

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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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. 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.

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time – 20 September 2020

To the People and Clergy of the Archdiocese of Melbourne

16 September

Dear friends in Christ,

As we now welcome the beginnings of easing in COVID-19 Restrictions in Victoria, I would like to take this opportunity to write to you, the Clergy and people of our Archdiocese. It is great news that regional Victoria will, from tonight, move into the Third Step of the Roadmap to reopening, which includes our parishes located outside the metropolitan zone. However, we have a long way to go.

The deprivation in sacramental life has been a profound loss for our people. As well as all the other sufferings of the Pandemic, the sense of estrangement from the Eucharist has been a particular struggle for Catholics. The Mass is our primary means of gathering together in faith; it is the source and summit of our Christian life, and its life-giving nourishment and healing is dearly missed.

In the midst of this loss, I am grateful to our Priests and Deacons for continuing to serve the faithful, for sharing a sacramental ministry even under strict conditions, and for being alongside our people and their loved ones in times of death and grief. Thank you for your faithfulness.

All of us are anxious to open church doors, but I want to emphasise our need to be creative in the ways we do so, especially with the thousands of children who have been waiting for Sacraments of Initiation. Countless Catholic families are awaiting Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation for their children. Adults, too, have longed to be received into the life of the Church. We shall be exploring possibilities such as outdoor liturgies in parish and school settings to facilitate these crucial events of grace and welcome.

Throughout the pandemic, I have been advocating directly with the Government, reminding authorities continually of our respectful compliance with each stage of restrictions, and seeking a fair consideration in what is permitted. The Catholic community throughout the pandemic has been constructive and positive. We have, and continue to act in a mature way, caring for the safety and vulnerability of Victorians facing great risk. Thankfully the signs of driving down COVID numbers are looking good at this moment and Catholics join other people of faith in giving thanks for this outcome and working to ensure the steps ahead do not take us backward.

Now, it is essential that the Government does not treat faith communities as an afterthought to the opening up of other sectors. Our churches are locations for communities of care and essential service, and must be treated fairly and reasonably.

Practically speaking, I have been in discussion with the Premier to thank him for overturning the restriction on spiritual ministry to the sick and the dying, and have assured him that the Catholic Church is able to manage restrictions (including good hygiene, face coverings, social distancing and density requirements). If pubs and restaurants can open, then places of worship should be open under similar conditions and numbers.

If case numbers track well, I expect we will see larger outdoor gatherings in regional Victoria become possible over the next few weeks, and proportionate opportunities for gathering in metropolitan Melbourne. I am hopeful that this may occur sometime in October, which would be a deeply welcomed improvement on the current Roadmap indications. If we can open our churches, even for outdoor gatherings, then we should open them.

The Deputy Premier and the Multicultural Affairs Minister are conducting discussions this month through the Multifaith Leaders Forum. The Archdiocese will be contributing to these meetings. In addition I will continue to engage with the Premier and Ministers directly on the Church’s need for opening doors, carefully and safely.

Be assured of my ongoing closeness in prayer and concern. I have heard your cry, and I am working to bring your voice to the authorities. The Lord has promised he will be with us always; let us place our hope in Him.

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

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli, Archbishop of Melbourne

Social Services Sunday

Today we mark Social Services Sunday within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, giving thanks and praying for all who stand with and provide support to those who are marginalised and vulnerable within our communities. We recognise with deep gratitude those working within Catholic Social Services Victoria's member organisations, the 7,000 staff and 17,000 volunteers, who together serve more than 200,000 people in need each year. We also give thanks for all in our parishes, so often at the forefront of providing practical support and care to those in need within their local communities, and beyond. We call to mind the 2020 Social Justice Statement brought out recently by the Australian Catholic bishops, *To Live Life to the Full: Mental Health in Australia Today*, and draw your attention to a recent event hosted by CSSV, *Counselling and Therapeutic Support in a Time of COVID*, which was an opportunity to become more familiar with mental health services, and how to practically reach out for or point to assistance.

Member Organisations of Catholic Social Services Victoria

- Aboriginal Catholic Ministry – Assisi Centre – Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH)
– Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project – Cabrini Health – CatholicCare Melbourne – CatholicCare Sandhurst
– CatholicCare Victoria Tasmania – Catholic Chaplains' Association for Health Care
– Catholic Womens League Victoria and Wagga Wagga – Centacare Ballarat – Corazon – Corpus Christi Community
– Don Bosco Youth Centre & Hostel Inc – Edmund Rice Camps (Amberley) – Edmund Rice Refugee and Community Services
– Edmund Rice Services - Mt Atkinson – Good Samaritan Inn – Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand – Griefline
– Jesuit Social Services – John Pierce Centre for Deaf Ministry – Kewn Kreestha (Family Care Sisters) – Keysborough Learning Centre
– Little Sisters of the Poor, St Joseph's Home for the Aged – MacKillop Family Services – Marist180 – Mary Aikenhead Ministries
– Mary MacKillop Aged Care – McAuley Community Services for Women – Missionary Sisters of Service
– Nazareth Care (Sisters of Nazareth, Nazareth House) – Office for Justice and Peace, Archdiocese of Melbourne
– Order of Malta Hospice Home Care (Vic) Inc – Pregnancy Assistance Frankston – Rosie's Victoria – Sacred Heart Mission St Kilda Inc
– Southern Cross Care (Vic) – St John of God ACCORD – St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre – St Mary's House of Welcome Ltd
– St Vincent de Paul Society (Vic) – The Way Community – Villa Maria Catholic Homes
– Vietnamese Catholic Family Mutual Assistance Network – VincentCare Victoria – Wellsprings for Women Inc

Websites for most of these member organisations can be found on the Catholic Social Services website: www.css.org.au

From Church Teaching – On the Inspiration and Truth of Sacred Scripture

Last Tuesday, 15th September, was the centenary of the Encyclical 'Spiritus Paraclitus' of Pope Benedict XV, which was itself issued in anticipation of the 1500th anniversary of the death of St Jerome (30th September 420 – 30th September 1920). (His upcoming feast day on the 30th of this month will therefore be the 1600th anniversary of his death.) St Jerome, a Doctor of the Church, is the pre-eminent Scripture scholar among the saints, especially famous for translating the Bible into Latin. Other papal teachings on Scripture also intentionally promulgated in connection with St Jerome's feast day include the Encyclical 'Divino Afflante Spiritu' of Pope Pius XII (30th September 1943) and the Apostolic Exhortation 'Verbum Domini' of Pope Benedict XVI (30th September 2010). On 30th September 2019, Pope Francis' Motu Proprio 'Aperuit Illis' established that the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time would henceforth also be the 'Sunday of the Word of God', with a special focus on the Bible. 'Spiritus Paraclitus' was one of the magisterial documents referenced several times in Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 'Dei Verbum' (18th November 1965). We look then at some of the teachings of Pope Benedict XV on the Bible in 'Spiritus Paraclitus', (keeping in mind the different papal writing style of a century ago, which may seem old-fashioned to us):

'You will not find a page in [St Jerome's] writings which does not show clearly that he, in common with the whole Catholic Church, firmly and consistently held that the Sacred Books – written as they were under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit – have God for their Author, and as such were delivered to the Church. Thus he asserts that the Books of the Bible were composed at the inspiration, or suggestion, or even at the dictation of the Holy Spirit...

'Yet he never questions but that the individual authors of these Books worked in full freedom under the Divine *afflatus*, each of them in accordance with his individual nature and character... Jerome shows us how, in composition, in language, in style and mode of expression, each of them uses his own gifts and powers... This partnership of God and man in the production of a work in common Jerome illustrates by the case of a workman who uses instruments for the production of his work; for he says that whatsoever the sacred authors say "Is the word

of God, and not their own; and what the Lord says by their mouths He says, as it were, by means of an instrument.' '

'...St Jerome in no wise differs from the common teaching of the Catholic Church. For he holds that God, through His grace, illumines the writer's mind regarding the particular truth which, "in the person of God," he is to set before men; he holds, moreover, that God moves the writer's will – nay, even impels it – to write; finally, that God abides with him unceasingly, in unique fashion, until his task is accomplished...'

'Holding principles like these, Jerome was compelled, when he discovered apparent discrepancies in the Sacred Books, to use every endeavour to unravel the difficulty. If he felt that he had not satisfactorily settled the problem, he would return to it again and again, not always, indeed, with the happiest results. Yet he would never accuse the sacred writers of the slightest mistake – "that we leave to impious folk like Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian..."'

‘St Jerome’s teaching on this point serves to confirm and illustrate what our predecessor of happy memory, Leo XIII, declared to be the ancient and traditional belief of the Church touching the absolute immunity of Scripture from error: “So far is it from being the case that error can be compatible with inspiration, that, on the contrary, it not only of its very nature precludes the presence of error, but as necessarily excludes it and forbids it as God, the Supreme Truth, necessarily cannot be the Author of error.”’

‘Then, after giving the definitions of the Councils of Florence and Trent, confirmed by [Vatican I], Pope Leo continues: “Consequently it is not to the point to suggest that the Holy Spirit used men as His instruments for writing, and that therefore, while no error is referable to the primary Author, it may well be due to the inspired authors themselves. For by supernatural power the Holy Spirit so stirred them and moved them to write, so assisted them as they wrote, that their minds could rightly conceive only those and all those things which He himself bade them conceive; only such things could they faithfully commit to writing and aptly express with unerring truth; else God would not be the Author of the entirety of Sacred Scripture.” (Providentissimus Deus (1893))’

‘...Moreover, our predecessor [Pope Leo XIII] ... also teaches that Divine inspiration extends to every part of the Bible without the slightest exception, and that no error can occur in the inspired text: “It would be wholly impious to limit inspiration to certain portions only of Scripture or to concede that the sacred authors themselves could have erred.”’

‘...St Jerome is in complete agreement with St Augustine, who sums up the general belief of Christian antiquity when he says: “Holy Scripture is invested with supreme authority by reason of its sure and momentous teachings regarding the faith... We believe it simply because it is written in Scripture; and unless we believe in Scripture we can neither be Christians nor be saved.”’

[As has been emphasised in the Parish Bulletin a number of times before, the truth that God is affirming in Scripture is that truth that the human author intends to affirm as true. Pius XII (1943) and Vatican II (1965) highlighted the role of ascertaining the literary genre used by the human author, in determining what it was that the author intended to affirm – and that genre is not always simple history. Benedict XV back in 1920, not contradicting this possibility but with a more ‘conservative’ emphasis, warned against “too ready” a recourse to this ‘literary genre’ solution of certain historical difficulties. These different yet non-contradictory positions approach and carve out the truth from different directions, in a manner typical of the coherent development of Catholic doctrine. So we can and should still say, in line with the earlier approach, that in a biblical text apparently historical, the first presumption should be in favour of a historical genre and interpretation, until shown otherwise. But advancing studies enabled greater recognition of different genres.]

[The Church strongly affirmed at Vatican II that the Gospels themselves are historical in genre, as Benedict XV himself stated:] ‘What can we say of men who in expounding the very Gospels so whittle away the human

trust we should repose in it as to overturn Divine faith in it? They refuse to allow that the things which Christ said or did have come down to us unchanged and entire through witnesses who carefully committed to writing what they themselves had seen or heard... Not thus did Jerome and Augustine and the other Doctors of the Church understand the historical trustworthiness of the Gospels...’

‘Writing to the Roman matron Laeta about her daughter’s training, [St Jerome] says: “Every day she should give you a definite account of her Bible-reading...”’

‘He says the same to Eustochium: “Read assiduously and learn as much as you can. Let sleep find you holding your Bible, and when your head nods let it be resting on the sacred page.” When he sent Eustochium the epitaph he had composed for her mother Paula, he especially praised that holy woman for having so wholeheartedly devoted herself and her daughter to Bible study that she knew the Bible through and through, and had committed it to memory. He continues: “I will tell you another thing about her... : she determined to learn Hebrew, a language which I myself, with immense labour and toil from my youth upwards, have only partly learned...”’

‘Hence, as far as in us lies, we, Venerable Brethren, shall, with St Jerome as our guide, never desist from urging the faithful to read daily the Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles, so as to gather thence food for their souls...’

‘If, then, St Jerome begs for assiduous reading of the Bible by the faithful in general, he insists on it for those who are called to “bear the yoke of Christ” and preach His word... “Constantly read the Bible; in fact, have it always in your hands.”...’

‘Alas! many of God’s ministers, through never looking at their Bible, perish themselves and allow many others to perish also...’

‘We have seen with what reverent yet enthusiastic love he attached himself to the Roman Church and to the See of Peter... When applauding Augustine, his junior yet his fellow-soldier, and rejoicing in the fact that they were one in their hatred of heresy [NB: not hatred of heretics (people), obviously, but of false doctrine], he hails him with the words: “Well done! You are famous throughout the world. Catholics revere you and point you out as the establisher of the old-time faith; and – an even greater glory – all heretics hate you. And they hate me too; unable to slay us with the sword, they would that wishes could kill.”’

‘...He likewise never failed to lash with biting tongue [that the holy saint is admittedly known for!] any looseness in morals... How terribly he upbraids men who have degraded the dignity of the priesthood! With what vigour he inveighs against the pagan morals then infecting Rome!’

‘...So convinced indeed was Jerome that familiarity with the Bible was the royal road to the knowledge and love of Christ that he did not hesitate to say: “Ignorance of the Bible means ignorance of Christ.”...’

‘Our one desire for all the Church’s children is that, being saturated with the Bible, they may arrive at the all-surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ.’

25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A – READINGS

FIRST READING

Is 55:6-9

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Seek the Lord while he is still to be found, call to him while he is still near. Let the wicked man abandon his way, the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn back to the Lord who will take pity on him, to our God who is rich in forgiving; for my thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways not your ways – it is the Lord who speaks. Yes, the heavens are as high above earth as my ways are above your ways, my thoughts above your thoughts.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 144

R. The Lord is near to all who call him.

1. I will bless you day after day
and praise your name for ever.

The Lord is great, highly to be praised,
his greatness cannot be measured. (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. The Lord is just in all his ways
and loving in all his deeds.
He is close to all who call him,
who call on him from their hearts. (R.)

SECOND READING

Phil 1:20-24, 27

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians

Christ will be glorified in my body, whether by my life or by my death. Life to me, of course, is Christ, but then death would bring me something more; but then again, if living in this body means doing work which is having good results – I do not know what I should choose. I am caught in this dilemma: I want to be gone and be with Christ, which would be very much the better, but for me to stay alive in this body is a more urgent need for your sake. Avoid anything in your everyday lives that would be unworthy of the gospel of Christ.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. Acts 16:14

Alleluia, alleluia!
Open our hearts, O Lord,
to listen to the words of your Son.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 20:1-16

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner going out at daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard. He made an agreement with the workers for one denarius a day, and sent them to his vineyard. Going out at about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place and said to them, “You go to my vineyard too and I will give you a fair wage.” So they went. At about the sixth hour and again at about the ninth hour, he went out and did the same. Then at about the eleventh hour he went out and found more men standing round, and he said to them, “Why have you been standing here idle all day?” “Because no one has hired us” they answered. He said to them, “You go into my vineyard too.” In the evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his bailiff, “Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last arrivals and ending with the first.” So those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came forward and received one denarius each. When the first came, they expected to get more, but they too received one denarius each. They took it, but grumbled at the landowner. “The men who came last” they said “have done only one hour, and you have treated them the same as us, though we have done a heavy day’s work in all the heat.” He answered one of them and said, “My friend, I am not being unjust to you; did we not agree on one denarius? Take your earnings and go. I choose to pay the last comer as much as I pay you. Have I no right to do what I like with my own? Why be envious because I am generous?” Thus the last will be first, and the first, last.

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

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 595	Seek, O seek the Lord
Offertory	– CWB 570	O God, we give ourselves today
Communion	– CWB 164	Soul of my Saviour
Recessional	– Blessed be the Lord God Almighty	

Feast Days:

21 September:	Feast of St Matthew, Apostle	
23 September:	St Pius of Pietrelcina [<i>Padre Pio</i>]	26 September: Sts Cosmas & Damian

Recently Deceased:

Madge Magyar

Anniversaries:

Mario Dancel; Rufina Mallari; Nicola Colicchia; Giuseppe Gervasi; Espedito Catania

Readings Next Week:

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time: Ezek 18:25-28; Phil 2:1-11; Mt 21:28-32

***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***