



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)
Telephone:	9370 6688
Website:	www.stmaryschurch.org.au
Email:	ascotvale@cam.org.au
Office Hours: [At parish Wednesday 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

Mass

We are now again able to celebrate daily Mass indoors, with a congregation of ten. 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 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

6 months’ notice required. For information on weddings please ring the parish office during office hours.

Private prayer in our churches

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

Parish Bulletin

The Sunday Bulletin will be uploaded to the parish website the Saturday afternoon prior.

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time – 8 November 2020

Towards the end of Matthew’s gospel is a series of parables in which Jesus reminds us that hearing the proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom also brings with it responsibility: we’re free either to accept or reject the life and happiness being offered, and at some point, the time for making our decision will come to an end. Today’s Gospel story of the five wise and five foolish bridesmaids is one of these parables. In the New Testament we find, a number of times, the image of Christ as the bridegroom, the Church as his bride, and heaven as a marriage feast. So the parable of the five wise and five foolish bridesmaids questions us about our own response to Christ’s invitation.

When we were baptised, God gave us the gift of his grace, the seed of divine life in our souls, destined to blossom into eternal life with him. Or, to use the image from the parable of the bridesmaids: sanctifying grace is like the oil in our lamps that keeps them burning. When we meet the bridegroom at the end of our lives, if we have oil in our lamps – grace, faith and charity alive in our souls – then we can be sure we’ll be admitted to the wedding feast. But just as no one knows when Christ is going to come again in glory, no one really knows when their own life will come to an end.

If we’re living in God’s grace, we don’t need to fear death. However and whenever it comes, it will be the gateway to eternal happiness. But if we turn away from God by deliberate serious sin, we say ‘no’ to God’s love, and destroy grace and charity. And if we die without the divine life of grace, we simply lack the power to live the life of heaven. God’s love never changes, but we close ourselves off from receiving it.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation puts the oil back in our lamps if we lose it by mortal sin. It can make up for some of what is lacking in our dispositions. Outside the sacrament, perfect contrition (motivated by love of God above all things) is needed, and the intention to confess as soon as possible. But in the actual sacrament, imperfect contrition (motivated by fear of punishment after death, or by the ugliness of sin) is enough.

There are people who count on making a death-bed conversion – and by a miracle of God’s mercy, it can happen. But maybe more normally, the way people live is the way they die. Death comes suddenly, with no chance for repentance; or when the time comes, they’ve drifted far from faith, or any interest in spiritual things. They’re not really sorry for how they’ve lived. They don’t call for the priest at the end.

Jesus urgently calls us *here and now*. If someone goes for days, months, even years, living in a way that they know in their hearts isn’t according to God’s law; if someone is always thinking, ‘I’ll change, I’ll repent...but not yet’ – they very much need to hear his warning: ‘Stay awake, because you know neither the day nor the hour.’

Baptisms

The regular schedule of Baptisms in the parish is still on hold. However, we expect to soon announce how we will proceed with bookings for Baptisms in the coming months.

Feast Days: 9 November: Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

10 Nov: St Leo the Great 11 Nov: St Martin of Tours 12 Nov: St Josaphat

Recently Deceased: Jocelyn Quiñones; Pablito Carreon; Joseph Sy Tinh Do; Tony Gibilisco

Readings Next Week: 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time:

Prov 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; 1 Thess 5:1-6; Mt 25:14-30

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

Today's parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids leads us to reflect on 'the four last things': Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell

From Church teaching: Heaven

1022 Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven – through a purification or immediately – or immediate and everlasting damnation. (Cf. Ecumenical Council of Lyons II (1274): DS 857-858; John XXII, *Ne super his* (1334): DS 990; Benedict XII, Apostolic Constitution *Benedictus Deus* (1336): DS 1000-1002; Ecumenical Council of Florence (1439): DS 1304-1306; Ecumenical Council of Trent (1563): DS 1820)

At the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love.
(St John of the Cross)

1023 Those who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ. They are like God for ever, for they "see him as he is," face to face. (*1 Jn* 3:2; cf. *1 Cor* 13:12; *Rev* 22:4)

1024 This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity – this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the

Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed – is called "heaven." Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfilment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness.

1025 To live in heaven is "to be with Christ." The elect live "in Christ," (*Phil* 1:23; cf. *Jn* 14:3; *1 Thess* 4:17) but they retain, or rather find, their true identity, their own name. (Cf. *Rev* 2:17)

For life is to be with Christ; where Christ is, there is life, there is the kingdom. (St Ambrose)

1027 This mystery of blessed communion with God and all who are in Christ is beyond all understanding and description. Scripture speaks of it in images: life, light, peace, wedding feast, wine of the kingdom, the Father's house, the heavenly Jerusalem, paradise: "no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him." (*1 Cor* 2:9)

Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992)

'From then on, forever': The Pope infallibly defines the nature of our heavenly vision of God

'By virtue of our apostolic authority, we define the following: According to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints...and other faithful who died after receiving Christ's holy Baptism (provided they were not in need of purification when they died,...or, if they then did need or will need some purification, when they have been purified after death,...) already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment – and this since the Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ into heaven – have been, are and will be in heaven, in the heavenly Kingdom and celestial paradise with Christ, joined to the company of the holy angels.

'Since the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, these souls have seen and do see the divine essence with an intuitive vision, and even face to face, without the mediation of any creature...rather the divine essence immediately manifests itself to them, plainly, clearly, and openly...And after such intuitive and face-to-face vision and enjoyment have or will have begun for these souls, the same vision and enjoyment have continued and will continue without any interruption and without end until the Last Judgement and from then on forever.'

Pope Benedict XII, Apostolic Constitution *Benedictus Deus* (1336): DS 1000-1002

From Church teaching: Vatican II – 'Watch constantly'

'Basing itself on Scripture and tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation...Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it.

'They are fully incorporated in the society of the Church who, possessing the Spirit of Christ accept her entire system and all the means of salvation given to her, and are united with her as part of her visible bodily structure and through her with Christ, who rules her through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops. The bonds which bind men to the Church in a visible way are profession of faith, the sacraments, and ecclesiastical government and communion.

'He is not saved, however, who, though part of the body of the Church, does not persevere in charity. He remains indeed in the bosom of the Church, but, as it were, only in a "bodily" manner and not "in his heart." All the Church's children should remember that their exalted status is to be attributed not to their own merits but to the special grace of Christ. If they fail moreover to respond to that grace in thought, word and deed, not only shall they not be saved but they will be the more severely judged. (Cf. *Lk* 12:48 'Every one to whom much is given, much will be required'; *Mt* 5:19-20; 7:21-22; 25:41-46; *James* 2:14)'

Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* (1964) 14

'We strive therefore to please God in all things (Cf. *2 Cor* 5:9) and we put on the armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil and resist in the evil day. (Cf. *Eph* 6:11-13) Since however we know neither the day nor the hour, we should follow the advice of the Lord and watch constantly so that, when the single course of our earthly life is completed, (Cf. *Heb* 9:27) we may merit to enter with Him into the marriage feast and be numbered among the blessed, (Cf. *Mt* 25:31-46) and not, like the wicked and slothful servants, (Cf. *Mt* 25:26) be ordered to depart into the eternal fire, (Cf. *Mt* 25:41) into the outer darkness where "men will weep and gnash their teeth." (*Mt* 22:13; 25:30)'

Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* (1964) 48

From Church teaching: Salvation hangs in the balance

1033 We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love him. But we cannot love God if we sin gravely against him, against our neighbour or against ourselves...To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him for ever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called "hell."

1034 Jesus often speaks of "Gehenna" of "the unquenchable fire" reserved for those who to the end of their lives refuse to believe and be converted, where both soul and body can be lost. (Cf. *Mt* 5:22, 29; 10:28; 13:42, 50; *Mk* 9:43-48) Jesus solemnly proclaims that he "will send his angels, and they will gather...all evil doers, and throw them into the furnace of fire," (*Mt* 13:41-42) and that he will pronounce the condemnation: "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire!" (*Mt* 25:41)

1035 The teaching of the Church affirms the existence of hell and its eternity. Immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell, where they suffer the punishments of hell, "eternal fire." (Cf. *Athanasian Creed* DS 76; *Anathemas against Origen* DS 409, 411; 4th Lateran Ecumenical Council, *Creed* DS 801; Ecumenical Council of Lyons II, *Profession of Faith of Emperor Michael Paleologus* DS 858; Benedict XII, Apostolic Constitution *Benedictus Deus* DS 1002; Ecumenical Council of Florence *Decree for the Jacobites* DS 1351; Ecumenical Council of Trent *Decree on Justification* DS 1575; Paul VI, *Credo of the People of God* 12) The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God, in whom alone man can possess the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs.

1036 The affirmations of Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Church on the subject of hell are a call to the responsibility incumbent upon man to make use of

his freedom in view of his eternal destiny. They are at the same time an urgent call to conversion: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few." (*Mt* 7:13-14)

1037 God predestines no one to go to hell; (Cf. Council of Orange II (529): DS 397; Ecumenical Council of Trent (1547): DS 1567) for this, a wilful turning away from God (a mortal sin) is necessary, and persistence in it until the end. In the Eucharistic liturgy and in the daily prayers of her faithful, the Church implores the mercy of God, who does not want "any to perish, but all to come to repentance". (*2 Pet* 3:9)

1861 Mortal sin is a radical possibility of human freedom, as is love itself. It results in the loss of charity and the privation of sanctifying grace, that is, of the state of grace. If it is not redeemed by repentance and God's forgiveness, it causes exclusion from Christ's kingdom and the eternal death of hell, for our freedom has the power to make choices for ever, with no turning back. However, although we can judge that an act is in itself a grave offense, we must entrust judgement of persons to the justice and mercy of God.

1857 For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must together be met: "Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent." (John Paul II, *Reconciliatio et paenitentia*, 17.12)

1497 Individual and integral [*i.e. complete*] confession of grave sins followed by absolution remains the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and with the Church.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992)

November Plenary Indulgences

Every year a plenary indulgence can be gained on 2 November (All Souls' Day) for devoutly visiting a church and reciting the *Our Father* and the *Creed*. A plenary indulgence remits all punishment in purgatory for past sins, the guilt of which has already been forgiven. Normally applicable either to oneself or as a prayer for the souls in purgatory, the All Souls indulgence can only be for the latter. (You cannot guarantee that it will be applied to any particular soul so as to release that soul into heaven, but of course you can ask God.)

But in the circumstances of COVID-19, the Holy See has determined that this indulgence can be gained (once only) on *any day* in November of one's choice. So if you visit a church in this time, it is a good opportunity to gain this indulgence for the souls in purgatory by vocally reciting the *Our Father* and the *Creed*.

To gain the full plenary indulgence, one must normally also fulfil the conditions of Communion; Confession within 20 days either side; and additional prayers for the Pope's intentions (e.g. 1 *Our Father* and 1 *Hail Mary*). Again due to COVID-19, the Apostolic Penitentiary, by mandate of Pope Francis, has decreed that it suffices to have the *willingness to fulfil these conditions as soon as possible*. One must also be free of all attachment to sin, even venial (so it is a suitable preliminary to the indulgenced prayers to ask God's grace, and make a sincere *Act of Contrition*). However, if all these conditions are not fulfilled, a partial indulgence can still be obtained.

Bookings for Masses

You can book to attend a Mass on our website, with up to 10 at each Mass, plus the priest. We are hoping this will increase to 20 from tomorrow, Monday 9 November. Naturally at the moment there is great demand for places. Those who have attended a Mass recently are asked to refrain from booking again until the time frame given on the website for each Mass – to give as many people as possible the opportunity of coming in these days. Bookings for next Sunday open on Wednesday morning. Also consider if there are parishioners you know without internet access, on whose behalf you might make a booking.

32ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – READINGS

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON *(if no hymn is sung)*

Let my prayer come into your presence.
Incline your ear to my cry for help, O Lord.

FIRST READING

Wis 6:12-16

A reading from the book of Wisdom

Wisdom is bright, and does not grow dim. By those who love her she is readily seen, and found by those who look for her. Quick to anticipate those who desire her, she makes herself known to them. Watch for her early and you will have no trouble; you will find her sitting at your gates. Even to think about her is understanding fully grown; be on the alert for her and anxiety will quickly leave you. She herself walks about looking for those who are worthy of her and graciously shows herself to them as they go, in every thought of theirs coming to meet them.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 62

R. My soul is thirsting for you O Lord my God.

1. O God, you are my God, for you I long;
for you my soul is thirsting.
My body pines for you
like a dry, weary land without water. (R.)

2. So I gaze on you in the sanctuary
to see your strength and your glory.
For your love is better than life,
my lips will speak your praise. (R.)

3. So I will bless you all my life,
in your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul shall be filled as with a banquet,
my mouth shall praise you with joy. (R.)

4. On my bed I remember you.
On you I muse through the night
for you have been my help;
in the shadow of your wings I rejoice. (R.)

SECOND READING

1 Thess 4:13-18

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

We want you to be quite certain, brothers, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with him. We can tell you this from the Lord's own teaching, that any of us who are left alive until the Lord's coming will not have any advantage over those who have died. At the trumpet of God, the voice of the archangel will call out the command and the Lord himself will come down from heaven; those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then

those of us who are still alive will be taken up in the clouds, together with them, to meet the Lord in the air. So we shall stay with the Lord for ever. With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Mt 24:42, 44

Alleluia, alleluia!

Be watchful and ready:

you know not when the Son of Man is coming.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 25:1-13

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus told this parable to his disciples: 'The kingdom of heaven will be like this: Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were sensible: the foolish ones did take their lamps, but they brought no oil, whereas the sensible ones took flasks of oil as well as their lamps. The bridegroom was late, and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But at midnight there was a cry, "The bridegroom is here! Go out and meet him." At this, all those bridesmaids woke up and trimmed their lamps, and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, "Give us some of your oil: our lamps are going out." But they replied, "There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go to those who sell it and buy some for yourselves." They had gone off to buy it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding hall and the door was closed. The other bridesmaids arrived later. "Lord, Lord," they said, "open the door for us." But he replied, "I tell you solemnly, I do not know you." So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

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

COMMUNION ANTIPHON *(if no hymn is sung)*

The disciples recognised the Lord Jesus
in the breaking of bread.

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.

Hymns:

Entrance – CWB 455 (*verses 1, 2, 5*)

Offertory – CWB 619

Communion – CWB 444

Recessional – CWB 520

Be thou my vision

The Lord is my shepherd

Abide with me

In faith and hope and love