



St Mary's Parish Concord

Passion Sunday

Year A

2 April 2023

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 50:4-7

*I did not cover my face against insult,
and I know I will not be ashamed.*

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 21

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:6-11

*He humbled himself to become like us and God
raised him on high.*

GOSPEL: Matthew 26:14-27:66

The passion of Jesus Christ, the Lord.

PRAYER INTENTIONS

We pray for those who continue to suffer because of war and violent conflicts, especially for the people of Ukraine.

We pray for communities in many places recovering from recent natural disasters.

We pray for those who are sick, especially those who have no one to care for them.

We pray for all those who have died recently; we pray for Antonio Di Sano, Mario Pieretti, Maria Cohil, Bruno Brancatisano and for all those whose anniversaries occur about this time; for all our deceased family members and friends.

PASSION SUNDAY: On Palm Sunday of the Passion, we remember how Jesus was welcomed by the crowds as he entered Jerusalem and within days, they were calling for him to be crucified.

Each year we read St John's account of the Passion on Good Friday. On Passion Sunday we follow the three year cycle of readings. This year we listen to St Matthew's account of the Passion.

EASTER TRIDUUM 2023

HOLY THURSDAY 6 April

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

GOOD FRIDAY 7 April

Please note there is no 8.30 am Mass
10.00 am - Stations of the Cross
3.00 pm - Celebration of the Passion

HOLY SATURDAY 8 April

7.00 pm The Easter Vigil
Please note there is no 6.00 pm Vigil Mass

EASTER SUNDAY 9 April

Masses 7.30am, 9.30am & 6.00pm

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

There will be no Reconciliation available on Saturday 8 April. Reconciliation at St Mary's Concord will next be available on Saturday 15 April

COVID HEALTH REPORT: We have learned to live with COVID-19. However, the virus continues to spread in the community.

A 2023 COVID-19 vaccine booster dose is recommended for adults who have not had a COVID infection or a vaccine dose in the past 6 months. This will provide an increase in protection against severe illness.

Please also consider wearing a mask at Mass to protect yourself and the older members of our parish community. **We are still encouraged to wear a mask at indoor gatherings, especially where social distancing is difficult, and we are together for an extended time.**

Acknowledgement of Country



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

CONFIRMATION 2023: The Sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated at 11.00 am on Sunday 4 June. **Registrations will not open until Monday 24 April.** Please see the parish website for more details.

ST MATTHEW'S PASSION

Matthew's account is based on the Passion in Mark's Gospel, but Matthew adapts and adds to Mark.

In Matthew's Gospel, the disciples and especially Peter, have clearly professed that Jesus is the Son of God. Therefore, their abandonment of Jesus and Peter's three-fold denial of knowing Jesus is particularly significant.

Matthew's Passion gives prominence to the trial before the Jewish Council, the Sanhedrin. At the same time Peter is interrogated in the courtyard and denies knowing Jesus. Matthew also includes details of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas.

In Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus, the Magi, who are gentiles (non-Jews) recognize Jesus as the Messiah. They are contrasted to Herod who is seeking to kill the child.

In the Passion, it is another gentile, Pilate's wife, who has a dream and recognizes that Jesus is innocent and seeks his release. Only in Matthew's Passion does Pilate wash his hands to distance himself from the cry of the crowd to crucify Jesus.

To further emphasize that the Jewish leaders were responsible, Matthew alone has the people cry out "His blood be on us and on our children" (Mt 27:25). Throughout history, and particularly in Christian Europe, that verse led to the persecution of the Jewish people each year when the Christian communities celebrated Good Friday.

It is not accurate to place the blame for the death of Jesus on countless generations of the Jewish people. For that reason, that verse is now omitted when Matthew's Passion is proclaimed on this Sunday.

A central theme of Matthew's Gospel is that Jesus, as the promised Messiah, fulfilled the Scriptures. There are also many references in Matthew's Passion to events fulfilling the Scriptures

Like Mark, Matthew's Jesus at the end cries out, quoting a verse from Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

Paul Crowley

BLESSING OF OILS All are invited to participate in the Chrism Mass at 10.30 am on Holy Thursday (6 April) in St Mary's Cathedral. During the Mass, Archbishop Fisher will bless the Oil of the Sick, the Oil of Baptism and the Chrism. Chrism is the oil used in the celebration of Baptism and Confirmation. It is also used during the Ordination of Presbyters and for the dedication of a church or altar.

EASTER OFFERINGS Envelopes are available on the pews. Easter Offerings, together with your contributions throughout the year to the first collection, go to the support of the clergy. Your contributions not only support our parish priest here at St Mary's Concord but also assist those smaller parishes where the local community cannot support a priest. It is one of the ways that we as a community help to support struggling parishes.

PROJECT COMPASSION Every day, more than 200 million children miss out on school, around 690 million people go hungry, and 2.2 billion people cannot access clean drinking water. For many vulnerable communities across the world, life today is proving even more challenging and devastating than in recent years.

Each year, Project Compassion comes as a timely reminder of the importance of solidarity and how a single act of kindness, whether big or small, can make a life-changing impact in the lives of those who need it most.

The theme of Project Compassion this year is ***For All Future Generations***. This phrase is a powerful affirmation that the good we do today will extend and impact the lives of generations to come.

It is also a call for all of us to play our part in making the world a better place by working together as sisters and brothers in finding long-term solutions to global issues.



Thank you for your continued support of Project Compassion. Please return boxes and envelopes on Holy Thursday or Easter Sunday.

Donations can also be made by calling 1800 024 413 or at caritas.org.au/project-compassion

ST CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Children's Liturgy is not a catechetical class nor Sunday school; it is a celebration of the Word of God at a level appropriate for young children. They listen to the Gospel reading of the Sunday and share prayers and reflections. The children leave the church after the Opening Prayer and return 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 adult leaders. We thank the leaders and helpers. All children of primary school age are invited to attend. We ask that pre-school children remain in the church with their parents.

MARY'S PLAYGROUP operates each Friday of the school term from 9.30-10.45am in the Parish Hall. All families are welcome to join us with their pre-school aged children. It is a wonderful opportunity to engage with other families and have fun with your child. Please email St Mary's Primary School at info@stmconcord.catholic.edu.au or the parish office at parish@stmarysconcord.org.au.

PLEASE NOTE: The children's Liturgy of the Word on Sunday mornings and the Play Group on Friday mornings are suspended during school holidays.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL The Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body entrusted with the task of reflecting on the parish's vision and mission. In a spirit of service to the community the Pastoral Council works with the parish priest to foster and support appropriate pastoral action. Members serve a four-year term with half the Council changing every two years.

As we begin to plan for 2023, new members are needed. Any active parishioner 18 years of age or older may be nominated or may nominate his/herself. If you are interested, please talk to Fr Paul or to any of the current members. For more information go to the "Our Parish" tab on the Home Page of the parish website www.stmarysconcord.org.au

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2023: There will be a special Mass for 1st Holy Communion on Sundays 20 & 27 August. **More details and registration forms will be available in early July.** Families who believe that their child is ready to celebrate 1st Holy Communion can also choose to celebrate 1st Holy Communion at any parish Sunday Mass. Please contact the parish for more details. The best preparation for a child for 1st Holy Communion is to participate in a Mass each Sunday. with their family

HOW CAN I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

As a parish, we need to rebuild the various parish ministry teams: those who support the community at Sunday Masses and those who extend the Mission of the parish in the wider community.

We thank those who continue to support the parish community each Sunday as readers and ministers of Holy Communion. However, we need more people to become active members of our community.

For more information, contact Fr Paul or the Parish Office: parish@stmarysconcord.org.au

HOW DO I BECOME A CATHOLIC? Adults who have not been baptized and wish to become part of the community of the Catholic Church receive the Sacraments of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) in the ***Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*** (RCIA).

The RCIA presumes that there is an extended period of formation and preparation, usually leading to the celebration of Baptism at Easter.

Baptised members of other Christian Churches who wish to become members of the Catholic Church do so through ***Reception into Full Communion***.

If you are interested, or if you know of someone who may be interested in becoming a Catholic, please contact Fr Paul or the Parish Office tel 9747 4210 or email parish@stmarysconcord.org.au.

FASTING AND LENTEN PENANCE

On this First Sunday of Lent each year we read about Jesus going into the wilderness after his Baptism. This Sunday we will read Matthew's account (Mt 4:1-11).

The practice of fasting in the early Christian communities reflected the Jewish tradition and was linked to prayer.

Although the Law of Moses only demanded fasting for the Day of Atonement, the practice was common and devout Jews would fast every week.

Fasting was also seen as an appropriate way to prepare for an important celebration. By the second century Christians were preparing for Easter by a forty hour fast that began on Good Friday.

By the early fourth century the preparation for Easter had been extended to forty days. As the season of Lent began to evolve, the Lenten fast was linked to the forty days Jesus fasted after his baptism.

The Lenten fast in the fourth century allowed people to have 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.

Christians also saw fasting as a preparation for the reception of the Spirit and so it was also associated with preparing for Baptism and the Eucharist. That is the origin of the fast before receiving Holy Communion.

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

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

In the Australian Catholic Church 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 form of that penance is left to each person. However, the traditional penitential practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving are still recommended.

The focus, however, is not on the external practice but on opening our heart to God. For some people perhaps a "fast" from social media or from the constant use of their smart phone would be a significant act of self-denial that would also create space for prayer.

Paul Crowley

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.

MARRIAGE ANNULMENT: The Tribunal of the Catholic Church offers advice to all of those who have experienced a marriage breakdown and question the validity of their first marriage as understood by the Church. Inquiries: 9307 8300 or email: admin@sydneytribunal.org.au

COLLECTIONS: The practice of passing around the collection plates during Mass remains suspended. Your regular donations can be placed in the appropriate containers in the church. For your convenience "Tap and Go" stations are available at the doors of the church. Tap to donate the set amount. Please note that receipts cannot be issued for donations and the "Tap & Go" transactions cannot be reversed.

CLIMATE CHANGE: World leaders gathered in Canada in December 2022 for COP 15, the United Nations Conference of the Parties on biodiversity. In his Message for the **2022 World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation**, Pope Francis urged world leaders to commit to ambitious plans at the COP 27 to achieve the goal of keeping global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. He also urged leaders gathering at the COP 15 to make new multilateral agreements to halt the alarming increases in destruction of ecosystems and extinction of species. Pope Francis reminds us that the Gospel calls us to repentance, to a new relationship with God and a different relationship with others and with all of creation. This conversion of heart will lead us to take action personally, but also communally to care for our common home.



These two meetings present another opportunity for world leaders to agree on actions which will address the twin crises of climate change and loss of biodiversity.

They also present us with an opportunity as people of faith to join with others in calling for effective action to deal with these immense ecological crises.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Office for Justice, Ecology and Peace has produced a new **Information Sheet on COP 27 & COP 15**.

For more information:

<https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/2022/11/10/cops-docs/>

THE LETTER: The Feast of St Francis of Assisi (4 October) saw the world premiere at the Vatican of the documentary film *The Letter: A Message For Our Earth*. Based on Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter, "Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home" the film was made in partnership with the Laudato Si' Movement, the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and the Dicastery for Communication.

It explores the consequences of climate change through the voices of the poor, young people, indigenous peoples and others who met with Pope Francis last year. The film is streaming for free at theletterfilm.org and **YouTube Originals**.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: The 2022 Social Justice Statement, *Respect: Confronting Violence and Abuse*, invites us to engage with a complex and confronting social reality. It explores the roots of violence and abuse, honours the voices of victims, offers a social and theological exploration of the reality of violence, especially against women and children, and invites us to develop relationships in all parts of our lives 'marked by equality and reciprocity rather than domination and violence, respect and freedom rather than coercion and control.'



If the content of the Statement raises issues or concerns for you, please refer to the Getting Help page in the Statement for a list of support channels, or speak to a trusted friend, your GP, your parish priest or parish pastoral worker.

Access the Statement: <https://bit.ly/SJS22-23>.

More information: ACBC Office for Justice, Ecology and Peace, www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au or Tel (02) 62019845.

Facebook | www.facebook.com/socialjusticeACBC

Twitter | @JusticeCatholic

Instagram | @JusticeCatholic

JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE FOODBANK

The JRS continues to support those 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.

HOUSE OF WELCOME FOODBANK



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

197 The Trongate, Granville Ph: 02 9727 9290

stfrancis.org.au/house-of-welcome



Caritas Australia Ukraine Appeal

The continuing violence in Ukraine is a humanitarian crisis.

Over three million people have been displaced and thousands of civilians have lost their lives. Our long-standing partner, Caritas Ukraine, is on the ground to provide support for those forced from their homes. Donate today at www.caritas.org.au/ukraine or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

Help with Alcoholism and Addiction

Do you, a family member, or friend need help with an addiction concern? You can reach out to the **Calix Society**. Calix is an association of Catholic alcoholics, drug addicts, and family members and friends affected by addiction, who are maintaining their sobriety through participation in their Catholic faith and a 12 Step program. We welcome anyone concerned with the illness of alcoholism or addiction who wish to join with us in prayer for *the virtue of total abstinence, promoting our spiritual development, and striving for the sanctification of the whole personality of each member*. Contact calixsydney@outlook.com for meeting times and resources. Perhaps this could be a crucial step toward recovery and saving a life.

HERITAGE SIGNS: St Mary's Parish commissioned five heritage signs to mark the sesquicentenary of the parish in 2020.

The signs are located in the Church Forecourt and recall the 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). Each sign has been placed close to the original location of that building.



The Presbytery c 2003

When Father McCarthy was appointed parish priest in 1870, he lived in a cottage on the Burwood side of Parramatta Road until the Presbytery (the priest's residence) was built in 1882. It stood on the northern side of the 1874 church facing Burton Street.

The original building was extended several times as the needs of the parish changed. As well as providing a residence for the priests, it also served as the office for the parish until 1994 when the Parish Office was relocated to a cottage at 4 Ada Street.

The Presbytery continued to be the residence for the priests of the parish until 2002. As part of the strategic plan for the development of the parish site, in 2002 the residence for the parish priest was relocated to a cottage at 6 Ada Street that the parish had purchased in 1995.



In 2008 the Presbytery, the Convent and the 1950s school building were all demolished to make way for the new St Mary's Villa.