

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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Office Hours:	Tue & Fri, 10am – 3pm. <i>Secretary:</i> 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 Margaret's

Sat 9.30am St Mary's

Reconciliation (Confession)

Saturday

10.00–10.30am St Mary's

5.30–5.45pm St Mary's

Eucharistic Adoration

Tue 9.30–10.30am St Mary's

Sat 10.00–11.00am St Mary's

Baptisms at St Mary's

Group baptisms recommence
in March: 12:00 every Sunday
till 27 June. Until March, we are
having baptisms for individual
babies, with up to two
ceremonies every weekend.

Baptism Information Sessions
are held in St Mary's Church at
7:30 pm on the first Thursday of
each month. Those interested in
the baptism of their child should
attend one of these sessions.

Weddings at St Mary's

For information on weddings
please ring the parish office.

1st Sunday of Lent – 21 February 2021



We proclaim a crucified Christ
1Cor123

16 February 2021

To the Laity, Religious and Clergy of the Archdiocese of Melbourne

Dear Friends,

It is welcome news that the first batches of the Pfizer vaccine have arrived in Australia. Soon the most vulnerable people in our country – our frontline workers and those at greatest risk – will receive their first dose against the COVID-19 virus. I will be grateful to receive a vaccination when my turn in the staged roll-out comes around.

None of the vaccines are a cure for COVID-19, but indications are that they provide a significant measure of protection from the worst effects of the virus, for the time being. For the common good, it is appropriate that our governments work together to roll out a nationwide process of vaccination for all residents.

Likewise, for the common good, everyone should respect the decisions of individuals who, for medical, safety or moral reasons, are not ready to receive a vaccination immediately. At this early stage in measuring the longer-term effectiveness and safety of each of the COVID19 vaccines, calls for a 'No jab, no service' policy would be unjust.

The Catholic Bishops have already endorsed efforts to offer a vaccination as soon as possible to all who can safely receive one. <https://mediablog.catholic.org.au/a-letter-to-the-faithful-regarding-development-of-a-covid-19-vaccine/#more-8597>

However, the Government has indicated that there is likely to be little, if any, choice as to which vaccine will be available to individuals in the shorter term. This means that you can receive any one of the three vaccines to be made available, without moral complicity in the processes of its development. On balance, it is a good thing to do.

For anyone with health and safety concerns, please speak with your family doctor.

For anyone with ethical questions, please read the statement issued by the Vatican or speak with your Pastor. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20201221_nota-vaccini-anticovid_en.html

I encourage the Australian government to do all it can to make a vaccine choice available to all residents in Australia as soon as possible, and offer the same care to our poorer neighbouring countries. Please continue to pray for those impacted by this pandemic, and to work in whatever way you can to support your neighbour in need. The God of mercy and compassion is present to us all, through the tender heads, hearts and hands we offer to one another.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli, Archbishop of Melbourne

The 2020 Vatican statement referenced above continues the line of teaching given under Pope Benedict XVI in *Dignitas Personae* (2008), and rests on long-standing principles of Catholic moral theology on material cooperation (explained in our parish bulletin of 7 May 2017).

Today's first reading tells of the covenant God makes with Noah after the end of the great flood. As with a few narratives in the Old Testament, one question that people ask is, **'Should we take the story of Noah and the Ark as literal historical truth?'** Recalling some major principles that should guide us in such questions:

First, there is the principle of the complete truth of Scripture (the inspired Word of God), *understood according to the meaning the human author intended to convey, and to what the human author intended to claim as truth*. If the author intended to make, and did make, a historical claim or assertion, then since 'everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit' (Vatican II, *Dei Verbum* 11) it follows that the Holy Spirit is also making that assertion (which is therefore necessarily true). But if the author *intended to convey a meaning in another way* than reporting literal historical truth, then it is any assertion conveyed by this other meaning that is also asserted by the Holy Spirit, and which is necessarily true. An important guide here is the *literary genre* (e.g. history, poetry, parable, fictional story with a message, etc.) in which the author was intending to write. (Note also that the Holy Spirit, as well as asserting everything that the human author asserts as true, also included within the inspired Word numerous meanings *beyond* what the human author understood or intended.)

There is nothing against the truth of Scripture in saying one of the scriptural authors intended to communicate something other than literal historical truth – just as there is nothing against the truth of Jesus' teaching when we say there were not 'really' such people as the Good Samaritan or the Prodigal Son. Jesus presumably had no intention of claiming there were such people: the point he was making was the underlying message.

Language derives its meaning based on the intention of the speaker / writer, communicating their meaning in the context of some linguistic / cultural community. A casual reader might just assume that some Old Testament narrative was intended as straight history – but so might some future reader assume, if they came across some extract from a 'historical novel' of the present day. So we shouldn't jump to conclusions about the literary genre of a work written more than two thousand years ago, in a cultural setting we personally have minimal knowledge of.

Second, there is the principle that **the Church, herself guided by the Holy Spirit as Jesus promised, guides us as to correct interpretation**. Regarding the Gospels for example, the Church proclaimed at Vatican II their literal historical truth: 'the four Gospels...whose historicity she unhesitatingly affirms, faithfully hand on what Jesus, the Son of God, while he lived among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation, until the day when he was taken up.' (*Dei Verbum* 19)

With the first eleven chapters of *Genesis* (i.e. everything prior to the call of Abraham – Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel; the lists and chronology of Adam's descendants, the ancient patriarchs; Noah and the flood; the Tower of Babel) **the Church has stated the following:**

The first eleven chapters of Genesis, although properly speaking not conforming to the historical method used by the best Greek and Latin writers or by competent authors of our time, do nevertheless pertain to history in a true sense, which however must be further studied and determined by exegetes [biblical scholars]; the same chapters...in simple and metaphorical language adapted to the mentality of a people but little cultured, both state the principal truths which are fundamental for our salvation, and also give a popular description of the origin of the human race and the chosen people. (Pope Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Humani Generis* (1950) 38)

(In addition, beyond questions of historical detail, the Church has quite extensive teaching about the 'inner meaning' of the account of Adam and Eve – their creation, fall, and the transmission to the human race of original sin.)

From this teaching of Pius XII in *Humani Generis* we can take that **whoever composed / compiled these first chapters of Genesis did not intend to write history in exactly the way that we understand 'history'** (and so each detail need not be taken as a literal historical assertion). **Yet, granted that we do not have to interpret every single detail as history, we may not say that these things in no way really happened at all:** rather, as the Pope says they do 'pertain to history in a true sense'. But this is obviously quite vague, allowing considerable leeway of interpretation. For example, no Church teaching seems to require us to hold literally the whole earth to have been flooded in Noah's time, or the whole human race apart from his family to have drowned – both of which would involve considerable scientific difficulties. (Circumspection is called for in evaluating some of the scientific assertions of fundamentalists trying to reconcile science with a literalist interpretation of *Genesis*.)

Many ancient cultures from around the world do have flood narratives. One interesting hypothesis as to what the 'great flood' of the Bible might have been is the filling of the Black Sea. Until maybe 5600 BC, because of lower sea levels from the time of the last Ice Age, what is now the Black Sea was not directly connected to the Mediterranean Sea but was a considerably smaller freshwater lake. According to a respectable and prominent scientific theory, the sea levels rose to the point that water flooded in from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea basin through what is now the straits of the Bosphorus, estimated at 40 cubic kilometres a day for 300 days – much expanding the Black Sea and presumably flooding human settlements. The main debated question in the scientific community is how sudden this event really was, but it does remain one plausible explanation of the biblical flood. So on this biblical hypothesis – not literal rain for forty days, but still an extreme catastrophic flood that God intended as a sign and instrument of the retribution due to sin (doubtless along with countless other unknown purposes of the flood in his all-embracing providential plan).

First Holy Communion

At the 6:00 pm Saturday Vigil Mass this weekend, children from Year Five at St Margaret's School will receive their First Holy Communion (postponed from last March, when the lockdown came in). We keep these children in our prayers, as well as Year Five children from St Mary's School receiving First Communion at this time.

First Communion next Saturday

First Communion is also scheduled for 6pm Mass next Saturday 27 February for children of St Mary's School who missed out last March. As with this Saturday, parishioners may attend this Mass, as guest numbers, though still high, have been limited.

Wedding at St Mary's

We congratulate **Tannya Devraj & Jens Sailagan Christy**, who were married at St Mary's on Friday.

Baptisms

We warmly welcome into the family of God's Church the following children baptised in our parish this weekend:

Isabella Gargiso

Ariella Cristina Ellen Surace

Corpus Christi College – New seminarians for 2021

We keep in our prayers the six new Melbourne seminarians starting studies for the priesthood at Corpus Christi College at this time: **Jordan McBroom, Xavier Ryan, Greg Lewis, Gerard Martin, Anthony Wright and Andrew Tran.**

SAINT OF THE WEEK 15 February: St Claude La Colombière – Apostle of the Sacred Heart

with an episode from English Catholic history

St Claude La Colombière was born in 1641 in Saint-Symphorien-d'Ozon near Lyon in France. He joined the Jesuit order in 1658 and was ordained priest after studies in Avignon and Paris. After a time of ministry in preaching and teaching school, in 1675 he was made rector of the Jesuit community at Paray-le-Monial in Burgundy. Here he was spiritual director and confessor to the local convent of the Visitation order, where St Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-90) received from 1673 to 1675 several visions of Christ, manifesting his Sacred Heart and asking that this devotion be propagated.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus had arisen in the Church from the 11th century, promoted over the centuries by St Bernard, St Bonaventure, St Mechtilde, St Gertrude and St John Eudes. But it was the revelations to St Margaret Mary that established its widespread modern form, with the devotion of Communion of reparation especially on the First Friday of each month; the Holy Hour, especially on Thursdays in union with the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane on Holy Thursday; and the request for a Feast of the Sacred Heart to be established.

Sr Margaret Mary was in anguish because the other nuns rejected her visions, but Our Lord had promised to send her 'my faithful servant and perfect friend'. She opened her heart to Fr Claude, who came to accept and fervently promote the revelations, also by his writings. With his support, Margaret Mary persevered, until the devotion was accepted in the convent and gradually spread.

Meanwhile in England from 1603, kings of the Stuart dynasty were ruling (as also in Scotland). At the time of the Protestant Reformation (from 1517), King Henry VIII (reigned 1509-47) had broken from the Catholic Church in 1534; and so began the Church of England. There were Catholic martyrs under Henry, and many more under his daughter Elizabeth I (reigned 1558-1603) (whereas in the Catholic restoration under Henry's Catholic daughter Mary I (reigned 1553-58) many Protestants were put to death). In the 17th century, different Stuart kings had sympathies with Catholics, amidst much Protestant hostility.

So in the reign (1660-85) of King Charles II, the Queen was a Catholic and the King's brother and heir, the Duke of York (the future James II), had converted. In 1676 Fr Claude was appointed preacher to James' wife, Mary of Modena, and guided many into the Catholic Faith, while continuing correspondence with St Margaret Mary.

But in 1678, the fictional Catholic conspiracy known as the 'Popish Plot', invented by anti-Catholic Titus Oates, put prominent Catholics in peril. In three years of hysteria at least 22 Catholics were executed (including 8 Jesuits – 12 others died in prison – and St Oliver Plunkett, Archbishop of Armagh). The Queen was accused of being in a plot to assassinate the King, and there were moves to exclude James from succession to the throne. Fr Claude was imprisoned for some weeks, until King Louis XIV of France obtained his release. He returned to Paray-Le-Monial with his health ruined, dying there on 15 February 1682. Fr Claude was beatified by Pope Pius XI in 1929 and canonised by St John Paul II in 1992.

Charles II was received into the Catholic Church in 1685 the night before he died, the Duke of York bringing a priest into his room by a secret door while the Anglican bishop waited in the outer room. The Duke became king as James II, but his attempts to bring toleration for Catholicism led to him being driven from the throne in 1688. Since then, Catholics have been legally excluded from the British throne to this day, and the Catholic 'Jacobite' line, though senior, has been disinherited. There were unsuccessful uprisings by James' son ('James III') in 1715 and his grandson 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' in 1745. The Jacobite line continues today, but has made no claims since 1807 (the death of the Cardinal of York, second grandson of James II and Mary of Modena).

St Margaret Mary died in 1690. The Jesuits especially continued to propagate devotion to the Sacred Heart, and in 1856 Pope Blessed Pius IX extended the Feast of the Sacred Heart to the universal Church. On 11 June 1899, Pope Leo XIII consecrated the entire human race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

1ST SUNDAY OF LENT – READINGS

FIRST READING

Gen 9:8-15

A reading from the book of Genesis

God spoke to Noah and his sons, 'See, I establish my Covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; also with every living creature to be found with you, birds, cattle and every wild beast with you: everything that came out of the ark, everything that lives on the earth. I establish my Covenant with you: no thing of flesh shall be swept away again by the waters of the flood. There shall be no flood to destroy the earth again.' God said, 'Here is the sign of the Covenant I make between myself and you and every living creature with you for all generations: I set my bow in the clouds and it shall be a sign of the Covenant between me and the earth. When I gather the clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the Covenant between myself and you and every living creature of every kind. And so the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all things of flesh.'

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 24

R. Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.

1. Lord, make me know your ways.

Lord, teach me your paths.

Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:

for you are God my saviour. (R.)

2. Remember your mercy, Lord, and the love you have shown from of old.

In your love remember me,

because of your goodness, O Lord. (R.)

3. The Lord is good and upright.

He shows the path to those who stray,

he guides the humble in the right path;

he teaches his way to the poor. (R.)

SECOND READING

1 Pet 3:18-22

A reading from the first letter of St Peter

Christ himself, innocent though he was, died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he

was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. Now it was long ago, when Noah was still building that ark which saved only a small group of eight people 'by water,' and when God was still waiting patiently, that these spirits refused to believe. That water is a type of the baptism which saves you now, and which is not the washing off of physical dirt but a pledge made to God from a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has entered heaven and is at God's right hand, now that he has made the angels and Dominations and Powers his subjects.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Mt 4:4

Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

No one lives on bread alone,

but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

GOSPEL

Mk 1:12-15

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him. After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,

we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

(for those unable to receive sacramentally)

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: (8:30 & 10:30)

Entrance: CWB 290

Offertory: CWB 454

Communion: CWB 585

Reflection: CWB 164

Recessional: CWB 595

God of mercy and compassion

Be still, for the presence of the Lord

Praise to the holiest

Soul of my Saviour

Seek, O seek the Lord

Recently Deceased: Dianne Humphreys; Romeo Roque

Anniversaries: Aleyamma Abraham; Elisabetta Madaffari; Novella Tamburin; Domenica Barbaro; Giacomo Andronaco; Denziel Ignatius

Feast Days: 22 February: Feast of the Chair of St Peter, Apostle 23 February: St Polycarp, Martyr

Readings Next Week: 2nd Sunday of Lent: Gen 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18; Rom 8:31-34; Mk 9:2-10

Stations of the Cross on Fridays of Lent

Stations of the Cross will be held at 7:00 pm every Friday of Lent at St Mary's.

Project Compassion

Project Compassion envelopes are available for collection in both churches.

Distribution and blessing of ashes this Wednesday

Because lockdown last Wednesday prevented parishioners being at our Ash Wednesday Mass, ashes will also be blessed and distributed at the 9:00 am and 7:00 pm Masses at St Mary's this coming Wednesday, 24 February.

St Vincent de Paul Helpline: 1800 305 330 Mon-Fri 10am-3pm