



29 March 2020-Year A Fifth Sunday of Lent



ST ANTHONY'S PARISH CHURCH 105 ELEVENTH AVENUE AUSTRAL 2179

Pastor:
Fr. Robert Hayes PP RFD VF

Secretary: Cheryl McKell
House Manager: Cathy Sanders

Presbytery and Parish Office:
320 EDMONDSON AVENUE
AUSTRAL

Parish Office is open on:
Tuesday - Thursday
Closed for lunch 12.30-1.30 pm.

Phone: 9606 0206; **Fax:** 9606 0153

Email Address:
stanthonysaustral@bigpond.com

Web Address:
www.stanthonysaustral.org

Archdiocesan website:
www.sydney.catholic.org.au
Presbytery is closed on Mondays.

St Anthony of Padua Catholic College

School Principal:
Mrs Lea De Angelis
Phone: 9606 8600
Email: info@stapaaustral.catholic.edu.au

Sacramental Life

Celebration of the Eucharist:

Mass Schedule:

Saturday - 5.30pm Vigil (Includes Children's Liturgy during School Term)

Sunday - 7.30am

Sunday - 9am (Includes Children's Liturgy during School Term)

Monday - No Mass

Tuesday - 9am

Wednesday - 9am

Thursday - 9am

Friday - 9.00am Mass and Adoration till 10am.

Reconciliation: Saturday
4.30 - 5.15pm

Baptisms & Marriages:

By appointment at Presbytery

Anointing: Every 2 months - check bulletin for dates

Sick Calls: Any time - day/night.

Funeral Masses: In co-operation with Funeral Directors.

First Reading: A Reading from Ezekiel 37:12-14

Responsorial Psalm: With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

Second Reading: A Reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 8:8-11

Gospel Acclamation:

Glory and praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ!

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord; whoever believes in Me will not die for ever. **Glory and praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ!**

Gospel: A Reading according to John 11:1-45

**Dear Parishioners,
We celebrate the Fifth Sunday of Lent**

1. The Desires of the Heart

When Lazarus died, Mary of Bethany must have been heartbroken. You can see why she would have been. She loved her brother Lazarus, and she trusted and loved Jesus. Like everybody else in her community, she knew that Jesus could heal sick people. So when her brother got sick and she knew that Jesus was nearby, she turned to him for help. Then she waited three desperate and increasingly miserable days. During those days Jesus didn't come, and Lazarus died. **In this story the Lord knows better than Mary what she herself actually wants.**

And so she was devastated. Her beloved brother was dead, and her beloved Jesus seemed to have disregarded her entirely in her time of need. She must have felt sure that she had lost the desires of her heart and lost them irretrievably.

But what the story of the raising of Lazarus shows is that a person can feel sure about such things and still be thoroughly mistaken.

Of course, Mary was right about some things. She had this much accurate insight into herself: she was right in thinking that it was her heart's desire to have her brother and to be loved by Jesus.

But she was mistaken about what the fulfillment of those desires would be. She thought that she could have the desires of her heart only in case Jesus came to her to heal her brother before he died. Consequently, when Lazarus did die, Mary thought that she had lost what she wanted most. What the story makes clear, though, is that the Lord can know better than a human person does what she most wants. We are not surprised if the Lord knows better than we do what is good for us, and we generally expect that good to be something we don't want. But in this story the Lord knows better than Mary what she herself actually wants.

When Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, Mary has her brother, and is loved by Jesus in a way more deeply fulfilling to her and more glorious than the mere healing of her brother in his sickness would have been. And here is the thing to notice: Jesus was in the process of giving her what she wanted most even as she was firmly persuaded that she had lost it forever.

And so the story helps us see that the Lord can be trusted even with the deepest distress of the hearts of those who are his own. As the Psalmist promises (*Ps 37:4*), the Lord will give the desires of their hearts to those who put their trust in him.

2. Dear Parishioners

I hope you are all well and staying well and keeping at home, as much as, possible. This weekend, is the Fifth Sunday of Lent, as we move towards Easter. The Gospel for this Sunday is the raising of Lazarus. We see the power of God works through Jesus and Lazarus who is raised from death. The readings for this Sunday seeks to draw out the faith of Jesus' followers, to deepen their trust in God and to find hope even when all seems lost.

The Parish Bulletin's front page has the Scripture readings for this weekend. I invite you to gather as a family to pray together and spend time on the Word of God as a spiritual time together. If you are a single person at home, I invite you to spend time in the presence of the Lord.

It would be good if each family or each parishioner sets up a prayer space where you would gather and pray each day.

3. Prayer Intentions

Any parishioner seeking prayerful assistance during this time, I invite you to send it to me via email and I will remember you and your intention in my prayers and Mass.

4. Prayers of Intercession

My Sisters and Brothers, we turn to the Lord as we seek God's help this pandemic.

1. We pray for all at St Anthony of Padua Parish, that the Lord will keep us all safe and healthy through this pandemic. Lord Hear Us

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

2. We pray for our leaders in our nation, that the Lord will inspire them in the decisions they have to make for the good and wellbeing of us all.

Lord Hear Us

Response

3. We pray for strength and courage, that God will inspire all who are searching for treatments for this virus or working to develop a vaccine.

Lord Hear Us

Response

4. We pray for an end to this pandemic, that God will guide and inspire everyone working to curtail the virus and help them to employ proper hygiene.

Lord Hear Us

Response

Let us pray the prayer Jesus taught us praying....Our Father, who art in heaven.....

As we stay in our homes to protect our families and ourselves against this virus can we spiritually pray together at 12 noon ONE decade of the rosary together seeking Our Lady of Lourdes, healer of the sick, to assist us through this crisis.

So at noon we pause and pray one decade of the rosary as we think of us all praying this rosary to our God together.

5. Office Hours

Please be aware that in the week ahead my secretary will be available in the parish office from 8am to 3pm.

May God Bless you all and keep you all safe



Fr Bob



WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED

In your love and concern, please pray for:-

Recently Deceased: Ernest (Rusty) Rust

Anniversaries: Monsignor Dino Fragiacomio.

Also for: Holy Souls.

We remember those who are sick in the community that the Lord will be their comforter and healer as we pray for:

Ian & Shirley Farrell, Ken O'Leary, Paul Farnsworth, Marie Gough, Michael Jasenko, Tomislav Juric, Ernest Rust, James Dimech, Jean Poles, Margarita Vartuli.

POPE FRANCIS COLUMN



Francis prays for families in financial problems due to COVID-19 Prayer requires faith, perseverance and courage, says Pope.

March 24, 2020

Francis prays for families in financial problems due to COVID-19 Pope Francis at the Casa Santa Marta celebrating Mass, 23 March 2020

Pope Francis offered prayers for everyone, particularly families, facing financial difficulties because of the pandemic. "Let us pray today for people who are beginning to experience economic problems because they cannot work due to the pandemic, and all of this falls on the family," he said at the start of Mass March 23. Nearly 25 million jobs may be lost worldwide due to COVID-19, the International Labour Organization estimated in a preliminary assessment report released March 18. However, the impact on employment could be lower if there is an internationally coordinated policy response, similar to what happened during the global financial crisis of 2008, it said. During his livestreamed morning Mass, the pope reflected on what true prayer requires.

Many times prayer can just be a mere habit of reciting a series of words, he said in his homily. But authentic prayer comes from a heart filled with faith, he said. "Let us be careful during prayer to not fall into a habit without an awareness that the Lord is there, that I am speaking with the Lord and that he is able to solve the problem," the pope said.

During his homily, he spoke of the faith, perseverance and courage necessary to pray well.

Faith: Faith is the first requirement for "true prayer", Pope Francis said. "Many times prayer is only oral from the mouth...but it doesn't come from the faith in the heart, or it's a weak faith."

Perseverance: The second requirement, the pope said, is perseverance. Jesus himself teaches us this, he said. "Some people ask and then the grace doesn't come. They don't have this perseverance because deep down they don't need it or they don't have faith". He then cited the parables in which Jesus teaches us perseverance: the person who woke up his neighbour in the middle of the night for bread, and the widow before the unjust judge.

"Faith and perseverance go together because if you have faith you're sure that the Lord will give you what you are asking. If the Lord makes you wait, knock and knock and knock. In the end the Lord gives the grace. "If the Lord makes us wait, the pope said, He does so "for our good".

"He takes prayer seriously," Pope Francis said.

Courage: God wants us to pray courageously. This is the third requirement, the Pope said. "Is courage necessary to pray?", someone might think. To remain before the Lord: yes, it's necessary. It's almost, almost, I don't want to say a heresy, but almost as if we're threatening the Lord. Moses's courage before God when God wanted to destroy the people.... Abraham's courage when he negotiates the salvation of Sodom. 'What if there are 30? What if there are 20?'

Courage. This virtue of courage is very much needed, not only for apostolic works, but also for prayer.

"The pope concluded his homily reflecting on what we are all experiencing in these days. "Faith, perseverance and courage. In these days, it's necessary to pray more. Imagine if we were to pray like this. With faith – that the Lord can intervene; with perseverance and with courage. The Lord never deludes. He makes us wait. He takes His time. But he never deludes. Faith, perseverance and courage."



Feast of the Annunciation 25 March

Happy Feast of the Annunciation! With extra time on our hands these days because of Coronavirus, I invite you to read this meditation from St. John Paul II on the glorious “nuptials” revealed through today’s feast. This is a private translation of an address not publicly available in English. May it lead you into the heart of the glory of the marriage of heaven and earth consummated (today!) in Mary’s womb...

The Holy Spirit and Mary: Model of the Nuptial Union of God with Humanity

(General Audience of St. John Paul II from May 2, 1990)

1. The revelation of the Holy Spirit in the Annunciation is united to the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God and the divine maternity of Mary. We are able to see, in the Gospel of St. Luke, the angel says to the Virgin: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you” (Lk 1:35). It is also the action of the Holy Spirit which provokes her response, in which is manifested a conscious act of human freedom: “Let it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). Therefore, in the Annunciation we find the perfect “model” of what the personal God-man relationship is meant to be.

2. Even in the Old Testament this relationship expresses a unique quality. It is born in the terrain of the Covenant of God with the chosen people (Israel). And this Covenant in the prophetic texts is expressed with nuptial symbolism: it is presented as the nuptial bond between God and humanity. It is important to remember this in order to understand the depth and beauty of the reality of the Incarnation of the Son as a particular fullness (plentitude) of the action of the Holy Spirit.

3. According to the prophet Jeramiah, God says to his people: “With eternal love I have loved you; so I have kept my mercy toward you. I will return to you and rebuild you, virgin of Israel” (Jer 31:3-4). From the historical point of view, we should place this text in relation to the fall of Israel and the deportation to Assyria, which humiliates the chosen people, to the extent of believing themselves abandoned by God. But God encourages them, speaking as Father or Husband to the young beloved. The spousal analogy becomes even more clear and explicit in the words of Isaiah, directed, during the time of the Babylonian exile, toward Jerusalem as to a wife who had not remained faithful to the God of the Covenant: “For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name... The Lord calls you back, like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, a wife married in youth and then cast off, says your God. For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness, I will have compassion on you, says the Lord your Redeemer” (Is 54:5-8).

4. It is emphasized in the cited texts that the nuptial love of the God of the Covenant is “eternal.” Facing the sin of his wife, facing the infidelity of the chosen people, God allows painful experiences to come upon them, but in spite of that he assures them, through the prophets, that his love does not cease. He overcomes the evil of sin to renew his gift. The prophet Hosea declares with an even more explicit language: “I will espouse you to me forever; I will espouse you in justice and in righteousness, in love and in compassion; I will espouse you to me in fidelity, and you will know the Lord” (Hos 2:21-22).

5. These extraordinary prophetic texts from the Old Testament reach their true fulfillment in the mystery of the Incarnation. The nuptial love of God toward Israel, but also toward every man, is brought about in the Incarnation in a way that exceeds the measure of man's expectations. We discover this in the pages of the Annunciation, where the New Covenant is presented to us as the Nuptial Covenant of God with man, of divinity with humanity. In the context of this nuptial covenant, the Virgin of Nazareth, Mary, is the "virgin-Israel" par excellence of Jeremiah's prophecy. God's nuptial love, announced by the prophets, is concentrated on her perfectly and definitively. She is also the virgin-bride to whom it is granted conceiving and bearing forth the Son of God: the unique fruit of the nuptial love of God toward humanity, represented and summarized comprehensively as it were in Mary.

6. Descending upon Mary in the Annunciation, the Holy Spirit is the One who, in the Trinitarian relationship, expresses in his Person God's nuptial love, that love that is "eternal." In that moment the Holy Spirit is, in a unique way, the God-Spouse. In the mystery of the Incarnation the Holy Spirit effects the human conception of the Son of God while maintaining the divine transcendence. Luke's text expresses this in a precise way: the nuptial nature of the love of God has a completely spiritual and supernatural nature. What John will come to say about Christ's believers applies all the more to the Son of God, who was conceived in the womb of the Virgin "not by the desire of the flesh, nor by the desire of man, but rather born of God" (Jn 1:13). But above all, this expresses the supreme union of love, brought about between God and a human being by the work of the Holy Spirit.

7. In this divine espousing of humanity, Mary responds to the announcement of the angel with the love of a bride, capable of responding and adapting perfectly to the divine election. As a result of all of this, from the time of St. Francis of Assisi, the Church calls the Virgin the "spouse of the Holy Spirit." Only this perfect nuptial love, profoundly rooted in the complete virginal self-giving to God, could enable Mary to become the "Mother of God" in a conscious and worthy way, in the mystery of the Incarnation.

8. In the Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* I wrote: "The Holy Spirit had already come down upon her, and she became his faithful spouse at the Annunciation, welcoming the Word of the true God, offering 'the full submission of intellect and will ... and freely assenting to the truth revealed by him,' indeed abandoning herself totally to God through 'the obedience of faith,' whereby she replied to the angel: 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word'" (26).

9. Mary, with this act and gesture, totally reverses the act of Eve, and becomes, in the spiritual history of humanity, the new Bride, the new Eve, Mother of all the living, as the Doctors and Fathers of the Church have stated frequently. She will be the type and model, in the New Covenant, of the nuptial union of the Holy Spirit with each of us and with all of the human community, far beyond the context understood in ancient Israel: all individuals and all peoples will be called to receive the gift and to benefit from it in a new community of believers who have received the "power to become children of God" (Jn 1:12) and in baptism have been reborn "of the Spirit" (Jn 3:3) forming the family of God.