



## St Mary's Parish Concord The Ascension of the Lord

Year A

21 May 2023

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

**FIRST READING:** Acts 1:1-11

*Why are you standing here looking into the sky?  
Jesus has been taken into heaven.*

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** Psalm 46

God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

**SECOND READING:** Ephesians 1:17-23

*God seated Jesus at his right hand.*

**GOSPEL:** Matthew 28:16-20

*I am with you always.*

### PRAYER INTENTIONS

We pray for those who continue to suffer because of war and civil unrest.

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

We pray for the sick and the dying, especially those who have no one to care for them.

We pray for Rex Fernandes, Mona Maks, Giuseppe Lombardi (Italy), Bryony Barber and all those who have died recently; we pray for George Jackson, Gregory & Patricia McCue, Santo Rizzo and for all those whose anniversaries occur about this time; for Mary & Joseph Sackar, Angelo & Francesco Agueci, Silvana Criscione and all our deceased relatives and friends.

### CONFIRMATION

*We welcome our candidates for their  
enrolment for Confirmation.  
at 9.30 am Mass this Sunday.*

**VINNIE'S WINTER APPEAL** The St Mary's Concord conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society is seeking our support for their important outreach ministry to those in need in our local community. Envelopes are available on the pews and at the back of the church and can be placed in the parish collection buckets. Donations over \$2 are 100% tax deductible. If you wish to receive a receipt from the SVdP Society, please ensure all your contact details are clearly written on the envelope.

**MORNING TEA:** The Parish Social Committee has organized Morning Tea in the parish hall after 9.30 am Mass this Sunday 21 May. All are welcome. Please join us.

## Acknowledgement of Country



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

## Laudato Si' Week 2023 (21-28 May) *Hope for the earth. Hope for humanity.*

will be celebrated with the film *The Letter* to mark the eighth anniversary of Pope Francis' landmark encyclical on care for creation. This global celebration will unite Catholics to rejoice in the progress we have made in bringing Laudato Si' to life and show how the protagonists of *The Letter* are already doing so.

For more information go to <https://laudatosiweek.org/>

**THE LETTER:** The Feast of St Francis of Assisi in 2022 (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](http://theletterfilm.org) and YouTube Originals.

## CONFIRMATION, THE MASS AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Confirmation is one of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation and is therefore linked to Baptism and the Eucharist, which we first received at First Holy Communion.

When an adult is baptized, the person is also confirmed and receives Communion in the one celebration. But that was not the experience for most who were born into a Catholic family.

The more common experience is to be baptized as an infant, receive 1st Holy Communion about the age of 7 or 8 years and to be confirmed about the age of 12 years.

However, that has only been the common practice since the early 20th Century. Before that time, those who were baptized as infants were confirmed at age 12 and then to received 1st Holy Communion at the age of 15 when they were considered to have become adult members of their community.

Receiving Holy Communion is still the sign of full membership in the Church. However, as a consequence of that change in pastoral practice during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Confirmation came to be seen as the final stage of Christian Initiation.

That change also led to more emphasis being placed on the candidate's personal choice and readiness to be confirmed. In some places Confirmation was delayed until the age of 15 years.

It is important to remember, however, that the Sacraments are celebrations of the gift of the Holy Spirit and therefore the primary focus is always on what God does.

Baptism and Confirmation are not the only times we receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is constantly being poured out upon us. Confirmation therefore celebrates that ongoing gift of the Holy Spirit that we first received at Baptism.

Confirmation is linked to Baptism, but the Eucharist (the Mass) remains the final stage of Christian Initiation. Every time we share in the Eucharist, we receive again the gift of the Holy Spirit. We become one Body, one Spirit in Christ.

We are baptized and confirmed only once, but we constantly say "yes" to God's gift in every Mass. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit we become one with Christ and then go forth and to live as children of God.

*Paul Crowley  
Parish Priest*

**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](mailto:admin@sydneytribunal.org.au)

**COVID HEALTH REPORT:** 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. If you are unwell or at risk, please consider wearing a mask at Mass to protect yourself and the older members of our parish community.

**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. Any active parishioner 18 years of age or older may be nominated or may nominate his/herself. If you are interested, please contact Fr Paul. For more information go to the "Our Parish" tab on the Home Page of the parish website [www.stmarysconcord.org.au](http://www.stmarysconcord.org.au)

### 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](mailto: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 be 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](mailto:parish@stmarysconcord.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.



## THE EASTER SEASON

The Easter Triduum is the most solemn period in our liturgical calendar. The season of Lent concluded on Holy Thursday and the Triduum began on Holy Thursday evening with the Mass of the Lord's Supper. Easter Sunday marks the end of the Triduum and is also the beginning of the Easter Season.

The unity of the Easter Season, as an extended time of rejoicing, is also indicated by the fact that this Sunday is called the Second Sunday of Easter and not the first Sunday after Easter. It is also why no other feasts can take precedence over the Sundays of Easter. The one exception is the Ascension of the Lord, which can replace the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter.

The Easter Season extends from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday. This period of seven weeks or fifty days has its origin in *The Acts of the Apostles* (2:1-11) which describes the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles on the Jewish feast of Weeks (Shavuot). That feast was also known by the Greek name "Pentecost" because it was celebrated fifty days after the feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread.

The three-year cycle of readings continues during the Easter Season and this year we continue to follow Year A.

In the Easter Season the first reading is always taken from *The Acts of the Apostles*. Written by St Luke, it is the story of the growth of the early Christian communities and the role of the apostles as witnesses of the resurrection.

The Gospel readings on the Sundays of Easter are mostly taken from *John's Gospel* which presents a different account of the teachings of Jesus from that found in the other three Gospels.

As a sign of the unity of the season, the Easter Candle, a symbol of the risen Lord, remains near the altar until the evening of Pentecost Sunday. It is lit during all Masses throughout the season.

To highlight the festive nature of the season many traditional prayers are also changed. The *Angelus* is replaced by the *Regina Caeli* and Alleluia is added to many prayers. There is also an ancient tradition that there is no kneeling during the Easter Season.

**Paul Crowley**

**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

## 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.

They also presented 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/>

## 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](mailto:calixsydney@outlook.com) for meeting times and resources. Perhaps this could be a crucial step toward recovery and saving a life.

**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](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au) or Tel (02) 62019845.

Facebook | [www.facebook.com/socialjusticeACBC](https://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](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)

**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.