



St Mary's Parish Concord

2nd Sunday of Lent

Year B

25 February 2024

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING: Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18

Abraham, our father in faith, was ready to sacrifice his son.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Ps 115

*I will walk in the presence of the Lord,
in the land of the living.*

SECOND READING: Romans 8:31-35

God did not withhold his own Son.

GOSPEL: Mark 9:2-10

This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him.

PRAYER INTENTIONS

We pray for peace in the world and especially for people of Gaza and all those suffering because of war and violence.

We pray for our country; may all Australians renew their commitment to work for reconciliation.

We pray for those in many places who have been affected by fires, storms, floods and other natural disasters; may they receive the help they need.

We pray for Cecelia Gooley, Nicola Alvaro, Jan MacDonald, Otto Nelson, Kevin Roberts, Susana Hermenegildo, Veronica De Lauro and for all who have died recently; for Fernando Escano, Maria Rosa Pappalardo, Francesco Alvaro, Anton Francis, Tony Sellethamboo, Tamina Rizzo and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time; we pray for all our deceased family members and friends.

MORNING TEA: Please join us in the Hall after the 9.30 am Mass next **Sunday 3 March**. Our thanks to the Social Committee, the Family Group members and to all the volunteers who set up and host the Morning Teas.

If you are able to bring a small plate of food to share, your contribution is always appreciated. Food can be placed in the Hall before Mass.

SCHOOL OPEN DAYS: St Mary's School is holding an Open Day next **Sunday, 3 March from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm**. A second Open Day will be held on Thursday 7 March from 9.00 to 10.am.

ST MARY'S PLAYGROUP is held each Friday during school term in the Parish/School Hall from **9.30 to 10.45 am**. All families are welcome to join with their pre-school aged children. Access is from Burton St via the Bell Tower Courtyard between the church and St Mary's Villa. The Hall is on the western side of the Church Forecourt. Contact the parish office for more details.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER: The Ecumenical World Day of Prayer Service is celebrated each year in March. Local communities led by Christian women will gather in over 170 countries around the world to pray together. This year's theme, *Bear with One Another in Love*, is based on Ephesians 4:1-7. In 2019, the World Day of Prayer Committee met in Brazil and selected Palestine as the venue for 2024.

Our local Prayer Service will be held at **10.30 am on Friday 1 March 2024**. It is being hosted by the **Uniting Church, crn Wunda Road and Concord Road, Concord West** and will be followed by morning tea.

Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the Wangal people of the Eora nation, the Traditional Custodians who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

PROJECT COMPASSION Ronita is featured on this year's Project Compassion poster. She is a mother of two young boys and lives in a slum in Quezon City in the Philippines. Ronita left school when she became pregnant as a teenager. That could have had a life-long impact on her future. Thankfully, she heard about the Alternative Learning System (ALS) program run by the *Faithful Companions of Jesus*, Caritas Australia's local partners in the Philippines.

Ronita went back to school to finish her education and secured a job at a call centre. Ronita is now looking forward to a brighter future for her whole family.

Please donate to Project Compassion. Together, we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow **for all future generations**.

You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes, or by calling 1800 024 413 or visit caritas.org.au/project-compassion.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

during the 9.30 am Mass on Sunday. All children of primary school age are invited to attend. We ask that pre-school children remain in the church with their parents.

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.

The children listen to the readings of the Sunday and share prayers and reflections. They 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.

SUPPORTING OUR PARISH There are many ways parishioners continue to support the Mission and work of the parish: the Planned Giving program, Tap n' Go donations and cash donations placed in the collection buckets each Sunday.



For your convenience this QR Code allows secure credit donations to be made to the parish through the Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

The QR Code will take you directly to the Donation Page on our parish website. If you

select the default option (Sunday collections) your donation will automatically be split between the normal parish 1st and 2nd collections. Alternatively, you can scroll down for other options.

FASTING AND LENTEN PENANCE

Fasting is most frequently associated with abstaining from eating food and sometimes from drink, apart from water. In the modern world "fasting" has also been extended to abstaining from certain behaviours, such as smoking or using social media.

In a religious context fasting is usually associated with prayer. All the main world religions have a tradition of fasting either as a regular part of life or as a practice linked to special festivals.

In the Gospels we find many references to the Jewish practice of fasting. As we heard on Ash Wednesday, Jesus (Mt 6:16-18) warned his disciples against allowing fasting to become only an external practice that does not touch the heart, the core of a person's being.

The early Christian communities followed the Jewish tradition of fasting on certain days each week, usually Wednesday and Friday. By the second century we know that there was also a forty hour fast in Jerusalem that began on Good Friday. It was seen as a preparation for Easter.

By the first Council of Nicaea in 325 the preparation for Easter had been extended to a fast of forty days. It was seen to imitate the time Jesus fasted in the wilderness after his baptism.

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.

The early 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. We still fast for an hour before receiving Communion.

In the Roman 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 especially during the season of Lent. In that Lenten context fasting as a penance is also an expression of self-denial.

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

Paul Crowley

CONFIRMATION 2024: The Sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated at **11.00 am on Sunday 26 May 2024**. Registrations will open on Tuesday 2 April. More details about how to register will be available in March.

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

Child sexual abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with crimes are the police. If you, or anyone you know, have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding & Ministerial Integrity Office: safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org or phone 02 9390 5810. You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and guidance. The Archdiocese has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL: New members are needed for 2024. 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 Parish Pastoral Council works with the parish priest to foster and support appropriate pastoral actions. Members serve a four-year term with half the Council changing every two years. The Pastoral Council meets on the first Tuesday of every second month from February to December. Any parishioner 18 years of age or older may be nominated or may nominate his/herself. If you are interested, please contact Fr Paul.

BAPTISM OF CHILDREN 2024 Parents wishing to present a child for Baptism please note that Baptism is not celebrated at St Mary's Concord during the season of Lent. Please contact the parish office for a booking.

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. 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.

LIVE STREAMING MASS:

The very professional coverage is made possible because someone is directing the video cameras. We thank Angela Kwa and James Kennedy, our two video directors, who share that role. In 2024 we need to expand our team.

We also need more volunteers to operate the PowerPoint presentation that provides the words of the hymns each Sunday at 9.30 am Mass.

SUNDAY READINGS DURING LENT

The book that contains the readings for Mass is called *The Lectionary*. Our current Lectionary was introduced in 1969 and it presents three readings for each Sunday across a three-year cycle. This year we are in Year B of that cycle.

Except for the Easter Season, the first reading on a Sunday is selected from the Old Testament. The second reading is taken from the books of the New Testament apart from the Gospels.

On the Sundays of Lent the first readings present moments in the History of Salvation. We begin this Sunday with the story of the covenant with Noah after the Flood. Next Sunday we will move on to Abraham and Isaac. Then on the third Sunday we take up the story of the Exodus and the Law given to Moses. On the fourth Sunday we will hear about the exiles in Babylon.

The second reading each Sunday offers a further reflection that explores the main themes of Lent. On this first Sunday the second reading from 1 Peter links the image of the Flood in the first reading to the waters of Baptism.

The Gospel reading on the first Sunday of Lent is always an account of Jesus going into the wilderness after his Baptism. This year we listen to Mark's Gospel which gives a very brief account of what is sometimes called the "temptations of Jesus in the wilderness".

The Gospel on the second Sunday presents the Transfiguration and this year we will hear Mark's account. However, on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent we will listen to John's Gospel.

In Year A we hear the stories about people coming to believe in Jesus: a Samaritan woman, the man born blind and the raising of Lazarus. They are stories that have been used since the earliest centuries to instruct those who were preparing to be baptized at Easter. They can be used every year if there are candidates preparing for Baptism at Easter.

In the Year B cycle we still listen to John's Gospel but the focus shifts. On the third Sunday we listen to the account of Jesus driving the money-changers from the Temple. In John's Gospel that happened at the beginning of Jesus' Mission.

On the fourth Sunday we listen to part of the encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus. It explores the theme of rebirth. Then on the fifth Sunday the focus is on the hour when Jesus will be glorified. In John's Gospel that happens when he is lifted up on the cross.

Paul Crowley

VOTIVE CANDLES: A long Christian tradition has linked the lighting of a candle to prayers of petition. When we pray for a particular intention or for someone who has died, lighting a candle is visible expression of our prayer.

That is also why we give a donation so that it becomes “my candle” that I am offering to God as a sign of my prayer.

For safety reasons many churches have moved to electric votive candles. We have two electric votive candle stands to give parishioners an opportunity to “light” a candle. You simply need to touch the button in front of the candle.



In 2018 we also added a new votive candle stand in the shrine of *S Maria Vergine Annunziata* at the back of the church. It offers parishioners an opportunity to light a specially designed candle that fits into a glass holder. If there are no candles in the glass cups, simply place the candle into the cup and use the lighter that is provided. Please do not lift the glass holders out of the stand. A donation can be placed in the box at the front of the stand.

The parish buys the special candles for that stand and your donations also help to cover the cost of the candles.

PARKING FOR MASS: On-site parking is only available in the Church Forecourt via the Parramatta Road gates. Please park your vehicle rear to the buildings to avoid reversing after Mass and drivers please be patient as you leave. Do not move your vehicle while people are still exiting from the church.

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, but please not tinned spaghetti. Donations can be placed in the blue bin on the table at the back of the church.

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.

In this painting Murillo combined two different iconographic traditions: the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption.

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. 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)

PARISH HERITAGE SIGNS

In 2020 St Mary's Parish commissioned five heritage signs to mark the sesquicentenary of the founding of the parish in 1870. 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). The signs have been placed close to the original locations of the buildings.

THE FIRST CHURCH

The first church built on the St Mary's Parish site was blessed and opened by Archbishop Polding on 7 December 1845.

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 1845

The painting is based on a photograph taken in 1917 when the hall was under construction behind the first church. That painting now hangs in the parish hall

THE PRESBYTERY

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 Presbytery c 2003

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.

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, as part of the strategic plan for the development of the parish site, the Presbytery, the Convent and the 1950s school building were all demolished to make way for the new St Mary's Villa.



St Mary's Villa Residential Aged Care 2010

ST MARY'S SCHOOL

The 1845 church also served as a hall and from 1846 as a classroom for a one-teacher school with John Clancy as the first schoolmaster.

When John Clancy retired due to ill health in 1858, he was followed by a series of lay teachers. Records are unclear about the school's operation in the 1860s but when St Mary's Parish was established in 1870, the

existing one-teacher school became part of St Mary's Parish.

When the New South Wales Colonial Government withdrew funding for denominational schools in 1879, it became more difficult for the parish to pay the salary of the teacher and to maintain the school.

Fr Callaghan McCarthy, the first parish priest, asked the Sisters of Charity to take charge of the school and in 1883 the Sisters began travelling each day from Ashfield to teach in the school-hall



The photo of the 1894 school was taken 1917 as the hall was under construction (on the left).

The first school building was erected on the parish site in 1894. It stood on the western side of the present Church Forecourt on what is now the "grass" area within the school precinct. The foundation stone

laid by Cardinal Moran can now be seen on the western side of the church steps

St Mary's School continued to expand. In 1940 a new infants' school was built facing Burton Street and in 1956 a Commercial College for girls was built on the site of the second church. When more classrooms were needed in the 1970s, the first school building was demolished to make way for a new block of classrooms that were blessed and opened by Archbishop James Freeman on 3 September 1972. They became the Kindergarten block until almost forty years later in 2011 when another classroom block was built for Kindergarten along the Parramatta Road boundary of the school precinct on the western side of the hall.



The 1972 classroom block was then demolished to create the present "grass" area.