private prayer in our churches

Our churches are not currently open for private prayer.

Parish Bulletin

The Bulletin, containing the Sunday readings for your reflection, will be uploaded to the parish website the Saturday afternoon prior.

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time – 5 July 2020

**‘Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father;
and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father
except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.’ (Mt 11:27)**

These words of Jesus from today’s gospel tell us the source of his teaching: Jesus can reveal the Father to us because he is the One who ‘knows the Father’. Often we simply think, ‘Well, Jesus was God – of course he knew the Father!’ This is true, yet the complete truth has some more layers. Since Jesus is both fully God and fully man, it means he has both the unlimited divine mind that belongs to him with the Father and the Holy Spirit in virtue of being God (and by which he knows all things); and the limited human mind that belongs to him in virtue of having a human soul. What Jesus expressed to his hearers through his human body, in human language, with the help of his human brain, was his human knowledge.

Some people, upon realising this, jump to the conclusion that Jesus (at least in his human nature) must actually have been ignorant about all sorts of things, even in religious matters; that maybe he was even sometimes in error and we, much wiser, need to correct him! (This approach is supposedly part of ‘truly acknowledging his humanity’, and has appeared in some dramatisations of his life.) The Catholic Church has rejected this over-simplified idea. For one thing, if Jesus could err it would unravel all of Christian faith. Each of us would need to judge each one of Jesus’ teachings – deciding if it was correct, or maybe just ‘an earlier stage of his development’ or his ‘cultural limitation’! Clearly, no one is competent to decide this.

Certainly, the Son of God became ‘a man like us in all things but sin’. This means he had everything *essential* to human nature, such as body, soul, human mind, human free will, emotions, senses. Yet in various ways his human life and existence were hardly *ordinary* (and otherwise, no one would have any reason to even follow him): yes, some things were ordinary (such as his hidden life at Nazareth), but other things not. So to be the Son of God; to be born of a virgin; to work miracles; to die and rise for human salvation – these things, while of course not at all in strict logical contradiction to true humanity, are obviously not ‘standard’! By the same token, we reason incorrectly if we first assume the false premise that Jesus must have been *in every way* an ‘ordinary’ man, and then deduce from this unproven basis, that his human knowledge must likewise have been subject to typical human ignorance and error.

So what is the right way to understand Jesus’ human mind and knowledge? Well, they were indeed truly finite, not infinite, and with his human senses, brain and rational soul he did acquire knowledge in a human way. (See Lk 2:52; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 472)

‘But at the same time, this truly human knowledge of God’s Son expressed the divine life of his person. “The human nature of God’s Son, not by itself but by its union with the Word, knew and showed forth in itself everything that pertains to God.” (St Maximus the Confessor) Such is first of all the case with the intimate and immediate knowledge that the Son of God made man has of his Father... By its union to the divine wisdom in the person of the Word incarnate, Christ enjoyed in his human knowledge the fullness of understanding of the eternal plans he had come to reveal. What he admitted to not knowing in this area, he elsewhere declared himself not sent to reveal.’ (*Catechism* 473-474. See also John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* 24-27)

This spiritual ‘vision of the Father’ that Jesus had in his human knowledge from the first moment of the Incarnation is not against his true humanity. Indeed, such is God’s final plan for every human being: all those who reach heaven will possess a similar vision. And in fact, Christ’s possession of that vision is the *source and principle* of our own vision of the Father – by faith here on earth, in clear sight in eternity: this is central to salvation. No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

From Church teaching: *Christ's human consciousness*

Jesus did not have faith (which believes what we do not yet see) but vision (which already sees the Father)

'The Gospel of John speaks of Jesus' "vision" of the Father: "Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father". (Jn 6:46; Cf. also Jn 1:18) This unique and singular intimacy between Jesus and the Father is equally evident in the Synoptic Gospels [i.e. *Matthew, Mark & Luke*]. (Cf. *Mt* 11:25-27; *Lk* 10:21-22)

'The filial and messianic consciousness of Jesus is the direct consequence of his ontology as Son of God made man. If Jesus were a believer like ourselves, albeit in an exemplary manner, he would not be able to be the true Revealer showing us the face of the Father... Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, enjoys an intimate and immediate knowledge of his Father, a "vision" that certainly goes beyond the vision of faith... It is precisely the intimacy and the direct and immediate knowledge which he has of the Father that allows Jesus to reveal to men the mystery of divine love.'

**Holy See, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,
Notification (2006)**

Christ's intimate human knowledge of each one of us, even during his earthly life

'The knowledge and love of our Divine Redeemer, of which we were the object from the first moment of His Incarnation, exceed all that the human intellect can hope to grasp. For hardly was He conceived in the womb of the Mother of God, when He began to enjoy the Beatific Vision, and in that vision all the members of His Mystical Body were continually and unceasingly present to Him, and He embraced them with His redeeming love.'

'In the crib, on the Cross, in the unending glory of the Father, Christ has all the members of the Church present before Him and united to Him in a much clearer and more loving manner than that of a mother who clasps her child to her breast, or than that with which a man knows and loves himself.'

Pope Pius XII, *Encyclical Mystici Corporis* (1943)

The mystery of Christ's consciousness during his Passion

'However valid it may be to maintain that, because of the human condition which made him grow "in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man", (*Lk* 2:52) his human awareness of his own mystery would also have progressed to its fullest expression in his glorified humanity, there is no doubt that already in his historical existence Jesus was aware of his identity as the Son of God.'

'John emphasises this to the point of affirming that it was ultimately because of this awareness that Jesus was rejected and condemned: they sought to kill him "because he not only broke the sabbath but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God". (*Jn* 5:18) In Gethsemane and on Golgotha Jesus' human awareness will be put to the supreme test. But not even the drama of his Passion and Death will be able to shake his serene certainty of being the Son of the heavenly Father...'

'We shall never exhaust the depths of this mystery. All the harshness of the paradox can be heard in Jesus' seemingly

desperate cry of pain on the Cross: "... 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' " (*Mk* 15:34). Is it possible to imagine a greater agony, a more impenetrable darkness? In reality, the anguished "why" addressed to the Father in the opening words of the 22nd Psalm expresses all the realism of unspeakable pain; but it is also illumined by the meaning of that entire prayer, in which the Psalmist brings together suffering and trust, in a moving blend of emotions. In fact the Psalm continues: "In you our fathers put their trust; they trusted and you set them free... Do not leave me alone in my distress, come close, there is none else to help" (*Ps* 22:5, 12).

Jesus' cry on the Cross, dear Brothers and Sisters, is not the cry of anguish of a man without hope, but the prayer of the Son who offers his life to the Father in love, for the salvation of all. At the very moment when he identifies with our sin, "abandoned" by the Father, he "abandons" himself into the hands of the Father. His eyes remain fixed on the Father. Precisely because of the knowledge and experience of the Father which he alone has, even at this moment of darkness he sees clearly the gravity of sin and suffers because of it. He alone, who sees the Father and rejoices fully in him, can understand completely what it means to resist the Father's love by sin. More than an experience of physical pain, his Passion is an agonising suffering of the soul.

Pope St John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (2001)

Christ in his agony knew both our future sins and our reparation – sorrowing for one, consoled by the other

'The sins of men and their crimes committed in every age were the cause why Christ was delivered up to death, and now also they would of themselves bring death to Christ, joined with the same griefs and sorrows, since each several sin in its own way is held to renew the passion of Our Lord: "Crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making him a mockery" (*Heb* 6:6). Now if, because of our sins also which were as yet in the future, but were foreseen, the soul of Christ became sorrowful unto death, it cannot be doubted that then, too, already He derived somewhat of solace from our reparation, which was likewise foreseen, when "there appeared to Him an angel from heaven" (*Lk* 22:43), in order that His Heart, oppressed with weariness and anguish, might find consolation. And so even now, in a wondrous yet true manner, we can and ought to console that Most Sacred Heart which is continually wounded by the sins of thankless men.'

Pope Pius XI, *Encyclical Miserentissimus Redemptor* (1928)

'Jesus knew and loved us each and all during his life, his agony and his Passion, and gave himself up for each one of us: "The Son of God... loved me and gave himself for me." (*Gal* 2:20) He has loved us all with a human heart. For this reason, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced by our sins and for our salvation, (Cf. *Jn* 19:34) "is quite rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that... love with which the divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father and all human beings" without exception. (Pius XII, *Encyclical Haurietis aquas* (1956): DS 3924; cf. DS 3812)'

***Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992) n. 478**

14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A – ANTIPHONS & READINGS

FIRST READING

Zech 9:9-10

A reading from the prophet Zechariah

The Lord says this:

‘Rejoice heart and soul, daughter of Zion!
Shout with gladness, daughter of Jerusalem!
See now, your king comes to you;
he is victorious, he is triumphant,
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
He will banish chariots from Ephraim
and horses from Jerusalem;
the bow of war will be banished.
He will proclaim peace for the nations.
His empire shall stretch from sea to sea,
from the River to the ends of the earth.’

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 144

R. I will praise your name for ever,
my king and my God.

1. I will give you glory, O God my King,
I will bless your name for ever.
I will bless you day after day
and praise your name for ever. (R.)

2. The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures. (R.)

3. All your creatures shall thank you, O Lord,
and your friends shall repeat their blessing.
They shall speak of the glory of your reign
and declare your might, O God. (R.)

4. The Lord is faithful in all his words
and loving in all his deeds.
The Lord supports all who fall
and raises all who are bowed down. (R.)

SECOND READING

Rom 8:9, 11-13

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Your interests are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him, and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

So then, my brothers, there is no necessity for us to obey our unspiritual selves or to live unspiritual lives. If you do live in that way, you are doomed to die; but if by the Spirit you put an end to the misdeeds of the body you will live.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. Mt 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia!

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth;
you have revealed to little ones
the mysteries of the kingdom.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 11:25-30

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus exclaimed, ‘I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

‘Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

Memorial Acclamation: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

Hymns:

Entrance – CWB 455 (*verses 1, 4, 5*)
Offertory – CWB 470
Communion – CWB 512
Recessional – CWB 561

Be thou my vision
Come to me, all you who labour
I heard the voice of Jesus say
Now thank we all our God

COVID-19: Renewed Stage 3 Restrictions

As you would no doubt be aware, the 3032 postcode area that covers most of our parish, including both churches, is one of those areas under renewed lockdown until 29 July. (The section of our parish within Moonee Ponds suburb, in the 3039 postcode, is not in lockdown.) As a result, we are unfortunately required to again cancel public Masses at both St Mary's and St Margaret's, until at least 29 July; so bookings for Mass can no longer be taken. (Funerals can still be held here, but with only 10 in attendance – unlike outside the lockdown zone where 50 are permitted.)

However, as in the weeks after Easter, we are allowed to continue our **livestreamed 10:30 Sunday Mass** behind closed doors, with a minimum number of essential ministers / workers present to carry out the ceremony and the broadcasting (though no other congregation members are permitted); so, this will continue to be accessible from our parish website. This is because the government considers a place of worship broadcasting a service to be an essential workplace (as Federal Cabinet determined prior to Holy Week, and as is still maintained by the Victorian Government). For this reason also, these essential ministers, even from the lockdown area, are permitted to leave their residences in order to come to the Mass, since this is for the purpose of work – one of the four legitimate reasons for leaving home in a lockdown area. The government regulations state that this work can be 'paid or voluntary, including for charitable and religious purposes'.

The Department of Health and Human Services has been in contact with our parish to request that we help communicate the urgent message about the new restrictions in our area, so that the lockdown is effective and achieves the desired reduction in transmission. Naturally you are urged to comply with these restrictions, which will also help enable our hoped-for return to less-restricted conditions after 29 July. You are encouraged to view the details of the current restrictions and guidelines on the home page of the parish website, by clicking the links under 'Current COVID-19 Information and Guidelines'. (If you are printing out this bulletin for distribution to parishioners without internet access, you may also wish to print out for them relevant pages from those guidelines.)

Recently deceased: John Paul D'Amico; Sam Calabro; Marceline Romell

Anniversaries: Giuseppe Timpano

Feast Days: 6 July: St Maria Goretti 7 July: Blessed Peter To Rot
9 July: St Augustine Zhao Rong & companions 11 July: St Benedict

Readings Next Week: 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time: Is 55:10-11; Rom 8:18-23; Mt 13:1-23

Men's Faith & Spirituality Group

We meet fortnightly on Thursdays, 7:30-9:00 pm, connecting with other men for prayer, upbeat discussion and comradery. (Some recent meetings have been by Zoom.) *More info, Joe Librandi:* Ph – 0400 650 861; Email – josephlibrandi@bigpond.com

St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal

This is the time of the St Vincent De Paul Winter Appeal. In present circumstances, the normal method of collecting donations is not possible, but the needs continue, greater than ever. So you are encouraged to donate, either by calling 13 18 12, or online at vinnies.org.au (A button on the home page of our parish website will take you to the donation page.)

SAINT OF THE WEEK

11 July: St Benedict of Norcia (480-547), Co-Patron of Europe.

The great founder of monasticism in Western Europe was born in Norcia in Umbria, Italy, the son of a Roman noble, four years after the Roman Empire in the West had finally collapsed under the barbarian invasions. Leaving the dissolute society of Rome, for three years he lived as a hermit in a cave at Subiaco (after which Subiaco in Perth was named by the Benedictine monks who settled there in 1851). Eventually his reputation for sanctity spread, and he established twelve monasteries at Subiaco for those who came to him. In 529 he moved south and established the great abbey which still stands between Rome and Naples at Monte Cassino (sacked, destroyed and rebuilt several times, most recently after World War Two). Benedict's famous monastic 'Rule', noted for its spirituality, balance and humanity, was adopted by most religious communities established in the Middle Ages, and is still the most common rule for monks. In the midst of the difficult times that followed the barbarian invasions, Benedictine monasteries became the foundation of the new culture and civilisation that was Christian Europe.