

The Barra

Weekly Newsletter of St Finbar's Catholic Parish, Glenbrook
The Ascension of the Lord - Year A
23rd & 24th May 2020

Acts 1:1-11; Ps 46; Ephesians 1:17-23; Matthew 28:16-20;

FATHER JOLLY'S WEEKLY REFLECTION

Ascension is the celebration of Jesus's accomplishment and fulfilment of the greatest act of love and the redemption of all time and people. Life is the most precious gift we have from God, the author of life. All of us value our life very much. We all want to be happy and contented in life. Logically, as we grow older, we have to find ourselves happier and living a fuller life. Our joy and happiness must be ever on increase. Certainly, it should not be on the decrease. But in truth, the opposite is true for many of us. Many as they grow older, get stuck in the struggles that come their way of life. Suffering is often related to love and life. Love involves sacrifice, pain and suffering. A father who loves his family is ready to work hard and make many sacrifices for the sake of his family. He does not regard it as 'pain' or 'suffering' but an act of 'love' for his family. Indeed it is his love for his family that gives meaning to his hard work and sacrifices. A mother who gets up a half a dozen times at night to nurse her baby does not call those actions 'suffering'. Hence if we live in love we become loving persons. Many times we hear that Jesus' suffering and precious blood saved us once and for all. How inaccurate; The fact is, it was the love of Jesus that had saved us and not his suffering and precious blood. Of course, because he loved us, he had to undergo the pain of being misunderstood and persecuted, shed blood and be put to a brutal death. But it is purely His love that saves us. All of us are fruits of love, long for love and search for love. Hence Jesus would ask us to make love the rule and motive of our lives whereby we shall be happy always. Love is the passport to a state of abiding Joy, Peace and Freedom. The feast of Ascension tells us sacrificial love never ends in failure but total freedom and salvation. As I reflect on the Ascension of Jesus, I feel that he ascended into heaven to lead us in love and to celebrate the meaning of the freedom that sacrificial love offers. He is the leader of love. From heaven as the leader he has been giving an endless supply of workers to his church on earth. He wants all of us to be involved in the work of the Kingdom. That is why Jesus said to his disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you and remember, I am with you always, to the end of age" (Matthew 28:19-20).



The mission of the apostles was simple to understand, but difficult to carry out. It was to teach others all that he had taught them through his words and actions. Just as he asked his disciples to obey him, they were to ask that others should obey his directions and instructions and live the life of love. The programme of redemption and salvation (the mission of love) must continue from generation to generation, person to person until the end of time. We had many changes in the church and in society and we still continue to change. For example, we experience lots of changes in our behaviours, our way of worship and social living now, due to Covid-19. But the two things that have not changed are Jesus himself and every word of his message. The message and the messenger have never changed and will never change.

Pope Francis says: "I want the church to go out onto the streets, I want us to resist everything worldly, everything static, everything comfortable, everything to do with clericalism, everything that might make us closed in on ourselves. Our Parishes, schools and institutions are all made for going out if they do not, they become an NGO, and the church cannot be an NGO". He continues to say, "you are bearers of hope You are the protagonists of the future, artisans of the future Make the future with beauty, with goodness and truth.... have courage. Go forward. Make noise."

Dear friends, let us remember, we write a new page of the gospel each day, through the things that we do and the words we say. Therefore let us listen to Jesus words and make ourselves disciples of him. Disciples of Jesus through our examples. Disciples who obey everything that he has commanded us. And remember, he is with us always to the end of age.

PARISH NEWS

- ✚ It is Father Jolly's Birthday this week, St. Finbar's Parish Staff and all Parishioners would like to wish Father Jolly a very Happy Birthday and Many Happy Returns.
- ✚ The Power has been fully restored in the church and the car park.
- ✚ Weekday Masses are back Monday to Saturday at 9am with up to 10 Parishioners attending. Daily sanitising of the church pews, seats and doors been done every day as per NSW Government instructions.
- ✚ Father Jolly is inviting different groups and families each week to attend Sunday morning Mass.
- ✚ Thanks to the Parish Volunteers who kept the inside of the church and the church grounds all spic and span and in perfect order in the last 2 months.
- ✚ The Parish Community have been reaching out to other parishioners to keep the sense of community and belonging.
- ✚ The Youth Group have been in touch over the Covid-19 lockdown through Zoom meetings, to nurture the faith of one another.
- ✚ St. Finbar's Primary School is back with so many smiles on the little ones' faces excited of being back at school and with their friends.
- ✚ Theresa Luczak's Son in Law has had an Operation by Doctor Charlie Teo who managed to remove all the tumor - an answer to all the prayers. Praise God.

Join with others as The Institution for Mission creates community online to share and grow faith, every Saturday from 11am - 12pm with Saturday Sessions. Listen to the pre-recorded presentation about a topic of faith before Saturday 11am and then join an online group discussion via Zoom between 11am – 12pm. Register in advance for this meeting to receive the links for the presentation:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZAud-uorD0iHd3uiFHqUsjrFGs6dNYOVY2>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting and the links to the presentation.

23rd May 2020 - Bishop Robert Barron. Giving a reason for the hope within us. 2019 (approx. 1:15 hr). Bishop Robert Barron is an American prelate of the Catholic Church serving as auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

Bishop Barron speaks about the rising tide of the unaffiliated in our Church and looks at the who, why and how of this very relevant topic. Not only true of young people in our communities, but of all generations.

Please contact Lisa Bright on lisa.bright@parracatholic.org for further details or questions.

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), 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.

Reflection - Our Lady Help of Christians feast Monday 25th of May – St. Columban Mission Society

The Blessed Virgin Mary is a beautiful, beloved, essential and pervasive figure in Christian life and in the Church's calendar. She has been since the early days of the Church. Her feasts are as varied as the cultures of the world, with each having special traditions, customs, and habits of piety. For example, the Church honours Mary every Saturday, recalling both the one full day that Jesus spent in the tomb and the traditional belief that Mary was the disciple who best kept the faith on that day. The early Church took up the practice of keeping faith with her on that day each week.



Since the Middle-Ages, the Church has devoted the month of May to Mary. Many Christians undertake pilgrimages during this month to shrines associated with the Blessed Virgin. In May, there are also three Marian feasts that are celebrated which help us to understand what Mary can teach us about being disciples.

On May 13, we commemorate the Memorial of Our Lady of Fatima which recalls the appearance of the Blessed Virgin to three young children in Portugal in 1917. Mary encouraged penance, conversion and praying the rosary, warning the world of a Great War and suffering, but that, "In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph".

The Feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians, which is celebrated on May 24, dates back to the sixteenth century, which was not a peaceful time in Europe. In 1571, Catholics throughout the continent joined in praying the rosary in hopes of prevailing over military forces that had long sought to expand into Europe. These prayers were answered at the Battle of Lepanto on October 7, 1571, which is now the feast for Our Lady of the Rosary.

Both of these feasts highlight not only the strength we find in asking Mary's intercession, joining our prayers to her intercession, but also the confidence that God continues to act in the world. God hears the cry of those who suffer and God responds.

The third Marian feast for May is the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin on May 31. We remember how Mary journeyed to the home of her kinswoman Elizabeth to care for her as the birth of her son, John the Baptist, drew near.

These celebrations, like all Marian feasts, are really celebrations of Jesus Christ, for she has no privilege that she has not received from God. In these days, we learn how to stay close to him in prayer and through the practice of charity, such as caring for a relative in a time of need, with confidence that our prayers will be answered.

To rejoice in Mary is to celebrate God's greatest creation - the vessel he fashioned to be his own mother, the woman who would bear him into the world. In the life of the "handmaid of the Lord," we learn what it means to say "yes" to life in the Lord and to discover in him the meaning of life.

With maternal love for us, Mary wants what is best for us - she wants Jesus for us, so she urges us, "Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5). Then she helps us as we lead others to know and love her Son too. Her feasts not only empower us to turn to her in prayer, but also to love Jesus and others with a greater love.

Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington. Published in Cardinal Wuerl's blog, cardinalsblog.adw.org Zenit News - zenit.org May 24, 2016.

The feast day of Mary Help of Christians has been celebrated in Australia since 1844 but the history to this day dates back to the start of the 1800s.

Napoleon Bonaparte had jailed Pius VI who died in jail. When Pope Pius VII was elected he too was jailed by Bonaparte, who kept him prisoner at Fontainebleau, France.

The Holy Father vowed to God that if he were restored to the Roman See, he would institute a special feast in honour of Mary.

The military eventually forced Bonaparte to release the Pope and on May 24, 1814, Pius VII returned in triumph to Rome.

Twelve months later the Pope decreed that the feast of Mary Help of Christians be kept on 24 May.

The infant Church in Australia had a special reason for turning to Mary. In those early and mostly priestless days, it was largely the Rosary that kept the faith alive. Catholic Australia remained faithful to Mary, and was the first nation to choose her, under the title of Help of Christians, as Principal Patron.



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Reflection on the Gospel

The feast of the Ascension is really a kind of liminal moment in the Easter season. It is a time between times, a moment when we have left one place in our journey but have not yet arrived at a second. The glory of the Risen Christ has already been revealed in us, but not yet totally. The feast itself celebrates the exaltation of Jesus. Today we stand awestruck, watching Jesus ascend into the clouds of heaven, there to be enthroned at the right hand of God. Today we are overwhelmed by the reality of the divinity of the one whom we have known in his humanity. Like the conquering creator-god, he has overcome his enemy (death) and now reigns over his new creation (the church).



Christ who ascended into heaven in his body carries on what he began on earth through his new body, the church. He teaches through its apostles and evangelists. He ministers through its prophets and pastors. In and through the church, Jesus continues to heal and to comfort; to forgive and to include. We have not been left alone; we have his power, the same power with which he performed marvels when he walked the earth. We have not been left alone; we have each other. Together we make up the new body of Christ. Together we await the fullness of this body. It is this new body that stands in between the times, secure in what we have, confident of what we will be given.

Reflection by Dianne Bergant CSA

explore

faith
life
meaning

Alpha Online begins on Monday 1st June 2020 at 7.30pm.
 Please register by visiting nappaevents.org

Please note that Alpha Online will use Zoom Video Conferencing.
 You do not need to have a Zoom account to take part in Alpha Online.
 We look forward to sending you an email with further details the week before Alpha begins

For enquiries please contact Lisa at lisa.bright@parracatholic.org or call 0448 652 720

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