

26 March 2023
Fifth Sunday in Lent
Year A



Entrance Antiphon

Give me justice, O God,
and plead my cause against
a nation that is faithless.
From the deceitful and
cunning rescue me, for you,
O God, are my strength.

First Reading from the
prophet Ezekiel 37:12-14

Responsorial Psalm
Ps 129. R. v.7

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

Second 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!

Holy Gospel according to
John 11:1-45

Communion Antiphon

The Lord anointed my eyes:
I went, I washed, I saw and I
believed in God.

NEXT WEEK
2 April 2023
Palm Sunday

First: 50:4-7

Second: Phil 2:6-11

Gospel: Mt 26:14 – 27:66

We acknowledge and respect the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we stand, the elders, past and present and all the Dharawal people. May we too be good stewards of this land.

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT



Project Compassion is Caritas Australia's main annual fundraising campaign. It mobilises Australians to raise much-needed funds to help alleviate poverty, promote justice and uphold dignity in the most marginalised communities in the world.

Spanning across the six weeks of Lent each year, Project Compassion brings thousands of Australian schools, parishes and supporters together to stand in solidarity with people living in vulnerable communities across Asia, Africa, the Pacific and with First Nations people in Australia.

Project Compassion is a demonstration of the faith, empathy and generosity of our supporters. It is the lifeblood of Caritas Australia – without it, we could not do the vital work that we do.

The theme of Project Compassion is For All Future Generations. This year, we focus on the stories of four remarkable, resilient people from Nepal, Zimbabwe, Vietnam and Australia. Each of these stories demonstrates the powerful impact that each one of us can have For All Future Generations.



It must be difficult for somebody who has never experienced love to understand the Gospels. They are so full of different emotions, many of them tender. Just think of the beautiful reconciliation between Jesus and Peter after the resurrection. Jesus allows Peter to say that he loves him on no less than three occasions.

Thankfully, most of us can write down a long list of people we have loved and also of those who have loved us. Many names would appear on both lists! We keep a special place in our hearts and prayers for the people we know who have died. Even after a long time, their memory will still bring a tear to our eyes. That sorrow comes from a place of deep gratitude. God changes the world one heart at a time.

When we encounter today's Gospel, the story of the raising of Lazarus, we are in a world of emotion. Martha and Mary are grieving for their brother. Jesus loves these two women. Thomas, the twin, is full of bravado and bluster, just as he was later when he wanted proof of the resurrection. Both Martha and Mary are disappointed, even angry, that Jesus has not come sooner. Jesus weeps at the grave of his friend. The mourners who have come to comfort the family must also have been sensitive to the situation. When Jesus says 'I am the resurrection and the life' he is not explaining an idea. He is responding to the deepest longings of our hearts, as he always does.

Today's Psalm reminds us 'My soul is longing for the Lord more than the watcher for daybreak.' Over the last few weeks we have shared some of the stories presented to us by Caritas Australia to make us more aware of the inspirational work we can support through Project Compassion. There have been stories from Zimbabwe, Vietnam, Nepal and First Australians. Through your generosity, Caritas Australia is able to support partners in 18 different countries. These are all people who, not unlike Lazarus, are longing to be unbound and set free. The Gospel calls us to believe in the Life to which Jesus invites us; that Life is built on justice and compassion.

Worship: Mass and Devotions

Sunday Mass	Weekday Mass	Devotions
Saturday Vigil: 6pm	Mon, Tues, Wed Mass at 9am	Adoration with the Rosary: Saturday 9.30am
Sunday: 9.30 am & 5pm	Thursday - Mass at 7.30pm	Divine Mercy Devotion: Third Sunday at 3pm
Filipino Mass: Third Sunday at 11.15am	Fri & Sat Mass at 9am	Alliance of the 2 Hearts Mass and Devotion: Friday 14 April from 7.30pm
Samoan Mass: First Sunday of even months at 12 noon		Stations of the Cross will be held every Friday during Lent at 7pm in the Church.
Maori Mass: First Sunday at 2pm		Reconciliation: Saturday 11 am

Contact us

Office Hours: **Tuesday-Friday 9.30am-12.30pm**

Phone: **9603 7373 / 0434 705 176**

Email: **varroville@dow.org.au**

Website: **varroville.dow.org.au**

Parish Priest: **Fr. Shane Kelleher OCD**

Assistant Priest: **Fr “Sam” Ransom Rapirap OCD**

Parish Associate: **Sr “Jill” Girlie Sudario, CM**

Prayer intentions

For the sick & homebound: Myka Mangos, Kevin Cloran, Karen Browne, Amanda & John Meredith, Reg Gardner, Phyllis Cooper, Sr Heather Burke, Marie & Barry Atkins, Carol & Gabriel Gonzales, Amelia Jimenez, Joe Spinnato, Susan Mella, Sean Finnerty, Rose Levoune, Francisco Carmona, Doris Wahhib, John Kajdrys.

May they experience the saving power of the risen Lord amidst their pain & affliction.

For our recently dearly departed: Emmanuel Vella, Hugh Madden, June Wrightman, Sandra Bastoli, Marites Sitjar,

Those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Anthony Mangos, Veni Menezes, Virginia Abunassur, John McDermott.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, may perpetual light shine upon them.



Our Community: Rosters

02 April	Saturday 6pm	Sunday 9.30am	Sunday 5pm
Welcomers	Glen & Arlene	Chris, Margaret & Bianca	Betty & Boby
Altar Servers	Berna, Ralph & Kenneth	Orly, Claire & Meliame	Vu
Readers	Richard & Tracey	Irene & Lee	Sheenalyn & Timothy
Refreshments	Suzanne & Myra	Tina	
CLOTW			
Flowers	Katalina	Church Vacuuming	Tamisin family
Counters	Irene, Ruby & Cynthia	Foyer Cleaning	Suzanne

Our Community

Easter Mass Times:

Parish Reconciliation Service—Friday 31 March at 7.30pm

Holy Thursday— Mass at 7:30pm

Good Friday— Stations of the Cross at 10am
The Passion of the Lord at 3pm

Easter Saturday— Easter Vigil 7.00pm

Easter Sunday— Mass at 9:30am & 5.00pm

Feast of Divine Mercy - Sunday 16 April: Confession, Mass & Devotions from 2pm.

Preparation for Good Friday Stations of the Cross will be held every Sunday at 1.30pm in the parish hall.

RCIA: This Lent we include Grant, Jack and Adam in our Prayers of the Faithful and I ask all parishioners to keep them in your personal daily prayers as we join in the journey to renew our own baptismal promises at Easter. *Diane Redmayne RCIA*



Bulletin Notices

Working Bee thank you to all those who came last Saturday to Help prepare the parish for Easter and do some gardening and cleaning. It was such a hot day and it was wonderful to see you all working together. God bless us all.

Palm making workshop will be held in the meeting room today and next Sunday at 4pm. The team will be learning and folding the palm leaves into crosses ready for Palm Sunday.

Musicians Urgently Needed for our parish choir groups. Do you have any talent to share with our Parish Music Ministry. Please talk to a choir member after Mass.

A Lenten Invitation from Bishop Brian Mascord "I would like to take this opportunity to remind us of the call of Jesus—a call that was given to all of us—to go out and make disciples (Mt 28:18–20). It is not enough to live good “saintly” lives and then remain silent. This mission is to share the invitation of Christ to “come and see” (Jn 1:39). It is not the work of certain special individuals, but rather the responsibility of all Christians and the communities of faith in which they live." (Bishop Brian Mascord).

Many of us have family and friends that are disconnected from the Church or faith. As Bishop Brian has said, "What are you willing to give for the sake of those you love?" Please take a few moments to read the letter from Bishop Brian and prayerfully consider the question: Who is God asking me to reach out to this Lent?

Free Technology Training for Seniors: Due to the popularity of the Cross + Generation technology program, CatholicCare, will again partner with St Benedicts Oran Park and CEDoW to help with the technology that you may be struggling with. Bring in your device, either your phone, laptop or tablet and the students will assist you with becoming more confident in downloading apps, sending messages or even using google maps. The first day will be Tuesday 9 May from 12pm – 2.30. this will include lunch on the day, a briefing chat followed by training. The following dates will have afternoon tea provided.

☐ Tuesday 16 May 1pm-2.30pm

☐ Tuesday 23 May 1pm-2.30pm

☐ Tuesday 30 May 1pm-2.30pm

☐ Tuesday 6 June 1pm-2.30pm

Please join us in this unique opportunity to connect with seniors, and students for some information sharing in a fun relaxed setting at St Benedict's Catholic College Oran Park. Places will fill quickly, so please contact Jane Hollier Parish and Community Officer CatholicCare on 0417018152 or janeh@catholiccare.dow.org.au

The Journey Weekly Podcast On The Journey This Week: Fr Mark De Battista says in the Gospel Jesus leads us into an explicit affirmation of faith in him. Mother Hilda says the raising of Lazarus teaches us how to deal with grief. The Triumph Lenten series continues with Ken Bryant and Br Lewis Harwood. Plus, Mike Delaney on the wonder & restrictions of mobile phones. The Journey podcast available at www.jcr.org.au.

Liturgy Training Workshop Saturday 1 April 2023 Ingleburn Parish is hosting a Ministry Workshop, specifically for Readers, Ministers of Communion and Acolytes, both for existing

ministers and those interested in joining these ministries. The day will begin with mass at 9am, followed by the workshop at 9.30am and conclude with a light lunch at approximately 1pm. A contribution to the lunch would be appreciated. If you would like to register for this workshop please call the parish office on 96037373 / 0434 705 176.

Marriage Enrichment Weekend Learn to live your best life in love! **Join us on 14-16 April 2023** at Mt Carmel Retreat Centre, Varroville, NSW a stunning & tranquil oasis on the edge of Sydney. Book online at www.wwme.org.au or contact Christine & Terry Mahony on 0490 774 419 or Email: nswbookings@wwme.org.au

Appin Massacre Memorial Ceremony Sunday 16 April 2023 Cataract Dam Picnic Area 11am – 3.30pm. Hosted by: Winga Myamly Reconciliation Group. The event will take place regardless of weather conditions. Please see flyer for contacts and additional details.

Eastern Europe Pilgrimage of Mercy commences 13 June 2023: A rare combination of Eastern Europe's most intriguing cities of Budapest, Krakow and Prague. Be blessed by the powerful graces of the great Shrines of Divine Mercy and the Black Madonna of Czestochowa. Relish a 3-night stay in spectacular Krakow as we retrace the places and graces of Pope St John Paul II. Departing on 13 June 2023 with Fr Richard Healey. More info: <https://www.harvestjourneys.com/tour/pilgrimage-of-mercy/>

Caritas Turkey is responding to a series of powerful earthquakes. Thousands of lives have been lost already and the death toll increases by the hour. Your generous support can help provide emergency relief to help families recover and rebuild from the disaster. Visit <https://caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/turkey-and-syria-earthquake/> or call 1800 024 413 toll-free to provide much-needed support to our East Emergency Appeal.

The Chosen – A TV Series about Jesus The Chosen is a new 'free to view', series, now in its third season, that beautifully and creatively presents the life of Christ and his followers. The shows are of the highest quality and are receiving acclaim around the world across denominations. Go to watch.angelstudios.com/thechosen to watch or get the free app for use on your phone / laptop via The Chosen app (download) or for your Smart TV. Watch it on your own, or better still with family and friends.

Social Justice Statement (MSC Mission Office) Christ's poverty which enriches us is his taking flesh and bearing our weaknesses and sins as an expression of God's infinite mercy to us. Christ's poverty is the greatest treasure of all: Jesus' wealth is that of his boundless confidence in God the Father, his constant trust, his desire always and only to do the Father's will and give glory to him. ...When Jesus asks us to take up his "yoke which is easy", he asks us to be enriched by his "poverty which is rich" and his "richness which is poor", to share his filial and fraternal Spirit, to become sons and daughters in the Son, brothers and sisters in the firstborn brother (cf. Rom 8:29). (Pope Francis, Lenten Message 2014) <https://justiceandpeace.org.au/lent-easter-social-justice>

Holy Gospel according to John 11:1-45

I am the resurrection and the life.

The sisters Martha and Mary sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.'

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.'

On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said:

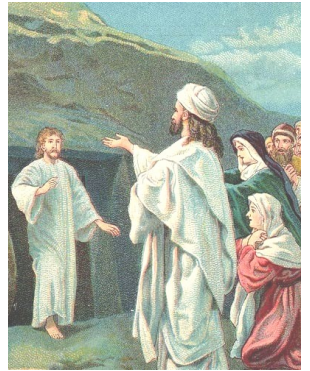
'I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

'Yes, Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.' Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'See how much he loved him!' But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man's death?' Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha said to him, 'Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.' Jesus replied, 'Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said:

'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer. I knew indeed that you always hear me, but I speak for the sake of all these who stand round me, so that they may believe it was you who sent me.'

When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.'

Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.



Reflection by Pope Francis

Jesus had friends. He loved them all, but He had friends with whom He had a special relationship, as one does with friends, of greater love, of greater trust... Very, very often, He stayed at the house of these siblings: Lazarus, Martha, Mary... And Jesus felt pain for the sickness and death of His friend. He arrives at the tomb and is deeply moved. He asks, very troubled: "Where have you laid him?" (see Jn 11:34). And Jesus breaks out in tears. Jesus, God and man, weeps. There is another time in the Gospel that says that Jesus wept: when He wept over Jerusalem (see Lk 19:41-42). With what tenderness Jesus weeps! He weeps from the heart. He weeps with love. He weeps with His friends who weep Jesus' tears. Perhaps He wept at other times in his life, we do not know; certainly on the Mount of Olives. But Jesus weeps out of love, always.

He is deeply moved and very troubled, and weeps. How many times we have heard this emotion of Jesus, with that repeated phrase: "His heart was moved with compassion" (see Mt 9:36; Mt 13:14). Jesus cannot look at the people and not feel compassion. His eyes are connected with His heart. Jesus sees with His eyes, but He sees with His heart and is capable of weeping.

Today, faced with a world that suffers greatly, many people who suffer the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, I wonder: Am I capable of weeping, as Jesus would certainly have done and does now? Is my heart like Jesus'? And if it is too hard, [even if] I can speak and do good in order to help, if my heart is not entering in and I am not capable of weeping, ask the Lord for this grace: Lord, that I might weep with You, weep with your people who are suffering right now. Many are weeping today. And we, from this altar, from this sacrifice of Jesus, of Jesus who was not ashamed of weeping, let us ask for the grace to weep. May today be for everyone like a Sunday of tears.

What does it mean to have the true light, to walk in the light? First of all it means abandoning false lights: the cold, vain light of prejudice against others, because prejudice distorts reality and ladens us with aversion to those whom we judge without mercy and condemn without appeal. This is our daily bread! When you gossip about others, you do not walk in the light, you walk in shadows. Another false light, because it is seductive and ambiguous, is that of self-interest: if we value men and things on the basis of usefulness to us, of pleasure, of prestige, we are not truthful in our relationships and situations. If we go down this path of seeking self-interest, we are walking in shadows. Blessed Virgin, who was the first to welcome Jesus, the Light of the World, obtain for us this grace of welcoming anew the light of faith this Lent, rediscovering the inestimable gift of Baptism, which all of us have received. And may this new illumination transform us in attitude and action, so that we too, beginning with our poverty, our narrow-mindedness, may be bearers of a ray of the light of Christ.

May the Lord grant us the grace to pray always with the truth, to turn to the Lord with our own truth, not with others' truth, not with truths distilled in debates: "It is true, I had five husbands. This is my truth" (cf. vv. 17-18).