

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. 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

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 Mary's

Sat 9.30am St Mary's

Reconciliation

(Confession)

Saturday

10.00–10.30am St Mary's

5.30–5.45pm St Mary's

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

For information on weddings
please ring the parish office.

Private prayer in our churches

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

3rd Sunday of Advent – 13 December 2020

For the 150th Anniversary of Saint Joseph being named Patron of the Universal Church, Pope Francis has declared a 'Year of St Joseph', from 8 December 2020 until 8 December 2021. We print here the opening of his Apostolic Letter 'Patris Corde' ('With a father's heart') promulgated last Tuesday. (The remaining parts will be printed in the coming weeks.)

APOSTOLIC LETTER *PATRIS CORDE* OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS

ON THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF

THE PROCLAMATION OF SAINT JOSEPH AS PATRON OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

WITH A FATHER'S HEART: that is how Joseph loved Jesus, whom all four Gospels refer to as "*the son of Joseph*". (Lk 4:22; Jn 6:42; cf. Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3)

Matthew and Luke, the two Evangelists who speak most of Joseph, tell us very little, yet enough for us to appreciate what sort of father he was, and the mission entrusted to him by God's providence.

We know that Joseph was a lowly carpenter (cf. Mt 13:55), betrothed to Mary (cf. Mt 1:18; Lk 1:27). He was a "just man" (Mt 1:19), ever ready to carry out God's will as revealed to him in the Law (cf. Lk 2:22.27.39) and through four dreams (cf. Mt 1:20; 2:13.19.22). After a long and tiring journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, he beheld the birth of the Messiah in a stable, since "there was no place for them" elsewhere (cf. Lk 2:7). He witnessed the adoration of the shepherds (cf. Lk 2:8-20) and the Magi (cf. Mt 2:1-12), who represented respectively the people of Israel and the pagan peoples.

Joseph had the courage to become the legal father of Jesus, to whom he gave the name revealed by the angel: "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). As we know, for ancient peoples, to give a name to a person or to a thing, as Adam did in the account in the Book of Genesis (cf. 2:19-20), was to establish a relationship.

In the Temple, forty days after Jesus' birth, Joseph and Mary offered their child to the Lord and listened with amazement to Simeon's prophecy concerning Jesus and his Mother (cf. Lk 2:22-35). To protect Jesus from Herod, Joseph dwelt as a foreigner in Egypt (cf. Mt 2:13-18). After returning to his own country, he led a hidden life in the tiny and obscure village of Nazareth in Galilee, far from Bethlehem, his ancestral town, and from Jerusalem and the Temple. Of Nazareth it was said, "No prophet is to rise" (cf. Jn 7:52) and indeed, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (cf. Jn 1:46). When, during a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Joseph and Mary lost track of the twelve-year-old Jesus, they anxiously sought him out and they found him in the Temple, in discussion with the doctors of the Law (cf. Lk 2:41-50).

After Mary, the Mother of God, no saint is mentioned more frequently in the papal magisterium than Joseph, her spouse. My Predecessors reflected on the message contained in the limited information handed down by the Gospels in order to appreciate more fully his central role in the history of salvation. Blessed Pius IX declared him "Patron of the Catholic Church", (Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Quemadmodum Deus* (8 December 1870)) Venerable Pius XII proposed him as "Patron of Workers" (Cf. *Address on the Solemnity of Saint Joseph the Worker* (1 May 1955)) and Saint John Paul II as "Guardian of the Redeemer".

(Cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptoris Custos* (15 August 1989)) Saint Joseph is universally invoked as the “patron of a happy death”. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1014)

Now, one hundred and fifty years after his proclamation as *Patron of the Catholic Church* by Blessed Pius IX (8 December 1870), I would like to share some personal reflections on this extraordinary figure, so close to our own human experience. For, as Jesus says, “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (*Mt* 12:34). My desire to do so increased during these months of pandemic, when we experienced, amid the crisis, how “our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people, people often overlooked. People who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines, or on the latest television show, yet in these very days are surely shaping the decisive events of our history. Doctors, nurses, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caregivers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety,

volunteers, priests, men and women religious, and so very many others. They understood that no one is saved alone... How many people daily exercise patience and offer hope, taking care to spread not panic, but shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday ways, how to accept and deal with a crisis by adjusting their routines, looking ahead and encouraging the practice of prayer. How many are praying, making sacrifices and interceding for the good of all”. (*Meditation in the Time of Pandemic* (27 March 2020)) Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. Saint Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all.

Further lifting of restrictions on Masses – Booking for Christmas Masses

With the further lifting of COVID restrictions, numbers in churches are now subject only to the density quotient and the required 1.5 metre distancing. Sanitising and registration are still required. However, **masks are no longer required** to be worn in churches, unless distancing cannot be maintained. (You should carry a mask with you in case it is needed.)

If churches are using electronic registration, they can accept 1 person per 2 square metres; otherwise, 1 person per 4 square metres. So, we will introduce the facility for electronic registration in the coming days, with arrangements also for those without mobile phones, or those whose mobile phones do not have the function of reading the QR Code used for electronic registration. This will permit us to have numbers in both churches well above our normal Sunday congregations. **Bookings are therefore no longer required (or available) for either Sunday or weekday Masses.**

However, bookings will still be required to ensure a place at Christmas Masses, since typical numbers at some of these would exceed what is permitted by our density quotient. A booking system will be placed on the parish website in the coming days, once the schedule is finalised. **(If you do not have internet access, it is requested that you have a family member or friend book in your name if at all possible, rather than do this through the parish office, as it would be difficult for our office to handle the expected number of manual bookings.)**

It is expected that the schedule will differ a little from our typical Christmas schedule – possibly two Masses at St Mary’s early in the evening on Christmas Eve (not necessarily at the normal times), then Midnight Mass; then on Christmas Day, 8:30 Mass at St Margaret’s and 10:30 Mass at St Mary’s. **THESE TIMES ARE NOT YET FINAL.** (Moving the second Christmas Eve Mass from St Margaret’s to St Mary’s would help accommodate the very large numbers who normally come to the first Christmas Eve Mass at St Mary’s, but who would not be permitted under COVID restrictions. However, we are still establishing what is feasible.) **Bookings will be available, along with the final schedule, on the parish website, from the morning of this Wednesday 16 December.**

Sacrament of Reconciliation

With the further lifting of COVID restrictions, we are now able to return to regularly scheduled Confessions, with the Sacrament again available at St Mary’s every Saturday from now on, at 10:00-10:30 am, and 5:30-5:45 pm.

In preparation for Christmas, Confessions will also be available:

7:30-8:30 pm (*following 7:00 pm Mass*)

Wednesday 16 December & Wednesday 23 December.

In case of the (hoped-for) possibility of many people coming to Reconciliation on these occasions after having had more difficult access to the Sacrament all these months, the priest will remain in the confessional as long as necessary even after the end of the scheduled time if there are still people in the queue, so that all Confessions can be completed. The same will be the case for **10:00-10:30 am Confessions on Saturday 19 December.**

Melbourne Overseas Mission – Annual Appeal

This Sunday is the annual Appeal for Melbourne Overseas Mission. You can donate using the envelopes at the church doors, or online at mom.org.au (A button on the home page of our parish website will take you to the donation page.)

St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal

This is the time of the St Vincent De Paul Christmas Appeal. You are encouraged to donate, either by using the envelopes at the church doors, by calling 13 18 12, or online at vinnies.org.au (A button on the home page of our parish website will take you to the donation page.)

SAINT OF THE WEEK – 11 December – St Damasus I

Of Spanish descent, Pope St Damasus I was born in Rome about 305. He became church archivist and preserved records of the still-recent persecutions. (Emperor Constantine the Great had declared legal toleration for Christianity in the Edict of Milan in 313, after two-and-a-half centuries of Imperial Roman persecution.) Elected pope in 366, Damasus was devoted to promoting the veneration of the martyrs.

In 380, Roman Emperor Theodosius, with his co-emperors, declared the Catholic Church the state religion of the Roman Empire, acknowledging that Pope Damasus was its primary voice: ‘...that religion which was delivered to the Romans by the divine Apostle Peter, as it has been preserved by faithful tradition, and which is now professed by the Pontiff Damasus and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria...We authorise the followers of this law to assume the title of Catholic Christians.’ (The first known use of the expression ‘the Catholic Church’ is in a letter of St Ignatius of Antioch from about AD 110.)

Pope Damasus presided at the Council of Rome (382) that decreed the correct list of books in Scripture (the Canon of Scripture) – the same list as would be defined infallibly by the Ecumenical Council of Trent in 1546. When St Jerome as a young priest was secretary to Damasus from 382 to 384, the Pope entrusted him with revising existing Latin translations of the Gospels. (This went on to become Jerome’s virtually complete translation of the Bible into Latin, the Vulgate, completed in 405.) St Jerome wrote to the Pope: ‘As I follow no leader save Christ, so I communicate with none but your blessedness, that is with the chair of Peter. For this, I know, is the rock on which the Church is built! ...This is the ark of Noah, and he who is not found in it shall perish when the flood prevails.’ Pope St Damasus died on 11 December 384.

Letter of Archbishop Comensoli – Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill 2020

Archbishop Peter has sent a letter to parishes explaining his concerns with legislation currently before State Parliament that poses serious threats to religious freedom. The stated purpose of the legislation is to protect people from harmful or coercive ‘conversion’ practices intended to change someone’s sexual orientation – which purpose, as the Archbishop states, is in itself unobjectionable and worthy. However, the bill as it stands greatly and dangerously overreaches. No government has any business legislating on what people may pray about. Copies of the Archbishop’s letter, along with some questions about the bill, are available at the church doors. Please contact our members of State Parliament, in particular from the Upper House, the Legislative Council, to express your concerns.

Baptisms at St Mary’s

We warmly welcome into the family of God’s Church **Alessio Gabriele Agresta** baptised at St Mary’s this weekend.

Booking of Baptisms

Scheduling of regular Baptisms remains a difficulty, as unaccountably, various restrictions were kept on Baptisms in the latest COVID regulations that we had been awaiting. Accordingly, individual rather than group baptisms will continue to be scheduled into the New Year. Numerous enquiries have been received in recent days and weeks, which we have been unable to respond to as swiftly as we would have liked. We will contact you as soon as we can, now that we know the regulations under which we are operating.

Sacrament of Confirmation

Last Wednesday Fr Justin conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation on Year Six children from St Mary’s School. We keep these children, and the children from St Margaret’s School confirmed the previous week, in our prayers.

Collections at Masses

From next weekend, it is intended to resume the collections at Sunday Masses, organised in a way to be COVID-safe.

Helping to take registration of contact details at Masses

If you are able to volunteer on-the-spot to help register arrivals at any Mass you happen to be at where you see that help is needed, that will be welcomed. With more assistants, we can speed the admission of the congregation.

At Christmas Masses, help with registrations will be especially necessary, and we will of course need to organise many welcomers/registrars in advance. If you can help with this, please email the parish office (rather than phoning, or making a verbal offer) and we will get back to you. Assuming we go ahead with electronic registration by QR Code so as to greatly increase permitted numbers in the churches, we will especially need people who are able to help others do this. But those who only consider themselves able to take manual registrations (then to be electronically entered by others) are also very much encouraged to volunteer.

Singing for Christmas Masses

Also, we do not currently have cantors available for all Christmas Masses, so we may need to rely upon small choirs. We do not want to have any Christmas Masses that have no music. If you have any ability in this regard, please email the parish office. We will not make you sing solo! And the group will simply be helping to lead the congregation in well-known carols. Christmas this year will only go ahead with everyone’s help!

Recently Deceased:

Louie Carreon; Luigi Marchetti; Kevin Karczewski

Anniversaries:

Maria Trimarchi; Maria Antonia De Maria; William Henry Ward

Feast Days:

14 December: St John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church

Readings Next Week:

4th Sunday of Advent, Year B: 2 Sam 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16; Rom 16:25-27; Lk 1:26-38

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR B – READINGS

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (*if no hymn is sung*) Phil 4:4-5

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.
Indeed, the Lord is near.

FIRST READING Is 61:1-2, 10-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for the Lord has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,
to bind up hearts that are broken;
to proclaim liberty to captives,
freedom to those in prison;
to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.
'I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God,
for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation,
he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity,
like a bridegroom wearing his wreath,
like a bride adorned in her jewels.
'For as the earth makes fresh things grow,
as a garden makes seeds spring up,
so will the Lord make both integrity and praise
spring up in the sight of the nations.'

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Lk 1:46-50, 53-54. R. Is 60:10

R. My soul rejoices in my God.

1. My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her nothingness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed. (R.)

2. The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him. (R.)

3. He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.
He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Thess 5:16-24

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

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things
give thanks to God, because this is what God expects
you to do in Christ Jesus.

Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of
prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything –
hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and
may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and
body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has
called you and he will not fail you.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Is 61:1 (Lk 4:18)

Alleluia, alleluia!
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;
he sent me to bring Good News to the poor.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

A man came, sent by God.
His name was John.
He came as a witness,
as a witness to speak for the light,
so that everyone might believe through him.
He was not the light,
only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews
sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him,
'Who are you?' he not only declared, but he declared
quite openly, 'I am not the Christ.' 'Well then,' they
asked, 'are you Elijah?' 'I am not,' he said. 'Are you the
Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who
are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent
us. What have you to say about yourself?' So John said,
'I am, as Isaiah prophesied:

a voice that cries in the wilderness:
Make a straight way for the Lord.'

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they
put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising
if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the
prophet?' John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there
stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is
coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-
strap.' This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the
Jordan, where John was baptising.

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*)

Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear.
Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

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 528
Offertory – CWB 251
Communion – CWB 242
Reflection – CWB 163
Recessional – CWB 621 (*vs 1, 4, 5*)

Joyful, joyful we adore you
Wait for the Lord
O come, O come Emmanuel
Jesus, my Lord, my God, my all
The voice of God