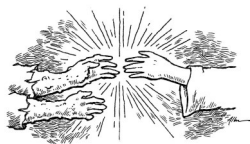


11 February 2024
Sixth Sunday of Ordinary
Time Year B



Entrance Antiphon

Be my protector, O God,
a mighty stronghold to save
me. For you are my rock,
my stronghold!
Lead me, guide me, for the
sake of your name.

First Reading from the book
of Leviticus 13:1-2. 44-46

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 31:1-2. 5. 11. R. v.7

Response:

I turn to you, Lord, in time of
trouble, and you fill me with
the joy of salvation.

Second Reading from the
first letter of St Paul to the 1
Corinthians 10:31 – 11:1

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!
A great prophet has
appeared among us;
God has visited his people.
Alleluia!

Holy Gospel according to
Mark 1:40-45

Communion Antiphon

They ate and had their fill,
and what they craved the
Lord gave them;
they were not disappointed
in what they craved.

First Sunday of Lent
year B

First: Genesis 9:8-15

Resp Ps: Ps 24:4-9. R.
see v.10

Second: 1 Peter 3:18-22

Gospel: Mark 1:12-15

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.

Ash Wednesday is this week 14 February.

Mass will be at 9am and 7.30pm.

It is curious that this year Ash Wednesday happens to fall on the same day as St Valentine's Day. This doesn't happen very often. St Valentine's Day is a great occasion for florists and restaurants. Some people get carried away and arrange to propose marriage in hot air balloons and beside beautiful waterfalls. This is all great fun, and it is delightful to see people dizzy with love.



We all know that real love is about more than the good times. It is a commitment to grow together and encounter each other more and more deeply, even when the going is tough. There are legends about St Valentine but it's not clear who he may have been. The chances are, however, that he was a martyr in the early period of the Christian story. He knew that love meant sacrifice. Love lays down its own life to give life to others.

Ash Wednesday is the perfect day to think about love. We don't see flowers in church today and we are asked to eat modestly. Today, we begin our journey towards our observance and celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter. The cross of Jesus is the ultimate symbol of how profoundly God loves the world.

Lent is a time when we are also asked to consider how authentically we make God's love visible to others. The reading today from St Paul reminds us that 'we are ambassadors for Christ.' This means taking risks and reaching beyond our comfort zones to share a message with a world that is often indifferent and doesn't want to hear it.

Each year, through Project Compassion, Caritas Australia offers us a significant opportunity to become ambassadors for Christ. The prophet Joel says, 'Why should it be said among nations, "where is their God?"' In other words, we must try to live the message of Jesus, which is one of justice, compassion, inclusion and extravagant love.

We pray for all who are trying to rise from the ashes in their lives. May our support for Project Compassion remind us that now is the time to turn to the Lord with all our hearts and embrace the needs of God's whole family.

"God's love calls us to move beyond fear. We ask God for the courage to put on faith, hope and love as we go out into the world and become the word in body as well as spirit." Pope Francis.

caritas.org.au/project-compassion
1800 024 413 #projectcompassion

Bring your palms from last year to make the ashes for this year

Days of Penance are on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday:

- ☑ All who are 14 years of age and older are obliged to *abstain* from meat.
- ☑ All who are 18 to 59 years of age are obliged to *fast* (Canon 1252).
- ☑ All have an overall moral obligation "to do penance".
- ☑ Anyone who is sick or infirm are not obliged by these laws.

Lenten Groups will be meeting during Lent to reflect on the Diocesan Lenten Resource, Pieta. The books are available in the piety store for \$5.

All groups will be in the meeting room, except those on zoom.

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| ◆ 10am on Monday. | ◆ 7.30pm Tuesday |
| ◆ 2pm Monday on zoom | ◆ 10am Wednesday |
| ◆ 7pm Monday on zoom | ◆ 6pm Sunday |
| ◆ 7.30pm Monday | |

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 and 5pm	Thursday - Mass at 7.30pm	Divine Mercy Devotion: Third Sunday at 3pm
Filipino Mass: Third Sunday at 11.15am	Fri and Sat Mass at 9am	Alliance of the 2 Hearts Mass and Devotion: First Friday of each month from 7.30pm
Samoan Mass: First Sunday of even months at 12 noon	Healing Mass on the first Saturday of each month at 9am	Stations of the Cross; Friday 7pm during Lent
Maori Mass: First Sunday at 2pm		Reconciliation: Saturday 11 am—12

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

Parish Associate:
Sr “Jill” Girlie Sudario, CM

Prayer intentions

For the sick and homebound: Myka Mangos, Kevin Cloran, Karen Browne, Amanda and John Meredith, Reg Gardner, Sr Heather Burke, Marie and Barry Atkins, Carol and 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 and affliction.

For our recently dearly departed: Rodney Smith, Joseph Baldwin Lopez, Elena Del Rosario Bacani,

Those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Anne & Jerry Migus, Francis Haldar, Antonio De Azevedo, Hilda Young, Lio Feiloakitohi,

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

11 February World Day of Prayer for the Sick



Our Community: Rosters

18 February	Saturday 6pm	Sunday 9.30am	Sunday 5pm
Welcomers	Tracey, Richard, Estela	Sarah, Violeti & Martin	Terry & Maree
Altar Servers	Volunteer, Austin, Christian	Orly, Fisilose & Claire	Vu
Readers	Suzanne & Margaret	Irene & Lee	Kathy & Margaret
Refreshments	Emmarie & Berna	Nelia, Anita & Tina	Leah & Patricia
CLOTW		Rebecca & Nelly	
Flowers	Vai & Mago	Church Vacuuming	Volunteer
Counters	Louise & Lina	Foyer Cleaning	Parish office

Our Community Notices: Upcoming Events

Parish Lenten Retreat Saturday 24 February from 8.30am—3pm
Registration fee by donation, includes Mass, morning tea, talk, lunch, reconciliation, adoration. Register at parish office

Holy Family Fellowship Prayer Group We gather at, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Varroville, on the 4th Saturday every month after the Vigil Mass. We have a short time of Praise and Worship followed by a time of fellowship and sharing of a light

meal. Contact : Ryan - Mob:0430 404 575.

RCIA helpers needed: Appeal for parishioners willing to assist in supporting adults and children new to the Catholic faith in our parish. There are many small ways that you can make a difference. To have a conversation about this contact Diane Redmayne RCIA coordinator via the parish office or leave your contact details with Sr Jill.



Bulletin Notices

Working bee next weekend Come along on Friday afternoon and Saturday to help paint and renovate the little house. There are also gardening jobs and cleaning jobs inside the church. For more info and to volunteer your skillset please call the parish office.

Book Club meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 10am in the parish meeting room.

This year there is the possibility of a weekend meeting via zoom—possibly Sunday afternoon. Those who express an interest will be consulted to set a time and day. Please express your interest through the parish office by 11 February. More information is available on the parish website. This group is a faith sharing activity, not an academic exercise. There will be five books this year. The first book for this year is titled: **Jesus and the Natural World** by Denis Edwards, an Adelaide Diocesan priest, encourages Christians to wholeheartedly embrace ecological conversion and to connect with people around the globe in their deepening commitment to the survival of life on Earth. (Available from Garratt Publishing \$19.95).

Fundraising news: The parish fundraising team will be collecting “return and earn” bottles and cans this year. Please bring your bottles and cans that are recyclable for 10c to the parish and leave them in the signposted area for collection.

There will be a bunnings BBQ on Sunday 3 March at Gregory Hills. Volunteers and donations are gratefully accepted for this day. Each bunnings bbq raises approx \$1400 to help with our fundraising target.

Restore Palliative Care Funding In the last State budget, \$150 million was slashed from palliative care, having a direct effect on how people die in NSW. It flies in the face of guarantees made at the time of the passing of new laws for Euthanasia, ensuring that everyone in NSW would have true choice as to how they died. No one should be pushed into euthanasia because of funding issues. People of faith need to urgently stand up for the sanctity of human life by objecting to these cuts. Please urgently sign this petition and invite friends and family to do the same <https://bit.ly/restorethefunding>

National Fertility Conference – Melbourne 23 – 24 February 2024 Registrations are now open for a wonderful gathering of fertility educators, medical practitioners and academics. For more details and registration: National Fertility Conference - Melbourne 2024 (airrm.org.au)

Men around the Country invited to participate in a 33-day consecration to St Joseph; Men are invited to be part of a 33-day Consecration to St Joseph and to get to know St Joseph more deeply and as a model for men. The start of the Consecration, via Zoom, will be on Ash Wednesday being 14 February 2024. Please register [HERE](#) to receive all the information. If you are not able to join us on the Pilgrimage, just click Consecration only or any of the other options.

Diocesan Youth Ministry Leader – Catholic Diocese of Wollongong Suitably experienced and qualified persons are encouraged to apply for the role of Youth Ministry Leader in

the Diocese of Wollongong. Applications close on Thursday, 29 February 2024. For more information and a detailed role description, please go to: dow.org.au/position-vacant-diocesan-youth-ministry-leader/ or for enquiries contact helen.bennett@dow.org.au

The Chosen – A TV Series about Jesus – Season 4 starts this week The Chosen is a new ‘free to view’, series, now in its fourth season, that beautifully and creatively presents the life of Christ and his followers. The shows are of the highest quality and it continues to 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.

On The Journey This Week: Fr Mark De Battista says we’re invited to trust ourselves to Jesus, ask him; if you want to you can cure me and see what he says to you. Mother Hilda tells how the Word of God always speaks to us in all our circumstances. Plus, Fr Tony Percy and two lead-in Lenten reflections from Fr’s Sean Cullen and Chris Sarkis. The Journey podcast available at www.jcr.org.au.

CCD Level 1 Catechist Course The Level 1 course is mandatory for all new SRE Catechists (Teachers and Helpers). Experienced Catechists are also welcome to attend to refresh skills and knowledge. The course will run 9:30am - 1:30pm for 5 weeks on Fridays in Campbelltown Fridays 9th, 16th, 23rd February and 1st and 8th March at the Campbelltown Catholic Club (20/22 Camden Rd, Campbelltown). To register for the Level 1 course click here [RSVP: CCD 2024 Level 1 Course](#). The first day of the course in both locations will include the Child Protection and Classroom Management training, which is required of all SRE Catechists every three years. To register for the Child Protection and Classroom Management update click here [RSVP: CCD CP and CM Training Update](#).

Touched by Abortion. Need Healing? Rachel's Vineyard next retreat 1 – 3 March 2024. Held at Mount Carmel Retreat Centre Varroville NSW. Cost is negotiable. Part /full scholarships available. To book or further information, phone 0400 092 555 or 0407 626 079. EMAIL: rachelsvineyardaus@gmail.com.

Carmelite Retreat 2 March: “Today I must come to your house” presented by Fr Bernard Hancock. With St Teresa as our guide and taking a journey into the gospels, we will see how God is always inviting us into life with Him. 10am—3pm; for booking contact 87953464. Cost \$30 (BYO lunch)

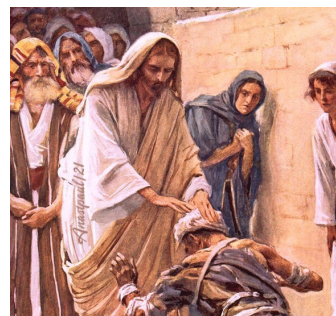
“Peace in difficult times” (Retreat in the style of Taizé): 22-24 March; Our world seems to move at an ever-accelerating pace with increased suffering and challenges and amidst this, we may feel pain, overwhelm, and fear for ourselves and others. Join us for a weekend of prayer, connection and community, as we enter more fully into the embrace of god, who alone gives our hearts rest and peace. bookings@mtcarmel.com.au. Please complete the enquiry form on our website; mtcarmel.com.au

Holy Gospel according to Mark 1: 40-45

The leprosy left him and he was cured.

A leper came to Jesus and pleaded on his knees: 'If you want to' he said 'you can cure me.' Feeling sorry for him, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him. 'Of course I want to!' he said. 'Be cured!' And the leprosy left him at once and he was cured. Jesus immediately sent him away and sternly ordered him, 'Mind you say nothing to anyone, but go and show yourself to the priest, and make the offering for your healing prescribed by Moses as evidence of your recovery.' The man went away, but then started talking about it freely and telling the story everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer go openly into any town, but had to stay outside in places where nobody lived. Even so, people from all around would come to him.

The Gospel of the Lord.



Reflection of Pope Francis

In these Sundays, Mark the Evangelist speaks to us about Jesus' actions against every type of evil, for the benefit of those suffering in body and spirit: the possessed, the sick, sinners.... Jesus presents Himself as the One who fights and conquers evil wherever He encounters it. In today's Gospel (cf. Mk 1:40-45) this struggle of His confronts an emblematic case, because the sick man is a leper. Leprosy is a contagious and pitiless disease, which disfigures the person, and it was a symbol of impurity: a leper had to stay outside of inhabited centres and make his presence known to passersby. He was marginalized by the civil and religious community. He was like a deadman walking.

The episode of the healing of the leper takes place in three brief phases: the sick man's supplication, Jesus' response, the result of the miraculous healing. The leper beseeches Jesus, "kneeling", and says to Him: "If you will, you can make me clean" (v. 40). Jesus responds to this humble and trusting prayer because his soul is moved to deep pity: compassion. "Compassion" is a most profound word: compassion means "to suffer-with-another". Jesus' heart manifests God's paternal compassion for that man, moving close to him and touching him. And this detail is very important. Jesus "stretched out his hand and touched him.... And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean" (vv. 41-42). God's mercy overcomes every barrier and Jesus' hand touches the leper. He does not stand at a safe distance and does not act by delegating, but places Himself in direct contact with our contagion and in precisely this way our ills become the motive for contact: He, Jesus, takes from us our diseased humanity and we take from Him his sound and healing humanity. This happens each time we receive a Sacrament with faith: the Lord Jesus "touches" us and grants us his grace. In this case we think especially of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which heals us from the leprosy of sin.

Once again the Gospel shows us what God does in the face of our ills: God does not come to "give a lesson" on pain; neither does He come to eliminate suffering and death from the world; but rather, He comes to take upon Himself the burden of our human condition and carries it to the end, to free us in a radical and definitive way. This is how Christ fights the world's maladies and suffering: by taking them upon Himself and conquering them with the power of God's mercy.

The Gospel of the healing of the leper tells us today that, if we want to be true disciples of Jesus, we are called to become, united to Him, instruments of his merciful love, overcoming every kind of marginalization. In order to be "imitators of Christ" (cf. 1 Cor 11:1) in the face of a poor or sick person, we must not be afraid to look him in the eye and to draw near with tenderness and compassion, and to touch him and embrace him. I have often asked this of people who help others, to do so looking them in the eye, not to be afraid to touch them; that this gesture of help may also be a gesture of communication: we too need to be welcomed by them. A gesture of tenderness, a gesture of compassion.... Let us ask you: when you help others, do you look them in the eye? Do you embrace them without being afraid to touch them? Do you embrace them with tenderness? Think about this: how do you help? From a distance or with tenderness, with closeness? If evil is contagious, so is goodness. Therefore, there needs to be ever more abundant goodness in us. Let us be infected by goodness and let us spread goodness!

