

The BARRA

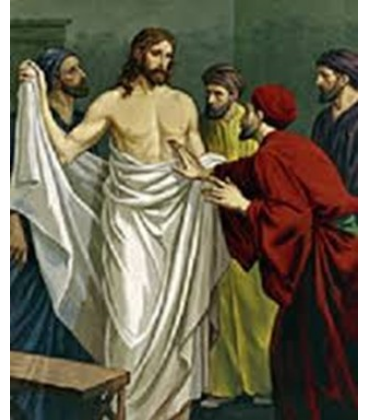
Weekly Newsletter of St Finbar's Catholic Parish, Glenbrook
2nd Sunday of Easter - Divine Mercy - Year A

18th & 19th April 2020

Acts 2:42-47; Ps 117; St. Peter 1:3-9; Jn 20:19-31; Eucharistic Prayer 2

Father Jolly Weekly Reflection

When we are baptised, we have the most important date of our life, for it is on that date, "God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ gives us new birth, a birth unto hope which draws its life from the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Pet 1:3). We Christians need to believe in this, for it is this faith which is the master key of Christian life, which unlock the divine store house and fetch Christ's new life into our souls. Our faith is the assurance of things we hope for. We are assured that in our Baptism, we receive the same gifts that Jesus granted to his community of disciples after his resurrection, namely, we are welcomed into the community of believers; we encounter Christ's wounds and are marked with the cross of Christ; we are Baptised into Christ's death that we might share his resurrection; we are given peace, forgiveness and community with a commission for ministry. If this faith of ours as to what happens at Baptism is weak, it is time to stir it up; unless our faith is raised up, it will lie prostrate and unless it is warmed, it will be frozen. One sure way to rouse up our faith is to put our faith into works. We all know that if we don't use a muscle, it begins to weaken. The same can happen to our faith, if we don't exercise it. As we cannot separate heat from fire so we cannot have faith without works. We are not Baptised for a self-sufficient aloneness. Each of us need to belong to the community of believers. St. Thomas got his experience of Christ in the community of disciples. In the community he became a believer because there he met Christ. We ask the question how could we do that in middle of all this worries, Isolation and fear. To belong to the community of believers we need not be physically close to each other. To belong is to share and serve and pray for one another at this time. It is a time wherein we can't come together in worship as a Parish Community but let us be aware that none of us are alone we are all together in our struggles. Let our prayer for one another, sharing of our goodness with our neighbours and those in dare need, looking after our elderly and sick making sure that no one feels in our community not being loved. Let our kindness and love be strongly felt for each member of our community not being loved. Find enough time to pray together as a family. Let us wait in patience and anticipation for the days when we can gather together to pray, to break the word of God and break the living bread. Let us not forget and let be assured of the power of the Holy Spirit working in each one of us. As today's Gospel make us reflect about the Healing touch of Jesus to Thomas and allowing him to touch his wounds, Jesus heals the wounds of pain, loneliness, hurt and disbelief of Thomas. The same way let us ask Jesus to touch the whole world with his healing touch at this time of agony and pain, let the expression of Thomas be upon our lips "My God and My Lord", which is an expression of his complete dependence and trust in the Lord.



FINANCIAL WELLBEING OF THE PARISH

With the closure of churches to public Masses, the parish income has taken a severe hit, and is struggling to pay its bills.

All staff have been placed on absolute minimum hours, and the parish has registered for the Jobkeeper allowance to try to help staff through this crisis.

All expenditure has been suspended unless it is essential (such as paying for insurance, power, water and other services).

We still need you to continue your regular envelope donations so we can meet these essential expenses, and this can be done by dropping them into Fr Jolly in the parish office (slip it under the door if he is not there), or by converting to either a regular credit card payment or a regular payment from your bank account. Either of these can be set up for you once you complete a very simple form. If you would like to do either of these electronic payments, just call in or ring the parish office and the relevant form can be completed on the spot or sent to you. Another option is to make regular donations using the Parish website (stfinbars.org.au) hit the "Make a Payment" button on the front page select the biller code "Planned Giving" and complete the other details.

Thank you for your continued support

Fr Jolly
Parish Priest

BISHOP VINCENT'S EASTER MESSAGE 2020

Dear friends,

This year, for the first time perhaps ever, Easter is celebrated in our virtually empty cathedral and in many churches around the world. Of course, we all hope that this strange phenomenon is only temporary and once the coronavirus crisis is over, we will be able to gather and to do things the way we did before.

While we yearn for familiarity and security, we must not allow ourselves to be unmoved by the signs of the times. We must discern what the Holy Spirit is saying and seize this moment as a kairos, an opportune moment to seek the will of God for us in a world that is being radically transformed before our eyes.

Pope Francis did this when he appeared alone at St Peter's Square last week. He said the pandemic uncovers our false certainties around which we construct our projects, habits and priorities. When carry these things on without regard for the poor, the afflicted and the ailing planet, the consequences can only be destructive. When we are out of touch with the natural world and our spiritual roots, we deprive ourselves of the antibodies we need to confront adversity.

This crisis, in other words, is a symptom of a deeper malaise, a sign that we have alienated ourselves from the God of life and love; that we have become dull to the cry of God's poor and the cry of God's creation. Therefore, it is an opportunity for us to recognise our own sinfulness that contributes to the suffering of Body of Christ, now, at this moment, in the poor, the dispossessed, the marginalised and our wounded Mother Earth. It is a kairos for us to further God's restorative justice in the world.

But this crisis also has significance for the way we are being Church moving forward. I cannot help but wonder whether the time of empty and closed churches is not some kind of cautionary vision of what might happen in a not distant future. This is what it could look like in years to come. Certainly, as tourists you would have seen many churches in Europe being reduced to near empty and in some instances repurposed for communal usage. Some might see this as a sign of religious decay or even moral decadence. Others would suggest that we are at a threshold of an emerging Christianity, which is not confined to ornate cathedrals or churches, convents and monasteries.

The Gospel tonight speaks of the bewilderment and disillusionment of the disciples as they were confronted with an empty tomb. They were reassured that this was not a dead end and that Jesus had risen and had gone ahead of them to Galilee. A question to stimulate meditation for this strange Easter: Where is the Galilee of today or where we can encounter the risen Christ?

Galilee is emblematic of Jesus' radical, inclusive and boundary-breaking mission. It is where he healed the sick, championed the cause of the oppressed and transformed lives.

We must learn to broaden radically the boundaries of our understanding of the church. Pope Francis famously commented a passage from the Book of Revelation in which Jesus stands before the door and knocks. The Pope said: "Today Christ is knocking from inside the church and wants to get out."

We encounter the living Christ, therefore, beyond the known boundaries of our worldview and the safe moorings of the past. We meet him as a community of seekers of truth, meaning and ultimate concern. More importantly, we witness to him in our acts of solidarity, communion and love.

Brothers and sisters,

Let us embrace this Easter as a challenge to seek Christ anew. Let us not seek the living among the dead. Let us seek him boldly and tenaciously, and let us not be taken aback if he appears to us as a foreigner, a stranger or an outsider.

We will recognise him by his wounds, by his voice when he speaks to us intimately, by the Spirit that brings peace and banishes fear.

Let Easter get into us. Let Easter come and live where we live. Let Easter permeate our souls. Let Him Easter in us, and be "a dayspring to the dimness of us".

In this holy season of Easter 2020, may we all allow the Risen Jesus to 'Easter in us'!

Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv
Bishop of Parramatta

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THE CHAPLET OF THE DIVINE MERCY

The Chaplet was revealed to St Faustina through a series of visions, starting September 13, 1935:

"I saw an Angel, the executor of God's wrath... about to strike the earth...I began to beg God earnestly for the world with words which I heard interiorly. As I prayed in this way, I saw the Angel's helplessness, and he could not carry out the just punishment..."

The following day an inner voice taught her to say this prayer on ordinary rosary beads. In subsequent revelations, the Lord made it clear that the Chaplet was not just for her, but for the whole world. He also attached extraordinary promises to its recitation.

Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy at the hour of death (Diary 687). When they say this Chaplet in the presence of the dying, I will stand between My Father and the dying person, not as the just Judge but as the Merciful Saviour (Diary 1541). Priests will recommend it to sinners as their last hope of salvation. Even if there were a sinner most hardened, if he were to recite this Chaplet only once, he would receive grace from My infinite mercy (Diary 687). I desire to grant unimaginable graces to those souls who trust in My mercy (Diary 687).



HOW TO RECITE THE CHAPLET.

The Chaplet of Mercy is recited using ordinary rosary beads of five decades. The Chaplet is preceded by two opening prayers from the Diary of Saint Faustina and followed by a closing prayer.

1. **Make the Sign of the Cross**

2. **Opening Prayers**

You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls, and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy, envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.

(Repeat three times)

O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of mercy for us, I trust in You!

3. **Our Father.**

4. **Hail Mary**

5. **The Apostles' Creed**

6. **The Eternal Father**

Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

7. **On the 10 Small Beads of Each Decade**

8. **Repeat for the remaining decades**

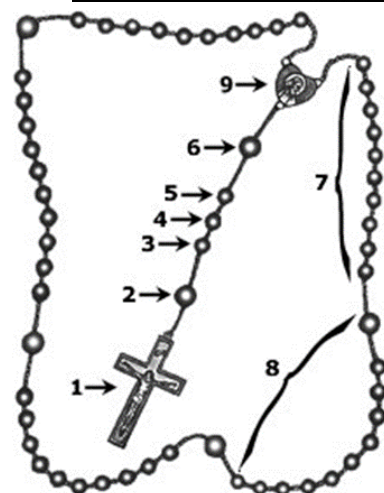
Saying the "Eternal Father" (6) on the "Our Father" bead and then 10 "For the sake of His sorrowful Passion" (7) on the following "Hail Mary" beads.

9. **Conclude with Holy God (Repeat three times)**

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

10. **Closing Prayer**

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion — inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself.



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Reflection on the Gospel

Because the focus of this week's gospel passage is usually placed on poor old doubting Thomas, we sometimes overlook the way the passage begins. The disciples are huddled in a room, 'for fear of the Jews'. Just a couple of weeks earlier they had been on top of the world. Jesus was enormously popular with the people, and the disciples, by association, were caught up in that affection. Their man, the one they had chosen to follow, was making waves and stirring the authorities – thumbing his nose at the rules. This, of course, made the disciples feel good to be around Jesus. However, in the space of just a few short days, their world had turned upside down. They'd gone from riding the crest of a wave to being utterly dumped! They were cowering in a closed up room, afraid for their lives in case those who handed Jesus over for death came for them as well. They'd already had an experience of the resurrected Jesus yet they were still hiding and afraid. Into this fear and uncertainty steps Jesus who says, 'Peace be with you'. It is a reminder of Jesus calming the storm out on the lake – in the midst of turmoil and anxiety he brings peace and calm.

Thomas has received a pretty bad rap for the last 2000 years, forever labelled as 'Doubting Thomas' because he wasn't prepared to take someone else's word for the fact that Jesus had risen. However, despite his demand for evidence, once Jesus is before him, he abandons all his thoughts about placing his fingers in the wounds and proclaims, 'My Lord and my God!' This is an absolutely extraordinary statement of faith. For the very first time, someone recognises Jesus, not as Messiah, prophet or Lord, but as God.

Reflection by Greg Sunter

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE RECENTLY DECEASED:

Catherine Walsh (Mari McDonald's Sister), Elise Doyle (Jacqui Visser's Sister), Patrick Hanson, Patricia De Mattia, Ken Moore, Maureen Purcell, Veronica Blair (Marg Holden and Bly Miers Mother), Merle Catlin (Margaret Richard's Mother), Jim Barrett, Anthony Campbell (Alison Howard's Brother), Hilary Doyle and Denis (Mick) O'Sullivan.

PLEASE PRAY FOR SICK PARISHIONERS, RELATIVES & FRIENDS:


Kathleen Schneiders, Maria Macri, Eugene Daley (Margaret Rivas' Friend), Ryder Lopez, Rev. Max Barrett (CSSR) (Jim Barrett's Brother), Joan Paine, Mark Bates, Lyn Downes, Reg Moore, Pam Clyne, Ellen Moffitt, Terry Stevens, Jacqui Visser, Joan Lohrey, Joanne Macrae, Maddison Farrugia, Catherine Kirk (Cameron), Sophie Hollies, Colleen Nolan, Michelle Anthony and Harrison Aggar (Margaret & Ian Dickson's Grandson).

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME:

Rein Bruinsma, Benjamin Lowe, Baby Gwen Fielden, Eleanor Morgan, Grace Walkley, Alan Bryan, Madge Boylan, Raymond Merchant, Kathleen Moore, Margaret Mead and Wayne Portelli.



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