



St Mary's Parish Concord

5th Sunday of Lent

Year B

17 March 2024

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34

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

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Ps 50

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 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 Jean McGrath and for all who have died recently; for Antonio Patrizi, George Guinness, Giuseppe & Venera Russo, John McCue and for all those whose anniversaries occur about this time; we pray for all our deceased family members and friends.

ST PATRICK'S DAY: As this Sunday, 17 March, is the Fifth Sunday of Lent, the feast of St Patrick is transferred to Monday 18 March. All are invited to join Bishop Terry Brady to celebrate the feast in St Mary's Cathedral at 10.00 am on 18 March.

EASTER TRIDUUM 2024

HOLY THURSDAY 28 March

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

GOOD FRIDAY 29 March

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 30 March

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

EASTER SUNDAY 31 March

Masses 7.30 am, 9.30 am & 6.00 pm

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

The Second Rite of Reconciliation will be celebrated at St Mark's Church, Drummoyne at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 26 March. It is a communal celebration that includes the opportunity for individual confession. Several priests will be available.

First Rite of Reconciliation (individual) is available on Saturdays from 5.00 to 5.30 pm in the Reconciliation Room near the Baptism Font. **Saturday 23 March** is the last opportunity for individual Reconciliation at St Mary's Concord before Easter.

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.

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. Contact the parish office for more details.

PROJECT COMPASSION

The work of Caritas Australia is only possible with the dedication, passion and tenacity of our local partners who implement the programs. They are the heroes on the ground, working tirelessly behind-the-scenes every day to create a better future for their communities.

Caritas Australia partners with the *Faithful Companions of Jesus* (FCJ) to support communities living in urban slums in the Philippines. FCJ runs a number of programs that include house renovating, food processing, basic literacy skills, urban gardening, upcycling and income generating activities. They also have a clinic visited weekly by a doctor and community nurse.

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

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

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: phone 02 9390 5810 or safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org. 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.

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.

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.

PASSION (PALM) SUNDAY 24 MARCH

It is the custom to bless palm or olive branches at all Masses. Please note that the people who 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 small branches to share with others. Branches will be blessed at the beginning of each Mass. **Weather permitting, the Solemn Blessing will take place in the Church Forecourt at the beginning of the 9.30 am Mass.** Please note parking will be limited and the Parramatta Road gates will be closed once the available parking spaces are filled.

PALM CROSSES: All parishioners are invited to make their own palm crosses in the hall after the 9.30 am Mass next Sunday (Palm Sunday 24 March). After viewing a 3min YouTube clip, volunteers will be available to help you make palm crosses for your family. Please bring your own palm branch and if possible some extra palms for others to share. We look forward to sharing this activity with you all."

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.

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.

IMPORTANT DATE for 2024

Friday 16 August Parish Dinner

The Parish Dinner will be one of the opportunities for the parish community to celebrate Fr Paul's Golden Jubilee of Ordination (7 September 1974).

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

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.