



The Barbra

Weekly Newsletter of St Finbar's Catholic Parish, Glenbrook
6th Sunday of Easter - Year A

16th & 17th May 2020

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; Ps 65; 1 Peter 3:15-18; John 14:15-21

FATHER JOLLY'S WEEKLY REFLECTION

The whole scientific and medical world is these days making all efforts to invent a vaccine for Covid-19.

Robert Cheesebrough is the fellow who invented Vaseline, a Petroleum Jelly refined from rod wax, the ooze that forms on shafts of oil rigs. He believed so much in its power to heal wounds that he became his own guinea pig. He burned himself with acid and flame! He cut and scratched himself so often and so deeply that he bore the scars of his tests for the rest of his life. But he proved his product worked. People had only to look at his wounds, now healed, to see the value of his work and belief. We too say that we are believers. But how true is our belief? Faith is more than just having an idea but a deep conviction and commitment. If so, how deeply are we committed to the Good News?

There is nothing more dangerous than to study faith, analyse faith, make noble declaration of faith but never actually accept it or live it. Juan Arias in his book, *THE GOD I DON'T BELIEVE IN*, gives a summary of those aspects of God that such people declare, and he does not believe. He says "No I shall never believe it – The God who catches man and woman by surprise in a sin of weakness, The God who condemns material things, The God who loves pain, The God who flashes a red light against human joy, The God who makes himself feared, The God who does not allow people to talk familiarly to Him, The God who always demands 100% in an examination, The God who can be fully explained by a philosophy or Theology, The God whom only the mature, the wise, or the comfortably placed can understand, The God who says, "You shall pay for that!", The God who says and feels nothing about the agonizing problems of humanity, The God who does not go out to meet the person, who has abandoned him, The God who has never wept for humans, The God who is not present where people love each other, The God in whom I cannot hope! No, I shall never believe in such a God ...".

All, those who have experienced the God of the Bible will agree with those statements fully. In fact those statements resonate the absence of a true God experience. "No one has ever seen God" (Jn1:18). "God as God is incomprehensible" says Karl Rahner. Our experience of God is our immersion in the incomprehensibility of God! We experience God by all the good qualities in the incomprehensible divine.

For example, we experience his infinite goodness, his peaceful, forgiving, and compassionate love. WE experience God as always more, smaller than a cell and greater than the whole Cosmos.

"When the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them" (Acts 8:14). Their believing was their personal interior acceptance of the truth of what Philip preached. Their Baptism was their personal, public, sacramental expression of their believing. Their personal immersion in the incomprehensibility of God! It is their trust in God. Many of us were Baptised as infants; have we ever seriously and maturely considered the Christian Message and accepted and committed ourselves to be immersed into the incomprehensibility of God? If we have, our faith will have by now become obedience, because faith is always obedience. One who obeys God believes him: one who believes God obeys him. In order to obey God, we first need the conversion of our hearts to the new life in Christ.

"Venerating him in the heart" (1Peter 3:15). This is so because the seat of faith is not in the brain but in the heart. Once our hearts are converted to Christ, we are ready to obey the commandments for the love of him.



FATHER JOLLY'S WEEKLY REFLECTION

That is what he meant when he said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). If we obey Christ's commandments then, and then only, he will send us his Holy Spirit. "If you obey the commandments I give you, I will ask the Father who will give you another Helper" (John 14:15-16). Don't we need the Holy Spirit? Yes, we do need the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who will help us to be immersed into the incomprehensibility of God yet know the beauty of his love and be compassionate to the needy and be generous. It is through the Holy Spirit, our capacities are activated and developed fully, and we can reach a peak in personal growth, become Christ like and enrich the lives of people around us, even in times of social distancing and lock-ups. May the Holy Spirit empower us and fill us with all the gifts so that we can be immersed into the incomprehensibility and mystery of God but experience him every second of our lives. May each of us be filled the Holy Spirit, so that we become the tangible, comprehensible experiences and expressions of the incomprehensible God to our brothers and sisters. In that way they too can love God and follow his commandments.

WEEKDAY MASSES.

Weekday Masses will resume starting this Monday the 18th of May with all Masses starting at 9am. Only 10 Parishioners are allowed inside the church at the same time as per the NSW Government Covid-19 Safe Distancing Rules.

First come, first served basis.

The Bishop's dispensation from your Sunday Obligation of attending Mass still remains.

You must write your name, address and phone number on the lists provided in the Narthex every time you come to church. All the information collected will be safely kept in the Parish Office in case of Covid19 outbreak, we will be able to contact you.

Don't forget to use the hand sanitizer provided in the Narthex.

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:

Michael Moelroy, Paul Zoeller, Claire Fisher, Dennis Barron, Cyril Fitzjohn, Millicent Grant, Moira Holmes, Denis Smith, Michael Klein, Hilder Ahrenfeld, William Osborne, Irena Chambers, Vincent Noonan, Clare Konza, Betty McSweeney, Peter Stapleton (1980) and Winifred Shindorfer.

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AD CLERUM

14 May 2020

AC 9/20

Dear Fathers, Deacons and Seminarians,

Re: COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Update

As you will be aware from Friday 15 May, 2020 in New South Wales we will move to Stage 1 of a three stage process that will ease some of the restrictions that have been in place for several weeks. It will mean that some opportunities for limited ministry will be available and that will present some challenges as we move forward. However, the following still applies:

1. COVID-19 remains present in the community and highly infectious, though in small numbers at present. With the relaxation of isolation measures and the approach of winter, an increase in cases is expected.
2. Churches may reopen for private prayer and Reconciliation, as long as no more than 10 people are in the church at once, which does not include the priest.
3. Religious gatherings are permitted with congregations of up to 10, which does not include the clergy and other ministers, for Masses, Weddings, Baptisms and Eucharistic Adoration.
4. 20 mourners indoors or 30 mourners outdoors are permitted for funerals, in addition to clergy and funeral directors.
5. Even for private prayer or for a formal gathering in a church, contact details of the attendees must be recorded and physical distancing must be observed.

Penance

1. Confessions can be celebrated in the church.
2. When recording details of attendance, there should be no reference as to why the person is attending.
3. A virus-proof barrier between the penitent and the confessor is recommended.
4. Hand sanitiser at the doors of confessionals will help to ensure that the doorknobs do not become high risk sites; frequent sanitising of confessionals is recommended.

Masses

1. There should be no procession of gifts, no passing of hymn books or collection plates.
2. The priest should sanitise his hands before distributing Holy Communion.
3. The Sign of Peace should be omitted or given without any hand-to-hand contact.
4. In the Ordinary Form of the Latin Rite, Holy Communion can only be distributed and received on the hand only.

Sacraments of initiation

1. Baptism should be celebrated when a family is happy to be limited to 10 attendees.
2. Fresh baptismal water should be used for each candidate (i.e. water that has already been used to baptise one candidate should not be reused for another.)
3. Baptismal anointings should be hygienic (e.g. use hand sanitiser before and after contact with skin.)

Weddings

1. Up to 10 persons plus the couple, the celebrant and assisting ministers are permitted.

In those parishes where weekday Masses typically involve fewer than 10 people, it may be possible to resume these Masses without rationing places. Other parishes might explore a booking or lottery system to identify 10 people for each gathering. Every appearance of favouritism or elitism should be avoided.

Priests must exercise judgment in deciding whether it is practicable to conduct one or more public Sunday Masses for 10 people. Even were Sunday Masses multiplied, the majority of the faithful will be unable to attend. All but priests therefore continue to be dispensed from attending Sunday Mass.

If you have any questions relating to these new provisions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Finally, thank you for your faithful constancy and the ingenious and creative ways in which you have maintained pastoral care of your people, either through live-streamed Masses or other outreach you have employed by use of modern technology.

We all long for the day when we can resume our normal parish activities and the People of God can once again gather to celebrate the Eucharist.

With prayers this Eastertide,

Very Rev Peter G. Williams
Vicar General & Moderator of the Curia

LAUDATO SI' WEEK

CELEBRATION FOR
5TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION
May 16-24, 2020



LAUDATO SI'
WEEK 2020



Catholic
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DIOCESE of
PARRAMATTA

2020 marks the fifth anniversary of Laudato Si', which was signed on 24 May 2015.

Pope Francis' encyclical on care for our common home, Laudato Si', is an inspiration during moments of difficulty. It encourages us to reflect on the values we share, and create a more just and sustainable future.

The theme of Laudato Si' Week is "everything is connected."

During Laudato Si' Week, we come together as one people around the world to prayerfully discern the lessons of this moment. While the world experiences a historical crisis, we reflect and prepare to build a better world. At midday on Sunday May 24, we're invited to join with the rest of the world as we say a common prayer together to mark the fifth anniversary of Laudato Si'.

COMMON PRAYER

for the 5th anniversary of
Laudato Si'

Loving God,
Creator of heaven and earth and all that is in them,
You created us in your image and made us
stewards of all your creation, of our common home.

You blessed us with the sun, water and bountiful
land so that all might be nourished.

Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we may attend to your gift of creation.

Help us to be conscious that our common home
belongs not only to us,
but to all future generations, and that it is our
responsibility to preserve it.
May we help each person secure the food and
resources that they need.

Be present to those in need in these trying times,
especially the poorest and those most at risk of
being left behind.
Transform our fear, anxiety and feelings of isolation
into hope so that we may experience a true
conversion of the heart.

Help us to show creative solidarity in addressing
the consequences of this global pandemic,
Make us courageous to embrace the changes that
are needed in search of the common good.
Now more than ever may we feel that we are all
interconnected, in our efforts to lift up the cry of the
earth and the cry of the poor.

We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.
Amen

LAUDATO SI'
WEEK 2020

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Are you wondering how the coronavirus pandemic is affecting the Church around the world? Visit: www.aidtochurch.org/covid-19 to read messages from bishops, priests, brothers and religious sisters serving in some of the most remote and dangerous countries in the world.

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Reflection on the Gospel

There are two strong images in today's gospel: the law and love. In a few verses Jesus keeps moving between the two ideas because he knows how closely related they are.

This can seem curious to modern ears because we have been duped into thinking that the law is the enemy of love, and that only freedom and joy are love's fruits. But think for a moment of people or projects we love, ones to which we are committed. We don't need a rulebook to call us to the most generous and sacrificial behaviour in their regard. We respond 'above and beyond the call of duty' not because of the law, but because of love. Jesus teaches us today that obedience to his commandments is a sub-set of our loving relationship with him.

The word 'obedience' comes from the Latin word *oboedire*, meaning, 'to listen carefully'. That's a gentler way of understanding Jesus' call. The more obedient we are to Christ's commandments, the more we are listening to his Spirit's call in our lives. And what are these commandments to which we have to listen? Jesus said the whole law and the prophets could be summarised as 'loving God and our neighbour, as we love ourselves'. If this seems too general a statement, then St Paul helps us fill out the details. Like Jesus, St Paul tells us the law of love is not primarily revealed in what we say, or how we feel, but in what we do. Christian love is an intensely practical affair. When we are patient, kind and gentle with each other we are obeying the law of love. So too when we forgive each other, tell the truth and remain faithful, we are listening most carefully to Christ's commandments.

St Paul also tells us that another of the fruits of Christian love is self-control. Sacrifice and self-control are really where the law of love comes into its own. The secular world keeps peddling the myth that self-expression is the only way to happiness. Most of us can see how irrational this position is and how unliveable the world would be if everyone expressed all their feelings and desires as they wished. Sometimes the most loving thing is to do nothing. If we are very angry with friends, for example, abusing them physically or verbally won't help. If we are sexually attracted to our best friend's spouse, having an affair will end in tears. On a more positive note, if we are alert to the poverty in which others live in our world, making sacrifices so that they might have something will not take away from us at all. Self-control is the ally of love and it helps us sort out the appropriate time to undertake the appropriate action.

The path to true happiness is found in being self-controlled. The problem is that self-control doesn't come easily. We need to train ourselves in its art and practise it regularly and consistently so that we can enjoy seeing the benefits of winning smaller battles before we venture out on larger campaigns. If we cultivate an attitude of self-control, we can be sure that when we most need to exercise it, we are in charge of our emotional life rather than it being in charge of us.

May this Eucharist effect a change of heart in us. May we embrace sacrifice and self-control as the doors to an even greater practical experience of the Risen Christ's law of love.



Reflection by Richard Leonard

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