

PARISH OF ASCOT VALE

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

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| 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. Secretary: Carmen D’Rosario (Wednesdays) |
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Mass

Public Masses are currently suspended in Melbourne, until 13 September. Livestreaming of our 10:30 Sunday Mass will continue, 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.

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – 6 September 2020

Wishing blessings upon all fathers this Father’s Day

Father’s Day Prayer

*Father, it is your commandment that we should honour our fathers;
hear the prayers we offer you for them.
Grant them many years on earth and keep them in health of mind and body.
Bless their work and all they do.
Give them back a hundred-fold whatever they have done for us.
Inspire them with your love and help them to fulfil your holy law.
One day, may we be their comfort and support,
so that having enjoyed their affection on earth
we may have the joy of being with them forever in your home in heaven.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Wednesday, 2 September 2020

MEDIA STATEMENT On behalf of the Catholic Bishops in Victoria, on the release of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board Report of Operation January – June 2020

“The latest report from the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board is not a celebration of good healthcare, but a sad story of the loss of hope and care for vulnerable people.

The report is notable mostly for what it does not address: mental health, the proportion of patients who died alone, and the number of patients who were able to receive a comprehensive palliative care assessment before a VAD assessment.

Despite assurances that VAD numbers would not increase significantly in its early years, the numbers presented in the report are alarming. Comparatively, it took the State of Oregon in the United States 17 years to reach the same number of deaths that Victoria has reached in its first 12 months of VAD.

On the one hand, our nation is making sacrifices to protect people from the Coronavirus pandemic while on the other, this report is encouraging greater access to assisted suicide. The contradiction is baffling to many doctors, which is alluded to in the VAD report but not addressed comprehensively.

Our hearts go out to families in distress at this time and the lack of quality palliative care options available to them. It illustrates, just as recent Royal Commission findings have also shown, that the range of quality aged care options available to Australians is far narrower than what it should be in a prosperous country like ours.

One of the few ‘safeguards’ in the VAD legislation is that doctors are prevented from initiating the conversation with patients. This protects doctors from becoming stewards of death to their patients, and it protects vulnerable patients from having VAD pushed on them. We are surprised and disappointed that the VAD Board is now sympathetic to overturning this safeguard.

Despite the scant detail in the report, we are encouraged by those with the resilience to keep serving patients without resorting to VAD. Catholic healthcare providers will not abandon their patients, and believe they have a right to be loved from the beginning to the end of their life.”

*Most Rev Paul Bird CSsR, Bishop of Ballarat
Most Rev Peter A Comensoli, Archbishop of Melbourne
Most Rev Terence Curtin, Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne
Most Rev Shane Mackinlay, Bishop of Sandhurst
Most Rev Bosco Puthur, Bishop of the Syro-Malabar Eparchy
Rev Peter Slater, Administrator Diocese of Sale*

A key Church teaching that draws inspiration from today's gospel is the 'collegiality' of the Bishops, highlighted by the Second Vatican Council. Jesus says to the disciples, 'Whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven'. (Mt 18:18) Earlier, Jesus had said the same words to Peter individually (Mt 16:19); now he extends them to the body of Apostles. St Peter alone was made the 'rock foundation' of the Church and he alone was granted the 'keys of the kingdom', (Mt 16:18-19) but the power of 'binding and loosing' is given, certainly still to Peter acting alone, but also now to the Apostles (including Peter) as a united group.

Accordingly, the Catholic Church doesn't view the governance of the Church as simply a 'monarchy' of the Pope, Peter's Successor. That's one aspect of the divine plan for the Church, but not the whole reality. More fully, by the will of Christ, the Church is governed by the Pope *and the Bishops in union with him*. The Pope embodies unity, and the Bishops, Successors of the Apostles, embody catholicity (universality) and diversity. The College of Bishops and the Pope can never be set in opposition, since (as Vatican II explained) the College has no power except in union with the Pope, its Head. For example, an 'Ecumenical' or 'General' Council of Bishops has supreme authority over the Church (just as does the Pope 'acting alone') – yet a Council is not truly 'Ecumenical' until its decisions are confirmed by the Pope. (Vatican II gave a new emphasis to the *theory* of collegiality, but in *practice* it has always been of great importance. Thus a great number of infallible dogmatic statements in the Church's history come from one of the 21 Ecumenical Councils, not just from the Popes.)

THE ECUMENICAL COUNCILS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

1st Council of Nicaea (325) The first Ecumenical Council was called not long after Roman Emperor Constantine the Great had decreed toleration for Christianity (313). Its main concern was the Arian heresy. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, had taught that the Son was lesser than the Father and not co-eternal with him – meaning, he was not God in the true sense. The Council condemned his teaching and proclaimed its Creed (with its crucial assertion against Arius that the Son is 'consubstantial' [Greek: *homoousios*] with the Father). But in the following decades numerous bishops, supported by the newly-Christian emperors, compromised on the controversial '*homoousios*', and defenders of the full Nicene Creed (and Christ's true divinity) such as St Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria, were persecuted.

1st Council of Constantinople (381) reaffirmed the teaching of Nicaea and also defined (against the Macedonian heresy) the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed was expanded into the form in which we proclaim it at Sunday Masses today (the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed). (By papal authority, the *filioque* [that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father '*and the Son*'] was added much later – a point of disagreement with the Eastern Orthodox Church.)

Council of Ephesus (431) Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, had taught that Jesus and the Divine Word were two separate persons (and that therefore Mary could not truly be called 'Mother of God'). Guided by St Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, the Council taught against the Nestorian heresy that Jesus and the divine Word were one and the same person, and that therefore Mary is truly the *Theotokos* [God-bearer], the Mother of God, not simply the mother of a human person, 'since she begot, according to the flesh, the Word of God made flesh'. (The Church in the Persian Empire rejected the Council and separated from the Catholic Church; today this is the Assyrian Church of the East.)

Council of Chalcedon (451) After Ephesus, some went to the opposite extreme from Nestorianism, being so concerned to affirm the unity of Christ as to deny that his human nature continued to exist as such after the Incarnation (Monophysitism). A new council at Ephesus in 449 even supported the heresy; however, Pope St Leo the Great condemned that council as a 'Robber Council' (and thus it has no binding force). The Council of Chalcedon, largest of the ancient Councils, then met, and guided by St Leo through his legates, it defined (against the heresy) that Christ is one person with two distinct and complete natures, perfectly God and perfectly man. (The Council was rejected by the Church in Egypt, giving rise to the separated Oriental Orthodox Churches – today the Coptic Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox, Eritrean Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox, Malankara Orthodox Syrian, and Armenian Apostolic Churches.)

2nd Council of Constantinople (553) The Council, convened by Byzantine Emperor Justinian I, originally met in opposition to Pope Vigilius, who was imprisoned by Justinian; but in the end, the Pope accepted the Council (making it a genuinely ecumenical council). It reinforced, against Nestorian currents, Christ's full unity as one divine person.

3rd Council of Constantinople (680-81) The Monothelite heresy arose in the 620s as a compromise with Monophysitism, saying that Christ had only a divine will and not also a human will. Constantinople III condemned Monothelitism, and also Pope Honorius I (625-38) for having failed to curb it. (Pope St Leo II, in confirming the Council, clarified that Honorius was condemned for negligence rather than for personal heresy.)

2nd Council of Nicaea (787) Byzantine Emperor Leo III began the iconoclast ('image-breaking') heresy that condemned the use of religious images as idolatrous; this divided the Empire for decades, and many images were destroyed. Nicaea II condemned iconoclasm and re-affirmed the legitimacy of using religious images (for honour and veneration, not worship as divine): 'He who venerates an image venerates in it the person whom the image represents.'

4th Council of Constantinople (869-70) The 8th Ecumenical Council (Constantinople IV) deposed Patriarch Photius of Constantinople as a usurper. However, a later Council (879) reinstated him. From this time on there was an anti-Roman party in Constantinople, until the formal split between the Eastern Orthodox Church and Rome in 1054. (The Eastern Orthodox Church today accepts the first seven Ecumenical Councils but not those from Constantinople IV on.)

1st Lateran Council (1123) The first Ecumenical Council held in western Europe (held at the Pope's Lateran Palace in Rome), Lateran I aimed to settle the 'Investiture Question' of whether the Pope or lay rulers had the right to nominate bishops, by limiting the power of monarchs and nobles to do this.

2nd Lateran Council (1139) reformed discipline, again condemning clerical marriages, also declaring them invalid.

3rd Lateran Council (1179) Lateran III restricted papal election to cardinals (with a two-thirds majority required); deposed immoral clerics; condemned usury and simony (i.e. buying and selling spiritual things); set the minimum age for parish priests at 25 and bishops at 30; organised homes for lepers; and established all cathedrals must have schools.

4th Lateran Council (1215) Greatest of the medieval Councils and a peak of the Church's medieval glory, Lateran IV under Innocent III proclaimed a Creed with many dogmas, including reaffirmation of the Trinity; the creation of the angels (some becoming demons by their own doing); the necessity of the one Church for salvation; transubstantiation, performed only by an ordained priest; and the everlasting glory of heaven and perpetual punishment of hell.

1st Council of Lyon (1245) in France proclaimed the deposition of Emperor Frederick II, part of the final struggle for supremacy between the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire, with the Papacy seemingly emerging victorious.

2nd Council of Lyon (1274) temporarily reunited the Eastern Orthodox Church with the Catholic Church, with the Orthodox acceptance of papal primacy and the *filioque*; but in 1282 the new Byzantine Emperor rejected the union.

Council of Vienne (1311-12) French King Philip IV had many Knights Templar arrested on outrageous charges (very likely false), and under pressure, the French Pope Clement V ordered all the knights arrested. The Council of Vienne (France) dissolved the Templars altogether. The Council taught that the soul is the 'form' of the body (i.e. it is the soul that makes the body living and human) – in us, spirit and matter are not two natures, but form one single human nature.

Council of Constance (1414-18) A disputed papal election in 1378 had led to the Great Western Schism, when for four decades there were two claimants to the papacy, a 'Roman' line and an 'Avignon' line. The true popes were those of the Roman line, but this was difficult to tell at the time, and the nations of Europe divided in their allegiance along political lines. The Council of Pisa elected a new 'pope' to resolve the schism, but neither of the existing claimants to the papacy recognised him, so there were then three claimants. Finally, the Council of Constance (on the German-Swiss border) obtained the abdication of Gregory XII (today considered to have been the true pope), deposed the other two claimants and elected Martin V, ending the 39-year dispute. Czech reformer priest Jan Hus was condemned at the Council and executed for heresy; the Hussite Wars (1419-34) followed in Bohemia between Hussites and Catholics.

Council of Florence (1431-45) The Council reunited the Eastern Orthodox Church with the Catholic Church, the Bishops proclaiming together papal primacy, the *filioque*, heaven, hell and purgatory. However, the Orthodox people did not accept the union, which collapsed after Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, ending the Byzantine Empire.

5th Lateran Council (1512-17) The Council gave teaching on the immortality of the soul, and that everyone has their own individual soul. Rulings were made on much-needed Church reform, but had little effect.

Council of Trent (1545-63) The Protestant Reformation, sparked by Martin Luther in 1517, had taken off in different parts of Europe. After long delay, the Church at last gave her response in one of the most far-reaching of all the Councils, at Trent in northern Italy. Catholic teachings were re-affirmed, clarified and defined – on Scripture & Tradition; original sin; justification; the Sacraments; Baptism; Christ's real presence in the Eucharist; the Mass as a true sacrifice; Reconciliation; Priesthood; Marriage; veneration of the saints; purgatory; and indulgences. The seminary system for the training of priests was established; many abuses in Church life were addressed, and discipline reasserted. In 1566, Pope St Pius V published the *Roman Catechism*, the only universal Catholic catechism until the 1992 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; and in 1570, he standardised the Mass in the form it took until Vatican II.

1st Vatican Council (1870) Called by Pius IX, Vatican I gave infallible teachings on the nature and relationship of faith and reason, and on papal authority as God's law, proclaiming the dogma that papal definitions are infallible even apart from an Ecumenical Council. The Council was cut short by Italy's capture of Rome, which ended the papal states.

2nd Vatican Council (1962-65) Called and opened by St John XXIII and seen through by St Paul VI, Vatican II reformed liturgy, including permission for local languages. Other teachings included the image of the Church as People of God, all called to holiness and mission; the collegiality of Bishops; the encouragement of the lay apostolate; reform of religious life; the affirmation of positive aspects of the modern world and other religions; the endorsement of ecumenism, and friendly dialogue with other Christians; and the right of freedom from coercion in religion.

'But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community; and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a pagan or a tax collector.' (Mt 18:17) A debatable translation in our version (*Jerusalem Bible*) of today's Gospel is this word 'community' that occurs twice in this sentence. The original Greek is *ekklesia*, rendered as 'church' in this passage by the great majority of English translations, Catholic or Protestant. (Indeed, the *Jerusalem Bible* itself translates the same basic Greek word as 'church' in the famous passage in *Matthew* 16:18: 'You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church.') The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* gives deeper background (which suggests 'community' is a bit weak a term):

"The word "Church" (Latin *ecclesia*, from the Greek *ek-ka-lein*, to "call out of") means a convocation or an assembly. It designates the assemblies of the people, usually for a religious purpose. *Ekklesia* is used frequently in the Greek Old Testament for the assembly of the Chosen People before God, above all for their assembly on Mount Sinai where Israel received the Law and was established by God as his holy people. By calling itself "Church," the first community of Christian believers recognised itself as heir to that assembly. In the Church, God is "calling together" his people from all the ends of the earth. The equivalent Greek term *Kyriake*, from which the English word *Church* and the German *Kirche* are derived, means "what belongs to the Lord." (*Catechism*, n. 751)

23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A – READINGS

FIRST READING

Ezek 33:7-9

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

The word of the Lord was addressed to me as follows, 'Son of man, I have appointed you as sentry to the House of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth, warn them in my name. If I say to a wicked man: Wicked wretch, you are to die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked man to renounce his ways, then he shall die for his sin, but I will hold you responsible for his death. If, however, you do warn a wicked man to renounce his ways and repent, and he does not repent, then he shall die for his sin, but you yourself will have saved your life.'

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 94

R. O that today you would listen to his voice!
Harden not your hearts.

1. Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;
hail the rock who saves us.
Let us come before him, giving thanks,
with songs let us hail the Lord. (R.)

2. Come in; let us bow and bend low;
let us kneel before the God who made us
for he is our God and we
the people who belong to his pasture,
the flock that is led by his hand. (R.)

3. O that today you would listen to his voice!
'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as on that day at Massah in the desert
when your fathers put me to the test;
when they tried me, though they saw my work.' (R.)

SECOND READING

Rom 13:8-10

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Avoid getting into debt, except the debt of mutual love. If you love your fellow men you have carried out your obligations. All the commandments: You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and so on, are summed up in this single command: You must love your neighbour as yourself. Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your

neighbour; that is why it is the answer to every one of the commandments.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

2 Cor 5:19

Alleluia, alleluia!

God was in Christ, to reconcile the world to himself;
and the Good News of reconciliation he has entrusted to us.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 18:15-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain any charge. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community; and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a pagan or a tax collector.

'I tell you solemnly, whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.

'I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them.'

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:

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| Entrance | – | CWB 451 | As we gather at your table |
| Offertory | – | CWB 553 | Love is his word |
| Communion | – | CWB 469 | Christians, let us love one another |
| Recessional | – | CWB 503 | Holy Father, God of might |

Feast Days:

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| 8 September: | Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary |
| 9 September: | St Peter Claver |
| 12 September: | The Most Holy Name of Mary |

Recently Deceased:

Leven Puno, Grace Loresto

Anniversaries:

Mary & Bill Sheargold; Tom Flood; Dawn Drysdale; John Berger; Rosario Antonio Catanzariti; Pasquale Catanzariti; Francesco, Pasquale & Domenico Spagnolo

Readings Next Week:

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time: Sirach 27:30-28:7; Rom 14:7-9; Mt 18:21-35

***Remember to pray a decade of the Rosary every day for the parishioners of
St Patrick's, Bega, who are especially praying for our parish at this time of lockdown***