

OUR COMMUNITY NEWS – June 21st 2020 **Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary time Year A**

Parish Safeguarding Officer: Sandra Watkins: 0409 492 508
Fr Marcello Colasante 0416 194 825 Contact: St Columba's, Ballarat North 53 311 012
email: ballaratnorth@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Information for special parish events (Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals)

Please contact Anne Beer on 5349 2168 or 0417 369 322

Parish Support:

A reminder that if anyone needs help with anything,
to please get in touch with one of our members below.

Gail Hall 0412 311 586 Bernadette Franc 0427 678830 Anne Beer 0417 369 322

Welcome to 'Our Community News' for June 21st 2020

Note: Today's Community News email has an attachment: copy of 'The Saving Word'

Back into the Church for our Mass and LLA celebrations.

Fr Marcello has advised Bernadette that he will be celebrating Mass at Beaufort on Sunday July 12th at 8.30 am, From then on our usual roster will return—Mass on the 2nd and 4th Sundays .LLA on the 1st and 3rd Sundays.

FATHER JUSTIN'S ONLINE MASSES FROM ST JOHN OF GOD HOSPITAL:

Reminder: Daily Mass at 11.30am from St John of God Hospital.

Access by searching St Patrick's Cathedral in Facebook If you can't watch then, you can always replay it.

<https://www.facebook.com/patricks.cathedral.9>

RECENT DEATHS:

Michael Wise, (Ena Fricot's brother)

We continue to pray for all the victims to Coronavirus throughout the world.

ANNIVERSARIES:

Joan Hewinson, John Henry Cushing, Tom Lester, Irmgard Liopold. Thomas Bourke, Maggie Topp, Mary O'Callaghan, Ken Cameron, Marisa Di Giambattista, Stan Read, Avis Shannon, Agnes Mary Cushing, Chappie O'Brien, Linda May Hains.

PRAY FOR ALL THESE FRIENDS OF OURS WHO ARE ILL:

Pat Byrne, Margaret MacDonald, Roger Molomby, Graeme Dawson, Blake Dridan, Fr. Adrian McInerney, Shelagh Mulcahy, Valda Murphy, and all those in need of prayer.

ROSTERS:

The newsletter roster will continue, but if any parishioners wish to contribute anything at all for inclusion, it will be greatly appreciated. This is a great way to keep our little community in touch. Just simply put your contribution in an email.

June: **Carmel Milenkovic** Phone: 0407320759 Email: carmelmilen@hotmail.com

POSITION AVAILABLE

The Diocesan Pastoral Development Coordinator will develop and facilitate diocesan initiatives, programmes and activities to strengthen and support Diocesan and Parish life. Position information available from the diocesan website www.ballarat.catholic.org.au

Ballarat Diocese Lay Pastoral Ministry Program – Registrations now open

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. The next cycle begins July 12. Study is 5 weeks. Registrations open now until July 8. More information at www.ballarat.catholic.org.au or email kim.butler@ballarat.catholic.org.au or ph. 0407 523 424.

Plenary Council Discernment Papers released

Six Discernment and Writing Groups, one each for the six national themes for discernment that emerged from the Council's *Listening and Dialogue* phase, were tasked with writing papers to bring some major themes and issues into focus. The papers were released on Pentecost Sunday and are available to read at the Plenary Council website <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/continuing-the-journey-of-discernment/>

Social Media Guide for Parishes

The Australian Catholic Media Council has launched a resource encouraging parishes to embrace Pope Francis' invitation to share the Gospel story as the Church in Australia - in person or online. The guide can be downloaded from the diocesan website www.ballarat.catholic.org.au.

ST VINCENT PALLOTTI SCHOLARSHIP TRUST

Scholarships are offered to enable lay people to further their understanding and skills in leadership/ministry or a specialised activity, such as promoting faith enhancement, social justice and pastoral care. More information and applications forms are available at <https://pallottine.org.au/scholarships/st-vincent-pallotti-scholarship-for-lay-ministry.html>. Closing Date July 31, 2020.

EXPLORING THE WORD

The people of Matthew's community were being persecuted for their faith. They were mostly Jews who had come to accept Jesus as the awaited Messiah. But not all Jews accepted this, and they did not want the Christians to worship with them in the synagogues, so the Jewish Christians were expelled. Matthew's Christian community was feeling very vulnerable and trying to find a new way of living their faith outside the traditional Jewish practices. In this passage, Matthew comforts them and assures them that they need not fear physical harm, for God knows every hair of their heads and will protect them. Those who are strong in their faith and refuse to recant will be honoured before God. If God extends his care to the sparrows, the cheapest life available, how much more will he extend his care to his faithful people?

- Jesus wants to form a community in which each individual is valued. In what ways do you experience God's individual care and concern?
- How does your parish reflect God's individual care and concern?

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- Sparrows were sold in market places as inexpensive food for the poor and were a symbol of something of minimal value.
- Members of the church who have died rather than renounce their faith are called martyrs. The word martyr literally means ‘witness’. Throughout history, many have given their lives for the faith, and in our own time, people are still martyred because they will not swerve from their commitment to Christ.
- By the time Matthew wrote his gospel, the church was already undergoing persecution in some areas, and Christian faith was being sorely tested

MAKING CONNECTIONS

SHARING THE TRADITION

A closer look at the Scripture of the day, to see how it makes more explicit God’s word to us through the teachings of Jesus Christ

In the early centuries of the church, many people were persecuted and even killed for confessing faith in Jesus Christ.

Under the Roman Emperor Nero, the first persecution of Christians began in Rome. We all know the stories of believers being thrown to the lions! What is more surprising is that people are still being martyred for their faith today. In 2019, 29 Catholic pastoral care workers, including priests, nuns and lay people, were killed while performing their duties.

In 2017 Pope Francis authorised the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to promulgate the decree on the martyrdom of Sister Regina Maria Vattalil (nee Maria), professed nun of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Poor Clare’s Franciscans, who was killed very publically in India on 25 February 1995.

Sister Maria had been working with village women and poor farmers in providing social assistance and empowering them to seek civil rights in an area dominated by large landowners and moneylenders.

Sister Irene McCormack was an Australian member of the Sisters of St Joseph, working as a missionary in a poor mountain village in Peru. Her pride and joy in this work was a simple school room/library where she taught the village children to read and write. The area where the village was located was a dangerous region because of the presence of a Marxist guerilla group known as the ‘Shining Path’. On the evening of 21 May 1991, the terrorists entered the village and accused Sr Irene of being a ‘Yankee imperialist’ and poisoning the minds of the children. They also disapproved of Irene’s work of distributing food aid to the very poor. She and four local men were subjected to a sham trial in the village square, forced to lie on the ground and each was shot in the head.

Sr Irene took seriously the call of the Gospel to bring good news to the poor and to raise up the downtrodden. Her dedication cost Irene her life.

- You could tell the story of Archbishop Oscar Romero who spoke out boldly against injustice and was murdered for doing so.
- Tell other stories of people who were persecuted or killed for their faith. What can we learn from their example?

SYMBOLS AND IMAGES

- Jesus' words in this text are words of encouragement for the confused and fearful Christians of that time and all times.

He speaks of a time when his teachings will be shouted from the rooftops and clear to all. Jesus reassures believers that their faith will be rewarded. They are precious to him and to the Father.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Jn 15: 26-27

Alleluia, alleluia! / The Spirit of Truth will bear witness to me, says the Lord, / and you also will be my witnesses. / Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 10: 26-33

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Do not fear those who can kill the body.

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'Do not be afraid. For everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the house-tops.

'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows.

'So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven. But the one who disowns me in the presence of men, I will disown in the presence of my Father in heaven.'

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.**

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Reflections on the Gospel



THE SAVING WORD

TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

21 JUNE 2020

OF WHOM TO BE AFRAID?

As a basic human emotion, fear can go two ways. It can be a safeguard and protection. Or it can be a force that cripples and disables. The key thing is to distinguish well-founded fear from that which is illusory or based on deception. A great part of spiritual direction consists in helping people to recognise their fears and see whether they are based on falsehood or reality.

Today's Gospel addresses challenges believers face in living out and giving witness to their faith. Ringing through it is the refrain: 'Do not fear'. Jesus acknowledges that there will be much that will dismay believers and make them afraid. He urges them to distinguish appropriate from inappropriate fear.

Disciples need not fear persecutors who can only kill the body. Our physical existence is held in God's hands; we are precious in God's sight – infinitely more so than sparrows, none of whose falling to the ground escapes divine notice. In all threats, then, we can be confident that God will see them through to eternal life.

For disciples, the only truly valid fear is that of falling out of God's favour. The warning, 'Fear him, rather, who can destroy both body and soul in hell', may refer, then, to those whose evil influence and deception could bring this about.

God's only desire is to impart to us eternal life. But we can so alienate ourselves from the outreach of divine love as to face eternal loss. It is of such a consequence that people ought truly to be afraid.

Brendan Byrne, SJ

FIRST READING

20: 10-13

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

He has delivered the soul of the needy from the hands of those who are evil.

Jeremiah said:

I hear so many disparaging me,
'"Terror from every side!"
Denounce him! Let us denounce him!
All those who used to be my friends
watched for my downfall,
'Perhaps he will be seduced into error.
Then we will master him
and take our revenge!
But the Lord is at my side, a mighty hero;
my opponents will stumble, mastered,
confounded by their failure;
everlasting, unforgettable disgrace will be
theirs.
But you, Lord of Hosts, you who probe with
justice,
who scrutinise the loins and heart,
let me see the vengeance you will take on
them,
for I have committed my cause to you.
Sing to the Lord,
praise the Lord,
for he has delivered the soul of the needy
from the hands of evil men.

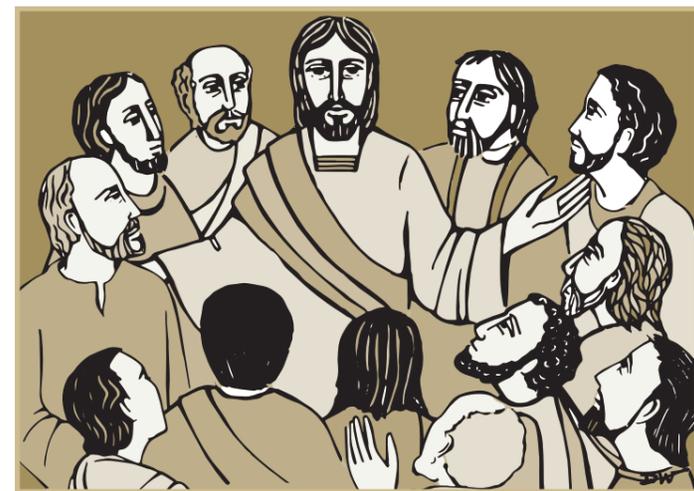
■ **The word of the Lord.**

RESP PSALM Ps 68: 8-10, 14, 17, 33-35. R. v. 14

R. Lord, in your great love, answer me.

1. It is for you that I suffer taunts, / that shame covers my face, / that I have become a stranger to my brothers, / an alien to my own mother's sons. / I burn with zeal for your house / and taunts against you fall on me. **R.**

2. This is my prayer to you, / my prayer for your favour. / In your great love, answer me, O God, / with your help that never fails: / Lord, answer, for your love is kind; / in your compassion, turn towards me. **R.**



3. The poor when they see it will be glad / and God-seeking hearts will revive; / for the Lord listens to the needy; / and does not spurn his servants in their chains. / Let the heavens and the earth give him praise, / the sea and all its living creatures. **R.**

SECOND READING

Rom 5: 12-15

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans.

God's gift to us is nothing like our sin against him.

Sin entered the world through one man, and through sin death, and thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned. Sin existed in the world long before the Law was given. There was no law and so no one could be accused of the sin of 'law-breaking', yet death reigned over all from Adam to Moses, even though their sin, unlike that of Adam, was not a matter of breaking a law.

Adam prefigured the One to come, but the gift itself considerably outweighed the fall. If it is certain that through one man's fall so many died, it is even more certain that divine grace, coming through the one man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an abundant free gift.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

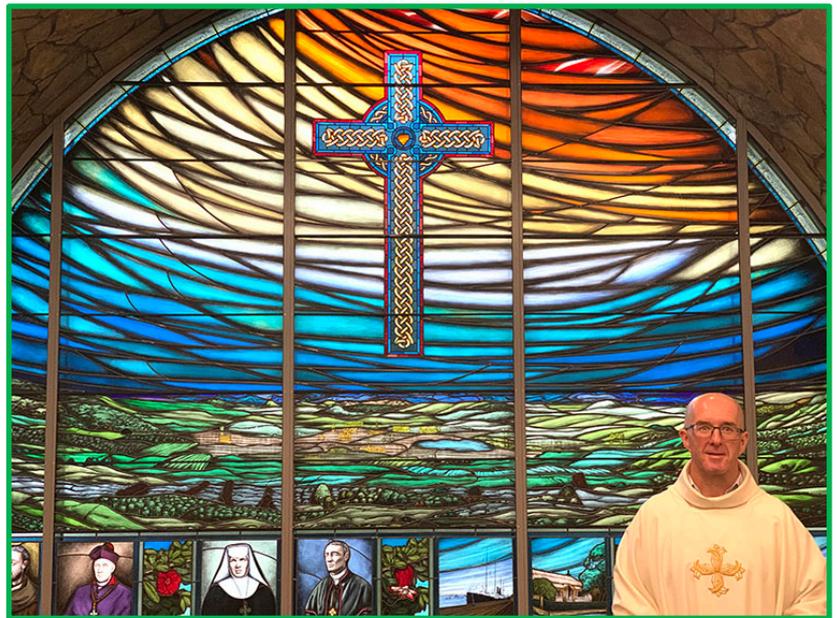


THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RESET

This is an opportunity to RESET. I can not count the number of times I've heard someone say that over these past weeks. Perhaps because life is slower, there is a spaciousness that fosters deeper reflection and contemplation, and I've been seeking to make the very best of the gift of having more time. Isn't that what we have so often desired?

So what could it mean for our Cathedral Parish and our Church to RESET? To reset is "setting, adjusting, or fixing something in a new or different way." COVID-19 has already reset us. We are all adjusting and are learning to be more adaptable. Reflection on our practice of ministry and our way of being Church is always needed, but challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic we're asking with greater depth and sense of urgency what's essential to us, essential to our identity as the Church, the People of God, the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit?

We ask these questions and many more while our Church buildings have been closed, when public celebrations of the liturgy and the sacraments have not been possible, gatherings of people have been prohibited and we have needed to stay home, self-isolating. We ask these questions within the context of a much larger global threat to human life, unprecedented in our time, forcing government leaders to respond to both the health and economic impacts of COVID-19, plunging us into a state of emergency.



Daniel Ang writes that "In this strange and unchosen landscape, the Church cannot afford to read off old maps, at least not if the mission to bring people to Christ and Christ to people has higher priority than our methods."¹ Pastoral Care, Faith formation, Service, Outreach, the pursuit of Justice and Mercy, Prayer and Worship are all essential to our communal identity and mission. How are we resetting?

The digital frontier offers us opportunities to adapt and reset. As we enter this frontier we need to discern the effectiveness of such adaptation and resetting, looking to the fruits that are borne of these endeavours. Like many, we've entered this frontier as novices, and what may seem like a naive desire to respond to this opportunity to reach out and connect with people where they are, it demands that we recast our missional imaginations. Over these weeks the vision of Pope Francis for parishes such as ours has resonated with great urgency than ever as he tells us that "The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be

¹Daniel Ang, <https://www.catholicweekly.com.au/big-questions-the-pandemic-our-mission-and-the-new-evangelisation/>

“the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters.” This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few.”²

The Coronavirus pandemic has called on the missionary creativity, flexibility and adaptivity that Pope Francis dreams of for a missionary Church in ways that we may never have never thought possible (or necessary). We have intentionally sought to be in the homes of as many people as possible, just when we were self-isolated and unable to come together, when everything from children’s education to their parent’s employment was happening in their own homes – so too we have sought to build the Church at home also. Sarah McDonald recognises that “In this COVID-19 era, it seems the Lord is calling us “home”. May our hearts find rest and rejuvenation. May the gentle nature of domestic life restore a flourishing creativity.”³



The digital frontier has seen us create a Parish Facebook page to connect with people near and far as our first step. Live streaming Masses each day via Facebook from the Chapel at St John of God Hospital was the second. Going digital has also meant a complete rethink of the weekly Parish newsletter. After all, what news did we have? What was the purpose of this weekly communication? Who have we been trying to reach and what have we been trying to say? The very name that we give it reveals so much – was it a Mass sheet? A Pew Sheet? A Bulletin? A Newsletter? All of these presumed a gathered community of faith, yet we haven’t gathered and yet communication is more necessary than ever to bring us together as One Body, One Spirit in Christ. The desire to be connected, the opportunity of more time to read, reflect, pray and be spiritually nourished, offered us an opportunity to reset and adapt this method of communication.

Our daily live streamed Masses that included the liturgies of Holy Week have borne fruit in ways we could never have expected. One email said “11.30am each day gives me a short time to forget that I’m here on my own which I must say is not easy for an extrovert, and know that I am part of the wider prayerful community.” Another person emailed saying “11.30 am is the focal point of my day and that of many by the look of it.” Yet another wrote “God really does work in mysterious ways; who would have thought I would start ‘going to Church’ at a time when going to Church is virtually impossible, and yet it is possible because it is virtual. Curious times!”

The writer of this email continued (their communication is printed with permission),
“I wanted to thank you for the Facebook Live services. I have been questioning being Catholic for a while (not my faith but the way I practice my faith). It wasn’t until I found your services on here that I realised that being part of St Patrick’s Parish is still important to me.... I was determined to keep the faith because I didn’t think the appalling behaviour of others should drive out the people who could stay and help with the healing. But over these past few years I have succumbed to it being all too hard. I couldn’t go on because it made me feel complicit. My faith was there but I couldn’t keep marching with the band. I have maintained that I am Catholic but my heart wasn’t in it anymore...It was amidst all this that I found your Facebook streamed services. Your voice, even more comforting and familiar in this time of being removed from the people closest to us, combined with one shot inside St Pat’s Cathedral, stirred me. It’s partly pain, because now I am torn again but partly peace because there is hope too.”

To reset is to adapt, but authentic and faithful adaptation requires a dialogue between our mission and our context. The way that the mission of Christ is understood by us will subsequently shape our Church, not the other way around. Considering our way of being the Church, Daniel Izuzquiza says that “the primacy always belongs to the strategy, but the strategy, in accord with the basic principle of Christian incarnation always requires tactical alliances.”⁴ Conceived as a strategy of mission, the Church is not an end in itself, and its identity must be shaped by the mission as it is perceived. These questions of identity are important to our Church and our Parish in particular, that must always be developed in the particular context in which we find ourselves. To be a missionary Church that enters the digital frontier in order to proclaim the Gospel is to deconstruct the many borders that we may have erected over time and some of the behaviours that have contributed to a fortress mentality of ‘us and them.’

² Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 28.

³ Sarah McDonald, <http://animanetwork.org/2020/04/09/reawakening-the-domestic-church/>

⁴ Daniel Izuzquiza, *Rooted in Jesus Christ. Towards a Radical Ecclesiology*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 3.

We have the image of the 'Upper Room' from which the early Church was born, one that emerged from behind locked doors through the power of the Holy Spirit that inspired the disciples to emerge with the courage to exercise their missional imagination. They were sent to new frontiers, to the margins. In these days between Easter Sunday and Pentecost, as the restrictions are gradually being eased, we pray that the Holy Spirit will inspire us, with courage and imagination as we pray

*Come Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.*

Fr Justin Driscoll

Bernadette Franc (Beaufort) reflects on the live streaming of Mass:

It has been a wonderful opportunity to participate in Masses and liturgies over Holy Week and Easter due to the restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as this ongoing service.

Whilst not being very tech savvy, I wasn't sure how this would work for me. At times there were issues such as when I tried to share the link with some of my Facebook friends through Messenger. This didn't seem to work for me.

I have been grateful though, to be a part of the live streaming celebrations, as well as being able to view some as a replay. A special thank you to Fr Justin for his very meaningful Masses, including prayers, homilies, reflections and music. I have also found that the very simple background and decor of the chapel at St John's Chapel very profound.

As always, Fr Justin has truly demonstrated the depth of his faith and his humbleness for us all. A wonderful example for all of us at this difficult time, in the most important time of our Church's celebration of Easter.

Thank you again to Fr Justin, St John of God Hospital and those who have helped as Readers.

Susan Begbie, (Ballarat East) also took the opportunity to be thankful for the live-streaming of Mass:

Thank you for having Mass every day. Most days, just knowing that I can log in to Mass and join in helps me to get through my day. On most days, I can not make it at 11.30 am due to work commitments but I do so at night. I do know that I am able to log in to other Masses from all over the world but it is different when it is a familiar face and it is local.