



# PARISH OF ASCOT VALE

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

<b>Parish Priest:</b>	Rev Fr Justin Ford
<b>Assistant Priest / Lithuanian Chaplain:</b>	Rev Fr Joseph Deveikis
<b>Presbytery / Parish Office:</b>	123 St Leonards Rd, Ascot Vale (Postal: PO Box 468 Ascot Vale 3032)
<b>Telephone:</b>	9370 6688
<b>Website:</b>	www.stmaryschurch.org.au
<b>Email:</b>	ascotvale@cam.org.au
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tue – Fri, 10am – 3pm. <i>Secretary:</i> Carmen D'Rosario (Wednesdays)
<b>Principal, St Mary's School:</b>	Mr Paul Hogan T: 9370 1194
<b>Principal, St Margaret's School:</b>	Mr Gavin Brennan T: 9318 1339

## Mass

We are now permitted to celebrate daily Mass outdoors, with a congregation of five. This will be in the courtyard of St Mary's; scheduling will depend on weather forecasts. You can book to attend this on the parish website. Live streaming of our 10:30 Sunday Mass will continue, also accessible on the website.

## 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.

## 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – 4 October 2020

**'The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.'** (Mt 21:43)

The words of Jesus in today's gospel addressed to the chief priests and elders warn them of the consequences of their refusal to accept him (the son of the owner of the vineyard in the parable that he has just told). A superficial reading could take this as divine rejection of the whole 'people' of the Jews for unfaithfulness. But the Church tells us:

The Church keeps ever before her mind the words of the Apostle Paul about his kinsmen: 'they are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race according to the flesh, is the Christ' (Rom 9:4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary... God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or of the calls He issues (Rom 11:28-29)... Even though the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ, neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his passion. It is true that the Church is the new people of God, yet the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy Scripture. (Vatican II, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate* 4 (1965))

So *individuals* of any nation and religious background are responsible for their own rejection of Christ, if they have sufficient knowledge to incur guilt – and Jesus is warning his own hearers of their personal responsibility. Although many Jews of Jesus' time did not accept him, quite a number did, including of course his own Mother, the Apostles and all the first disciples. So we read in the *Acts of the Apostles*: 'a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith'; and 'how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed; and they are all zealous for the Law'. (Acts 6:7; 21:20)

Christ's death has reconciled Jews and Gentiles in the peace of one Body. (Eph 2:11-22) St Paul speaks of the Gentiles being grafted into the 'original vine' of the Jews. 'I ask then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham...' (Rom 11:1) Some 'natural branches', indeed, are broken off – those personally unfaithful – and replaced by the grafted 'wild branches' of the Gentiles: 'If some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the richness of the olive tree, do not boast over the branches... If God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you... And even the others, if they do not persist in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again... a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel will be saved.' (Rom 11:17-18, 21, 23, 25-26)

So the meaning of the gospel parable for each of us, regardless of our own personal ethnic background and religious history, is that if we are unfaithful to the unmerited gift we've received of being members of God's People, we too risk being deservedly cut off. If we take our salvation for granted just because we are Catholics, and fail to live out our membership through whole-hearted faith and fruitful obedience to God's will, the kingdom of God will be taken from us and given to people who will produce its fruit.

**Recently Deceased:** Monsignor Anthony Toms; Sr Kath Ragg; Margaret Tyler  
**Anniversaries:** Bernadette Brooks; Maria Giuseppina Timpano; Antonio Barbaro; Edgardo Dancel; Maria Assunta & Francesco Stranieri

**Feast Days:** 5 October: St Faustina Kowalska 6 October: St Bruno  
7 October: Our Lady of the Rosary 9 October: St Denis & companions; St John Leonardi

**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**

### **Outdoor Masses now permitted with congregation of five**

With current restrictions we are now able to celebrate Mass outdoors, with five people present plus the priest. This will take place on a daily basis in the courtyard at St Mary's, in the verandah area of the Presbytery. Scheduling is subject to the weather forecast, and cancellations are possible if conditions are poor. (Unfortunately, rain is forecast several days this coming week, so Masses may be limited.) Attending these outdoor Masses is a permitted reason for leaving home (though you may not travel more than 5 km from home). Naturally, masks must be worn and normal precautions taken. Bookings can be made from the parish website. If you know parishioners without internet access, you may wish to make a booking on their behalf. If you have been able to attend Mass in recent days, you are asked to initially hold off from booking again, to enable others an opportunity; however, if within an hour of the close of booking (as listed on the website) there are still spaces available, you can then feel free to book, as others have had their chance.

### **Scripturae Sacrae Affectus**

Last Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> September, Feast of St Jerome and 1600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, Pope Francis promulgated the Apostolic Letter *Scripturae Sacrae Affectus* to mark the anniversary. Since in recent weeks we've already looked in some depth at St Jerome and at Catholic teaching on Scripture, we won't quote excerpts here, but you're encouraged to read the full text (reasonably short) on the Vatican website:

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap\\_20200930\\_scripturae-sacrae-affectus.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20200930_scripturae-sacrae-affectus.html) – to further increase your appreciation and knowledge of different facets of this great saint, and what he can teach us of the immense value of Sacred Scripture.

*The Holy See published a new document a week ago (officially dated from 14 July), the Letter 'Samaritanus Bonus' of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith – on euthanasia, assisted suicide, and related end-of-life issues. It reaffirms teachings already well-known, but goes into more detail on specific practical questions that may arise for individuals, medical professionals and chaplains – for example in situations where euthanasia or assisted suicide have been legalised, as in Victoria. Since it is formally approved by Pope Francis, the 'Letter' participates in his Magisterium and so requires Catholics to sincerely adhere to its various teachings with religious submission of will and intellect. (And the central teaching of the grave immorality of euthanasia, the Letter points out, is actually already 'definitively proposed' and so taught infallibly by the Church. As a consequence, it must be 'held definitively': thus it is gravely sinful for Catholics to deny that teaching, and they would also cut themselves off thereby from full union with the Catholic Church.)*

*The 'Letter' is of some length, so we will look at excerpts over three weeks. Medical professionals are recommended to read the full text, available online. Today we'll look at the reaffirmation of the condemnation of euthanasia and assisted suicide as gravely and intrinsically evil; the evil nature of cooperation in these actions, for example by lawmakers or medical professionals; the legitimacy of forgoing aggressive or disproportionate treatments – as long as death is merely foreseen and accepted, never directly intended (whether by action or omission), and as long as normal care (such as hydration and nutrition) is maintained. In the coming weeks we will look at the application of the principles to children before and after birth; more detailed questions of hydration and nutrition; palliative care, and the use of painkillers foreseen to shorten life; the so-called 'vegetative state'; duties of conscientious objection and refusal to collaborate; and guidance for priests on giving or refusing sacraments to those who have intended euthanasia for themselves.*

### **CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH**

#### **Letter Samaritanus Bonus 'The Good Samaritan'**

#### **on the care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life**

'Human life is the primary common good of society. Human life is a highest good, and society is called to acknowledge this...'

'God the Creator offers life and its dignity to man as a precious gift to safeguard and nurture, and ultimately to be accountable to Him... The positive meaning of human life is something already knowable by right reason, and in the light of faith is confirmed and understood in its inalienable dignity... Life is the first good because it is the basis for the enjoyment of every other good (Cf. Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health Care Workers *New Charter for Health Care Workers* 1; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith *Dignitas personae* 8): "The

special love of the Creator for each human being confers upon him or her an infinite dignity". (Pope Francis *Laudato si'* 65) The unfringeable value of life is a fundamental principle of the natural moral law and an essential foundation of the legal order. Just as we cannot make another person our slave, even if they ask to be, so we cannot directly choose to take the life of another, even if they request it...'

'It is to take the place of God in deciding the moment of death. For this reason, "abortion, euthanasia and wilful self-destruction...poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury.

Moreover, they are a supreme dishonour to the Creator”. (Vatican II *Gaudium et spes* (1965) 27)’

‘Euthanasia...is an intrinsically evil act, in every situation or circumstance. In the past the Church has already affirmed in a definitive way “that euthanasia is a grave violation of the Law of God, since it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person. This doctrine is based upon the natural law and upon the written Word of God, is transmitted by the Church’s Tradition and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium. Depending on the circumstances, this practice involves the malice proper to suicide or murder”. (Pope St John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium vitae* (1995) 65. It is a definitively proposed doctrine in which the Church commits her infallibility.)’

‘Any formal or immediate material cooperation in such an act is a grave sin against human life: “No authority can legitimately recommend or permit such an action. For it is a question of the violation of the divine law, an offense against the dignity of the human person, a crime against life, and an attack on humanity”. (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration on Euthanasia *Iura et bona* (1980))’

‘Therefore, euthanasia is an act of homicide that no end can justify and that does not tolerate any form of complicity or active or passive collaboration. Those who approve laws of euthanasia and assisted suicide, therefore, become accomplices of a grave sin that others will execute.’

‘When a request for euthanasia rises from anguish and despair, “although in these cases the guilt of the individual may be reduced, or completely absent, nevertheless the error of judgment into which the conscience falls, perhaps in good faith, does not change the nature of this act of killing, which will always be in itself something to be rejected”. (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Iura et bona*)’

‘Euthanasia and assisted suicide are always the wrong choice: the medical personnel and the other health care workers – faithful to the task always to be at the service of life and to assist it up until the very end – cannot give themselves to any euthanistic practice, neither at the request of the interested party, and much less that of the family... Since there is no right to dispose of one’s life arbitrarily, no health care worker can be compelled to execute a non-existent right...’

‘It is gravely unjust to enact laws that legalise euthanasia or justify and support suicide... Such laws strike at the foundation of the legal order: the right to life sustains all other rights, including the exercise of freedom. The existence of such laws deeply wound human relations and justice, and threaten the mutual trust among human beings. The legitimization of assisted suicide and euthanasia is a sign of the degradation of legal systems... In some countries of the world, tens of thousands of people

have already died by euthanasia, and many of them because they displayed psychological suffering or depression. Physicians themselves report that abuses frequently occur when the lives of persons who would never have desired euthanasia are terminated.’

#### *The moral obligation to exclude aggressive medical treatment*

‘Medicine today can artificially delay death, often without real benefit to the patient. When death is imminent, and without interruption of the normal care the patient requires in such cases, it is lawful according to science and conscience to renounce treatments that provide only a precarious or painful extension of life. (Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2278; John Paul II *Evangelium vitae* 65) It is not lawful to suspend treatments that are required to maintain essential physiological functions, as long as the body can benefit from them (such as hydration, nutrition, thermoregulation, proportionate respiratory support, and the other types of assistance needed to maintain bodily homeostasis and manage systemic and organic pain). The suspension of futile treatments *must not involve the withdrawal of therapeutic care*. This clarification is now indispensable in light of the numerous court cases in recent years that have led to the withdrawal of care from – and to the early death of – critically but not terminally ill patients, for whom it was decided to suspend life-sustaining care which would not improve the quality of life.’

‘In the specific case of aggressive medical treatment...the renunciation of extraordinary and/or disproportionate means “is not the equivalent of suicide or euthanasia; it rather expresses acceptance of the human condition in the face of death” (John Paul II *Evangelium vitae* 65) or a deliberate decision to waive disproportionate medical treatments which have little hope of positive results. The renunciation of treatments that would only provide a precarious and painful prolongation of life can also mean respect for the will of the dying person as expressed in advanced directives for treatment, *excluding however every act of a euthanistic or suicidal nature...*’

‘Every medical action must always have as its object – intended by the moral agent – the promotion of life and never the pursuit of death. (Cf. John Paul II *Address*, 28 December 1978) The physician is never a mere executor of the will of patients or their legal representatives, but retains the right and obligation to withdraw at will from any course of action contrary to the moral good discerned by conscience...’

*The Sovereign Pontiff Francis, on 25 June 2020, approved the present Letter, and ordered its publication.*

*Rome, from the Offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 14 July 2020*

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

### **FIRST READING**

*Is 5:1-7*

*A reading from the prophet Isaiah*

Let me sing to my friend the song of his love for his vineyard. My friend had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. He dug the soil, cleared it of stones and planted choice vines in it. In the middle he built a tower, he dug a press there too. He expected it to yield grapes, but sour grapes were all that it gave. And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, I ask you to judge between my vineyard and me. What could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done? I expected it to yield grapes. Why did it yield sour grapes instead? Very well, I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge for it to be grazed on, and knock down its wall for it to be trampled on. I will lay it waste, unpruned, undug; overgrown by the briar and the thorn. I will command the clouds to rain no rain on it. Yes, the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the House of Israel, and the men of Judah that chosen plant. He expected justice, but found bloodshed, integrity, but only a cry of distress.

*The word of the Lord.*

### **RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

*Ps 79*

R. The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

1. You brought a vine out of Egypt;  
to plant it you drove out the nations.  
It stretched out its branches to the sea,  
to the Great River it stretched out its shoots. (R.)

2. Then why have you broken down its walls?  
It is plucked by all who pass by.  
It is ravaged by the boar of the forest,  
devoured by the beasts of the field. (R.)

3. 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. (R.)

4. And we shall never forsake you again;  
give us life that we may call upon your name.  
God of hosts, bring us back;  
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved. (R.)

### **SECOND READING**

*Phil 4:6-9*

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

There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honour, and everything that can be thought

virtuous or worthy of praise. Keep doing all the things that you learnt from me and have been taught by me and have heard or seen that I do. Then the God of peace will be with you.

*The word of the Lord.*

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*cf. Jn 15:15*

Alleluia, alleluia! I call you friends, says the Lord, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. Alleluia!

### **GOSPEL**

*Mt 21:33-43*

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew*

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, 'Listen to another parable. There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard; he fenced it round, dug a winepress in it and built a tower; then he leased it to tenants and went abroad. When vintage time drew near he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his servants, thrashed one, killed another and stoned a third. Next he sent some more servants, this time a larger number, and they dealt with them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them. "They will respect my son" he said. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, "This is the heir. Come on, let us kill him and take over his inheritance." So they seized him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' They answered, 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will deliver the produce to him when the season arrives.' Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures:

It was the stone rejected by the builders  
that became the keystone.

This was the Lord's doing and it is wonderful to see?

'I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.'

*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 565 (verses 1, 2, 4)

**Offertory** – CWB 548 (verses 1 - 3)

**Communion** – CWB 533

**Recessional** – Salvation belongs to our God

O Christ the great foundation

Peace Prayer

Let all mortal flesh keep silence

### **Readings Next Week:**

**28<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time:** Is 25:6-10; Phil 4:12-14, 19-20; Mt 22:1-14