



MOYNE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

St Patrick's Parish, Port Fairy

Infant Jesus Parish, Koroit



The Ascension of the Lord

Saturday 23rd May and Sunday 24th May, 2020

CHURCHES RE-OPEN

Victoria's bishops say the State Government's decision to allow churches to open for private prayer is a "gentle first step" as the state cautiously begins to lift COVID-19 restrictions.

"This opportunity for small gatherings and for some quiet moments of prayer in the sacramental presence of Our Lord is a gentle first step in the right direction, and rightly a moment of rejoicing for God's people."

"The conditions under which a church can be open include a collection of contact details (for the purposes of contact-tracing if it becomes necessary), strict monitoring of numbers, ongoing hygiene requirements, publicising the scheduled times for private worship, and public worship limited to ten people at a time."

Infant Jesus Church in Koroit is now open for private prayers from 4pm to 6:30pm on Saturdays.

St Patrick's Church in Port Fairy is open for private prayers from 9:30am to midday on Sundays.

PRAYERS FOR THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED



We commend to the Lord's mercy **John Carlin**, who died recently. Let's also pray for those dying of COVID-19, many of whom are unable to have their family and friends surround them as they would wish. May they, and all those whose anniversaries occur at this time, rest in God's peace.

IN PLACE OF HOLY MASS

Mass For You At Home is broadcast on WIN at 6am Sundays, and on Foxtel's Aurora at 3am, 6am and 10am every day. It can be viewed online any time at: www.mfyah.com

Sunday Mass from St Joseph's, Warrnambool can be viewed at: www.tiny.cc/joe3280

Daily Mass with Pope Francis (in Italian, with English dubbing) can be viewed at: www.tiny.cc/vatican

Weekday Mass at St John of God Hospital, Ballarat can be viewed at: www.stpatscathedral.weebly.com

BISHOPS TO ENTRUST AUSTRALIA TO OUR LADY

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect Australians' lives, including their worship, the Catholic bishops will entrust the country to the care of Mary Help of Christians on her feast day next week. At their recent plenary meeting, conducted using videoconference technology, they wrote a letter to the Australian faithful:

“Australia has certainly suffered because of the pandemic, but not as grievously as some other countries. For that we thank God and we congratulate public health authorities and governments on their prompt and prudent responses.

“Australians in general have also shown the solidarity and good sense, the generosity and kindness needed in such a time. In our healthcare workers particularly we have seen an exceptional spirit of self-sacrifice, and for that we are all grateful.”

“Churches and other religious communities have played their part, which has meant the suspension of public worship and the closure of places of worship. This has been a real deprivation, and the bishops understand not only your anxiety about the virus and shutdown but more especially your deep desire to return to the sacraments and to resume public worship. There is a real hunger in this. It is something we all feel, and we long for the time when our hunger will be satisfied as together we return to the feast of the Lord.”

“Even when our doors are closed, our hearts are still open. The churches may not yet be fully open, but the heart of the

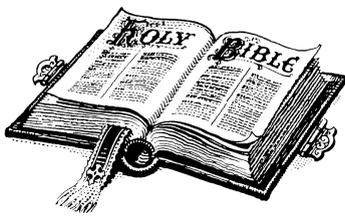
Church, which is the heart of Christ, is wide open. The celebration of Mass has never ceased. Though we and our brother priests cannot yet offer Mass with the people, we are still offering Mass day by day for the people – for all of you who are “flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone” (cf Genesis 2:23). The Church which is the Body of Christ still glows with the life of Easter, “thought to be dying, yet we are alive ... to be sorrowful, yet still rejoicing ... to have nothing, yet possessing everything” (2 Corinthians 6:9-10).

“At the heart of the community of disciples, there is always Mary the mother of Jesus. In this month of May, Pope Francis has urged us to look to her to intercede for us in this time of affliction; and to Mary we will entrust our homeland later this month, looking to a mother’s unfailing love. May she who is Health of the Sick and Help of Christians pray for us now, that we may see Jesus with her eyes, the eyes of Easter, and love him with her heart, which is the heart of faith.

The bishops approved this motion:

“That the Australian Bishops entrust Australia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary under the title Our Lady Help of Christians, seeking her intercession for the safety of all our people especially in this time of COVID-19 pandemic.”

Our Lady Help of Christians has been the official patroness of Australia since 1844. Her feast day is celebrated on 24th May, which this year coincides with the Feast of the Ascension. The bishops agreed that the entrustment of Australia to Our Lady can therefore take place on the 24th or the 25th May.



Reflection on this Sunday's readings

by Fr Francis Fernandez

JESUS AWAITS US IN HEAVEN

According to the Gospel of St Luke the last gesture of our Lord on earth was to give a blessing. The Eleven had gone, as Jesus had told them to, from Galilee to the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem. On seeing the risen Christ once more they fell down before him as their Master and their God and *worshipped him*. Now they are much more conscious of what they had for some time believed in their hearts and confessed with their lips: that their Master was the Messiah. They were delighted and full of joy at having their Lord and their God so near. After the forty days spent in his company they could be witnesses to what they had seen and heard. The Holy Spirit would confirm in them the teachings of Jesus and would lead them to the complete truth.”

The Master spoke to them as only God could: *Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me'*. Jesus confirmed the faith of those who worshipped him and taught them that the power they were to receive was a sharing in his own divine power. The power to forgive sins, and to bring about a rebirth through Baptism is the power of Christ himself, given now to his Church. The mission of the Church is to continue always the work of Christ, to teach divine truths and make known the demands these truths impose, to help people follow God's way through the grace of the sacraments.

He said to them ... 'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth'. And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. Thus does St Luke describe for us the Ascension in the Acts of the Apostles.

He withdrew from their sight little by little. The Apostles remained for a long while, looking up as Jesus ascended majestically until a cloud took him out of their sight. It was the cloud that signifies the presence of God. In John Chrysostom's words: "It was a sign that Jesus had entered Heaven."

Jesus' life on earth finished not with his death on the Cross but with his Ascension into Heaven. It is the last of the mysteries of his life here on earth. It is a redemptive mystery which together with his Passion, Death and Resurrection makes up the Paschal Mystery. It was fitting that those who saw Christ die amid insults, scoffing and mockery on the Cross should see him now exalted. They see fulfilled now the words Jesus had one day spoken to them: *I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.* And again: *Now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to thee.*

Jesus has gone to the Father. Two Angels in white approach and say, *Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up to Heaven?*

Peter and the others go back to Jerusalem – *'cum gaudio magno'* – with great joy. It is fitting that the Sacred Humanity of Christ should receive the homage, praise and adoration of all the hierarchies of the Angels and of all the legions of the saints in Heaven.

Lay Pastoral Ministry Program – now open for new participants

Low-cost online study and formation for lay workers in parish and other ministries – employed or volunteers. Sacraments, Scripture, Youth Ministry, Liturgy, Leadership and more.

- Study over 5 weeks per subject.
- Study Cycle 4 begins May 24.

Registrations open now. More information is available at www.ballarat.catholic.org.au, or e-mail Kim Butler at kim.butler@ballarat.catholic.org.au, or phone 0407 523 424.

Heart to Heart e-Seminars

Archbishop Chris Prowse, Archbishop of the Canberra-Goulburn Diocese, is presenting these 30 minute e-seminars over four weeks, leading you into a deeper relationship with Christ during this time of isolation. Visit:

www.catholicvoice.org.au/hearttoheart/

Appeal from Pope Francis to pray the Rosary in May

Pope Francis has encouraged the faithful to “rediscover the beauty of praying the Rosary at home in the month of May.”

“I am also providing two prayers to Our Lady that you can recite at the end of the Rosary, and that I myself will pray in the month of May, in spiritual union with all of you. I include them with this letter so that they are available to everyone.” (To see the prayers, visit <http://tiny.cc/FrancisMay2020>)

“Dear brothers and sisters, contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary our Mother will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial. I keep all of you in my prayers, especially those suffering most greatly, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. I thank you, and with great affection I send you my blessing.”

Franciscus

WE ARE A CHILD SAFE PARISH

Our Child Safe Policies can be read at our church entrances and on our websites. Our safe-guarding officer is Peter Sanderson.

NEXT SUNDAY: **SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

First Reading. Acts 8:5-8, 14-17. They laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Second Reading. 1 Peter 3:15-18. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

Gospel. John 14:15-21. “I shall ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate.”

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