



By **Monica Pazniewki**

Spiritual dryness is something I'm sure a lot of us can relate to. On the feast of her birthday last month, Our Lady was kind enough to give me some little lights of hope, amidst a season of dryness, which I would love to share with you.

On this feast, I attended a Bible study run by Gosford Parish. The video we watched began by explaining the historical context of the Bible. As we virtually toured the streets of Rome, our host pointed out the place where Saint Paul had spent two years under house arrest. Whilst this statement was made rather casually, it strongly resonated with me as a resident of NSW, the state which is 4 months into a 2 week lock down. Saint Paul's house arrest was ironically a very fruitful time for him as he managed to write 4 epistles. These letters spiritually enriched not only Philemon, the Ephesians, the Colossians and the Philippians, but billions of people even thousands of years later! Talk about a productive lock down! This was very inspiring for me to also use my lock down to pray, and reach out to people whose souls thirst for more than what this world can offer.

As we continued our virtual tour of Jerusalem, we saw a model of the temple that Jesus preached in, and that Jews frequently visited. Our guide explained where the Ark of the Covenant used to be kept. This box housed the ten commandments and served as the only physical manifestation of God on earth. How utterly shattered the Jewish people must have been when the Ark disappeared!! How devastating to have lost this great gift. BUT, the loss of the Ark was all within God's plan to prepare the Jewish people to receive His own son, Jesus into the world. This inspired me in two ways. Firstly, during this time when we cannot receive the sacraments, I can definitely relate to the Jews who had lost the Ark of the Covenant. But I trust that this is all within God's plan. He may be preparing our hearts to receive Jesus when He comes again. I'm not suggesting that this will come any time soon, it may be another 600 years as with the Ark! But I will not let this opportunity to prepare my heart pass me by none the less. Secondly, it makes me even more grateful for the great gift that is the Eucharist. We no longer have to rely on the Ark of the Covenant as the only physical manifestation of God on Earth. Every hour, there are hundreds of masses celebrated around the world. They constantly bring us to Jesus, and His sacrifice on Calvary to us. No matter what happens, I am assured that it is all within God's loving plan to be reunited with us in Heaven.

Monica Pazniewki is a life long parishioner at Hornsby Cathedral. Monica is a physiotherapist and piano teacher with a love for the Catholic faith. She has a particular passion for the pro-life movement as well as the work of the Culture Project. Monica is getting married later this year and is very excited to pursue this beautiful vocation.