

# 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
Assistant Priest / Lithuanian Chaplain:	Rev Fr Joseph Deveikis
Presbytery / Parish Office:	123 St Leonards Rd, Ascot Vale (Postal: PO Box 468 Ascot Vale 3032)
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Website:	www.stmaryschurch.org.au
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Office Hours: [At parish Tuesday only]	Tue – Fri, 10am – 3pm. Secretary: Carmen D'Rosario
Principal, St Mary's School:	Mr Paul Hogan T: 9370 1194
Principal, St Margaret's School:	Mr Gavin Brennan T: 9318 1339

## Weekend Mass Times

### Saturday Vigil:

6.00pm St Mary's

### Sunday:

8.30am St Margaret's

10.30am St Mary's

6.00pm St Mary's (Spanish)

Live streaming of our 10:30

Sunday Mass is continuing,  
accessible on our parish website.

## Weekday Mass Times

**Mon** 10.00am St Mary's

**Tue** 9.00am St Mary's

**Wed** 9.00am St Mary's

7.00pm St Mary's

**Thu** 9.00am St Mary's

**Fri** 9.15am St Mary's

**Sat** 9.30am St Mary's

### 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 normal schedule of Baptisms  
and Baptism Information  
Sessions remains on hold.  
However, announcements  
will soon be made about the  
resumption of Baptism  
ceremonies for individual  
babies, with up to two  
ceremonies every weekend.

### Weddings at St Mary's

For information on weddings  
please ring the parish office.

### Private prayer in our churches

St Mary's, although its doors  
remain closed, is now available  
for private prayer by  
contacting the parish office.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent – 29 November 2020

It's very fitting that we take this huge step forward out of lockdown, with much larger congregations now able to attend Sunday Mass, on this day when we begin the new Liturgical Year. At this point we still don't know exactly what our church celebrations will be like at Christmas, but as we enter Advent, we can certainly pray with renewed hope and excitement, 'Come, Lord Jesus!'

We might feel, indeed, as though we hardly had the *old* Liturgical Year at all – certainly it was a very different one from what any of us have experienced before. Yet we know that every part of what has happened somehow fell within the eternal plan of God's wisdom and providence, and that if we responded to these conditions the best we could under the circumstances, then spiritually and eternally we will have been the gainers.

We thank God for leading us to this new stage, and pray that we will continue to be led forward and protected from further outbreaks. We ask God to bless all those who have suffered hardships of all kinds over these months, or who continue to suffer hardship, in our state and our nation; and all those around the world who continue to struggle against COVID-19. And we pray that God will grant eternal salvation to all those he has called to himself. In gratitude, we pray particular blessings upon all those in Victoria who have had special roles to play in this crisis, and who have risen to the occasion with generosity and courage.

We are now fully back at our normal Mass schedule. At the moment, 150 people are allowed to attend services (subject to the density quotient of 1 person per 4 square metres, which means that only 80 can be present in St Margaret's Church). We expect this to increase further in the coming weeks. However, we are still told we should maintain 1.5 metres distance (whether when standing, or in the pews, or in the queue for Communion), and wear masks inside the church (with exemptions for the priest and ministers as already explained); we still need to sanitise, and to register contact details of all those who attend. Because of the need for registration as people enter the church, it is expected that there may be some organisational difficulties in the minutes immediately before Mass (especially this first weekend as we work things out), and we may possibly need to start a little late, if there are any queues still being registered.

To avoid this in the coming weeks, **you are asked to arrive at Mass well in advance of the starting time.** Obviously if 150 people arrive simultaneously five minutes before Mass is meant to begin, it will not be possible for all these people to be registered in the space of those five minutes. **Registration at the church door will also be sped up if you book your place in advance on the parish website.** This will also guarantee you a spot; whereas it is possible (depending on how attendance develops in the coming weeks) that some of those who turn up without booking will miss out on a place, if number limits are reached. (Bookings are no longer necessary, and are no longer being taken, for weekday Masses, as numbers at these will never go close to the congregational limit.)

Reconciliation is still possible by appointment (as it has been all along); it is hoped that we will soon be able to again have scheduled celebrations of the Sacrament. Baptism remains an issue, as we are still effectively limited to one family per ceremony, and there is quite a 'backlog'; hopefully this will also be resolved in the coming weeks.

## **Sacrament of Confirmation**

We are happy to at last be able to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation for Year Six children from our two primary schools (who were to have been confirmed last May). 'In the Latin Rite, the ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop. If the need arises, the bishop may grant the faculty of administering Confirmation to priests, although it is fitting that he confer it himself.' (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* n. 1313) Archbishop Comensoli has therefore granted to Parish Priests the faculty, until the end of February, of confirming the children in their schools. Accordingly, candidates from Year Six at St Margaret's School will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation from Fr Justin this **Thursday, 3 December**; and candidates from Year Six at St Mary's School will receive the Sacrament the following week, on **Wednesday 9 December**. (For this reason, there will be no Parish Mass open to the general public on the evening of Wednesday week, 9 December.) We keep all these children in our prayers.

## **First Reconciliation and First Communion**

Children from our schools currently in Year Three who would have made their First Reconciliation in 2020, and in Year Four who would have made their First Communion, will instead celebrate these Sacraments in 2021. (One class of children did receive First Communion a few days before the lockdown in March; all the other children were to have received the following weekend.) All this year we have kept on the walls of our churches the prayer sheets each child prepared for First Communion. We did this as a sign of our ongoing prayer for all these children, and a symbol of continuity and hope – looking forward, beyond the painful delay of lockdown, to the moment when the anticipation for the Sacrament, theirs and ours, would be fulfilled.

## **Baptisms at St Mary's**

We warmly welcome into the family of God's Church, **Maximus Angelo Bonanno, Archie Maxwell Mott & Isabelle Jane Mott**, baptised at St Mary's this weekend.

**Recently Deceased:** Lolita Fajardo Zoleta; Alwyn & Fritz Saldanha; Neville D'Rosario

**Anniversaries:** John Hendry; Olive Hayes; Angelita Mallari; Reynan Facun

**Feast Days:** **30 November:** Feast of St Andrew, Apostle

**3 December:** St Francis Xavier

**4 December:** St John Damascene

**Readings Next Week:** **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent, Year B:** Is 40:1-5, 9-11; 2 Pet 3:8-14; Mk 1:1-8

*Saturday (daytime) was the last day of the Liturgical Year, before the new Liturgical Year commencing with our Saturday evening Vigil Mass for the First Sunday of Advent. Every day in the Liturgy of the Hours (the 'Divine Office', prayed by priests, religious and many laypeople) in the 'Office of Readings', after the Scripture reading there is a second reading from a Church writer, maybe one of the Saints. Quoted below is part of a sermon of the great St Augustine, which the Church uses in the Office of Readings on that last Saturday, to close the Liturgical Year. We remember the words of St Mary MacKillop, 'Remember we are but travellers here.' Having come through an extraordinary year on our pilgrim journey through this world, and now moving forward with renewed hope into this new time, St Augustine's words give us strength and encouragement as we continue on the pathway to our true homeland.*

'Let us sing Alleluia here below while we are still anxious, so that we may sing it one day there above when we are freed from care. Why are we troubled here? Do you not expect me to be troubled when I read: "Is not man's life upon earth full of trial?" [Job 7:1] Do you not expect me to be troubled when I hear the words: "Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation"? [Mt 26:41] And yet, brethren, in this evil plight of ours here below we must sing Alleluia to the good God who delivers us from evil.

'Here, too, amidst the dangers and the trials we and others must sing Alleluia, "for God is faithful and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength," as Paul says. [1 Cor 10:13] So then we must also sing here Alleluia. Man is still a sinner, but God is faithful. Scripture does not say, "He will not let you be tempted," but, "He will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." For God is faithful: "The Lord will keep your coming in and your going out." [Ps 121:8]

'How happy will be our shout of Alleluia there, how carefree, how secure from any adversary, where there is no enemy, where no friend perishes. There praise is offered to God, and here, too, but here it is by those who are anxious, there by those who are free from care, here by those who must die, there by those who will live for ever. Here praise is offered in hope, there by those who enjoy the reality, here by those who are pilgrims on the way, there by those who have reached their own country.

'So brethren, now let us sing Alleluia, not in the enjoyment of heavenly rest, but to sweeten our toil. Sing as travellers sing along the road: but keep on walking. Solace your toil by singing – do not yield to idleness. Sing but keep on walking. What do I mean by "walking"? I mean, press on from good to better. The apostle says there are some who go from bad to worse. But if you press on, you keep on walking. Go forward then in virtue, in true faith and right conduct. Sing up – and keep on walking.'

## **SAINT OF THE WEEK**    **23 November: St Clement I, Pope and Martyr**

Pope St Clement I (St Clement of Rome) (pontificate c. 88-c. 99) was the third Successor of St Peter as pope, after St Linus and St Cletus (of whom we know little). These three popes, along with Pope St Sixtus (I or II) and Pope St Cornelius, are in the list of saints we read out in the ancient Roman Canon (1<sup>st</sup> Eucharistic Prayer). Historical records of the Church in those times are sketchy – the Christian community was still comparatively small, and operated ‘underground’, having entered nearly three centuries of persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire. St Irenaeus (late 2<sup>nd</sup> century) tells us that St Clement knew the Apostles; indeed, he is said to have been consecrated by St Peter. He is one of those very early Fathers of the Church known as the ‘Apostolic Fathers’, whose writings are especially valuable as evidence for the most ancient traditions and understandings of the Church.

St Clement wrote a letter to the Corinthians dated around AD 95, considered the oldest Christian epistle outside the New Testament. (Other writings attributed in the past to St Clement are no longer considered to be genuinely his.) The letter’s aim was to resolve a leadership dispute in the Corinthian church.

The lengthy epistle includes what can be interpreted as the first known assertion, after St Peter himself, of papal authority and jurisdiction over the universal Church. Later papal writings would be more explicit, but St Clement claims (without giving the reason) divine sanction for the directives he is giving the Corinthians: ‘If any shall disobey the words spoken by Him through us, let them know that they will involve themselves in transgression and serious danger...’ (It is notable that he is writing not merely to his own diocese of Rome, but to the distant church of Corinth in Greece, and this apparently still during the lifetime of St John the Apostle – who at Ephesus would have had closer access to Corinth. And far from rejecting Clement’s letter with its implied claim of divinely-endorsed authority, the Corinthians accepted his writing, and many decades later were having it read in church alongside the Scriptures.)

According to late writings, St Clement was banished under Emperor Trajan to the Crimea; after evangelising other prisoners, he was martyred (c. AD 99) by being tied to an anchor and thrown into the Black Sea.

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## **SAINTS OF THE WEEK**    **24 November: St Andrew Dũng-Lạc & Companions (Martyrs of Vietnam)**

On 19 June 1988 Pope St John Paul II canonised 117 Martyrs of Vietnam who were put to death for their faith at different times between 1745 and 1862. 96 of them were Vietnamese (37 priests and 59 laypeople); 21 were Spanish and French missionaries. Six of the martyrs died in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, 111 in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But these 117 canonised martyrs are also representatives of countless thousands of other unnamed martyrs for the faith in Vietnam during those times. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints at the Vatican gives one estimate of 130,000 victims under edicts against the Faith between 1625 and 1886; estimates are as high as 300,000. In the words of the ancient Church Father Tertullian, ‘The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians.’

Vietnam had been under Chinese control from 111 BC until AD 939, but then had re-established its original independence. Portuguese and Spanish missionaries preached the Gospel in Vietnam from 1533; a Jesuit mission was established in 1615, and Jesuit Fr Alexandre de Rhodes, who arrived in 1624, invented modern Vietnamese script.

St Vincent Liêm (for whom the Vietnamese Catholic centre in Mt Alexander Rd, Flemington, is named) was the first Vietnamese of the canonised martyrs to give his life. He was born in Trà Lũ, Nam Định, Tonkin (Đàng Ngoài, northern Vietnam), in 1732, and was baptised Catholic. After studies in the Philippines, he entered the Dominican order, and was ordained priest in 1758. From 1759 he served the Gospel in Tonkin. He was arrested in 1773 in the persecution of Trịnh Sâm, Lord of Tonkin, along with Spanish Dominican priest St Jacinto Castañeda. They were imprisoned in small cages, and after a trial, were beheaded at Đồng Mo on 7 November 1773, reciting the *Creed* and singing the *Salve Regina*.

By 1802, when Emperor Gia Long (Nguyễn Ánh) (imperial reign 1802-20) united Vietnam under the Nguyễn Dynasty, there were some 300,000 Catholics in Tonkin and 60,000 in Cochinchina (Đàng Trong, southern Vietnam) – maybe about 5% of the population. Gia Long supported Confucianism, but (having come to power with the help of a French Catholic priest and support from the French) had tolerated Catholic missionaries. The most severe persecutions were to come under his son Emperor Minh Mạng (reigned 1820-41). Catholicism was prohibited from 1831, and further edicts came in 1833 and 1836. Suspected Catholics were ordered to trample on the Cross to show their rejection of the Faith, and martyrs were subjected to terrible tortures. Vietnamese priest St Andrew Dũng-Lạc (1795-1839), who heads the list of the 117 canonised martyrs, was among the martyrs of this time, beheaded on 21 December 1839. Of the canonised martyrs, 58 died under Minh Mạng’s reign; another 50 were under Emperor Tự Đức (reigned 1847-83). (Interestingly, the last ruler of the Nguyễn Dynasty, Emperor Bảo Đại (1913-97), would himself become a Catholic while living in exile after losing power.)

After French colonisation (1883-1954) and the Vietnam War (1955-75), the Church in Vietnam has experienced communist repression, first in North Vietnam, then in the whole country after the fall of Saigon (1975). But the Catholic community has remained strong and faithful. According to government figures, 6.1% of Vietnamese are Catholic, but the real figure is said to be higher than this. In Australia, over a quarter of those of Vietnamese descent are Catholics. In recent decades around a quarter of our seminary students have been from Vietnamese backgrounds.

## **1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR B – READINGS**

### **ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** *(if no hymn is sung)*

To you, I lift up my soul, O my God.  
In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame.  
Nor let my enemies exult over me;  
and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

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### **FIRST READING** *Is 63:16-17, 64:1, 3-8*

*A reading from the prophet Isaiah*

You, Lord, yourself are our Father, 'Our Redeemer' is your ancient name. Why, Lord, leave us to stray from your ways and harden our hearts against fearing you? Return, for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your inheritance. Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down – at your Presence the mountains would melt. No ear has heard, no eye has seen any god but you act like this for those who trust him. You guide those who act with integrity and keep your ways in mind. You were angry when we were sinners; we had long been rebels against you. We were all like men unclean, all that integrity of ours like filthy clothing. We have all withered like leaves and our sins blew us away like the wind. No one invoked your name or roused himself to catch hold of you. For you hid your face from us and gave us up to the power of our sins. And yet, Lord, you are our Father; we the clay, you the potter, we are all the work of your hand.

*The word of the Lord.*

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### **RESPONSORIAL PSALM** *Ps 79*

R. Lord, make us turn to you;  
let us see your face and we shall be saved.

1. O shepherd of Israel, hear us,  
shine forth from your cherubim throne.  
O Lord, rouse up your might,  
O Lord, come to our help.

2. God of hosts, turn again, we implore,  
look down from heaven and see.  
Visit this vine and protect it,  
the vine your right hand has planted.

3. May your hand be on the man you have chosen,  
the man you have given your strength.  
And we shall never forsake you again;  
give us life that we may call upon your name. (R.)

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### **SECOND READING** *1 Cor 1:3-9*

*A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians*

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace. I never stop thanking God for all the

graces you have received through Jesus Christ. I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways, especially in your teachers and preachers; the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed; and he will keep you steady and without blame until the last day, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, because God by calling you has joined you to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God is faithful.

*The word of the Lord.*

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### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** *Ps 84:8*

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Lord, show us your mercy and love,  
and grant us your salvation.  
Alleluia!

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### **GOSPEL** *Mk 13:33-37*

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark*

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!'

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

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### **MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION**

We proclaim your Death, O Lord,  
and profess your Resurrection, until you come again.

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### **COMMUNION ANTIPHON** *(if no hymn is sung)*

The Lord will bestow his bounty,  
and our earth shall yield its increase.

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### **SPIRITUAL COMMUNION** *(for those unable to receive)*

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.

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### **Hymns:**

<b>Entrance</b>	– CWB 242 (verses 1, 2, 3)
<b>Offertory</b>	– CWB 232
<b>Communion</b>	– CWB 540
<b>Reflection</b>	– CWB 619
<b>Recessional</b>	– CWB 251

O come, O come Emmanuel  
Come, O long-expected Jesus  
Christ, be our light  
The Lord is my shepherd  
Wait for the Lord