



MANLY FRESHWATER..CATHOLIC PARISH

Mary Immaculate and St John the Baptist Churches

Third Sunday of Easter - 26th April 2020

Dear Friends,

How are you going? What Good News! From this weekend we are now able to have more contact with family and friends. I know it has been difficult for us to cope with this isolation from our families, friends and usual activities.

It seems to me that much has changed over these last six weeks not only in the way we gather and worship at Church, but also in the ways we live and relate to each other. Is it something that is better, or worse, or uncertain and still working it out?

We all as individuals, family and Parish Family need to use this time to reflect on this, guided by the Lord's Holy Spirit.

The attached reflection "The lessons from COVID-19" from Boston in the USA might be a starting point.

Best wishes from Fr Paul and Fr David. We are going OK and look forward to seeing you soon.

Life lessons from COVID-19

It's been a difficult and trying Easter for all of us, but columnist Yvonne Abraham, writing in **The Boston Globe** [March 25, 2020], wonders if this Easter could be the beginning of something extraordinary:

"What would the world be like if the things that have become so important to us during this pandemic remained so? How would our lives look, if our values and priorities were frozen, right here? If we were always as kind to each other, and as worried about the world, as we are today?

"We would do just about everything differently.

"We would pay teachers (blessings be upon them!) as much as hedge-funders.

"Our hands would always be so clean, we could eat off them.

"We would have more respect, and money, for low-wage workers who deliver our basic needs: grocery store clerks and others who work to bring food to our tables; drivers who keep bringing packages to the doors of the luckiest among us; trash haulers and maintenance workers and janitors and others who put themselves at risk to protect us.

"We would really see the folks who work in restaurants, most of them for lousy money, and insist that they earn wages that match their dignity.

"We would leave bigger tips . . .

"We would spend less money on things that serve no purpose except to signal status, care less about impressing strangers, make more of what we have left. We would waste less, period . . .

"We would spend more time with our family and friends and be more keenly aware of our massive good fortune to have them, especially the older ones. We would hug longer, and linger in each other's presence

"We would love our neighbor. Yep, even *that* one.

"We would work together to make those who are alone feel less so . . .

"We would be more grateful for all we have, and more outraged at what others do not.

"We would — will — be happier on the other side of this.

"If we remember"

Continued on page 2

LIVE STREAMING OF MASS

Facebook and YouTube – [manlyfreshwaterparish](https://www.facebook.com/manlyfreshwaterparish)

Youtube – access through playlist

Saturday 6pm Mass

Parish Pastoral Council: Paul Pervan (Chair), Ian Press (Deputy Chair), Margaret Dent (Secretary), Ivica Covic; Laurie de Ambrosio; Joanne Druery; Robert Marshall; Michael McGrath

St Mary's Primary School 9977 2225 Principal: Paul McGuire

St John the Baptist Primary School 9939 6699 Principal: Judy Slattery

St Paul's Catholic College 9977 5111 Principal: Chris Browne

Stella Maris College 9977 5144 Principal: Elizabeth Carnegie

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In the most difficult challenges of our lives — COVID-19 included — Christ the Good Shepherd speaks amid the turmoil and fear. If we listen with open hearts, we can hear Christ speaking in those small acts of kindness, forgiveness and justice that eventually get us beyond those obstacles. In today's Gospel, Jesus calls himself the "gate," the entry way, for us to God, the passage through which we step from the reality of our imperfect, incomplete world to the reality of the perfect holiness of God. May we learn the lessons of compassion and justice that these demanding days are teaching us, resolving to bring our new appreciation of the humanity we share into every Easter season to come.

Connections/ MediaWorks

May 2020

Mon 4/5 – 4th week of Easter

Year A

Acts 11:1-18; Jn 10:11-18

Tue 5/5 – 4th week of Easter

Acts 11:19-26; Jn 10:22-30

Wed 6/5 – 4th week of Easter

Acts 12:24 – 13:5; Jn 12:44-50

Thurs 7/5 – 4th week of Easter

Acts 13:13-25; Jn 13:16-20

Fri 8/5 – 4th week of Easter

Acts 13:26-33; Jn 14:1-6

Sat 9/5 – 4th week of Easter

Acts 13:44-52; Jn 14:7-14

Sun 10/5 – Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 6:1-7; 1 Pet 2:4-9; Jn 14:1-12

LET US PRAY FOR

3rd May 2020

Recently Deceased: Fr Pat McAuliffe

Anniversary:

Prayers for the sick in our parish: Eugenia Cavazzoni, Gavin Greenwood, Zacchaeus Emmanuel Joseph Ratnam; Mark Taylor; Kay Flenady; Leon Cochrane; Robina Dwyer; Ann Irvin; Prionsias Kearney; Brian Davies; Majella McLoughlin; Debbie Vernon; Desmond Connors; Lauren Hannahan; Rosalba Galuis; Vanessa Squirrell; Judith McKenzie; Jonathan Keil; Les Reilly; Wayne Smedley; Margaret Burridge; John Beninati



Pope Francis Being poor in spirit, mourning, meekness, thirsting for holiness, showing mercy, purity of heart, and being a peacemaker can lead to persecution for Christ's sake. But in the end, this persecution is a cause for joy and great reward in heaven. #Beatitudes

Parish Priest: Fr David Taylor

Assistant Priest: Fr Paul Kim

Parish Secretaries: Jenny Beninati & Paula Martin

Pastoral Coordinator: Michelle Ellis

Administration Office:

After Hours Urgent Sick Calls: 0499 910 010

Presbytery: 9977 2100

manlyfreshwaterparish@bbcatholic.org.au

www.bbcatholic.org.au/manlyfreshwater

Reconciliation: Manly Sat 10am – 11am

PARISH SOCIAL MEDIA

Parish facebook:

facebook.com/manlyfreshwaterparish

YouTube: Manlyfreshwaterparish

Or bit.ly/2EIGEu7 or frpaulkim

(one word with no space). You can view the YouTube videos thru the parish facebook, click on the link

Parish website:

bbcatholic.org.au/manlyfreshwater

HOLY WATER – Blessed "holy water" is really Easter water, the water of Baptism. Fr David has blessed holy water which is available to anyone who would like to bring a container to collect some. The Urn with the water will be in the foyer of the Parish Centre.

PIETY STORE MANLY



As You are aware the Church is closed but the Piety store will continue to operate. If you would like to purchase any items please call into the Parish Office during working hours. The Piety Store has a wide range of goods including Bibles, Divine Mercy items, rosaries, CD's and much more



Home Delivery - Last weekend around 60

bulletins were delivered to our Parishioners who do not have access to the internet. If you are able to spare some time on Friday to deliver some bulletins, please call the Parish Office on 9977 5822.

THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY

Now available to everyone online at www.catholicweekly.com.au

Visiting sick at home - If you, or if you know of anyone who are unwell and would like a home visit please contact the parish office 9977 5822 to organise for Communion or Anointing.

Sacrament of Reconciliation Saturdays 10am -11am in the Parish Centre at Manly

Manly Freshwater Parish promotes **SAFEGUARDING** which involves the implementation of proactive, common sense and practical ideas that ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults in our community



The Keep in Touch Project

Dear Friends,

Here at Manly Freshwater Parish we aim to find new ways of witnessing to God's love in our Community.

During the COVID 19 pandemic most of us have had to stay at home in lockdown.

I am now becoming more aware that many of us are finding that this self isolation is really hard going.

The Keep in Touch Project is one way in which our Parish can reach out to fellow parishioners to let them know that they have not been forgotten or abandoned.

What we hope to set up is a program involving a small group of volunteers from within the Parish who will telephone Parishioners in their homes to check how they are going and also where appropriate to offer practical help such as shopping for essential goods.

If you like to know more about getting involved please contact the Parish Office on 9977 5822 or email manlyfreshwaterparish@bbcatholic.org.au.

Fr David

ARE YOU ALONE AT HOME and would like a friendly call or help with some shopping?

Please let us know by contacting the Parish Office 9977 5822 or manlyfreshwaterparish@bbcatholic.org.au.



St Vincent De Paul Notice during COVID-19 lockdown

For assistance with food, clothing or other emergencies please call St Vincent de Paul Northern Beaches Regional Office 9905 0424.

If you would like to donate non perishable food, it can be dropped off at 684 Pittwater Road, Brookvale- rear entrance (off the carpark)

If you wish to donate clothing it will be accepted at the SVDP Shop Brookvale, Rogers Street, between 9am - 3pm.

Learning from Home SRE Lessons

The Department of Education has approved the continuation of SRE classes during the COVID-19 period via a Learning from Home model.

Our Diocesan CCD team have been working hard to adapt lessons into PowerPoint format so that they can be delivered online. Schools will be able to share a link to the lessons on our website so that students and families can easily access these lessons at home

Catholic SRE lessons are available online at the following link: [Catholic SRE Online](#)



SUPPORTING YOUR PARISH THROUGH COVID-19

Even though we are unable to gather together

for Mass on Sundays, much of the life of the parish is continuing. Most of our parish income comes from your donations given at Mass, either in planned giving envelopes, direct debit or loose on the second collection as well as your generous support of our Priests through the first collection.

As there are no Sunday Masses during the present shutdown our parish income has therefore dropped dramatically. Like many we have reduced our costs in parish and presbytery expenses. We are also accessing assistance from the Governments JobKeeper Program. However, unfortunately most of our costs are fixed, such as insurance, utilities, IT contracts, phone lines and Parish maintenance and repairs.

For those on Planned Giving Program through credit cards and direct debt, we are very grateful for your continued support.

For those who have supported us for many years by placing your donations or envelopes on the collection plate, we couldn't exist without you. In our parish, your contributions make up a major part of our income.

While our two Churches are closed we ask those of you who normally make their offerings in cash or through the envelopes on the plate, to please consider using our Planned Giving Program by **Credit Card**. If you would like to contribute by Credit Card please contact the Parish Office on 9977 5822 or manlyfreshwaterparish@bbcatholic.org.au.



Alternatively, you can make a donation **directly to our Parish Bank Accounts**. (details below)

Parish Bank Account -2nd collection funds the running of the Parish

Acc Name: Manly Freshwater Parish

Bank Name: Commonwealth Bank

Acc# 13958001

BSB: 062 784 Please include your name as reference or envelope number

Parish Bank Account -1st collection Support of our Priests

Acc Name: Manly Freshwater Parish Pastoral

Bank Name: Commonwealth Bank

Acc# 13958002

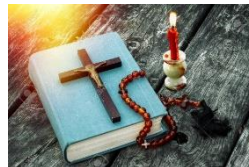
BSB - 062 784

Your regular donation will give the parish a reliable income so that we can be here to support people who are in need right now, and to be ready for you when we can worship and celebrate the Liturgy again together.

I am very grateful for your continued prayers and support. You are in my daily prayers. *Fr David*


Congratulations!

Congratulations to Peter Richmond and Stephanie Kerr who were married earlier this month at St Mary's Church. In keeping with the government requirements there were only 5 people, including Fr David as celebrant and Stephanie's parents were witnesses. Despite not being the wedding they had planned many months ago, it was a beautiful and joyful celebration.



The Mass is streamed live each Week –here are some suggestions on how to watch the Mass online in a spiritual and fruitful way:

- Prepare yourself and take time out of your Saturday night or Sunday to watch the Mass.
- Create a prayer space:
 - Include symbols such as a Cross, Rosary beads, a Bible or even flowers;
 - Light a candle;
 - Foster an atmosphere that allows for reflection, praise, thanksgiving and intercession.
- Be fully present and participate in the Mass as much as possible
 - Make the Sign of the Cross;
 - Sit down, stand and kneel at the appropriate times;
 - Join in the responses as you would normally;
 - Read the Readings for the Mass;
 - Sing hymns and songs;
 - Recite the prayer for spiritual communion.
 - Remain in silence and reflect prayerfully for

Laudate (App) This free App has a large number of resources at hand, including the day's Readings; the Liturgy of the Hours; the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Prayers. Download for Apple and Android.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference information online about streamed Masses and prayers on ACBC website in coronavirus portal: www.catholic.org.au/coronavirus

Pray As You Go Start the day with a reflection on the day's Reading, with music, Scripture reading, and guided reflection. A simple way to connect with the Church's liturgy and to bring God into your day. Approximately 15 minutes. <https://pray-as-you-go.org/> or download App on Apple or Android

Great News – our Parish has been successful in being rewarded a \$3,000 Heritage Grant from Northern Beaches Council's Local Heritage Fund with the financial assistance of the NSW Heritage Office (State Government), the funds go towards the cost of renovating the stone work at the eastern end of the Church which was completed in December 2018. We thank our Parish Pastoral Council for supporting this application and in particular Laurie de Ambrosis for doing all the onerous paperwork.

And remember that

*WE ARE THE CHURCH –
 A CHURCH THAT WILL NEVER BE CLOSED*

Reflection



Today is known as Good Shepherd Sunday, for the Gospel is always taken from St John, where Jesus speaks of himself as the 'Good Shepherd'.

A shepherd leads his flock and Jesus is the shepherd who leads his followers. The sheep know his voice, trust him, and will follow only him, especially at this difficult time.

In the First Reading, Peter proclaims to the crowd that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. They are invited to have faith in Christ, and by repenting and being baptised, they will be forgiven. Peter reminds them that God's promise is for everyone.

This familiar Psalm demonstrates the hope and trust of the psalmist in the Lord who is my shepherd, and who cares for me providing guidance, comfort and rest.

In the Second Reading, Peter continues encouraging the people to follow Christ's example and to put their trust in God, particularly when times are difficult or unjust. By dying on the cross and rising from the dead he has healed us and brought us back to God.

Jesus tells his disciples – and us – that he is the gate of the sheepfold; it is in following him that we can have the fullness of life. (Gospel)

In my prayer this week, I may want to take time to speak to Jesus as my shepherd and reflect on what that means for me. I can also consider how I am responding to the way Jesus is calling me, and pray that others also hear his invitation.

Pathways to God 2020



Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are in the Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I long for You in my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though You have already come, I embrace You and unite myself entirely to You; never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.



*A letter to Parents and Carers in the
Diocese of Broken Bay from
Bishop Anthony Randazzo*

Monday 27 April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Greetings of peace to you and your families.

As our schools prepare for the start of the second term, I write to you today, to update you on the significant work underway within our schools in our Diocese, that is of particular importance.

At the outset, I wish to again assure each of you of my prayers and support in these challenging times, and that I continue to be particularly mindful of you, as parents and carers. It is important we in the Diocese of Broken Bay have a spirit of service and that we provide support to parents during these challenging times. The safety of your children is paramount to everything we are doing. You have entrusted them to the care of our Catholic schools, and I wish to continue to assure you that every consideration is being given to their protection.

Additionally, I am enormously grateful for the dedication and hard work of our teachers and staff who work in our schools, as well as the Catholic Schools Office.

In all aspects, our response to the challenges presented by COVID-19 needs to be informed and consistent with the values and teachings that underpin Catholic education. In service to our students and parents, and despite the uncertainty, I am mindful that it is essential we respond to these needs and concerns, promptly and with clarity.

In our Diocese, we support an early, safe and orderly return to school. This is critical for our students and is understandably a high priority for you, as parents. The key elements that will guide the return of students to school are:

- Ensuring a safe environment for our staff and students;
- Maximising learning outcomes and recovering, to the extent possible, any lost learning, with special priority to Year 12, early years and vulnerable students;
- Providing support for our principals, teachers and all school staff;
- Responding to the needs of parents, especially those under financial stress; and
- Capturing learnings so we can enhance what we do post COVID-19.

Term 2 arrangements for families

Our Catholic schools are preparing for a phased approach to students returning to school during Term 2. Our aim is to return to normal operations with all student learning at school as soon as possible from Week 3. At all times, the safety of

students and staff will be a major consideration, including extra levels of hygiene and cleaning.

From Monday 11 May, all students will have an opportunity each week for some face-to-face learning, increasing over the early weeks of the term. Principals will be mindful of the needs of individual groups of students, including HSC students in our secondary schools, and young learners in our primary schools.

As students return to the school environment, they will benefit from the opportunity to socialise within a safe environment and re-engage with the faith community of their school and parish in a hope filled way.

Fee Relief

A Fee Relief package is also an essential element for those families who need assistance due to COVID-19.

While our schools rely upon the support of our families, I have asked that at this time, we do all we can to support those suffering immediate financial hardship. It is with this in mind, I have approved new initiatives that will be implemented immediately, and are targeted specifically to families in greatest need, as a result of financial stress.

In short, the Fee Relief program provides:

1. A full reduction on fees, building levies and school-based charges for Terms 2 and 3 for any family in receipt of the JobSeeker payment.
2. A partial reduction of at least 50% on fees, building levies and school-based charges for any family where one parent member is in receipt of the JobKeeper payment.
3. Deferment of payment of any fees until January 2021 for any family who, under COVID-19 related financial stress, requests additional time to pay outstanding fees.

The approach will be implemented by Mr Danny Casey, Interim Director of Schools and his staff in the Catholic Schools Office, in close collaboration with our principals, and will require minimal paperwork, recognising the unique circumstances we are experiencing. The need to extend the support beyond Term 3 will continue to be assessed, with an update to be provided to all families prior to the end of the Term 3.

Thank you again for your support of our schools and our staff who are working to serve and support you during these difficult times. Please be assured we stand with you as we work through the challenges.

I continue to hold you, your children and your families daily in my prayer.

*Sincerely yours in Christ,
Most Rev Anthony Randazzo DD JCL
Bishop of Broken Bay*



**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE FRANCIS
FOR THE 2020 WORLD DAY OF
VOCATIONS
(3 May 2020)**

Words of Vocation

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On 4 August last year, the 160th anniversary of the death of the Curé of Ars, I chose to write a letter to all those priests who daily devote their lives to the service of God's people in response to the Lord's call.

On that occasion, I chose four key words – *pain, gratitude, encouragement* and *praise* – as a way of thanking priests and supporting their ministry. I believe that today, on this 57th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, those words can be addressed to the whole people of God, against the backdrop of the Gospel passage that recounts for us the remarkable experience of Jesus and Peter during a stormy night on the Sea of Galilee (cf. *Mt 14:22-33*).

After the multiplication of the loaves, which had astonished the crowds, Jesus told his disciples to get into the boat and precede him to the other shore, while he took leave of the people. The image of the disciples crossing the lake can evoke our own life's journey. Indeed, the boat of our lives slowly advances, restlessly looking for a safe haven and prepared to face the perils and promises of the sea, yet at the same time trusting that the helmsman will ultimately keep us on the right course. At times, though, the boat can drift off course, misled by mirages, not the lighthouse that leads it home, and be tossed by the tempests of difficulty, doubt and fear.

Something similar takes place in the hearts of those who, called to follow the Teacher of Nazareth, have to undertake a crossing and abandon their own security to become the Lord's disciples. The risk involved is real: the night falls, the headwinds howl, the boat is tossed by the waves, and fear of failure, of not being up to the call, can threaten to overwhelm them.

The Gospel, however, tells us that in the midst of this challenging journey we are not alone. Like the first ray of dawn in the heart of the night, the Lord comes walking on the troubled waters to join the disciples; he invites Peter to come to him on the waves, saves him when he sees him sinking and, once in the boat, makes the winds die down.

The first word of vocation, then, is *gratitude*. Taking the right course is not something we do on our own, nor does it depend solely on the road we choose to travel. How we find fulfilment in life is more than a decision we make as isolated individuals; above all else, it is a response to a call from on high. The Lord points out our destination on the opposite shore and he grants us the courage to board the boat. In calling us, he becomes our helmsman; he accompanies and guides us; he prevents us from running aground on the shoals

of indecision and even enables us to walk on surging waters.

Every vocation is born of that gaze of love with which the Lord came to meet us, perhaps even at a time when our boat was being battered by the storm. "Vocation, more than our own choice, is a response to the Lord's unmerited call" (*Letter to Priests*, 4 August 2019). We will succeed in discovering and embracing our vocation once we open our hearts in gratitude and perceive the passage of God in our lives.

When the disciples see Jesus walking towards them on the sea, they first think that he is a ghost and are filled with fear. Jesus immediately reassures them with words that should constantly accompany our lives and our vocational journey: "Take heart, it is I; have no fear" (*Mt 14:27*). This, then, is the second word I wish to offer you: *encouragement*.

What frequently hinders our journey, our growth, our choosing the road the Lord is marking out for us, are certain "ghosts" that trouble our hearts. When we are called to leave safe shores and embrace a state of life – like marriage, ministerial priesthood, consecrated life – our first reaction is often from the "ghost of disbelief". Surely, this vocation is not for me! Can this really be the right path? Is the Lord really asking me to do this?

Those thoughts can keep growing – justifications and calculations that sap our determination and leave us hesitant and powerless on the shore where we started. We think we might be wrong, not up to the challenge, or simply glimpsing a ghost to be exorcized.

The Lord knows that a fundamental life choice – like marriage or special consecration to his service – calls for *courage*. He knows the questions, doubts and difficulties that toss the boat of our heart, and so he reassures us: "Take heart, it is I; have no fear!" We know in faith that he is present and comes to meet us, that he is ever at our side even amid stormy seas. This knowledge sets us free from that lethargy which I have called "sweet sorrow" (*Letter to Priests*, 4 August 2019), the interior discouragement that hold us back from experiencing the beauty of our vocation.

In the *Letter to Priests*, I also spoke about pain, but here I would like to translate the word differently, as *fatigue*. Every vocation brings with it a responsibility. The Lord calls us because he wants to enable us, like Peter, to "walk on water", in other words, to take charge of our lives and place them at the service of the Gospel, in the concrete and everyday ways that he shows us, and specifically in the different forms of lay, priestly and consecrated vocation. Yet, like Saint Peter, our desire and enthusiasm coexist with our failings and fears.

If we let ourselves be daunted by the responsibilities that await us – whether in married life or priestly ministry – or by the hardships in store for us, then we will soon turn away from the gaze of Jesus and, like Peter, we will begin to sink. On the other hand, despite

our frailty and poverty, faith enables us to walk towards the Risen Lord and to weather every storm. Whenever fatigue or fear make us start to sink, Jesus holds out his hand to us. He gives us the enthusiasm we need to live our vocation with joy and fervour.

When Jesus at last boards the boat, the winds die down and the waves are calmed. Here we have a beautiful image of what the Lord can do at times of turbulence and tempest in our lives. He stills those winds, so that the forces of evil, fear and resignation no longer have power over us.

As we live out our specific vocation, those headwinds can wear us down. Here I think of all those who have important responsibilities in civil society, spouses whom I like to refer to – not without reason – as “courageous”, and in a particular way those who have embraced the consecrated life or the priesthood. I am conscious of your hard work, the sense of isolation that can at times weigh upon your hearts, the risk of falling into a rut that can gradually make the ardent flame of our vocation die down, the burden of the uncertainty and insecurity of the times, and worry about the future. Take heart, do not be afraid! Jesus is at our side, and if we acknowledge him as the one Lord of our lives, he will stretch out his hand, take hold of us and save us.

Even amid the storm-tossed waters, then, our lives become open to *praise*. This is the last of our vocation words, and it is an invitation to cultivate the interior disposition of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Grateful that Lord gazed upon her, faithful amid fear and turmoil, she courageously embraced her vocation and made of her life an eternal song of praise to the Lord.

Dear friends, on this day in particular, but also in the ordinary pastoral life of our communities, I ask the Church to continue to promote vocations. May she touch the hearts of the faithful and enable each of them to discover with gratitude God’s call in their lives, to find courage to say “yes” to God, to overcome all weariness through faith in Christ, and to make of their lives a song of praise for God, for their brothers and sisters, and for the whole world. May the Virgin Mary accompany us and intercede for us.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 8 March 2020,
the Second Sunday of Lent

Franciscus



Seminarians of Broken Bay 2020,
Fr Paul Durkin, Vocations Director &
Fr Stephen Wayoyi Assistant Vocations Director

“Alleluia, alleluia! I am the good shepherd, says the Lord; I know my sheep, and mine know me Alleluia!”
Jn 10:14. Does a life of joy in knowing you are following the Lord as a priest, deacon or in the consecrated life inspire you? Contact the Vocation Office at 0418 522 449 or email: vocations.ministry@bbcatholic.org.au

Prayer for Vocation by Pope Francis

Lord of Harvest,
Bless young people with the gift of courage to respond to your call.
Open their hearts to great ideals, to great things.
Inspire all of your disciples to mutual love and giving-for vocations blossom in the good soil of faithful people
Instil those in religious life, parish ministries, and families with the confidence and grace to invite others to embrace the bold and noble path of a life consecrated to you.
Unite us to Jesus through prayer and sacrament, so that we may cooperate with you in building your reign of mercy and truth, of justice and peace. Amen





Pray the rosary to ask for end to pandemic, says Pope

by Cindy Wooden, CNS

Pope Francis has asked Catholics to make a special effort in May to pray the rosary, knowing that by doing so they will be united with believers around the world asking for Mary's intercession in stopping the coronavirus pandemic.

"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," the pope said in a letter addressed to all Catholics and released by the Vatican.

The month of May is traditionally devoted to Mary and many Catholics already are in the habit of praying the rosary at home during the month, he noted. "The restrictions of the pandemic have made us come to appreciate all the more this 'family' aspect, also from a spiritual point of view.

"You can decide according to your own situations" whether to pray individually or in groups, he said, noting that "it is easy also on the internet to find good models of prayers to follow."

Pope Francis wrote two prayers to Mary that can be recited at the end of the rosary, prayers he said he would be reciting "in spiritual union with all of you."

Both prayers acknowledge Mary's closeness to her son's followers and ask for her protection and for her intercession just as she interceded with Jesus on behalf of the newlyweds at Cana who had run out of wine for their wedding feast.

"We know that you will provide, so that, as at Cana in Galilee, joy and celebration may return after this time of trial," one of the prayers read.

Pope Francis' prayers also include specific intentions for those who are sick, for those who care for them, for those who have died and those who mourn for them, for scientists seeking cures and vaccines and for government leaders who must find a way to protect their people.

"Mary Most Holy, stir our consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on promoting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future," one of the prayers said.

"Beloved Mother, help us realise that we are all members of one great family and to recognise the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need," it continued. "Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer."

First Prayer

O Mary,
You shine continuously on our journey
as a sign of salvation and hope.
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,
who, at the foot of the cross,
were united with Jesus' suffering,
and persevered in your faith.

"Protectress of the Roman people",
you know our needs,
and we know that you will provide,
so that, as at Cana in Galilee,
joy and celebration may return
after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform ourselves to the will of the Father
and to do what Jesus tells us.
For he took upon himself our suffering,
and burdened himself with our sorrows
to bring us, through the cross,
to the joy of the Resurrection.
Amen.

We fly to your protection,
O Holy Mother of God;
Do not despise our petitions
in our necessities,
but deliver us always
from every danger,
O Glorious and Blessed Virgin.

Second Prayer

"We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God".

In the present tragic situation, when the whole world is prey to suffering and anxiety, we fly to you, Mother of God and our Mother, and seek refuge under your protection.

Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes towards us amid this coronavirus pandemic. Comfort those who are distraught and mourn their loved ones who have died, and at times are buried in a way that grieves them deeply. Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who, in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them. Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment.

Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the Father of mercies, that this great suffering may end and that hope and peace may dawn anew. Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust.

Protect those doctors, nurses, health workers and volunteers who are on the frontline of this emergency, and are risking their lives to save others. Support their heroic effort and grant them strength, generosity and continued health.

Be close to those who assist the sick night and day, and to priests who, in their pastoral concern and fidelity to the Gospel, are trying to help and support everyone.

Blessed Virgin, illumine the minds of men and women engaged in scientific research, that they may find effective solutions to overcome this virus.

Support national leaders, that with wisdom, solicitude and generosity they may come to the aid of those lacking the basic necessities of life and may devise social and economic solutions inspired by farsightedness and solidarity.

Mary Most Holy, stir our consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on promoting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

Beloved Mother, help us realize that we are all members of one great family and to recognize the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need. Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer.

Mary, Consolation of the afflicted, embrace all your children in distress and pray that God will stretch out his all-powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course.

To you, who shine on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope, do we entrust ourselves, O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary. Amen.

By Pope Francis.

**The month
of May,
dedicated to
Mary, is a
fitting time
to begin to
recite the
rosary daily.
~ Pope
Francis**



Is aloneness part of the Christian life?

The Puritan Daniel Defoe's 1719 novel *Robinson Crusoe* narrates the story of a truly lonely human being. Stranded on a tropical island, with none but his own thoughts for company, his solitude is at first a torture to him, and he verges on madness and depression.

As he recovers, he sits and contemplates his situation. If God was the maker and ruler of all things, then "Why has God done this to me?"

But then his conscience speaks up, almost like a conversation partner, "like a voice": what about his own wayward life? Taking up his Bible (and some tobacco!), he then finds himself falling to his knees: "I did what I never had done in all my life, I kneeled down and prayed to God."

Robinson Crusoe's solitary existence proves to be a blessing to him. His loneliness becomes a solitude through which he is given the opportunity to reflect on his spiritual condition. He comes to know God because he is removed from the hubbub of ordinary life, with its constant distractions and intrusions. His stillness then enables him to enjoy true Christian fellowship when he discovers his companion, the converted cannibal Friday.

Defoe would write later: "the business is to get a retired soul" – by which he meant that the Christian ought to aim to find an inner isolation in which to cultivate an openness to the voice of God in Scripture and to pray. But Robinson Crusoe was not intended to encourage Christians to isolate themselves in a physical sense, as many early Christians did. For Defoe, the idea of a hermit like existence in a mountain cave or in a monkish cell was a denial of the Christian's duty to others, and a misunderstanding of the purpose of Christian solitude. If anything, the purpose of seeking isolation was for the purpose of better serving in the midst of the whirl of everyday life.

We struggle to find a command in Scripture for Christians to seek solitude. Much spiritual writing which encourages solitude as a vital component of the Christian life flirts with a terrible legalism. It also promotes the establishment of a spiritual elite, which has the time and the resources and the immense self-discipline for a largely solitary existence. Defoe is right: a truly spiritual life is not properly enriched by simply removing the body from the difficulties of the world.

However, the very shape of the Christian life encourages us to seek an inwardness that solitude certainly helps. Solitude does not make a Christian; but a Christian tends to seek solitude, since to be Christian is to be one who listens to the Word of God. As Martin Luther wrote: "the ears alone are the organ of a Christian". And the practice of listening to the life-giving and nourishing Word of God takes an effort to still all distractions and complications of ordinary life.

That is what faith is, after all – not simply hearing but listening to the Word of God, and then accepting it as true. This may be marked outwardly, by baptism for example, but believing is an activity of the inner person.

And it will involve study of the Scriptures, so that the individual can be confronted by the Word of God which judges and changes a person from the inside.

To pray is also an activity that promotes an inwardness. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus encouraged the practice of private prayer: "...whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Matt 6:6). This is a contrast to the self-promoting publicness of pagan prayer. What Jesus allows us to understand here is that the Father "sees in secret": which is to say that Father knows us not only outwardly, but inwardly. Unsurprisingly, Jesus himself sought opportunities to pray in solitude.

Indeed, this is one of the great themes of the Sermon on the Mount. It means that God knows us in private as well as in public. He sees our intentions as well as our actions. He knows our motivations and our longings. This is a perspective that means that true prayer can only be honest, since God sees into our hearts. He is not bluffed by our rhetoric, nor by our piety.

And since repenting of sin is so deeply woven into the Christian life, this privateness is again something we will find ourselves seeking, so as to make an honest account of ourselves to the God of mercy. We cannot be honest with God about our sins if we cannot ever find time and space to examine ourselves and to speak to him about them.

It is true that not every human culture has understood the individual as Western Europeans have. In many other cultures, the individual is more like a cog in a system. This inwardness – the way we are used to speaking to or about this thing called "the self" – is not prized, or even recognised, in every culture.

But if Western civilisation was more interested in the establishment of "the self" than in other civilisations we are probably right to see this a result of Christianity's influence. The development of the science of psychology, which tries to understand and rehabilitate the self, and the rise of that most inward of literary forms, the novel, with its inner conversations, are both heavily indebted to the charting of the territory of the soul that followed the Reformation. For Puritans like Defoe and John Bunyan (the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*) detailed self-analysis was what the Christian life simply seemed to demand: not as an indulgent exercise in self-obsession, but as part of bringing the self under the mastery of Christ. It is actually necessary for the individual to find this inwardness, this quietude, that he or she may be prepared for Christian fellowship.

This was one of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's themes in his remarkable and much-loved book *Life Together*. Like his other early work *Discipleship*, Bonhoeffer would later say that he was much too intense in his vision of the Christian life in ways that are not always conducive to understanding grace. But he wrote profoundly of the role that solitude plays in the Christian life: "if you refuse to be alone you are rejecting call to you, and you can have no part in the community of those who are called." By this he means that the Christian cannot simply outsource the Christian life, with its dying to self and rising to new life, to someone else.

But Bonhoeffer – who would spend so many of his final months of life on his own in prison – would also say: "Let him who is not in community beware of being alone." Christian solitude is never alone, since the Christian life is always a matter of sharing and bearing with others. As Bonhoeffer went on: "if you scorn the fellowship of the brethren, you reject the call of Jesus Christ, and thus your solitude can only be hurtful to you."

The burning question for contemporary Christians then has to be: how can I find the solitude I need to live the Christian life in the midst of all the frantic activity of modern life, with its chirping phones and blinking screens, with our constant craving for connectedness, and with our need to fill every waking hour with activity and sound? Or what about the parent of a young child, who has no time to herself at all, and is frankly just happy to make it through the day?

The answer is not to be found in a set of bullet points, or tips. It lies rather in our fellowship with one another, as we recognise that the shape of the Christian life asks for silence as well as speaking, time apart as well as time together, and space to speak to the God who is in secret. This could be your gift to another Christian – to enable them to find quiet, so that they can really engage with God, and thus be equipped and empowered to serve the saints.

And the answer lies in grasping how rich is the treasure in store for us when we seek to know our Father in heaven. What we are enabled to discover in our solitude is the astounding love of God for us which is in Christ Jesus – a love which then overflows to the community of believers. If a fruit of our solitude is to know the love of God more richly, then why would we not pursue it, for the sake of the people God has given us to love?

This article is from "Eternity". Michael Jensen is the Rector of St Mark's Anglican Church, Darling Point, Sydney.

NB For many centuries the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Church tradition has been that hermits, monks and nuns seeking to live in prayerful solitude must nevertheless be part of a wider religious community.



Mary Undoer of Knots

Through your Grace,
Your intercession, and
your example,
deliver us from all evil,
Our Lady, and untie the
knots that prevent us from
being united with God,
so that we, free from sin
and error, may find Him in
all things. May have our
hearts placed in Him, and
may serve him always in
our brothers and sisters.

Amen

*Pope Francis' Prayer to
Mary, Undoer of Knots*

**Third Sunday of Easter
Good Shepherd Sunday**

3rd May 2020

First Reading *Acts 2:14, 36-41 (JB)*

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

On the day of Pentecost Peter stood up with the eleven and addressed the crowd with a loud voice: 'The whole House of Israel can be certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.'

Hearing this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the apostles, 'What must we do, brothers?' 'You must repent,' Peter answered 'and every one of you must be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise that was made is for you and your children, and for all those who are far away, for all those whom the Lord our God will call to himself.' He spoke to them for a long time using many arguments, and he urged them, 'Save yourselves from this perverse generation.' They were convinced by his arguments, and they accepted what he said and were baptised. That very day about three thousand were added to their number.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm *Ps 22:1-6 (JB)*

***R. The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.***

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit. R.

He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort. R.

You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. R.

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever. R.

Second Reading

1 Peter 2:20-25 (JB)

A reading from the first letter of St Peter

The merit, in the sight of God, is in bearing punishment patiently when you are punished after doing your duty.

This, in fact, is what you were called to do, because Christ suffered for you and left an example for you to follow the way he took. He had not done anything wrong, and there had been no perjury in his mouth. He was insulted and did not retaliate with insults; when he was tortured he made no threats but he put his trust in the righteous judge. He was bearing our faults in his own body on the cross, so that we might die to our faults and live for holiness; through his wounds you have been healed. You had gone astray like sheep but now you have come back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

John 10:14 (JB)

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord;

I know my sheep, and mine know me.

Alleluia!

Gospel

John 10:1-10 (JB)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said: 'I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers.'

Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to them.

So Jesus spoke to them again:

'I tell you most solemnly,

I am the gate of the sheepfold.

All others who have come
are thieves and brigands;

but the sheep took no notice of them.

I am the gate.

Anyone who enters through me will be safe:

he will go freely in and out

and be sure of finding pasture.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

I have come so that they may have life

and have it to the full.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

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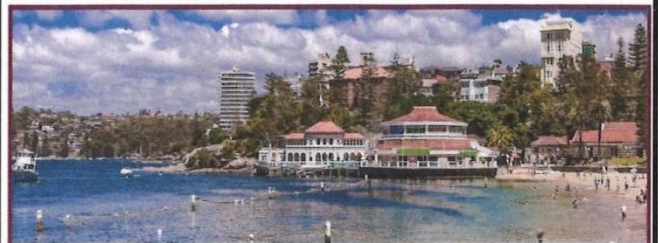
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