

# Catholic Parish of Lindfield-Killara

## Diocese of Broken Bay

### THE SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST BLESSED TRINITY (TRINITY SUNDAY) 7—6—20

*This week: Ex 34:4-6, 8-9; 2 Cor 13:11-13; Jn 3:16-18*  
*Next week: Deut 8:2-3, 14-16; 1 Cor 10:16-17; Jn 6:51-58*



With last Sunday's celebration of Pentecost we brought the Easter Season to a close. On Monday we moved back into the Ordinary Time of the Church year.

However, the first two Sundays of this Ordinary Time are always celebrated as great feasts – today, Trinity Sunday, and next week, the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi).

Trinity Sunday celebrates the God we experience in the Easter mystery: the **Father** who reaches out in love to the world in the incarnation, death and resurrection of the **Son**, who by the power of the **Holy Spirit** draws us with him to share in the life of the **Father**.

Ordinary Time reminds us that we discover God and that we minister God's love to others *in the ordinary*: in the simple things, where we live, where we work, just by who we are and how we relate.

Ordinary Time calls us to be a people filled with the life of the Trinity and who bring that life to others.

Fr Colin



J-Walk for young adults 18+

**OUR NEXT MEETING IS ONLINE!**

**SUNDAY 14 JUNE, 7PM**

Email us at [youth@lindfieldkillara.org.au](mailto:youth@lindfieldkillara.org.au)

or

check out the webpage:  
[lindfieldkillarayouth.weebly.com](http://lindfieldkillarayouth.weebly.com)



**Fusion Sunday Social**

Join us for some fun online activities and games!

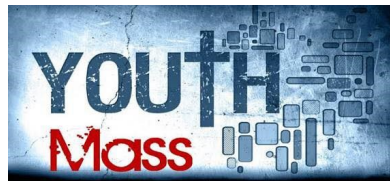


Years 7-12 invited

**Sunday, 14th June**  
**6 - 7:00pm**

email us: [youth@lindfieldkillara.org.au](mailto:youth@lindfieldkillara.org.au)  
for the Zoom link or contact us via our website: [lindfieldkillarayouth.weebly.com](http://lindfieldkillarayouth.weebly.com)

### Youth Masses



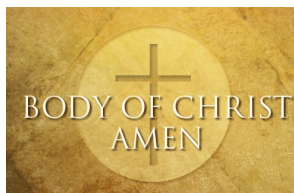
As you'll read on page 2, Sunday Masses return to our parish next weekend (though with a limited number of people per Mass—please read the whole article on page 2). We're delighted to say that this will include **TWO Sunday evening Youth Masses** each week—one at 5:30pm at Killara church and one at 6:00pm at our Lindfield church. **Bookings are essential for Mass** so that we may comply with public health restrictions.

While those current health restrictions prevent us from having live music at Mass, our Sunday night music team is eager to record music which will be incorporated into our Sunday evening celebrations.

We look forward to welcoming our young people back to the celebration of the Eucharist.

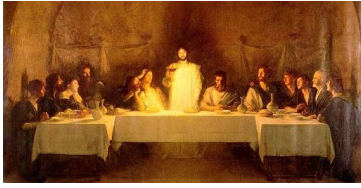
**See you then !**

### HOW APPROPRIATE!



Next weekend, as Sunday Mass returns to our parish, is the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi), celebrating the great gift of the Eucharist which flows out of - and makes present - the Easter mystery we have just celebrated.

## THE RETURN OF SUNDAY MASS !!....



Following the latest easing of restrictions we will begin offering Mass both on weekdays **AND ON SUNDAYS (HURRAH!)** with the increased number of participants, starting this Monday 8th June. So **next weekend** we can return to having Sunday Mass together (albeit in smaller gatherings). **PLEASE BE THERE! We've missed you !**

**The government is re-starting the economy—we have to re-start the Church !**

Just a few points to clarify:

- The government directive requires that there must be four square metres of space in the building per person (and of course that there is a minimum 1.5 metre separation between people). With these two requirements factored in our Killara church can accommodate the maximum of 50 people, and our Lindfield church can accommodate 46 people. We are providing a little more than the 1.5 metre separation for your safety.
- **We hope that you will now be able to re-join us for the celebration of Mass on the Lord's Day!** To make this possible, Fr Thomas and I will celebrate **ten Masses each weekend (5 at Killara and 5 at Lindfield)** — which enables us to provide the opportunity for nearly 500 people every weekend.
- While we are very much one parish we hope you understand that for the time being Fr Thomas and I are in general confining ourselves to a separate church each—which saves the effort and the cost of cleaning and sanitising sacristies and sanctuaries after each celebration. For simplicity we are working out of the church nearest to where we reside—thus, Fr Thomas at our Killara church and myself at our Lindfield church. But this is just a practical and temporary measure—we're both here to serve the whole parish.
- It will still be necessary to make a simple **online booking** for Mass to ensure that we don't exceed the maximum number permissible. It will not be possible to just 'turn up' - we live in very different times! If you're not proficient at online bookings (although it is a very simple system) just give Philita a call in the Parish Office and she will do it for you.
- I won't set out the full Mass timetable here as that will be evident when you go online to book. In summary however we will have:
  - three Vigil Masses, from 4pm onwards
  - five Sunday morning Masses
  - two Sunday evening YOUTH Masses

We're one parish so please feel free to move between our two churches and book a place at a Mass that suits you and/or has places vacant.
- We will also continue to have our parish online Mass for the sake of those who, perhaps for health reasons, cannot yet attend Mass physically.
- The government health restrictions do not permit us to have congregational singing at present (when we sing we aspirate more droplets). However our music ministry teams will be recording hymns which will be played at our Masses so that our celebrations are enhanced with music. But the most important thing is that we can gather as a faith community and celebrate and share in the Eucharist.
- We hope that you understand that with the very busy weekend schedule of Masses (in addition to those listed above there is also the online Mass each weekend and the Chinese Community Mass twice per month—on the second and fourth Sundays) we will be reducing the number of weekday Masses to just one per day (with one exception as outlined below). Mass (at which up to 45 people can be in attendance) will be at 10am Monday to Friday (at Killara on Mondays and Tuesdays; at Lindfield from Wednesday to Friday). There will be no Saturday morning Mass.
- Finally, for the sake of those who may not feel they are able to come to Mass with a larger number of people, either by reason of age or underlying health condition, we will continue to provide one Mass per week with a maximum of 10 people in attendance. This will be celebrated at 12 noon on Tuesdays at Killara—**however please do not book for this Mass unless you are over 70 or have an underlying health condition which puts you at greater risk).**

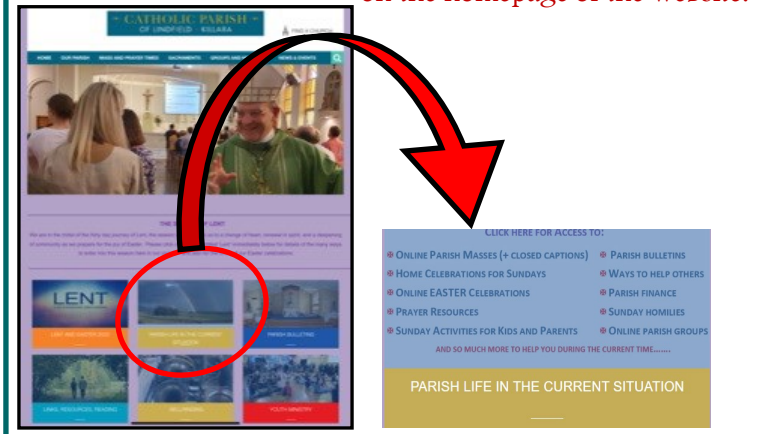
So let's gather next weekend and every weekend after that. The link to the simple online booking process is on the homepage of our parish website ([www.lindfieldkillara.org.au](http://www.lindfieldkillara.org.au)) - or just call the Parish Office.

See you there!

*Fr Colin*

## OUR PARISH LIFE ONLINE

Please keep visiting the special part of our parish website ([www.lindfieldkillara.org.au](http://www.lindfieldkillara.org.au)) where we keep expanding the resources for you online: Mass in our parish, helps for prayer, home Sunday liturgies, helps for leading the kids through a Sunday reflection and much much more. All accessible through the hotlink box 'Parish Life in the Current Situation' on the homepage of the website:



**OUR MONTHLY HEALING MASS** will be celebrated **this Friday 12th June at the 10am Mass at Lindfield.** Although we can't celebrate the Sacrament of the Sick we will have prayers and a blessing for the sick and for those who seek God's healing strength as part of the Mass. Sadly we are not able to have morning tea after Mass at this stage.



## A few more points about our new Masses with 50 people....

The pews will be marked with cards with a green tick on them. You must sit **ON THE CARD**, not just anywhere in the pew. We've spaced them very carefully.

Immediate family members can of course sit together. Everyone else must sit separately on one of the cards.

The churches will be sanitised after each and every Mass—wherever people have been sitting, handrails, doorknobs etc. We can't afford to have this professionally done after ten Sunday Masses (!) so we can only continue with all the Masses if we have sufficient volunteers on a roster to do this sanitising after each Mass. Please contact Alison in the Parish Office asap if you can help. We also need volunteers to act as warden at the doors.

We likewise cannot afford to have the toilets cleaned after every Mass and so the toilets will only be available on a restricted basis: they will be closed for weekday Masses and will be open on Sundays only for the 8:30am Mass at Lindfield and the 9:00am Mass at Killara.

For the health reasons the churches need to be well ventilated and so a number of the windows will be open for Mass—wear warm clothes!

**The Collections!** Our parish finances have been sorely affected and we hope that you can resume your parish contributions. However for health reasons the collection bowls will not be passed around—instead there will be separate boxes for contributions to the First and Second Collections which will be situated in the centre of each of our churches. The Tap and Go machines are also in Lindfield church.

It's great that we can gather again for the Eucharist and we hope that you understand that things however are still far from normal and so there are measures like these in place to ensure the health and safety of all.

## THIS WEEK'S LETTER FROM OUR BISHOP ANTHONY RANDAZZO



Bishop Anthony's letter for this week can be found via the link box on the special page for the current situation on our website.

**FOR THE KIDS** Please don't forget that there are a number of resources for helping your children celebrate on Sundays and to reflect on the Scripture readings. These can be found in the special section of our parish website 'Parish Life in the Current Situation'.

**THE PARISH OFFICE** is continuing to operate, though only one staff member is there at a time—the rest of the staff are working from home. For public health it's not possible to visit the office so please make contact by phone or email and the staff will assist you. **The Parish Office is functioning from Tues-Fri..**

## Enrolments for 2021 at Holy Family Catholic School are open.



To find out more about our wonderful learning community visit our school website or Facebook page. Contact the School Office, 9416 7200, to **book a private school tour** (outside school hours).

## THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

From next weekend the Sacrament will be available as follows:

Killara Saturdays 4:45—5:15pm  
Lindfield Saturdays 5:15—5:45pm

## OUR CHURCHES

### ARE ONCE AGAIN OPEN FOR PRAYER

Following the NSW Government's announcing of the first phase of the easing of restrictions our churches can now be re-opened for personal prayer—though the restriction remains in force of maintaining a distance of a minimum of 1.5 metres from other people. Hand sanitiser will be available in the foyer—please use it upon entering and leaving the church.

The opening hours for our churches will be:

|               | Killara      | Lindfield    |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Mon.:</b>  | 11am - 4pm   | Closed       |
| <b>Tues.:</b> | 1pm - 4pm    | 9:30am - 4pm |
| <b>Wed.:</b>  | Closed       | 11am - 4pm   |
| <b>Thur.:</b> | 10am - 4pm   | 11am - 4pm   |
| <b>Fri.:</b>  | 9am - 4pm    | 11am - 4pm   |
| <b>Sat.:</b>  | 10am - 4pm   | 1pm - 5pm    |
| <b>Sun.:</b>  | 12:30-4:30pm | 12:30-4:30pm |

We're here, we're online:

and here are some ways to join in ONLINE parish gatherings.....

These linkups take place using Zoom – the organisers will simply send you an email which provides you with a link to click on at the appropriate time, along with a 'Meeting ID' and a password which you enter when requested. Then off you go.

**I. OUR PARISH CHRISTIAN MEDITATION GROUP** is now gathering online and invites anyone to join them for a short time of prayer **each Wednesday at 8am.**

If you haven't tried Christian meditation before don't worry – our lovely group will help you to get introduced to this gentle way of praying.

If you'd like to join the group please email either Kay ([Kay.Hunt@optusnet.com.au](mailto:Kay.Hunt@optusnet.com.au)) or Catherine ([catherinecwillis@gmail.com](mailto:catherinecwillis@gmail.com))

## II. OUR PARISH SCRIPTURE STUDY SESSIONS

are also taking place online—both the daytime group and the evening group. If you're not already in either or both of these groups and would like to be please contact Fr Colin (94167195) or email ([colin@lindfieldkillara.org.au](mailto:colin@lindfieldkillara.org.au)).

- **The daytime Scripture Group HAS CHANGED FROM THURSDAYS TO WEDNESDAYS:** it now gathers online on the first & third Wednesdays of each month at 11am. We are just about to begin reading the Letter to the Ephesians..
- **The evening Scripture study group** gathers online on the second & fourth Wednesdays of each month at 7:30pm and is studying Luke's Gospel

## III. PARISH BOOK CLUB This year exploring the theme of Hope.

**Meeting time:** Last Wednesday of Month, 10:00—11.20 am.

If you'd like to be added to the email list receive details of how to take part in the online gatherings and to receive updates about further online gatherings in 2020 please contact either Catherine Willis ([catherinecwillis@gmail.com](mailto:catherinecwillis@gmail.com)) or Elizabeth Reedy ([elizabethreedy@msn.com](mailto:elizabethreedy@msn.com)).

**IV. YOUTH:** Please see page 1 for details of an another online gathering for FUSION YOUTH—our high school youth group: next Sunday 14th.

**V. CATHOLICISM: A FAITH DEVELOPMENT COURSE** a renowned audio-visual faith development course coming from the legendary Fr (now Bishop) Robert Barron on the **first and third Wednesdays** of the month **at 7:30pm** via Zoom . If you'd like to join in our parish online sessions contact Fr Colin for details.

**VI. YOUNG ADULTS ('J-WALK')** are gathering online for a fun evening online every few weeks. Next gathering next Sunday 14th. See page 1.

**IF YOU NEED HELP in learning how to take part online in any of these activities please call (9416 7195) or email ([colin@lindfieldkillara.org.au](mailto:colin@lindfieldkillara.org.au)) Fr Colin and he'll be happy to help you to master the technology (it's not hard at all!).**

## ANOTHER REQUEST

It has been a great help to us as a parish during this time when our income is severely reduced that a number of parishioners have responded to our recent appeals to cover the cost of various resources we've needed to purchase in these challenging times.

As people's use of cash is reducing in the new circumstances in which we find ourselves the time has come to provide 'Tap and Go' machines in our Killara church also. There is however a substantial start-up cost in buying the two devices. If you could help us with that please contact Fr Colin or the Parish Office.

## OUR NEW MASS SCHEDULE

**-WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU! -**

However you **MUST BOOK** to attend (you can do that up to 30 minutes before the Mass begins—but given the limited number that can attend you'd be well-advised to do it earlier in the week) as we cannot exceed the maximum number permitted by law and we also are required to keep a record of attendance along with phone no./email address of those who attend for public health purposes for contact tracing in the event of infection. The churches will be locked once Mass begins for this reason.

Please see page 2 for the very simple process of online booking. Or just call the Parish Office if you're not able to do online bookings.

### WEEKENDS

(starting NEXT weekend 13 –14th)

**Killara church (Fr Thomas) :**

4:00pm Vigil  
5:30pm Vigil  
9:00am  
10:30am  
5:30pm Youth Mass

**Lindfield church (Fr Colin) :**

6:00pm Vigil  
8:30am  
10:00am  
11:30am  
6:00pm Youth Mass

### WEEKDAYS

*Once again you MUST BOOK (for the same reasons as given above) and the church will be locked when Mass begins).*

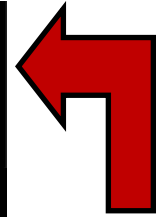
|        |           |      |
|--------|-----------|------|
| Mon.   | Killara   | 10am |
| Tues.  | Killara   | 10am |
| Wed.   | Lindfield | 10am |
| Thur.  | Lindfield | 10am |
| Friday | Lindfield | 10am |

In addition there will be a 12 noon Mass at Killara church on Tuesdays. This Mass however will be limited to ten people and is reserved for those over 70 or with an underlying health condition.

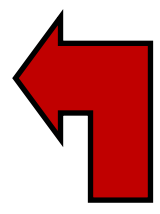
On both weekdays and weekends the churches will be opened **twenty minutes** before the coming celebration of Mass and closed again afterwards until twenty minutes before the next celebration. They will also be **closed during** the celebration of each Mass (exiting the church is of course possible at any time).

See **hotlink box on our website homepage for bookings:**  
[www.lindfieldkillara.org.au](http://www.lindfieldkillara.org.au)

Some of this week's parish online gatherings on Zoom ...

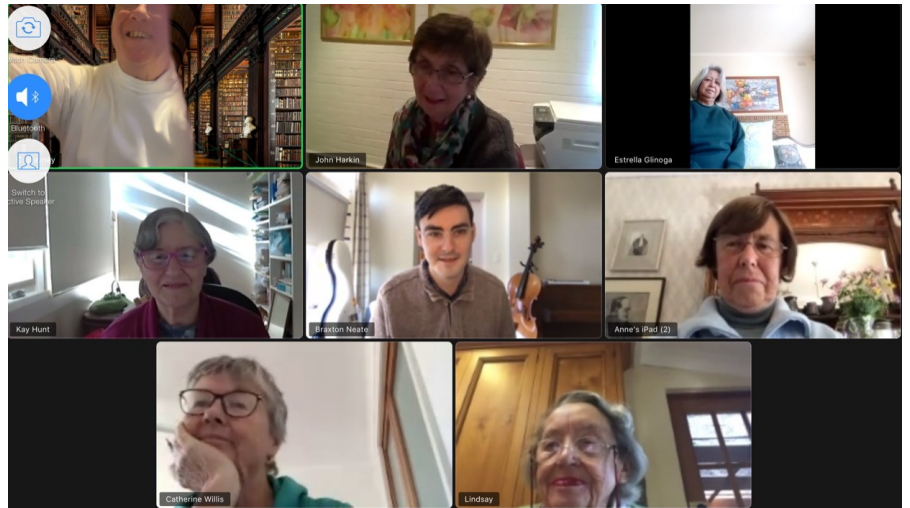
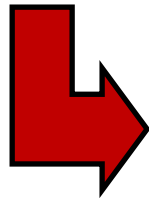


**OUR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL** met last Tuesday evening to consider how, as a parish, we might begin to re-ignite our parish life as restrictions ease.



**CATHOLICISM** group gathered on Wednesday evening for the third session with Bishop Rober Barron's visual stunning series exploring our faith.

**OUR DAYTIME SCRIPTURE STUDY GROUP** gathered on Wednesday to begin reflecting on the Letter to the Ephesians.



**KILLARA DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL GRANTED**

Well after so much hard work by members of our parish the Development Approval for our Killara Development was granted the week before last - so it's full steam ahead. Thanks are especially due to McGregor Grant, who chaired the original Killara Development Committee, and to the other members of that committee, with special thanks to Kylie O'Connor for her tireless work on this project and to our Parish Facilities' Coordinator, Anthony Cassidy, for all that he has done to steer this project to this stage.

Group Homes Australia will shortly begin the works to construct the two dwellings. We should see work underway in the next couple of months. There is no income coming to the parish until the dwellings are occupied—perhaps a year away—but after that our parish finances will receive a much needed and very substantial boost from the rent received—and of course the land itself—and ultimately the houses themselves at the end of the lease term—remain the property of the parish.

*Fr Colin*

六月七日  
五旬節後首主日  
天主聖三節 (節日)

讀經一 (上主, 上主是慈悲寬仁的天主。)  
恭讀出谷紀 34:4-6,8-9

那時候, 梅瑟照上主的吩咐, 清早起  
來, 上了西乃山, 手中拿著兩塊石版。  
上主乘雲降下, 站在梅瑟身旁, 宣告上  
主的名號。上主由梅瑟面前經過時, 大聲喊  
說: 「上主, 上主是慈悲寬仁的天主, 緩於  
發怒, 富於慈愛信實。」

梅瑟急忙俯伏在地朝拜, 說: 「上主,  
如果我真的在你眼中得寵, 求上主與我們同  
行; 這百姓固然執拗, 但求你寬赦我們的過  
犯和罪惡, 以我們作你的產業。」——上主  
的話。

(默想片刻)

答唱詠 達3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56

【答】: 上主, 當受稱揚, 極受讚頌, 直到  
永遠。(達3:52)

領: 上主, 我們祖先的天主, 你當受讚美,  
應受稱揚, 應受讚頌, 直到永遠! 你光  
榮的聖名, 當受讚美, 極受稱揚, 極受  
讚頌, 直到永遠。【答】

領: 你在光榮的聖殿裡, 當受讚美, 極受稱  
揚, 極受光榮, 直到永遠! 【答】

領: 你在你王國的寶座上, 當受讚美, 極受  
稱揚, 極受讚頌, 直到永遠! 【答】

領: 你鑒察深淵, 坐於革魯賈之上, 當受讚

美, 應受稱揚, 極受光榮, 直到永遠!  
【答】

領: 你在天空穹蒼之上, 當受讚美, 應受稱  
揚, 應受光榮, 直到永遠! 【答】

讀經二 (耶穌基督的恩寵, 和天主的愛情,  
及聖神的相通。)

恭讀聖保祿宗徒致格林多人後書 13:11-13  
弟兄姊妹們:

你們要喜樂, 要勉力成全, 要服從勤  
勉, 要同心合意, 要彼此和睦。這樣, 仁愛  
與平安的天主, 必與你們同在。

你們要以聖潔之物, 彼此問候。

這裡的眾聖徒都問候你們。

願主耶穌基督的恩寵, 和天主的愛情,  
及聖神的相通, 常與你們眾人同在。——上  
主的話。

(默想片刻)

福音前歡呼

領: 亞肋路亞。

眾: 亞肋路亞。

領: 光榮歸於父、及子、及聖神; 就是歸於  
那今在、昔在, 及將來永在的全能者、  
上主天主。(參閱默1:8)

眾: 亞肋路亞。

福音 (天主派遣子, 是為叫世界, 藉著他而  
獲救。)

恭讀聖若望福音 3:16-18

天主竟這樣愛了世界, 甚至賜下了自己  
的獨生子, 使凡信他的人不至喪亡, 反而獲

得永生, 因為天主沒有派遣子到世界上來審  
判世界, 而是為叫世界, 藉著他而獲救。那  
信從他的, 不受審判; 那不信的, 已受了審  
判, 因為他沒有信從天主獨生子的名字。——  
上主的話。

(講道後默想片刻)

華人天主教會 北區中心主日彌撒12時-牧職修  
女 司徒金美修女 0419- 426899  
中心聯絡 Gloria Cheung ☎0416-118089

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JUNIOR WORDSEARCH

God sent his Son to save the world

24.10.17

B Z O C N V I I P U D H H B C  
G U L O V E D K W R L I F E R  
O P H S H B I H K Q U I Q W M  
L F C G U D F X F N L A M C W  
N I C O D E M U S J H O I F O  
E D B Q Y H H C O N D E M N R  
E T E R N A L P X C S B P H L  
U Q G O S O D E N E V E R J D  
G K U P Y U N O X O M P L O Q  
D U V Z Q G Q P G F Y Z V H Y  
E W Y A O O L L V T Q S L E R  
N O Z J M D I E K K V E C B Q  
H W A V Q O F A I T H N K R H  
C R E H U J Z P B A W D P B S  
N V F L S A V E R F K O V Q J

Try to find these words:

condemn  
eternal  
faith  
God  
life  
loved  
never  
Nicodemus  
people  
save  
send  
world

## What's happening in our online parish?

### JUNE

|                 |                                 |  |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Sunday 7th      | On demand                       | <b>Parish Mass online (Trinity Sunday)</b>   |
| Wednesday 10th  | 8:00am<br>7:30pm                | <b>Meditation Group</b> See p. 4<br><b>Evening Scripture Study group</b> See p.4   |
| Saturday/Sunday | 13th/14th                       | Parish Masses (bookings required) return to our churches—see <b>page 2</b> . Online Parish Mass also remains available for those whose health or age prevents them attending Mass in person. |
| Sunday 14th     | 6:00-7:00pm<br>7:00-9:00pm      | <b>Fusion Youth</b> (see p.1)<br><b>Young Adults</b> (see p.1)   |
| Wednesday 17th  | 8:00am<br>11:00am<br><br>7:30pm | <b>Meditation Group</b> See p. 4<br><b>Daytime Scripture Study Group</b><br>See p. 4<br><b>Catholicism - Session 4</b><br>See p.4  |

## THE WONDERFUL JULIAN OF NORWICH PART 4

### THERE IS NO ANGER IN GOD

*Author and Episcopal priest Mary Earle explores the difficult questions that beset individuals during Julian's time as well as our own. She writes,*

In a social and cultural context [the fourteenth century was] so saturated with suffering and death, it is no wonder that many believers interpreted these [plagues] as clear signs of God's anger with humanity. (Certainly, we still see vestiges of this way of interpreting events) . . . The underlying theology draws on a medieval doctrine known as substitutionary atonement . . . [which] held (as it still does today) that because of our many sins, we owe God a debt we can never repay—our burden of debt is so vast and we are finite. That is why Jesus, by dying on the cross, offers himself . . . as a sacrifice in order to satisfy the Father's wrath. It is easy to see how this theology in its crudest form evolved into a belief in an angry and vengeful God, visiting humanity with punishing events.

Thus in Julian's day popular devotional art often depicted horrific scenes of the Last Judgment, scenes in which souls were being cast into hell, tortured endlessly by devils. Laymen and [lay]women of the fourteenth century would have constantly been wrestling with the "Why?" of suffering and the wrath of God. . . . When someone receives a terminal diagnosis, or a sudden death occurs, or a natural disaster

devastates a region, the first question that occurs is usually, "Why me?" . . . The context out of which Julian writes, although in some ways so remote from our own, is one full of universal questions and themes. . . .

*One of Julian's most radical insights, with which I fully concur, is that there can be no wrath in God. Mary Earle continues,*

Julian's radical insistence that we know there is "no anger in God" directs us all to look at ways in which we project our own bitterness, anger, and vengeance upon God. In a resolutely maternal way, she encourages us to grow up, to cast aside our immature and punitive images of God, and to be honest with ourselves about our own actions that have their roots in spiritual blindness. . . .

Julian tells us, again and again, in a variety of ways, that God is our friend, our mother and our father, as close to us as the clothing we wear. She employs homely imagery and language, the vocabulary of domesticity, to tell us her experience. At the same time, she demonstrates a degree of sophisticated theological language. Julian is firm and steady on these points: God is One.

Everything is in God.  
God is in everything.  
God transcends and encloses all that is made.

*The only point I would add to that list from my own study of Julian is that she really believes that God is Love.*

*Fr Richard Rohr ofm*

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**Principal:** Mr Lou Dogao **Phone:** 9416 7200  
**Email:** [info@holyfamily.nsw.edu.au](mailto:info@holyfamily.nsw.edu.au)

## Lord, in Jesus your Son, you restored to us the gift of everlasting life. Grant that life to:

**Recently deceased:** Chris Pulle, Marj Steffel, John Yun, Jack Biviano, Angela Ying Fung Yim, Patrick Fitzpatrick, Joyce Antelman, Jean Groves, John Cashman, Julie Wright, Maria Ciong KN, Joyce Murphy, Eleanor Villenor Quema, **And for:** Sylvia Dobbie.

### PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:

Nicholas Sutherland, Jesse Langford, Anthony Ellison, Ron Burke, Nena Umali, Wolfgang Liers, Cyril Ferriere, Alex Noble, William Wise, Lise Therese Ferriere, Ian Coffey, Maureen Hobbs, Russell Adams.

**And for all those affected by COVID-19.**

*"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you"*

**THE RICHNESS OF THE MYSTERY OF GOD**

GK Chesterton once said that one of the reasons he believed in Christianity was because of its belief in the trinity. If Christianity had been made up by human person, it would not have at its very centre a concept that is impossible to grasp or explain: the idea that God exists as one but in three persons.

How do we understand the trinity? We don't! God, by definition, is ineffable, beyond conceptualisation, beyond imagination, beyond language. The Christian belief that God is a trinity helps underscore how rich the mystery of God is and how our experience of God is always richer than our concepts and language about God.

This is already evident in the history of religion. From the beginning, humans have always had an experience of God & have worshipped God. However, from the very beginning too, humans have also had the sense that God is too rich & too-beyond any one set of categories to be captured in any human conception.

Hence most ancient peoples were polytheistic. They believed in many gods and goddesses. They experienced divine energy and the need to celebrate divine energy in many different areas of their lives and had gods and goddesses to accommodate that. Thus they had gods and goddesses for every longing and every circumstance, from war, through growing crops, through sex, through understanding why your father wouldn't bless you, there was a god or goddess to whom you could turn.

Sometimes they believed in one supreme god who ultimately ruled over lesser gods & goddesses, but they sensed that divine energy was too rich a reality to be contained in a single being. They believed too that sometimes the gods were at war with each other. As well, their gods & goddesses often times messed around within human lives, making special deals with humans, having affairs, sometimes even having children with them.

Many of the most powerful myths ever told arose out of the experience of God's overwhelming richness and the ancient peoples' incapacity to conceptualise God and God's activity in any singular way. Whatever else might be said about polytheism and ancient myths about the gods and goddesses, ancient religious practices and the incredible canon of mythology that these produced speak of how rich, untamed, and beyond simplistic imagination and language is the human experience of God. The ancients believed that their experience pointed to the existence of many deities.

And then a massive shift took place: Judaism, soon followed by Christianity and Islam, introduced the strong, clear, doctrinaire idea that there is only one God. Now all divine power and energy was seen as coming from a single source, monotheism, Yhwh, the Father of Jesus, Allah. There were no other gods or goddesses.

But from the time of Jesus' resurrection onwards, Christians began to struggle with simple monotheism. They believed that there is still only one God, but their experience of God demanded that they believe that this God was somehow "three." Stated simply, when Jesus rose from the dead Christians immediately began to attribute divinity to him, yet without identifying him as God the Father. Jesus was understood to be God, but somehow different from the Father. Moreover, inside of their experience, they sensed still a third divine energy which they couldn't fully identify with either Jesus or God the Father, the Holy Spirit.

This experience left them in a curious and sometimes perplexed state: They were monotheists, God alone was God. Yet, Jesus too was God, as was the Holy Spirit. Their experience of grace and God's action in the world was at odds with their simplistic conception of monotheism.

God was one and yet God was somehow three. How to fit this together? It took Christianity three hundred years to finally arrive at a formula that somehow honored the richness of the Christian experience of God. The Council of Nicea in 325 gave us the creedal formula we profess today: there is one God in three persons; except they wrote that formula in Greek and the words there state literally that God is one substance in three subsistent relations.

That formula isn't meant to give us perfect clarity. No formula can ever capture the reality of God because God is too rich to ever be captured, even half adequately, in imagination, thought, and word. The God that atheism rejects is precisely a conceptualised God, a God captured in a picture. In the end, atheism is less faithful to human experience than was polytheism which more rightly sensed deity, gods and goddesses, hidden under every rock.

To what does this call us? To humility. All of us, believers and atheists, need to be more humble in our language about God. The idea of God needs to stretch, not shrink, the human imagination. Our actual experience of God, just as for ancient polytheism, is forever eating away at all simplistic conceptions of God.

Thank God, for the complexity of the doctrine of the Trinity!

*Fr Ron Rolheiser omi (The Centre for Liturgy, University of St Louis)*



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