

# Sunraysia Catholic Communities

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Presbytery Red Cliffs: 5024 1966  
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www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parishes

Newsheet: Week 14



Fr. Michael McKinnon PP Fr. James Kerr Fr. Pat Flanagan

Parish Secretary: Carmel Russo

Office Hours: Tues - Fri 9:00am—4:00pm

Sacred Heart  
Mildura

Our Lady of Lourdes  
Werrimull

St. Francis Xavier  
Irymple

St. Joseph's  
Red Cliffs

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart  
Merbein

*The Sunraysia Catholic Communities are committed to ensure the safety of all children and vulnerable people in our care.  
Child Safety Officers:- Mildura—Christine Slattery, Merbein—Kevin Aston, Red Cliffs—Bernadette Gardner*

## MILDURA

Recent Deaths: Rosie Reyne, Pauline Barbara

Anniversaries: Larry Manno (1yr anniversary), Genoroso Zappia (1yr anniversary), George Farmer, George Matulic, Mona Richardson

## RED CLIFFS

Anniversaries:

## MERBEIN

Anniversaries: April 5th: Molly Callahan, Jimmy York, Paul Desmond; 10th: Richard Murphy Jnr.

**Palm Sunday / Year A  
4th & 5th April 2020**

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

### First Reading

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue. So that I may know how to reply to the wearied, he provides me with speech. Each morning he wakes me to hear, to listen like a disciple. The Lord has opened my ear. For my part, I made no resistance, neither did I turn away. I offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who tore at my beard; I did not cover my face against insult and spittle. The Lord comes to my help, so that I am untouched by the insults. So, too, I set my face like flint; I know I shall not be shamed.

### Responsorial Psalm

(R.) **My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?**

1. All who see me deride me. They curl their lips, they toss their heads. 'He trusted in the Lord, let him save him; let him release him if this is his friend.' (R.)
2. Many dogs have surrounded me, a band of the wicked beset me. They tear holes in my hands and my feet. I can count every one of my bones. (R.)
3. They divide my clothing among them. They cast lots for my robe. O Lord, do not leave me alone, my strength, make haste to help me! (R.)
4. I will tell of your name to my brethren and praise you where they are assembled. 'You who fear the Lord give him praise; all sons of Jacob, give him glory. Revere him, Israel's sons.' (R.)

### Second Reading

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians

He humbled himself to become like us and God raised him on high. His state was divine, yet Christ Jesus did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are, and being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all other names so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

## PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK

*If you want a sick person prayed for, ask their permission. Names will be included for the duration of one month after which family or friends can request more time.*

**Mildura:** Janelle Carney, Bill Antonie, Vincenzo Pileggi, Fr Denis Dennehy, Vince Alicastro, Teresita Eliquen-Dy (Manila), Melita Suppa, Celia-Dy Dela Tena, Perla Tuionisio, Lily Chumg, Lorna Kearney, Sandra McCarthy, Brian Ramsey, Hailey Crossan, Geraldine Brunner, Albis Dy

**Merbein:** Frank Chandler, Mary Avery, John Dorman

**Red Cliffs:** Bill Antonie, Martin Cameron, Maureen Lee, Edna Chua, Lily Flanagan, Barry Crosbie, Brendan Bell, Caterina

**Brizzi, Marie Adams, Reynaldo Chan, Albis Dy, Roman & Joe Dy, Robert & Elizabeth Young, Maurice O'Connor**

**Bulletins & Blessed Palms will be available outside Churches.**

## Our Parish Schools

**Sacred Heart Mildura** Principal: Des Lowry 5023 1204

**St Paul's Mildura** Principal: Vince Muscatello 5023 4567

**OLSH Merbein** Principal: Narelle Gallagher 5025 2258

**St. Joseph's Red Cliffs** Principal: Mark Gibson 5024 1654

**St. Joseph's Secondary College Mildura**

Principal: Marg Blythman 5018 8000

## Gospel for the blessing of palms

*A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew*

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, "Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey." The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

The Gospel of the Lord

Thank you to all those people who have telephoned, emailed or texted to acknowledge the Mass which was live streamed through youtube. We will continue to make these Masses available to those who are able access them. We are very grateful to Rob Klarich for this initiative, and with his help we are intending to have the **Holy Week Ceremonies** available - in a simpler version perhaps. For those without internet or Foxtel, there is a Mass telecast each Sunday morning on channel 10 at 6:00am, although it is not necessarily the Mass of the particular Sunday that it's telecast.



Let us continue to pray for each other and to be especially mindful of those who are in positions of leadership or who are working in the health sector at this time. Another concern of course is the people whose livelihoods are becoming threatened at the moment. COVID 19 may well claim the lives of the elderly and those with predispositions that leave them vulnerable. However, depression and anxiety, as well as the despair that may afflict some in these circumstances, may well claim the lives of a significant number of younger people within our community.

**LIVE STREAMING PALM SUNDAY EUCHARIST** from 5:30pm this Saturday:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpujOBwu7YYU-LzjhmqE\\_VQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpujOBwu7YYU-LzjhmqE_VQ)

Or go to the Parish Website: Sacred Heart Parish Mildura  
*Please pass on this information to family and friends.*



**Nail salons, hair salons, waxing centre and tanning places are closed. It's about to get ugly out there.**

## GOSPEL REFLECTION—Sr. Veronica Lawson rsm

This year, we are invited to hear Matthew's passion narrative through the lens of a global community threatened by a virus. The prospect of untimely death for many is an ever present reality. Even more abhorrent to most of us is the ongoing practice of capital punishment, particularly when a just person is put to death for specious reasons or to political ends. That's what confronts us in today's gospel, although the gospel writers pay little attention to the details of the suffering and death of Jesus: they are more interested in the meaning of these events.

The Romans execute Jesus outside Jerusalem when the city is filled with Jewish pilgrims, there for the Passover festival. For Jesus' friends and followers, every subsequent Passover is celebrated in the light of his death by crucifixion. They share their memories and reflect on the meaning of his death in the light of their sacred traditions. Every element of the Passover story, the ancient story of God's deliverance of their ancestors, resonates with echoes of the experience of Jesus who is now present to them in a new way. Little wonder, then, that the final events of Jesus' life were probably the first part of his story to be committed to writing.

Though Matthew draws much of his material from Mark, he fashions the tradition into a new narrative and adds several distinctive features. "To fulfil all righteousness" is Jesus' stated mission (3:15). He has declared "blessed" those who suffer for the sake of righteousness (justice or right relationship)" (5:10). He now embodies his own teaching as the just or righteous one, the one in right relationship with God. The prayer on his lips as he faces death (Psalm 22) is that of the suffering just Israelite who is utterly faithful to his mission and whose trust in God never fails.

There are hints that Jesus' death is not the end, but is rather the inauguration of the new age of God's empire, a compassionate alternative to the brutality of Rome. In response to the high priest Caiaphas, Jesus points beyond death to his resurrected life "at the right hand of power...." Extraordinary signs follow his death: the tearing of the temple curtain; the trembling of the earth; the recognition by the Roman centurion and his companions that this man is of God; and finally, the opening of the graves and appearance of the dead in anticipation of the final resurrection. These signs offer the hope of reversal to all who have witnessed the events surrounding Jesus' death. They offer hope to the women who have followed him all the way from Galilee and "ministered to him". They offer hope to the male disciples who have deserted or denied him, to faithful disciples like Joseph of Arimathea, and even to his Roman executioners. They have the potential to bring hope to us all at this time, especially to those who are putting their lives on the line for others.

**PROJECT  
COMPASSION**  
GO FURTHER TOGETHER

6th SUNDAY OF  
LENT  
5TH APRIL 2020

 **Caritas**  
AUSTRALIA

Dominic, 47, is a father of six from Papua New Guinea. In 2016, he became involved with Caritas Australia's partner, Centre of Hope who runs a safe house and family anonymous programs and turned a difficult life and an unhappy relationship around.

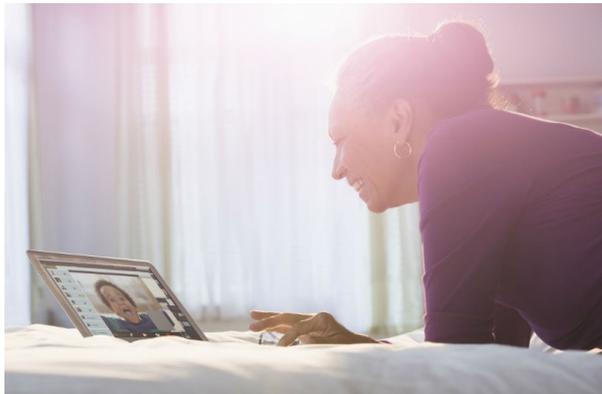
**Please donate to Project Compassion 2020 to help support the Safe House project and help bring greater harmony to families in Papua New Guinea.**

**Let's Go Further, Together.** You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, by visiting [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion) or phoning 1800 024 413.



## PRESENT FROM AFAR

One of the challenges posed by social distancing is how to reconcile personal presence with distance. Presence is tactile and up close. Measuring out the prescribed separation as people walk around the park in the early morning tends to turn familiars into strangers and greetings into dis-tancings.



On the other hand, to overcome distance we happily draw on Zoom and other technology that allow us to be see one another's faces. How to reconcile this interplay between distance and presence merits reflection.

My own reflection is coloured by my Catholic faith, and was prompted by the necessary closing of churches. In the Catholic tradition faith is tactile. At its heart is a God who in Jesus Christ joined our world, walked among us and had skin in our game. God is understood to be present in thingy, face to face ways — in gatherings of friends and strangers, rich and poor; in eating bread and drinking wine, teaching and listening, joking and being serious, in the pouring of water and anointing with oil, in shaking hands and hugs.

The central symbol and ritual of this understanding is the Sunday Eucharist where people gather to pray, eat and drink in the belief that Christ is really active in what they do and really present in what they eat and drink.

Seen from this perspective the closing of churches and consequent gatherings to celebrate the Eucharist is a serious business. The privileged ways in which God is present that cannot fully be replaced by other forms of presence. The expected outcome of closing churches might be the distancing of God from people's lives.

Yet for many people this does not seem to happen. They find that the televising of Mass and other rituals and engagement with other electronic expression of faith overcomes the barriers of distance. To explore why this is so may illuminate larger questions about presence and distance in our lockdown society.

'We need to attend to the infinite complexity of the people to whom we are physically present, to the feeling of bare feet on carpet and brick, to the pockets of cool air under shaded trees on a hot day, to the quality of the red flowers and the green leaves of the geranium outside our window.'

Questions about presence, distance, reality and appearance have been central to Christian reflection on the Eucharist for a millennium. It centred on the relationship between what Christ did in his time and what Catholics do at the Eucharist. Catholics argued that Christ is present at each Eucharist both in the action which he recalled and in the bread and wine. In ultimate reality the distance between what Christ did then and now is illusory. When seen empirically, of course, the distance is great: the bread and wine remain bread and wine; Jesus lived 2,000 years ago and we meet now. But for the participants the apparent distance falls away.

This crude summary of a complex debate may illuminate the way in which distance and presence are reconciled in electronic media. When people come together on Zoom they remain empirically distant. They are not on the screen, but only images of their faces and projections of their voices. But they would be right to describe their presence to one another as a real presence, not as a distance. In human terms people really do meet one another face to face, even though an empirical account of the transmission of images might describe their relationship as one of real distance.

The quality and reality of people's electronic presence to one another depend on the richness of their imagination. By imagination I mean the way in which we see the detailed qualities and connections of our lives and world. Our imagination can represent things and people in a blurred or homogenised way, or can catch the tactile detail and the multiplicity of facets present in our face to face contact. The inherent risk of relying on presence at a distance is that the imagination becomes blurred by lack of refreshment, so that we see people in a stereotypical or blurred way. The lack of tangible contact can lead to our imagination not being freshened and the sense of tactile presence being weakened. Distance wins over presence.

To maintain the intensity of presence we need to enrich the imagination by a habit of attention to the tactile details of our world. We need to attend to the infinite complexity of the people to whom we are physically present, to the feeling of bare feet on carpet and brick, to the pockets of cool air under shaded trees on a hot day, to the quality of the red flowers and the green leaves of the geranium outside our window. This habitual attention and wonder will also feed sharp memories of people and events into our imagination, so strengthening the reality of presence in distance. I leave it to others in another conversation to decide whether this line of thinking has any relevance to the Eucharist. It may suggest, however, that in a time of forced distancing for Catholics they might profitably cultivate the awareness of God's presence in the tangible details of the world around them.

*Andrew Hamilton is consulting editor of Eureka Street.*

### REFLECTION

*When this is over,  
May we never again take for granted  
A handshake with a stranger  
Full shelves at the store  
Conversations with neighbours  
A crowded theatre  
Friday night out  
The taste of communion  
A routine check-up  
A school rush each morning  
Coffee with a friend  
The stadium roaring  
Each deep breath  
A boring Tuesday  
Life itself.*

*When this ends,  
May we find  
That we have become  
More like the people  
We were called to be  
We hoped to be  
And may we stay  
That way – better  
For each other  
Because of the worst.*

*Laura Kelly Fanucci*

## Gospel

### The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, the governor, and the governor put to him this question, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'It is you who say it.' But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders he refused to answer at all. Pilate then said to him, 'Do you not hear how many charges they have brought against you?' But to the governor's complete amazement, he offered no reply to any of the charges.

At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the people, anyone they chose. Now there was at that time a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas. So when the crowd gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over.

Now as he was seated in the chair of judgement, his wife sent him a message, 'Have nothing to do with that man; I have been upset all day by a dream I had about him.'

The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. So when the governor spoke and asked them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' they said 'Barabbas'. 'But in that case,' Pilate said to them 'what am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said, 'Let him be crucified!' 'Why?' he asked 'What harm has he done?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Let him be crucified!' Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said, 'I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern.' And the people, to a man, shouted back, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' Then he released Barabbas for them. He ordered Jesus to be first scourged and then handed over to be crucified.

The governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium and collected the whole cohort around him. Then they stripped him and made him wear a scarlet cloak, and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they knelt to him saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head with it. And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes and led him away to crucify him.



On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, and enlisted him to carry his cross. When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place of the skull, they gave him wine to drink mixed with gall, which he tasted but refused to drink. When they had finished crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots, and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard over him.

Above his head was placed the charge against him; it read: 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' At the same time two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said 'So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If you are God's son, come down from the cross!' The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way. 'He saved others,' they said 'he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him.'

He put his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, "I am the son of God." Even the robbers who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way.

From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' When some of those who stood there heard this, they said, 'The man is calling on Elijah,' and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he dipped in vinegar and putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink. 'Wait!' said the rest of them 'and see if Elijah will come to save him.' But Jesus again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.

At that, the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth quaked; the rocks were split; the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy men rose from the dead, and these, after his resurrection, came out of the tombs, entered the Holy City and appeared to a number of people. Meanwhile the centurion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that was taking place, and they were terrified and said, 'In truth this was a son of God.'

The Gospel of the Lord



## Holy Week

### PALM CROSSES

A huge thank you to Teresa Parente, for making the Palm Crosses.



### SYRIAN MONK, ISAAC OF NINIVEH A 7<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY MONK AND ASCETIC ONCE WROTE:

"Many are avidly seeking but they alone find who remain in continual silence. ... Every person who delights in a multitude of words, even though they say admirable things, is empty within. If you love truth, be a lover of silence. Silence like the sunlight will illuminate you in God and will deliver you from the phantoms of ignorance. Silence will unite you to God himself. ... More than all things love silence: it brings you a fruit that tongue cannot describe. In the beginning we have to force ourselves to be silent. But then there is born something that draws us to silence. May God give you an experience of this "something" that is born of silence. If only you practice this, untold light will dawn on you in consequence ... after a while a certain sweetness is born in the heart of this exercise and the body is drawn almost by force to remain in silence."