

Sunraysia Catholic Communities

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 Presbytery Red Cliffs: 5024 1966
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 parish@sacredheartmildura.org.au
 www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parishes

Newsheet: Week 20



Fr. Michael McKinnon PP Fr. James Kerr Fr. Pat Flanagan

Parish Secretary: Carmel Russo
 Office Hours: Tues - Fri 9:00am—4:00pm

Sacred Heart
Mildura

Our Lady of Lourdes
Werrimull

St. Francis Xavier
Irymple

St. Joseph's
Red Cliffs

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart
Merbein

*The Sunraysia Catholic Communities are committed to ensure the safety of all children and vulnerable people in our care.
 Child Safety Officers:- Mildura—Christine Slattery, Merbein—Kevin Aston, Red Cliffs—Bernadette Gardner*

MILDURA

Recent Death: Marcello Castillo (Philippines—Bobby's father)
 Anniversaries: Neil Fernando, Jan & Vic McTaggart, Maria
 Giuseppa Pascale, Roy Agosta (1 year anniversary)

RED CLIFFS

Recent Death:
 Anniversaries:

MERBEIN

Recent Death:
 Anniversaries: May 17th Jean Fletcher, Maria Zappia;
 18th Katarina Fabich; 20th Emilia Dichiera; 22nd Vince Matotek

(Only immediate family members of the deceased are permitted to arrange anniversary Masses.)

6th Sunday of Easter / Year A 16th & 17th May 2020

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading Acts 8:5-8. 14-17

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Philip went to a Samaritan town and proclaimed the Christ to them. The people united in welcoming the message Philip preached, either because they had heard of the miracles he worked or because they saw them for themselves. There were, for example, unclean spirits that came shrieking out of many who were possessed, and several paralytics and cripples were cured. As a result there was great rejoicing in that town.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, and they went down there, and prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not come down on any of them: they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 65:1-7. 16. 20. R. see v.1

(R.) Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.

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| <p>1. Cry out with joy to God all the earth,
 O sing to the glory of his name.
 O render him glorious praise.
 Say to God: 'How tremendous your deeds! (R.)</p> | <p>3. He turned the sea into dry land,
 they passed through the river dry-shod.
 Let our joy then be in him; he rules for ever by his might. (R.)</p> |
| <p>2. 'Before you all the earth shall bow;
 shall sing to you, sing to your name!
 Come and see the works of God,
 tremendous his deeds among men. (R.)</p> | <p>4. Come and hear, all who fear God.
 I will tell what he did for my soul:
 Blessed be God who did not reject my prayer nor withhold his love from me. (R.)</p> |



PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK

If you want a sick person prayed for, ask their permission. Names will be included for the duration of one month after which family or friends can request more time.

Mildura: Fr Paul Jackson SJ (India), Janelle Carney, Bill Antonie, Vincenzo Pileggi, Fr Denis Dennehy, Vince Alicastro, Teresita Eliquen-Dy (Manila), Melita Suppa, Celia-Dy Dela Tena, Perla Tuoniso, Lily Chumg, Lorna Kearney, Sandra McCarthy, Brian Ramsey, Hailey Crossan, Geraldine Brunner, Albis Dy

Merbein: Mary Avery, John Dorman

Red Cliffs: Carmel Markham, Bill Antonie, Martin Cameron, Maureen Lee, Edna Chua, Lily Flanagan, Barry Crosbie, Brendan Bell, Caterina Brizzi, Marie Adams, Reynaldo Chan, Albis Dy, Roman & Joe Dy, Robert & Elizabeth Young, Maurice O'Connor

Bulletins are available outside main Church doors.

Our Parish Schools

Sacred Heart Mildura Principal: Des Lowry 5023 1204
 St Paul's Mildura Principal: Vince Muscatello 5023 4567
 OLSH Merbein Principal: Narelle Gallagher 5025 2258
 St. Joseph's Red Cliffs Principal: Mark Gibson 5024 1654
 St. Joseph's Secondary College Mildura
 Principal: Marg Blythman 5018 8000

SACRED HEART PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

For the past few years Christine Slattery has been the Parish Safeguarding Officer for Sacred Heart Parish. We are extremely grateful to Chris for assuming this role and for enabling us to seriously commit ourselves as a community to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. As Chris has decided to step down from this role, we are fortunate that Peter Issanchon has agreed to accept responsibility for this role. Let us remember though that the safety of children is a responsibility of the whole community. If you have any reason to be suspicious of behaviour towards children, please report it to the Parish Priest.



Sadly we were not able to celebrate the initiation of our five RCIA Candidates at the Easter Vigil this year. However, we will be celebrating their initiation during a Mass on the morning of Sunday 31st of May, Pentecost Sunday. The gathering will only be small, but you are invited to be especially mindful of Marcus, Brooke, Simon, Manu and Leigh over these next couple of weeks as we pray God's special blessing upon them.

THANK YOU

Whilst we have been unable to have the use of our church at this time we are very grateful to our Parks and Garden crew for keeping our church exterior looking so beautiful at this time.



FINANCIAL MATTERS

A huge thank you to those able to continue contributing - to our 1st & 2nd Collection, your support is greatly appreciated.



ARRIVAL OF FR MATTHEW THOMAS

Fr Matthew will be taking up residence in Sunraysia Monday 1st of June. This means that Pentecost Sunday which falls the 31st of May will be the last Mass celebrated with Fr Michael and Fr James.

Fr James will move to Swan Hill where he has been appointed Parish Priest. We are deeply grateful for the contribution he has made to our Parishes of Sunraysia and the Northern Mallee and we wish him every blessing in his future ministry. Arrangements will be made at an appropriate date in the future to officially farewell Fr James.

Meanwhile, Fr Michael is not able to leave the country, so it looks like he will be returning to his home soil to milk cows and chase rabbits!

GOSPEL REFLECTION—Sr. Veronica Lawson rsm

Those who defend themselves in court run the risk of being outsmarted by clever and sometimes unscrupulous adversaries. It is never a good idea to be too self-reliant even in a country with a basically sound legal system such as ours. Today's gospel implies that the disciples need a defense attorney or lawyer. Jesus has acted in that capacity for them in their struggles with the anti-gospel forces arrayed against them.

Now he is close to death and he gives them instructions that begin and end with reference to loving him and keeping his commandments. Jesus has given them a new commandment, namely that they love one another: "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (13:34). Later in this discourse (15:12-14) the reader of the gospel learns what the actors in the drama already know about Jesus' commandments. "This is my commandment," says Jesus, "that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you." This is no small demand, to be prepared to die for one another.

Given the opposition they are likely to face, the disciples cannot live out such a commitment on their own. Neither is Jesus leaving them "orphans" who have to fend for themselves. He will ask his "Father" to provide "another" defender or advocate who will act on their behalf, an advocate who will always be there. This new advocate is the "Spirit of truth". As we approach the end of the Easter season, the liturgy thus points us towards Pentecost and the gift of God's Spirit.

It is good to know we are never on our own. It is also good to reflect on the capacity we have for love. Many of us will never find ourselves in a situation where our love is tested to the point that we have to die for another. Since the outbreak of the present pandemic, however, we do not have the look far to find countless people doing just that. Health professionals, cleaners, truck drivers, flight attendants, shop assistants, school teachers, lecturers, ordinary people everywhere are laying down their lives for the sake of others. They are truly our friends. The gospel calls us to put the well-being of others, even their survival, before our own comfort. With the life-style changes that will inevitably come sooner rather than later, we may all find ourselves "laying down our lives" in various ways for the sake of our friends, humankind and other-kind, across the planet. We can, despite opposition, continue to advocate for climate action, for the rights of detainees and prisoners and for those displaced by war or persecution. With the help of the Spirit, our Advocate, we can surely rise to the challenge.

**If you love
Me keep My
Commandments**

John 14:15

WORLD DAY OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY FOR DIALOGUE AND DEVELOPMENT

The threat of coronavirus has stretched Western societies in many ways, and has taken them in different directions. It has first forced them to broaden their view of the relationships that are central in a good society. Previously we had tacitly accepted the view that the most important and untouchable relationships have to do with the economy – growing the GNP, making profit and protecting individuals' wealth.

When confronted with the threat to life and health posed by coronavirus, that assumption changed suddenly. When governments shut down the economy in order to distance people from one another, they stated clearly that our most crucial relationships were those to do with the health and life of the weakest members of society. In order to protect the whole community, people for the most part cheerfully accepted the limitations placed on their personal and economic freedom. They saw themselves as members of a community responsible to one another, not as individuals competing with one another.

At the same time, however, many societies, including our own, have experienced hostility to different groups in society. The crisis has narrowed relationships as some have been cut. In Australia some Chinese students and families have been abused and attacked as if they were responsible for the virus. Social media, too, has developed patterns of exclusion. Some people respond to misfortune by seeking scapegoats who can be expelled from the society and so purify the relationships that constitute it. Instead of diversity of cultures they seek an ideal purity and unity.

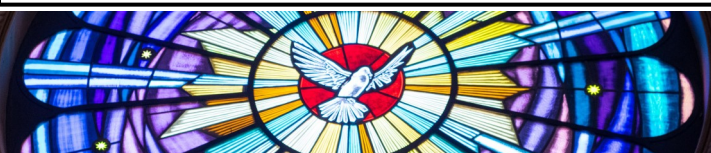
This year the special day to celebrate cultural diversity is timely because we are now preparing to face many questions about what kind of a society we want to build as the virus is contained. These questions will test our openness to diversity in our relationships and our resistance to cries to perpetuate divisions.

During the early stages of the epidemic people have felt that all of us were in this together. It would be a pity if we returned to endorse in our societies imagined divisions between leaners and lifters, contributors and consumers, white and black, Christian and Muslim, as if these labels marked the difference between good and bad, Australian and not-Australian. Our economic and political settings should not make these distinctions a ground for inclusion or exclusion, praise or abuse. They should see them as an index of resource and possibility.

At a deeper level this day to celebrate cultural diversity reminds us of the strength that differences within a society brings. Each person brings to the community distinctive qualities that reflect the different relationships that shape their life. Deep relationships that are embedded in the variety of foods we eat, the range of languages we speak at home and abroad, the feasts we celebrate, the ways in which we pray and embody a generous life, the stories we tell and the books we read – all these are more than individual curiosities. They are a gift in broadening and deepening the network of relationships that shape a nation.

Cultural diversity day points to the strength of a community that welcomes difference. The hard time that will follow coronavirus should also be a time to focus on respecting one another within our differences.

Andrew Hamilton SJ



BISHOPS TO ENTRUST NATION TO MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect Australians' lives, including their worship, the Catholic bishops will entrust the country to the care of Mary Help of Christians on her feast day next week. Source: *A CBC Media Blog*.



In a message issued today as "A word of encouragement to the Catholic people of Australia", the bishops noted that the country

"has certainly suffered because of the pandemic, but not as grievously as some other countries".

"For that we thank God and we congratulate public health authorities and governments on their prompt and prudent responses," the bishops wrote.

"Australians in general have also shown the solidarity and good sense, the generosity and kindness needed in such a time. In our healthcare workers particularly we have seen an exceptional spirit of self-sacrifice, and for that we are all grateful."

The bishops also acknowledge the role that churches and other religious communities have played, which has included the suspension of public worship and the closure of places of worship.

"This has been a real deprivation, and the bishops understand not only your anxiety about the virus and shutdown but more especially your deep desire to return to the sacraments and to resume public worship," they wrote.

"There is a real hunger in this. It is something we all feel, and we long for the time when our hunger will be satisfied as together we return to the feast of the Lord."

The letter reflects on the message of the Easter season, saying while there is "no room for complacency" as Australia appears to emerge from the worst of the pandemic, "there is certainly room for the hope that Easter brings to birth".

The bishops approved the entrustment of the country to Mary Help of Christians during this week's plenary meeting, conducted using videoconference technology.

Mary Help of Christians has been the official patroness of Australia since 1844. Her feast day is celebrated on May 24, which this year coincides with the Feast of the Ascension. The entrustment of Australia to Mary Help of Christians can therefore take place on the 24th or the 25th, the bishops agreed.

STREAMING from 5:30pm Saturdays continues

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpujOBwu7YYU-LzjhmqE_VQ

Or go to the Parish Website: Sacred Heart Parish Mildura
Please pass on this information to family and friends.

We continue to make available via streaming our Masses to those who are able access them via internet. We are very grateful to Rob Klarich for this initiative. **For those without internet or Foxtel, there is a Mass telecast each Sunday morning on channel 10 at 6:00am**, although it is not necessarily the Mass of the particular Sunday that its telecast.

Second Reading - 1 Pt 3:15-18

A reading from the first letter of St Peter

Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience, so that those who slander you when you are living a good life in Christ may be proved wrong in the accusations that they bring. And if it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong.

Why, Christ himself, innocent though he was, had died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

All who love me will keep my words,
and my Father will love them and we will come to them.

Alleluia!

Gospel Jn 14:15-21

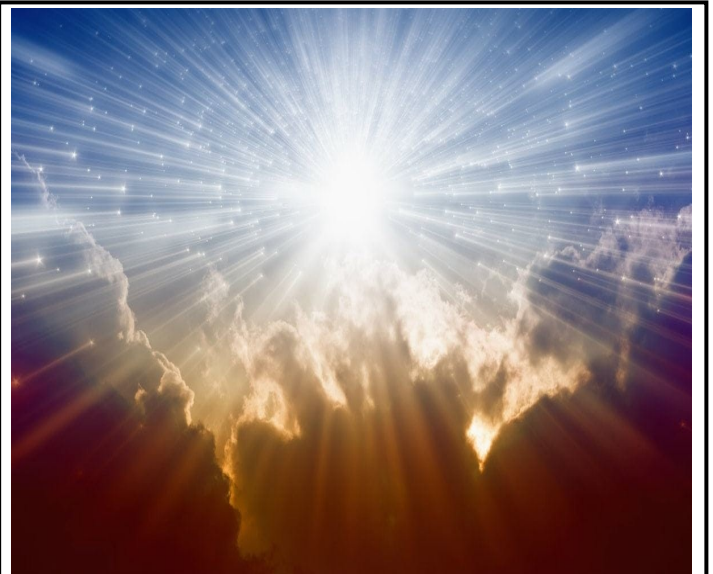
A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to his disciples:

'If you love me you will keep my commandments.
I shall ask the Father,
and he will give you another Advocate
to be with you for ever,
that Spirit of truth
whom the world can never receive
since it neither sees nor knows him;
but you know him,
because he is with you, he is in you.
I will not leave you orphans;
I will come back to you.
In a short time the world will no longer see me;
but you will see me,
because I live and you will live.
On that day
you will understand that I am in my Father
and you in me and I in you.
Anybody who receives my commandments and
keeps them
will be one who loves me;
and anybody who loves me will be loved by my
Father,
and I shall love him and show myself to him.'



I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU ORPHANS



LET US PRAY TOGETHER

*Gracious God,
We give thanks anew for your providence and
presence.
We prayerfully seek your grace, amidst COVID-19
here and overseas.
We pray for those in need of healing.
We pray for your peace with those who are anxious
or grieving.
We pray you will continue to strengthen and sustain
all those who are serving in response.
We pray for your Holy Spirit's discernment
amidst the many choices and decisions
facing our national, community and medical
leaders.
We pray we each might see quickly what more we
can do
to help those who are vulnerable.
This prayer for our nation in the family of nations,
with all that is on our hearts,
we gather now and pray
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

(Ecumenical prayer from the National Council of Churches. We have been invited to pray this prayer at 7pm each day.)



I will not leave
you as orphans;
I WILL COME TO YOU.
I will come to you
- John 14:18