



## St Mary's Parish Concord

### 5th Sunday of Lent

Year B

21 March 2021

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

**FIRST READING:** Jeremiah:31-31-34

*I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and remember their sins no more.*

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** Ps: 51

**R:** Create a clean heart in me, O God.

**SECOND READING:** Hebrews 5:7-9

*Christ learned obedience and became the source of eternal salvation for all.*

**GOSPEL:** John 12:20-33

*If a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it bears much fruit.*

### PRAYER INTENTIONS

We pray for Antonio Patrizi, Br John Gibson OH, Br Francis Cruice cfc and all those who have died recently.

We pray for George Guinness, Venera (Ann) Russo, Wilma & Selvam Selvakumaraswamy, Giuseppe Livolsi, Carmelo Livolsi, Bishop Patrick Murphy and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time.

We pray for all our deceased family members, friends and parishioners.

We pray for those in many places who have died of the COVID-19 virus, for their families and all who mourn for them.

We pray for all those who are sick and for the health workers who care for the sick.

**CONFIRMATION:** The two sessions are now fully booked and registrations have closed. Unfortunately, due to COVID Health restrictions, the number of candidates is limited.

**PASSION (PALM) SUNDAY** is next Sunday 28 March. It is the custom to bless palm or olive branches at all Masses. Please note that the people who have supplied palm branches to many parishes in the past are no longer able to do so. **Please bring your own palm or olive branch with you to Mass.** If you have a palm tree you may be able to bring extra branches to share with others. **The solemn blessing will take place in the Church at the beginning of the 9.30 am Mass.** It is not possible to hold the blessing and procession in the Forecourt due to the need to maintain appropriate social distance.

**LIVE STREAMING MASS:** The 9.30 am Sunday Mass each week is now being live streamed to the parish YouTube channel:  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL0awxfUmJ6XjHJZcqsR2\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL0awxfUmJ6XjHJZcqsR2_A)

It is also possible to view the Mass on the parish Facebook page: St Mary's Parish Church Concord. While we encourage all who can to join us on Sundays, we know that some older and frail parishioners are not able to come to the church.

### CHURCH ATTENDANCE UPDATE

All are welcome to join us at our Sunday and weekday Masses. No bookings are required.

**The QR Code for churches is now compulsory.** To use the QR Code you first need to download the Services NSW App to your phone.

Those who do not have a smart phone must record their name and contact details (phone or email) on the forms provided at the church doors. Please write clearly. It is very important that your details are accurately recorded.

### Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the Wangal people of the Eora nation as the traditional custodians of this land.

### GO MAKE DISCIPLES

Archbishop Anthony Fisher has launched a new Archdiocesan Mission Plan *Go Make Disciples*. The new plan is aimed at renewing parishes as places of encounter with the living Christ and centres of outreach to our community in love and mercy.

**To find out more about the Mission Plan go to** <https://www.gomakedisciples.org.au/>

# PROJECT COMPASSION BE MORE

**PROJECT COMPASSION** Halima is raising her two children in a refugee camp in Bangladesh while caring for her mother, who has a disability. Widowed at 21, Halima fled violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State and arrived at the camp with nothing.



*Caritas Bangladesh* with help from *Caritas Australia*, provided Halima with a shelter, cooking equipment, and hygiene training. She took on the role of community trainer herself, organising the cleaning of washrooms, wells and toilets.

Halima aspired to 'Be More'. She is proud that she is now able to earn a small income while maintaining the health of her family and the cleanliness of the camp community.

You can donate by visiting [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion) or phoning 1800 024 413 or you can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes.

*Project Compassion* envelopes may be placed in the parish collection (black bucket).

Donations are tax deductible. If you require a tax receipt please clearly fill in all the details and tick the box. Your generosity will assist some of the world's most vulnerable communities to lift themselves out of poverty.

## EASTER TRIDUUM 2021

*No bookings will be taken for the parish celebrations but please be aware that the church doors will be closed if we reach our capacity. Because social distancing may be more difficult, you may wish to consider wearing a mask.*

### **HOLY THURSDAY 1 April**

7.30 pm Mass of the Lord's Supper  
*Please note there is no 8.30 am Mass*

### **GOOD FRIDAY 2 April**

10.00 am - Stations of the Cross  
3.00 pm - Celebration of the Passion

### **HOLY SATURDAY 3 April**

7.30 pm The Easter Vigil  
*Please note there is no 6.00 pm Vigil Mass*

### **EASTER SUNDAY 4 April**

Masses 7.30am, 9.30am & 6.00pm  
*Please note Daylight Saving ends on Easter Sunday*

## ST VINCENT DE PAUL - MEMBERS NEEDED:

The St Mary's Concord SVdP Conference is seeking new members. If you are interested in joining or in hearing more about their important ministry, please call or text Poppy on 0438430347 or email [poppy@archb.com.au](mailto:poppy@archb.com.au) to express your interest. You are also invited to attend the next meeting to be held on Wednesday, 24 March 2021 at 6.30 pm in the parish hall.

The Concord Conference currently consists of seven members and meets in the parish hall once a fortnight on Wednesday evening for about an hour. Between meetings members also help to distribute emergency assistance in the local area.

**RACHEL'S VINEYARD RETREATS** offer healing and hope to women and men hurt by an abortion experience. For more information see the parish notice board or go to [www.rachelsvineyard.org.au](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org.au)

## CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Children's Liturgy is part of the parish 9.30 am Mass during the school terms. The Children's Liturgy of the Word is not a catechetical class or Sunday school; it is a celebration of the Word of God.

The children listen to the Gospel reading of the Sunday and share prayers and reflections. All children of primary school age are invited to attend. The children leave the church after the Opening Prayer for a celebration of the Word of God at a level appropriate for their age. They return to the church at the Preparation of the Gifts. The Children's Liturgy is held in the chapel of St Mary's Villa. The Children's Liturgy would not be possible without the help of the adult leaders. We are still in need of helpers; their role is to assist the leader.

## PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney Safeguarding Office provides support and training for parish communities to ensure that our communities offer a safe and caring environment. The Safeguarding Office also provides support for those who have suffered abuse.

If you or a person close to you has been abused by someone working or ministering within the Archdiocese of Sydney, the Safeguarding Office will listen to you respectfully, offer support and discuss the options you have available to you. Please contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office on phone: 9390 5812.



## JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE FOODBANK

Right now, JRS is feeding 1000 people a week and the demand for help keeps growing. COVID-19 has disproportionately affected the lives of people seeking asylum and temporary migrants in Australia, as they remain excluded from all forms of Federal government support. This has meant that people who were once working and self-sufficient have had to rely on charities, like JRS, for rent, medication, bills and food.

To help keep everyone fed, we are asking those who can to donate one item a week (1 or 2 Kg bags of Basmati Rice, Tuna in oil, Cooking Oil (750ml/1L/2L bottles), tinned tomatoes, tinned lentils, chickpeas, red kidney beans, pasta (spaghetti, penne, spiral) but please not tinned spaghetti.

Donations can be placed in the blue bin on the table at the back of the church.

**CARE SUPPORT WORKERS:** CatholicCare are seeking applicants with a Certificate III in Aged Care (or similar) and relevant experience to join their team of Community Support Workers who provide home care to our clients across Sydney.

The role includes assisting Seniors with the following service requirements: accompanying clients on errands and appointments; domestic assistance; meal preparation; personal care; social support. They are also recruiting Greek and Italian speaking Care Support Workers. If you are a carer with the relevant qualifications and speak one or both of these languages, we encourage you to apply. Find out more by visiting [www.catholiccare.org/jobs](http://www.catholiccare.org/jobs)

Or call our CCareline team - 8am to 6pm weekdays on 13 18 19.

**ONLINE MARRIAGE SEMINAR:** The Marriage Kit – Online Seminar is a six week workshop series for married couples wanting a lasting, passionate relationship. Facilitated through the SmartLoving learning platform, from the privacy of your home, the course includes self-directed learning with your spouse that you complete together.

Four facilitated Zoom meetings will provide you with opportunities to ask questions, share your insights and connect with other couples in the course. For more information go to:

<https://members.smartloving.org/rockhampton-marriage-kit-seminar/>

**MEALS ON WHEELS:** Volunteers are needed to assist with the delivery and/or packing of meals. If you can help or need more information, please contact: 9747-1135 or [delivery@bcw.org.au](mailto:delivery@bcw.org.au)

## FASTING AND LENTEN PENANCE

Only Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are now set down as days for fasting and abstaining from eating meat. However, all Christians are called to do some form of penance on Fridays throughout the year and during the season of Lent.

The traditional penitential practices of prayer, fasting and alms-giving are still recommended. However, the form of penance that is practiced is left to each person.

We know that by the second century Christians were already preparing for Easter by a forty hour fast that began on Good Friday.

By the first Council of Nicaea in 325 the preparation for Easter had been extended to forty days. It was seen to be a way to imitate the 40 day fast of Jesus after his baptism. This extended period of preparation became the season of Lent.

The Lenten fast at that time meant that people had only one meal each day and it was eaten after sunset. Abstinence from meat and wine and the further restriction on all dairy products during Lent were only added in later centuries.

Fasting for medical reasons was not uncommon in ancient Greece and Rome. However, the essential feature of Christian fasting was its link to prayer. In modern times we call fasting without prayer dieting.

Christians also saw fasting as a preparation for the reception of the Spirit and so it was associated with preparing for Baptism and the Eucharist.

But against that background there were also many references in the early Church to the prophet Isaiah (Is 58:1-9) and to the teaching of Jesus (Mt 6:16-18) who both warned against fasting becoming only an external practice that did not touch the heart, the core of a person's being.

Penance is always about conversion and is summed up in the call to repent and believe in the Good News. It is linked therefore to prayer and reflecting on the Word of God.

*Paul Crowley*

*This reflection draws on Adolf Adam's history of Lent in his book "The Liturgical Year" (Pueblo Publishing, New York 1981) which was originally published in Germany.*

## Australians' Spiritual Practices in a year of crises

NCLS Research is a world leader in research focused on connecting churches and their communities. Decades of rigorous and thoughtful research has examined wellbeing, spirituality and church health. The most well known five-yearly project is called the **National Church Life Survey**, which has had millions of participants. Cooperating denominations, including Catholics, Anglicans and Protestants, are a network for sharing practical resources to help churches and communities.



Life changed significantly for Australians in 2020, with bushfires, floods and then the COVID-19 pandemic. Many church services went online, people stayed home and zoom meetings became commonplace.

In this context, we asked Australians about their experiences of stress, wellbeing, spirituality and church, in the 2020 Australian Community Survey. Nearly seven in 10 Australians say that spirituality is important in personal wellbeing, in the context of events including bushfires and COVID-19. The greatest stressors listed are family relationships and social isolation.

Just under half of Australians report personally drawing on spiritual practices during the year, with 15% of those people increasing the level of their practice in 2020. While fewer Australians participated in religious services after March 2020 than before, a moderate proportion of Australians engaged in other spiritual practices.

Spending time in nature or outdoors; listening to music; and praying and meditating are the spiritual practices of most appeal.

As we approach Christmas, around four in ten Australians say they are open to being invited to church by family and friends.

**For more information about the work of NCLS go to <http://www.ncls.org>.**

**HERITAGE SIGNS:** St Mary's Parish commissioned five heritage signs to mark the sesquicentenary of the parish. They have now been installed in the Church Forecourt and recall historical parish buildings that once existed on the parish site: the first church (1845), the second church (1874), the presbytery (1882), the first school building (1894) and the convent (1898). They have been placed close to the original locations of the buildings.



### THE FIRST CHURCH OPENED IN 1845

The first church built of the St Mary's Parish site was blessed and opened by Archbishop Polding on 7 December 1845. The painting that now hangs in the parish hall is based on a photograph taken in 1917 when the hall was under construction.

Prior to European settlement, the Burwood-Concord district was occupied by the Wangal clan. They called themselves the Eora, meaning 'the people' and they had been living in the Sydney area for at least 10,000 years.

The British colony of New South Wales had been established in January 1788 with the arrival of the First Fleet under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip.

In late 1788 a small settlement was established at Parramatta and by 1791 a bush track had been built between Sydney and Parramatta that became what is now Parramatta Road. In 1793 some free settlers received grants in the area then named Liberty Plains. In that same year, land grants were made to six non-commissioned officers in the district that came to be known as Concord.

The Concord-Burwood district continued to grow and in 1844 land was purchased by the Catholic Church on Parramatta Road at Concord for the site of a church and school. The first church stood in the present Church Forecourt in front of the parish hall. It was blessed by Archbishop Polding on 7 December 1845.





At that time there was no resident priest. A priest came from Parramatta, where the parish of St Patrick's had been established in 1827. When the parish of Petersham (now Lewisham) was established in 1851, the church at Concord became part of Petersham parish. St Mary's Concord became a parish in 1870.

The first church was also used as a hall and a school. A Catholic School, operating with Government funds, had begun operating on the parish site in 1846.

**PRIVATE PRAYER IN THE CHURCH:** The church will be open for private prayer on Sunday after the 9.30 am Mass until 12 noon and on Monday to Friday from 9.00 am until 12 noon. All those entering the church must record their name and contact details.

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2020-21**

The ACBC Office for Social Justice have released the Social Justice Statement for 2020-21, entitled *To Live Life to the Full: Mental Health in Australia Today*.

This year's Statement encourages faith communities, governments, and each one of us to make mental health a priority. It is a timely message in a year where we have experienced bushfires, floods and the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has also influenced the way in which the Statement and associated materials are being distributed this year.

The Social Justice Statement and prayer card for 2020-21 have been made available online as free downloads. To download your copies now, please visit <https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

**GIFT OF BREAD:** The *Gift of Bread* program has created a donation page called "**Who gives a loaf? You can.**" The banner photo on the donate page is the team from St Mary's Concord in the parish hall. The program needs cash donations to keep their outreach services operational. If you can support this program, please go to:

<https://www.givenow.com.au/givealoaf>

## **CELEBRATING AT HOME**

We can be united with each other in prayer by setting aside a time when we can pause and read the Word of God and share our reflections. Many find it helpful to create a "prayer space" that helps us to focus.

We can also find those places where the Mass is being televised or live streamed.

For those who have access to the Internet there are many places that offer prayers and resources to help us. Those listed below are some examples

**LITURGY BRISBANE** offers a range of resources that are updated each week. They can be found on the Liturgy Brisbane website at <https://www.liturgybrisbane.net.au/prepare/sunday-readings-and-family-prayer/>

The Brisbane Liturgy website gives the Sunday readings with associated commentaries and prayers. It is suggested that families gather to read the Scriptures aloud together.



The second resource is designed for families with young children. An extract from the Sunday gospel is provided, along with some reflection questions, a family activity and a worksheet for children.

We invite you to share these resources with anyone who may find them useful.

**SACRED SCRIPTURE** Set aside a time each day to read the Bible by taking a book, such as one of the Gospels or the Psalms, and working your way through it together. Pause and reflect on the passage. Use *Lectio Divina* when reading a bible text – this is explained in **Universalis** (see below) and also on the Jamberoo Abbey website.

**THE ROSARY** is a prayer that a family can easily recite together or can be said by those living alone.

**The Examen** is a daily reflection that aims to help us to review how God is present in the ordinary moments of life. It is done at the end of the day and is inspired by the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola.

Search iTunes or other platforms for the following podcasts:

***The Examen with Fr James Martin SJ***

This 18 minute Podcast offers a guided reflection from the American Jesuits.

## Are you struggling in this time of crisis?

Depression. Anxiety. Loneliness. Conflict. Stress.  
CCareline 13 18 19 is a free and confidential  
helpline for counselling, relationships, parenting,  
ageing, disabilities, addictions and mental health.  
For help finding help, call CCareline on 13 18 19



## HOUSE OF WELCOME FOODBANK APPEAL



Foodbank provides household necessities for people seeking asylum who have limited or no income. People can access groceries on a weekly basis to alleviate the cost of living. The Foodbank program is largely stocked through the generosity of people in the community. No contribution is too small.

**Contact: [office@houseofwelcome.com.au](mailto:office@houseofwelcome.com.au)  
197 The Trongate, Granville  
Ph: 02 9727 9290  
[stfrancis.org.au/house-of-welcome](http://stfrancis.org.au/house-of-welcome)**