

# OUR COMMUNITY NEWS

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## SUNDAY – 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2021

23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year B

COVID restrictions have changed in regional Victoria as of 12.59pm on Saturday, August 21, 2021. More information is available on the government website <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/religion-and-ceremony-regional-victoria>. Updates are also be available from the diocesan website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/coronavirus-the-churchs-information-and-advice-2/>.

### RECENT DEATHS:

We pray for all the recently deceased, especially Anne Briody (formerly of Lexton). We pray also for those who have died in Afghanistan in recent weeks and for those who have died from Coronavirus in Australia recently.

### ANNIVERSARIES:

James Hewitt, Nell Collins, Jim Doyle, Pat Davies, Jean McManus, Belinda Horsley, Marie Huska (Franc), Bob Cockerell & Ron Pretty.

### PRAY FOR THE SICK:

Pat Byrne, Margaret MacDonald, Roger Molomby, Graeme Dawson, Blake Dridan, Shelagh Mulcahy, Fr Adrian McInerney & and all those in need of prayer.

### Safeguarding Sunday – September 12

The Catholic Church in Australia will mark Safeguarding Sunday on September 12 this year. This had previously been known as Child Protection Sunday, but the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference approved the change of name to better reflect the Church's policies and protocols to protect and support children and adults at risk. The day seeks to acknowledge the immense damage caused by the sexual abuse of children, including by priests, religious and lay people within Catholic contexts. It makes a commitment to practices and protocols that create and maintain safe environments for all people, especially children and other people who are at risk. It invites people to pray for those harmed by abuse directly and indirectly. A series of resources have been developed and can be found on the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference website <https://www.catholic.org.au/safeguardingsunday>

### Bishops of Victoria stand in solidarity with our Afghani communities across Victoria

The Catholic Bishops of Victoria have expressed their solidarity and support for the local Afghan community and their families back home in a joint statement. Read the statement on the diocesan website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/cssv-stands-in-solidarity-with-our-afghani-communities-across-victoria/>

### Plenary Council – Fan the Flame Prayer Campaign

You are invited to join the national prayer campaign and in a special way support the ongoing journey of the Plenary Council. As the first Assembly in October 2021 draws nearer, all people are invited to become 'Prayer Partners' to accompany the Members and invoke the Holy Spirit on this historic gathering for the Church in Australia. The "Fan the Flame" resources have been designed so they can be used by individuals or by groups of any size and in any setting. Parishes are encouraged to use these in any way that suits. They include material for each week as well as material that can be used at any time to support prayerful preparation for the Plenary Council. Resources can be accessed at <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/fanthe flame/>

**Continuing the Journey-** As we are not able to gather as a community at this time due to COVID restrictions, this opportunity to respond may be a way for you to spend some quiet time in reflection, thinking about the agenda of the Council and the future of the Church, on your life and prayer life. It may be of comfort to know that others from your faith community may be reflecting on this at a similar time. **Also please see attached handout.**

### Praying with Pope Francis

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer) is an international movement that is more than 170 years old. Each month, the Pope puts forward a prayer intention and asks Catholics around the world to join him in prayer. These intentions cover all sorts of areas of life, encouraging faith, renewing hope and calling us to loving service. Praying each month 'The Pope Video' forms part of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network – view at [www.thepopevideo.org](http://www.thepopevideo.org). Pope's intention for September: **Universal intention – an environmentally sustainable lifestyle:** We pray that we all will make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, rejoicing in our young people who are resolutely committed to this.

**BALLARAT CLERGY SUPPORT FUND Collection for Sick and Retired Priests – Contribute via accessing CDFPAY portal on Diocesan website.**

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus preached the Good News of the kingdom

and healed all who were sick.

Alleluia!

## GOSPEL

Mk 7:31-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

*He makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.*

Returning from the district of Tyre, Jesus went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, right through the Decapolis region. And they brought him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they asked him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then looking up to heaven he sighed; and he said to him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be opened.' And his ears were opened, and the ligament of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly. And Jesus ordered them to tell no one about it, but the more he insisted, the more widely they published it. Their admiration was unbounded. He has done all things well,' they said 'he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

# Breaking Open the Word



# THE SAVING WORD

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / B

05 SEPTEMBER 2021

## JESUS THE DIVINE HEALER

At the heart of our life of faith is the belief that God has the power and desire to enter into our world and bring life where there was death. Prophets such as Isaiah spoke of the impact that the Messiah would have on the life of the people. Through the promised king, God would reach out and set right what was no longer in order; wrongs would be redressed and life would flourish anew in the desert, and in the hearts of the people. How many of Isaiah's contemporaries would have thought his words were simply vain hopes which would never be realised? How many were disillusioned with their past experience of kingship in Israel?

It was into this situation of need, hope and disbelief that Jesus came. His powerful word and healing touch brought hope and new life to those in need. One of the great ironies of today's miracle is Jesus' command that the deaf man keep silent about what has happened to him. Having just found his voice could he be expected not to use it? Mark's point is that having encountered Jesus we cannot keep silent.

Despite its brevity the letter of James contains some of the most hard-hitting teaching in the New Testament. Today the challenge concerns how the voice of the powerless cannot be silenced in the Christian community. The standards of the world have no place in the Christian community when it leads to a distinction between rich and poor, when a person's worth and dignity is only measured by their wealth.

## FIRST READING

Isa 35:4-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

*Then the ears of the deaf shall be opened and the tongues of the dumb speak.*

Say to all faint hearts,  
'Courage! Do not be afraid.  
'Look, your God is coming,  
vengeance is coming,  
the retribution of God;  
he is coming to save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
the ears of the deaf unsealed,  
then the lame shall leap like a deer  
and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy;  
for water gushes in the desert,  
streams in the wasteland,  
the scorched earth becomes a lake,  
the parched land springs of water.

■ The word of the Lord.

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 145:7-10. R. v. 1

**R. Praise the Lord, my soul! (or Alleluia!)**

1. It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever, / who is just to those who are oppressed. / It is he who gives bread to the hungry, / the Lord, who sets prisoners free. **R.**
2. It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind, / who raises up those who are bowed down, / the Lord who loves the just, / the Lord, who protects the stranger. **R.**
3. The Lord upholds the widow and orphan, / but thwarts the path of the wicked. / The Lord will reign for ever, / Zion's God, from age to age. **R.**



## SECOND READING

James 2:1-5

A reading from the letter of St James.

*Has not God chosen the poor of the world to inherit the kingdom?*

My brothers, do not try to combine faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord, with the making of distinctions between classes of people. Now suppose a man comes into your synagogue, beautifully dressed and with a gold ring on, and at the same time a poor man comes in, in shabby clothes, and you take notice of the well-dressed man, and say, 'Come this way to the best seats;' then you tell the poor man, 'Stand over there' or 'You can sit on the floor by my foot-rest.' Can't you see that you have used two different standards in your mind, and turned yourselves into judges, and corrupt judges at that?

Listen, my dear brothers: it was those who are poor according to the world that God chose, to be rich in faith and to be the heirs to the kingdom which he promised to those who love him.

■ The word of the Lord.

### A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL



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## PRAYERS OF FAITHFUL FOR PLENARY COUNCIL.

### Sundays - September 2021

We pray for all the Plenary Council Members who are preparing for the First Assembly in October: that they will be attentive to the heartfelt hopes voiced in the initial consultations. *(Pause for silent prayer)* Lord, hear us.

We pray for the Church of Australia as we continue the preparations for the Plenary Council: that we may 'Listen to what the Spirit is saying' and be open to being guided by God's Holy Spirit. *(Pause for silent prayer)* Lord, hear us.

We pray that like a good shepherd we will strive to be a humble, healing and merciful community as we immerse ourselves in the journey of the Plenary Council. *(Pause for silent prayer)* Lord, hear us.

The Plenary Council calls us to be a joyful, hope-filled, servant community. We pray that the spirit of joy and hope fill our hearts and overflows to all we meet. *(Pause for silent prayer)* Lord, hear us.

As we reflect on the future of the Church in Australia and immerse ourselves in the Plenary Council, let us follow the example of Mary, remembering her trust that the Spirit of God would be with her. *(Pause for silent prayer)* Lord, hear us.

For the Plenary Council: in these months leading up to the First Assembly: that we may have the courage to speak boldly and the ability to listen humbly with hearts open to where the Spirit is leading our Church in Australia. *(Pause for silent prayer)* Lord, hear us.

For the Plenary Council Assemblies of 2021 and 2022: that the Assemblies to be held this year and next year will renew the Church making it humbler and hopeful. *(Pause for silent prayer)* Lord, hear us.

For our preparation for the Plenary Council: that our faith communities be encouraged and strengthened when our dialogue gets messy and we cannot see where the Spirit is leading us. *(Pause for silent prayer)* Lord, hear us.

For the Plenary Council: that we might be given more profound faith, greater courage, deeper spirituality and the ability to discern where the Holy Spirit is leading us, as faith communities come together to respond and prepare for the First Assembly in October this year. *(Pause for silent prayer)* Lord, hear us.