

# 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 Melbourne, until 19 August. Livestreaming of our 10:30 Sunday Mass continues, accessible from the parish website. 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 remain on hold. 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.

## 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – 12 July 2020



*We proclaim a crucified Christ*  
1Cor1.23

07 July 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

Today’s decision to place metropolitan Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire areas back into Stage 3 lockdown for the next six weeks from 11.59pm Wednesday 8 July is sobering news. It is truly disheartening, and will bring renewed distress to so many families and individuals.

These words from Psalm 22 have come immediately to my mind (words that were on the lips of Jesus as he was crucified): *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.* (Ps 22.1-2)

Yet, I want to encourage you in grace, trusting in the abiding closeness of our loving Lord, who promised to be with us always.

In returning to Stage 3 restrictions in those specific areas, sadly the public celebration of Mass, which we have only just re-commenced, will need to go back to live-streaming; churches will need to be closed again to any private prayer; and the numbers allowed for funerals and weddings will be severely limited. [...]

Now is a time for attentiveness to the care of one another. In the face of our own despondency and fears, our fatigue and anxieties, may we learn to hold firm in faith and hope, and experience sustaining moments of love. As the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews encouraged: *Let us be concerned for each other, to stir a response in love and good works.* (Heb 24.10)

Friends, while the Psalmist knew struggle and pain, there were also words of confidence that came from the heart: *In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.* (Ps 22.4-5)

May our Lord Jesus be with you, and may His Blessed Mother accompany us all.

With every grace and blessing, I remain,  
Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

**Most Rev Peter A Comensoli**  
Archbishop of Melbourne

## **A time to take stock...**

*For many people, these further six weeks of lockdown we're now entering with disappointment will be a burden, perhaps a great burden, with deep anxieties of health and finance; so our calling, as always, is to help bear one another's burdens. Depending on our personal situation, maybe we can also make a virtue of necessity. Not for everyone, but for some, these weeks will be a gift that may not soon return, of time – without so many distractions pulling us in every direction: a time when we can get our lives more in the order in which we'd like them to be.*

*In December 2018, the suggestion was put in the parish bulletin of taking time over those summer holidays to take stock of our lives, in the light of what truly matters. Maybe you found time for that back then, maybe you didn't. But either way – somewhere early in these next six weeks, again take stock of your life. (A few of the points made back then depend on the churches being open, so implementing those would obviously need to wait until the restrictions lift.) Reflect on how the resolutions you made 18 months ago are being put into practice, and on whether you might need to take some 'remedial action'; or, if you didn't get around to taking stock of your life back then, realise that God is giving you a second chance you could never have expected. Remember: these things are what our lives are really about; and maybe it can give us some peace as well, to place even our burdens and anxieties in the bigger picture of ultimate realities.*

*And once we've taken stock, we must use well the rest of these six weeks, maybe getting some jobs done that we've been putting off, making long-term plans, putting our affairs in order. In particular, maybe use this time for changing habits: breaking bad habits, forming good new ones. Depending on the habit and the person, they can take several weeks or even a few months to create or banish – but in any case, six weeks is a great start! A chance that may never return...*

### **From 18 months ago:**

When at the end of our lives we stand on the brink of eternity, as we look back, our life on earth will be revealed to us as the blink of an eye that it really is, compared to eternity. When we stand on the borderline between this world and the next, as every one of us most certainly will, how would we want to have spent the time that God gave us on earth? By amassing excess money and possessions, which we can't take with us? By pursuing more fleeting pleasures, when every true satisfaction is waiting for us in heaven anyway, as long as we live in such a way as to inherit it?

We can surely say that at the moment of death, we won't regret the time spent in loving and serving God, loving and serving other people; the time spent in prayer; the times we spent thanking, praising and worshipping God in the Mass, and receiving him as nourishment for everlasting life in the Holy Eucharist.

A suggestion and a challenge: set aside some time in the coming weeks, a few hours or even a whole day, when you can reflect on your life, with the same perspective with which you'll view it as you depart this world for your eternal destiny – so as to get things in order, to set your priorities straight. How about this afternoon? Or if that's not possible, at least put it in your diary – today – for the coming days. If you can't get space with the family around, go by yourself to the beach, or to the bush, for a few hours. [*Permitted lockdown exercise should enable us to achieve what we need.*]

And in those hours, you can ask yourself:

- Where am I with God? Do I just 'fit him in' to my own plans, or do I fit my life in with his supreme plan for me? Is my goal each day (as it should be) to please him in all things?
- Where am I with faith? Do I give my mind fully to God, in confident trust in his word, his revealed truth? Or do I let my mind and heart remain divided, not willing to commit, and so getting nowhere in the end? Do I need to learn more about my faith?
- Where am I with prayer? Do I spend personal time with God each day? And if I already do, maybe it's time to go that little bit further – it's unlikely we'll ever do too much! So maybe some Scripture, the Rosary, time in church before the Blessed Sacrament.
- Where am I with God's Law? Are there things in my life that I know in my heart aren't in accordance with his will? Is it time to go to Reconciliation and wipe the slate clean?
- Where am I with the Eucharist – the centre of Catholic life? Am I faithful to Sunday Mass? And if yes, maybe go one step further, and get to weekday Mass sometimes.
- Where am I with my personal life calling, whether marriage and parenthood, consecrated life, or committed single life? Do I live it out with faithfulness and love? Or if I'm still searching for my vocation, do I pray about this, and open myself to all options?
- Where am I with service of others? Do I share my faith – the calling for all the baptised? What do I do to serve those in need? What do I do to serve my parish and the wider Church? Do I see my daily job as service, and live it out in that spirit?
- And if there's 'not time' for all this, what things that don't really matter must I let go?

*On the day you enter eternity, what are the answers you would want to be able to give?*

**15<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A – READINGS**

**FIRST READING**

*Is 55:10-11*

*A reading from the prophet Isaiah*

Thus says the Lord: 'As the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.'

*The word of the Lord.*

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

*Ps 64*

R. The seed that falls on good ground  
will yield a fruitful harvest.

1. You care for the earth, give it water,  
you fill it with riches.  
Your river in heaven brims over  
to provide its grain. (R.)

2. And thus you provide for the earth;  
you drench its furrows,  
you level it, soften it with showers,  
you bless its growth. (R.)

3. You crown the year with your goodness.  
Abundance flows in your steps,  
in the pastures of the wilderness it flows. (R.)

4. The hills are girded with joy,  
the meadows covered with flocks,  
the valleys are decked with wheat,  
They shout for joy, yes, they sing. (R.)

**SECOND READING**

*Rom 8:18-23*

*A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans*

I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God. From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

*The word of the Lord.*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower;  
all who come to him will live for ever.

Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

*Mt 13:1-23*

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew*

Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the beach, and he told them many things in parables.

He said, 'Imagine a sower going out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth of earth; but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Listen, anyone who has ears!'

Then the disciples went up to him and asked, 'Why do you talk to them in parables?' 'Because' he replied 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed to you, but they are not revealed to them. For anyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. The reason I talk to them in parables is that they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding. So in their case this prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled:

"You will listen and listen again, but not understand, see and see again, but not perceive. For the heart of this nation has grown coarse, their ears are dull of hearing, and they have shut their eyes, for fear they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and be converted and be healed by me."

'But happy are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear! I tell you solemnly, many prophets and holy men longed to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it.

'You, therefore, are to hear the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom without understanding, the evil one comes and carries off what was sown in his heart: this is the man who received the seed on the edge of the path. The one who received it on patches of rock is the man who hears the word and welcomes it at once with joy. But he has no root in him, he does not last; let some trial come, or some persecution on account of the word, and he falls away at once. The one who received the seed in thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this world and the lure of riches choke the word and so he produces nothing. And the one who received the seed in rich soil is the man who hears the word and understands it; he is the one who yields a harvest and produces now a hundredfold, now sixty, now thirty.'

*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.

<b><u>Hymns:</u></b>	<b>Entrance</b>	–	CWB 586 ( <i>verses 1, 2, 4</i> )	Praise to the Lord
	<b>Offertory</b>	–	CWB 582	Open my eyes, Lord
	<b>Communion</b>	–	What a friend we have in Jesus	
	<b>Recessional</b>	–	CWB 497	God has spoken by his prophets

### **What a friend we have in Jesus**

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| 1. What a friend we have in Jesus,<br>all our sins and griefs to bear!<br>What a privilege to carry<br>everything to God in prayer!<br>O what peace we often forfeit,<br>O what needless pain we bear,<br>all because we do not carry<br>everything to God in prayer. | 2. Have we trials and temptations?<br>Is there trouble anywhere?<br>We should never be discouraged;<br>take it to the Lord in prayer.<br>Can we find a friend so faithful<br>who will all our sorrows share?<br>Jesus knows our every weakness;<br>take it to the Lord in prayer. | 3. Are we weak and heavy laden,<br>cumbered with a load of care?<br>Precious Saviour, still our refuge;<br>take it to the Lord in prayer.<br>Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?<br>Take it to the Lord in prayer!<br>In his arms he'll take and shield thee;<br>thou wilt find a solace there. |
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**Recently deceased:** Violet Peters; Matthew Albers

**Anniversaries:** Antonia Patti; Louis Menezes; Sam Calabro; Phyllis MacDonald

<b><u>Feast Days:</u></b>	<b>13 July:</b> St Henry	<b>14 July:</b> St Camillus de Lellis
	<b>15 July:</b> St Bonaventure	<b>16 July:</b> Our Lady of Mount Carmel

**Readings Next Week:** 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time: Wis 12:13, 16-19; Rom 8:26-27; Mt 13:24-43

### **COVID-19 Stage 3 Restrictions – public Masses cancelled, livestreaming continues**

With the renewed lockdown for the whole of Melbourne, we continue to pray for the alleviation of the crisis, looking forward to the day when we can resume all our normal activities, and can once again gather physically as a parish family. Parish Masses open to attendance by booking are unfortunately again cancelled, until 19 August. (Funerals can still be held, but with only 10 in attendance, plus those required to conduct the service.)

However, we are still able to continue our **livestreamed 10:30am Sunday Mass**, though with only essential ministers / workers present to carry out the ceremony and the broadcasting. (This is now limited to a maximum of five, including the priest and videographer, meaning some further scaling down of the ceremony.)

So, this will continue to be accessible from our parish website [stmaryschurch.org.au](http://stmaryschurch.org.au) –

special thanks to those parishioners who have helped, and are helping, to make these ceremonies possible.

### **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](mailto: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](http://vinnies.org.au) (A button on the home page of our parish website will take you to the donation page.)

### **'The Veil Removed' – link on parish website to short video on what the Mass really is**

In this time when church attendance is once again impossible, we must keep alive our longing for the Mass. An inspiring recent short film (5 minutes + credits), 'The Veil Removed', powerfully evokes in its imagery what faith tells us truly takes place spiritually at every Mass. It hopefully helps us in these days to inflame our desire for the Mass, when we might find ourselves drifting or losing spiritual focus.

You can access the film on youtube by clicking the link on the homepage of the parish website.

(Watch the film first, but then clicking on the next link on our website homepage, below the youtube link, will take you to a page summarising some of the Catholic teachings displayed in the film.)