



## **St Mary's Parish Concord**

**21st Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Year B**

**22 August 2021**

### **LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**FIRST READING: Joshua 24: 1-2, 15-18**

*We will serve the Lord.*

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Ps 34 78**

**R: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

**SECOND READING: Ephesians 5: 2, 21-32**

*Live in love, as Christ loved us.*

**GOSPEL: John 6: 53, 60-69**

*Lord, to whom can we go.*

### **PRAYER INTENTIONS**

**We pray for the children and their families who were to celebrate their 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion this Sunday.**

**We pray for the people of Afghanistan and people everywhere who are suffering because of war and civil unrest.**

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

**We pray for Mariella Marchetta, John Ryan, Honorio Mercene and all those who have died recently.**

**We pray for Selvam Selvakumaraswamy, Emmanuel Naren, Jim Tudehope, Tom McLaughlin, Catherine Manuelpillai, Nicola Maroni and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time and for all our deceased family members, friends and parishioners.**

### **LORD, TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?**

Over the past two Sundays we celebrated the feasts of St Mary MacKillop and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. As a result, we put aside our reading of chapter 6 of John's Gospel where Jesus declared that he is the Bread of Life.

Today we return to John's Gospel to conclude our reading of the Bread of Life discourse before returning to Mark's Gospel next Sunday.

In John's Gospel, many of those who had followed Jesus now walked away. It was a "vote of no confidence" and so Jesus puts the question to his disciples, "Do you also wish to go away?"

Reading John's Gospel almost 2,000 years after it was written and in the light of the many disputes about the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, we can easily misunderstand the reason many turned away. What is the teaching of Jesus that is too difficult?

When Jesus spoke about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, we think of the Eucharist. However, as we have previously seen, there is much more to this chapter of John's Gospel.

Jesus had declared that he is the "true bread from heaven". Against the background of the Exodus story Jesus was declaring that the way to God is no longer the Torah, the Word of God revealed to Moses. The Manna had become a symbol for the Torah and so Jesus is declaring that he is true "manna", the true Way to God.

When Jesus then declared that he is "Bread for the life of the world", we need to recall that those words point not only to the Last Supper but also to his death on the Cross. In John's Gospel, as Jesus dies on the Cross, he surrenders his life for the life of the world.

Paul (1 Cor 1:22) said "We proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles". That is the difficult teaching. Many who had followed Jesus wanted him to fit into their understanding of God. They turned away from Jesus because they could not accept a crucified Christ.

When we receive the Body of Christ in Communion, we are becoming one with Him in his giving of himself for the life of the world. That means embracing the Cross not as a symbol of suffering but as a symbol of self-giving love for others. It is also embracing the Father's will for us.

The call to live in union with Christ is not limited to the moment when we receive Holy Communion. Therefore, even though we cannot share in the Eucharist at present due to the pandemic, we can still be one with Christ by committing ourselves to seeking the Father's will in every aspect of our life.

*Fr Paul Crowley*

## Acknowledgement of Country



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

### NO EUTHANASIA PETITION

Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP is urging all Catholics to sign an e-petition to prevent the NSW parliament passing laws that sanction the killing of vulnerable human beings. There is never a good time to introduce laws such as this, but to do so in the middle of a pandemic and amidst lockdowns adversely affecting the lives and livelihoods of millions is unconscionable.

Our sick and elderly have already suffered 17 months of increasing isolation and right now that is being intensified. Meanwhile, people are losing their jobs, businesses are going under, families are under the pressures of schooling and working from home, people's movements are severely restricted, and depression rates are up. The last thing we need to hear from our leaders in this situation is a pro-suicide message.

Please sign this petition, calling on the Government to keep us focused on the present challenges and once they have been met, let us focus on medicine at its best and not its most lethal.

[https://www.no euthanasia.org.au/protect\\_life\\_nsw](https://www.no euthanasia.org.au/protect_life_nsw)

### SUPPORTING THE PARISH

Thank you to all who have continued to support the parish in these difficult times. Because the church must remain closed, the traditional way of contributing to the parish collections is not available. Even the more recent Tap & Go stations cannot be accessed.

Some parishioners have already opted to make a regular donation electronically. For more details please email the parish office.

Donations can also be made via the parish website. Go to the "Support Us" button at the top right of the Home Page. A drop-down menu offers various options.

**Planned Giving Envelopes 2021-2022:** New sets of envelopes were placed in the church just prior to the lockdown on 26 June. Unfortunately, the church must remain closed until the lockdown is lifted.

## St Mary's Church Concord

The painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary that is the dominant image of Mary in the church is a copy of *The Immaculate Virgin of Los Venerables* painted by the Spanish artist Bartolome Esteban Murillo (1618-1682) in about 1678.

It is believed that the original painting was commissioned from Bartolomé Esteban Murillo by Justino de Neve, who was ecclesiastical president of the *Hospital de los Venerables* in Seville. He later donated it to the chapel at the hospital. The original painting is now in the Prado Museum in Madrid

The title of Immaculate Virgin reflects the belief that Mary was without sin from the first moment of her being. Although it was only officially declared a dogma of the Church in 1854, belief in the Immaculate Conception of Mary had been a popular devotion in Spain since the 16th century.

In this painting Murillo combined two different iconographic traditions: the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. Although the Assumption of Mary was only declared to be a dogma in 1950, it too had been a popular devotion for many centuries.

The parish's copy was cleaned and restored in February 2020 to mark the Sesquicentenary of the founding of St Mary's Parish (1870-2020).



**LIVE STREAMING MASS:** During the current COVID lockdown the 9.30 am Sunday Mass is still being live streamed to the parish YouTube channel. See our website for details. It is also possible to view the Mass on the parish Facebook page: **St Mary's Parish Church Concord**

### **TAX RECEIPT FOR PLANNED GIVING**

Printed tax receipts will not be available until the current Lockdown is lifted.

Those who have previously requested that their tax receipt be sent via email have received an emailed receipt.

Others who wish to receive their receipt via email are asked to email the parish office. Please give your full name and envelope number when requesting a receipt.

**The receipt will be sent to the email address you use to make the request.**

The tax deduction for the *Parish Planned Giving* is only provided for those contributors who have already nominated that they require a *tax receipt*.

Please note that your receipt should show two figures: the amount contributed and the amount that is tax deductible.

Those who contributed to various other appeals during 2020-2021 (CWF Appeal, Project Compassion, Priests' Retirement Foundation) **and also requested a tax receipt for those contributions** should find their contributions listed on their receipt.

If you have any questions, please contact the parish office by email.

In the coming financial year (2021-2022) the parish can again provide a 50% tax deduction for contributions to the *Planned Giving*.

**SCHOOL ENROLMENT 2022:** St Mary's School is now enrolling students for Kindergarten in 2022. An application form is available from the school office or phone 9744 0260 or email your request to [info@stmconcord.catholic.edu.au](mailto:info@stmconcord.catholic.edu.au)

Visit the school website for more information [www.stmconcord.catholic.edu.au](http://www.stmconcord.catholic.edu.au).

**PLAYGROUP:** The Playgroup has suspended all meetings until further notice.

**THE JOURNEY:** Journey Catholic Radio is a weekly radio program and podcast developed by the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong all about faith, hope, love and life. It includes awesome music, a weekly Gospel reflection, interviews and a variety of weekly inputs from some of the best Catholic presenters in Australia.

Journey Catholic Radio is hosted by the director of the Office of Renewal and Evangelisation, Mr Jude Hennessy and produced by Mr Max Norden. For information about how to listen and subscribe go to <https://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/journey-radio/>

## **Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for August 2021**

*Evangelization begins with  
our personal renewal*

**Let us pray for the Church, that she may receive from the Holy Spirit the grace and strength to reform herself in the light of the Gospel.**

*Pope Francis' message can also be viewed on YouTube as **The Pope Video** produced by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network. The full text of the Pope's prayer intention is below:*

The specific vocation of the Church is evangelization, which isn't proselytism. Its vocation is evangelization; even more, the Church's identity is evangelization.

We can only renew the Church by discerning God's will in our daily life and embarking on a transformation guided by the Holy Spirit. Our own reform as persons is that transformation. Allowing the Holy Spirit, the gift of God in our hearts, to remind us what Jesus taught and help us put it into practice.

Let us begin reforming the Church with a reform of ourselves, without prefabricated ideas, without ideological prejudices, without rigidity, but rather by moving forward based on spiritual experience —an experience of prayer, an experience of charity, an experience of service.

I dream of an even more missionary option: one that goes out to meet others without proselytism and that transforms all its structures for the evangelization of today's world.

Let us remember that the Church always has difficulties, always is in crisis, because she's alive. Living things go through crises. Only the dead don't have crises.

**Let us pray for the Church, that she may receive from the Holy Spirit the grace and strength to reform herself in the light of the Gospel.**

**GO MAKE DISCIPLES** is 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/>**

**RACHEL'S VINEYARD RETREATS:** offer healing and hope to women and men hurt by an abortion experience. The next retreat will be held 5-7 Nov 2021. For more information phone their confidential phone line (0400092555) or see the parish notice board or go to [rachelsaus.blogspot.com](http://rachelsaus.blogspot.com)  
If you have any questions, please email [jpoinfo@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:jpoinfo@sydneycatholic.org).

## 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



## CELEBRATING AT HOME

St Mary's Concord has been live-streaming the 9.30 am Mass each Sunday since December 2020.

Parishioners, including families with young children, who are not able to join us in the church have found it helpful to join us via the live-streaming (see the notice above for details).

We can also 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.

A free resource for children can be found at [Holy Heroes- Children's Liturgy Activities and Gospel Story](#) It provides a short YouTube presentation of the Gospel reading and a worksheet that can be printed.

## PARISH COMMUNITY AFTER COVID

The Parish Pastoral Council is currently reflecting on *Go Make Disciples*, the Mission Plan for the Archdiocese of Sydney. Their aim is to set our goals for the future. One of the foundation areas of the Mission Plan is Community.

The current Health Lockdown in the Sydney region is a reminder of the challenges we face as we reflect on the need to rebuild our parish community.

Many of the things that we took for granted in the past still cannot happen. We cannot gather for the Morning Tea on the first Sunday of the month.

An example of the challenges we face is the need to rebuild our team of volunteers who previously took Holy Communion to the sick at home or in Aged Care facilities. Many of our older parishioners are still not confident to come back to Mass.

If you are interested in being part of this important reflection, come and join the Pastoral Council. New members are welcome. Speak to Fr Paul or contact the Parish Office for more details.

**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)

**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>

## 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.

**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/>

**HERITAGE SIGNS:** In 2020 St Mary's Parish commissioned five heritage signs to mark the sesquicentenary of the parish. They can be seen 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 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.

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.

### 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. 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 once the church reopens.

## 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)

### CHURCH ATTENDANCE

*Due to the current NSW COVID*

*Health Restrictions*

*all churches must remain closed  
until the lockdown is lifted.*

*See the parish website for details.*