

# The Barbra

Weekly Newsletter of St Finbar's Catholic Parish, Glenbrook  
5th Sunday of Easter - Year A

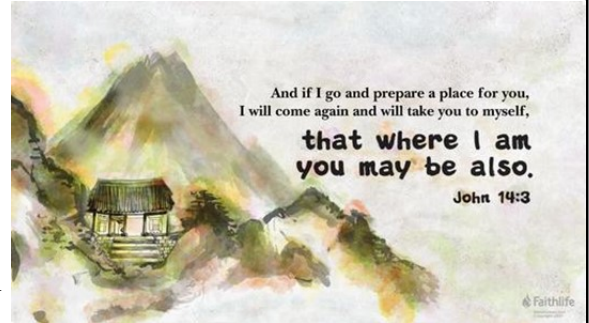
9th & 10th May 2020

Acts 6:1-7; Ps 32; St. Peter 2:4-9; Jn 14:1-12

***Wishing all the mothers, stepmothers and grandmothers in our Parish a very Happy Mother's Day, may God bless them all. Father Jolly***

## **FATHER JOLLY'S WEEKLY REFLECTION**

Everyone in the world experiences some manner of trouble. None of us are free from it. Trouble appears to crush people. Some people invite trouble unaware that it will welcome and accept our invitation at any time. A lot of trouble in the world is caused by people trying to reform other people first. We are not so much talking here about such troubles; We talk here about real troubles. One is afraid of unemployment; parents are fearful about their sons and daughters going through great worries. Someone afraid of not being able to find a place to live or his freedom taken away, children afraid of losing their parents. Apart from such personal troubles, we are all afflicted by the fear of Covid-19. To add to all these we have our imaginary troubles. We live in a time where we all feel great fear. Fear is of two kinds. One is constructive fear. This is the fear that can lead us to deeper constructive and creative action. Much of our progress has been a result of fears of starvation, sickness and the like. One of these days I was listening to a press conference of the Kerala Chief Minister in India where in he expressed his fear of the consumer state, people with the most educational average, white collar jobs not having enough food supply, if the Covid-19 continues for another few months, due to the inability of food supplies delivered to the state from other parts of India. He asked every family to plant vegetables and fruits to be self-sufficient. It can be an instruction to create a vegetable revolution to that state.



There is another kind of fear which is destructive. This fear leads one to deterioration of emotional state, to increased nervousness, impotence and unreasonable behaviour. We should not become victims of this destructive fear but act with an attitude of calmness and have a strong trust in our own inherent power to face it. We should move towards a constructive action knowing that we are all in God's hands. It was this kind of trust in God that Jesus was referring to when he said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Have faith in God and faith in me" (John 14:1). We must believe that God is with us in our troubles. We may not see him, but he is there. Jesus promised us that God is always with us and will save us in spite of our troubles. Yes, we are believers in God, and he created each one of us. Then we ask the question why is there so much suffering? Does he not notice us? Albert Einstein, a scientist who believed in God, once said "Mind and reason do not give answer to our suffering. We have to find answers elsewhere. We have to give up our idea of a God who always does what we think is good for us and others". "We have to accept that God's ways are not our ways, yet He is infinitely good". We trust Him as Job and Jesus did. We do not promote suffering. On the contrary we try to eliminate every suffering. But if suffering comes, we accept it as a sign of our trust in and fidelity to God. Jesus was aware of the existence of suffering and evil all around Him. In the midst of suffering Jesus is our model: Many presume that Jesus, accepted suffering as suffering. But Jesus considered suffering as negative and life crippling. He fought against it and its causes.

That is why He directed His ministry to remove suffering and help those who were suffering. Jesus healed the lepers, the deaf, the blind, the lame and the sick. He accepted suffering only when it was unavoidable without making compromises on life-giving principles. We too shall suffer while living the life-giving values of the Gospels, but if we keep ourselves united with Jesus, we shall experience what St. Paul experienced and say what he said "We are afflicted in every way but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed" (2 Cor 4:8-10). To be able to follow the model of Jesus, we should be people of prayer. Like Paul, we must call upon God and pray to him in our troubles. Not just in times of troubles a Christian should pray; prayer should be the soul of our faith life.

## **FATHER JOLLY'S WEEKLY REFLECTION**

The Early Church realised the importance of prayer so well that when the Apostles found that they had no time "for prayer and the service of the word" (Acts 6:2) they appointed seven Deacons to care for the material needs of the community so they themselves could devote all their time to prayer and preaching the word. Therefore, let us become prayerful people. The Lord will encourage a prayerful Christian to have a calm appraisal of the problem that is causing fear and motivate us to use the available resources to overcome our difficulties. The Lord will give us the ability to bear it. Yes, the Lord is good; as someone has said: "Happiness keeps you sweet, trials keep you strong, sorrow keeps you human, failure keeps you humble, success keeps you glowing, but only God keeps you going".

Let us be aware of his presence with us all the time to keep us going and doing the good works we can do.

## **THANKS TO PARISHIONERS**

The Parish would like to thank those parishioners who are continuing to support the Parish financially, whether it be through regular credit card donations, regular direct debit donations, by donations through the parish website or the 25 or so parishioners who have their weekly envelopes dropped into the parish office.

May God's grace be with you all.

If you have not yet been able to donate to the Parish, please consider using your envelopes, either by dropping them into the Parish office each week, or by a lump sum to the end of June in a single envelope dropped in to the Parish office. If it is easier, just make your donations via the "Make a Payment" button on the front page of the Parish website and select the Planned Giving code and complete the other details.

Fr Jolly and the Parish Community thank you and urge you to stay safe in these difficult times.

*We express our heartfelt condolences to our School Principal Mrs. Robyn Clarke and her family at the loss of her dear mother Mrs. Judy Lee and offer our prayers for Eternal Rest. Eternal Rest grant to her O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her.*

## **PLEASE PRAY FOR THE RECENTLY DECEASED:**

Judy Lee (Robyn Clarke's Mother), Yvonne Holt (Judy Burrett's Sister), Betty Burge-Lopez (Julie-Ann McLoughlin's Grandmother), Elise Doyle (Jacqui Visser's Sister), Patrick Hanson, Patricia De Mattia, Ken Moore, Maureen Purcell, Merle Catlin (Margaret Richard's Mother), Jim Barrett, Anthony Campbell (Alison Howard's Brother).

## **PLEASE PRAY FOR SICK PARISHIONERS, RELATIVES & FRIENDS:**

Adam Carlyon (Theresa Luczak's Son in Law), 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:**

Joseph (William) Horneman, Laurence Brooks, Maureen Holmes, Emma Peters, Marjorie Aussel, Peter Buckley, Thomas Hannigan, Kathleen Scholfield, Michael Hughes, John Appleton and Anita Dyson.

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## **WHY IS MAY THE MONTH OF MARY? BY MARGE FENELON**

The ways Mary is honoured in May is as varied as the people who honor her.

May, the month in which the earth springs into bloom (at least in the Northern Hemisphere) and we start thinking about planting gardens, family picnics and making vacation plans.

It's also the Month of Mary.

### ***Why is May Mary's month?***

Here's a brief explanation.

For centuries, the Catholic Church has set aside the entire month of May to honor Mary, Mother of God. Not just a day *in* May, mind you, but the entire month.

The custom spans both centuries and cultures, with roots going back as far as the Ancient Greeks. In early Greece, May was dedicated to Artemis, the goddess of fecundity.

In Ancient Rome, May was dedicated to Flora, the goddess of blooms, or blossoms. They celebrated *ludi florals*, or floral games, at the end of April and asked the intercession of Flora for all that blooms.

In medieval times, similar customs abounded, all centering around the practice of expelling winter, as May 1 was considered the start of new growth.

During this period, the tradition of *Tricesimum*, or "Thirty-Day Devotion to Mary," came into being. Also called, "Lady Month," the event was held from August 15-September 14 and is still observed in some areas.

The idea of a month dedicated specifically to Mary can be traced back to baroque times. Although it wasn't always held during May, Mary Month included thirty daily spiritual exercises honouring Mary.

It was in this era that Mary's Month and May were combined, making May the Month of Mary with special devotions organized on each day throughout the month. This custom became especially widespread during the nineteenth century and remains in practice until today.

The ways Mary is honoured in May is as varied as the people who honor her.

It's common for parishes have a daily recitation of the Rosary during May, and many erect a special May altar with a statue or picture of Mary as a reminder of Mary's month. Additionally, it's a long-standing tradition to crown the statue of Mary during May – a custom known as May Crowning. Often, the crown is made of beautiful blossoms representing Mary's beauty and virtue. It's also a reminder to the faithful to strive to imitate our Blessed Mother's virtue in our own lives. May Crowning, in some areas, is a huge celebration and is usually done outside of Mass, although Mass may be celebrated before or after the actual crowning.

But May altars and crownings aren't just "church" things. We can and should be doing the same in our homes. When we echo the customs and traditions of the Church in our homes – our domestic churches – we participate more fully in the life of the Church.

If you haven't already, I encourage you to erect a prayer corner in your home. No matter how fancy or simple it is. The main point is that it's a place designated for God, and more specifically, for spending time with him. Just as you need proper atmosphere to sleep, you also need proper atmosphere to pray.

For May, give Mary a special spot in your prayer corner. It can be a statue or picture, but place there some representation of our Blessed Mother. Make it appealing and a real tribute to her beauty and virtue.

Then, crown Mary. You can give her an actual or spiritual crown and you can make it a subtle gesture or ornate ceremony of your own device. The meaning is far more important than the action. You can do it in the beginning, at the end of May or anywhere in between.

Just do it.

### ***Why?***

Not because it's a long-standing tradition in the Church, although it is. Not because there are any special graces connected to it, although there is.

No, do it because Mary is Mother – your mother, my mother, everyone's mother – and because she cares for all of us day-in-and-day-out without fail, interceding for us in even the tiniest matters.

For that, she deserves an entire month in her honor.

***This article originally appeared May 1, 2016, at the Register.***

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### *Reflection on the Gospel*

For many people 'going home', means a return to comfort and security. In the best homes children are unafraid, they know that their home is a buffer against some harsh realities beyond the door. As adults we carry that desire for security into all the various homes in which we live.

When we reflect on our childhood homes many of us can say of it what Jesus says of himself. It was the first place almost all of us learnt about 'The Way'. The earliest Christians were called people of The Way. It's a rich image denoting that Christianity is not an idea, it's a way of living, a path to follow.

For better or worse one of the distinctive features of most of our homes is that it's also where we are told 'The Truth'. Sometimes that deflates our egos or means we hear things we would rather not listen to. But hopefully the comfort and love which accompanies this truth telling comes from the ease and care in the relationships at home. Our family doesn't pull any punches with the truth because they know us too well and love us too much.

Most adults also remember their childhood houses as lively. 'The Life' in our homes was about the buzz of children going to and from school, various friends calling in, the reign of organised chaos where space was claimed and a position defended. Minor dramas were never far away and life was lived to the full.

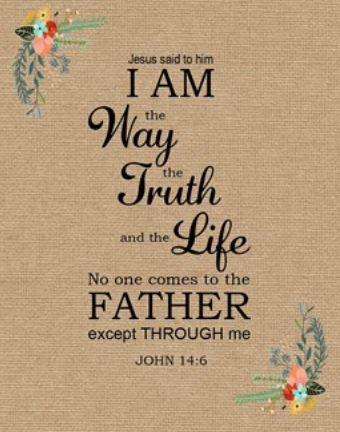
It's not by accident that the image of Jesus preparing us a house and being the Way, the Truth and the Life are put together in today's Gospel. In another part of John's gospel Jesus goes further in describing himself as our master builder, as our home and even our lodger. We are told to make a home in him as he makes a home in us. What a terrific image of the intimacy Christ wants to share with us, and we with him!

The best homes, however, do not just protect and keep their occupants safe for eternity. A home is a means to an end, which is to give us the stability and sanity we need to keep going out to the world beyond it. In the same way, our home of faith with Jesus enables us to keep going out to a sometimes hostile world and share with others the Way, the Truth and the Life that sustains us. In a world where 70% of all people have substandard housing and millions of displaced people have to create homes wherever they are, we have our work cut out for us.

The Way we follow is about justice, development and peace for all people everywhere and not just the select few who can build the biggest mansions on earth. We are invited to keep speaking the Truth even if that makes us unpopular or different or at odds with the majority. And we have to keep living the Life which sees that our greatest joy comes from human dignity being celebrated everywhere.

If all Christians lived out this Way, Truth and Life we would, by His grace, fulfil Jesus' extraordinary prophecy that we could do greater works than He did. Now that's a challenge to take with us into the coming week!

*Reflection by Richard Leonard*



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