



St Mary's Parish Concord

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Year B

28 April 2024

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING: Acts 9:26-31

Barnabas described how the Lord appeared to Saul and spoke to him on his journey.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 21

**I will praise you, Lord,
in the assembly of your people.**

SECOND READING: 1 John 3:18-24

This is his commandment: we should believe in Jesus and love one another.

GOSPEL: John 15:1-8

Those who abide in me, and I in them, bear much fruit.

PRAYER INTENTIONS

We pray for those who continue to suffer because of war and violent conflicts.

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 Manuel Becerra, Vincenzo Darenzo (Italy), Patricia Watson, Mary Anjela Ariyaratnam and all those who have died recently; we pray for Lionel Fonseka, Wayne Smith, Cath Collins, Frank Collins, Teresa Fitzmaurice, Joseph Emmanuel Sellathamboo, Edoardo Bregolin and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time; for all our deceased family members and friends.

CWF APPEAL

The final Charitable Works Fund Appeal for the 2023-2024 financial year is being held next Sunday. Your donations go directly towards the charitable and pastoral works of the Church in the Sydney Archdiocese. **Donations are 100% tax deductible. If you require a tax receipt, please complete all the details on the CWF envelope.** Your donation also assists the parish to meet its quota for the appeal. Thank you for your support.

MORNING TEA: Please join us in the Hall after the 9.30 am Mass next **Sunday 5 May**. 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.

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.

CONFIRMATION 2024

Confirmation will be celebrated at 11am on Sunday 26 May. **Registration will close on Monday 29 April.** To register please email the parish office and include your child's name, school and year to request enrolment. A registration form and information letter will be sent via return email.

ST MARY'S PLAYGROUP will recommence on **Friday 5 May at 9.30 am** 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 note there will be no Playgroup meeting on Friday 10 May** due to the school Mothers' Day Mass.

IMPORTANT DATES for 2024

Friday 16 August Parish Dinner

The Parish Dinner will be our opportunity to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the parish. The 2020 Sesquicentenary celebrations were cancelled due to the COVID pandemic. Further details will be available in the coming weeks.

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

NEW TAP & GO TERMINALS

Thank you to all who donate to the parish through our Tap & Go terminals. New eftpos terminals are in place this week at the doors of the church. The new terminals allow you to choose your donation by selecting one of the preset amounts or by entering your own donation amount. Please note that receipts cannot be issued for eftpos donations and transactions cannot be reversed.

THE TRUE VINE

In John's Gospel (Jn 15:1-8) when Jesus describes himself as the True Vine, the context is the Last Supper and Jesus is addressing his disciples.

In this long discourse Jesus has been telling them that he will leave them and then return to take them with him. That was introduced (Jn 14:1-14) by Jesus telling them "Do not let your hearts be troubled". Jesus then tells them that although he will leave them, he will return and take them to be with him.

The image of the Father's house is used to capture that promise of being with the Risen Jesus. However, it is not about a building. It is about our relationship with God in Christ.

That part of John's Gospel is a popular choice for Funeral Masses, offering as it does reassurance and hope in the promise of eternal life. However, it is not just about life after death.

The discourse of Jesus at the Last Supper then explores how the Risen Jesus continues to dwell with the disciples through the gift of the Holy Spirit (the Paraclete).

Key words that John's Gospel uses to express that relationship between the Risen Jesus and the disciples are "remaining" and "abiding".

The metaphor of the vine and the branches captures that mutual love: "Abide in me as I abide in you."

It is only by remaining one with the Risen Jesus through the gift of the Holy Spirit that we are able to bear fruit.

The second reading on this Fifth Sunday (1 John 3:18-24) explores the implications of abiding in God's love. The fruit is that we should love one another.

That message is also taken up in John 15:9-17, the Gospel for the Sixth Sunday of Easter.

Paul Crowley

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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.

BLESSING OF A HOME AT EASTER:

Families are invited to take Easter Water from the blue container in the side porch. A simple prayer, *Blessing of a Home at Easter*, is also available.

PROJECT COMPASSION

Thank you for supporting Caritas Australia's Project Compassion 2024 Lenten appeal. Together, we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow, for all future generations. If you still have a box or envelopes at home, [we encourage you to return them next Sunday](#). Donations can still be made by calling 1800 024 413 or at 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, has 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 of Sydney has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.

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.

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.

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.

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.