

OUR SUNDAY CELEBRATION

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

18 OCTOBER 2020

SERVING GOD THROUGH CIVIL SOCIETY. The kingdom of God is already present in our world. It is here that we practise the kingdom values of justice, honesty, love and compassion. It is here that we show our faith in action, work for love and persevere in hope. When we contribute to the well-being of civil society we are promoting the kingdom of God.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON cf. Ps 16:6, 8

To you I call; for you will surely heed me, O God; turn your ear to me; hear my words. Guard me as the apple of your eye; in the shadow of your wings protect me.

GREETING

P. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT

P. Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

P. Lord Jesus, you are the image of the unseen God; Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

P. You are the first born of all creation; Christ, have mercy.

R. Christ, have mercy.

P. You are the head of the body, the Church; Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

P. May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

GLORIA

Glorify God in the highest, / and on earth peace to people of good will. / We praise you, / we bless you, / we adore you, / we glorify you, / we give you thanks for your great glory, / Lord God, heavenly King, / O God, almighty Father. / Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, / Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, / you take away the sins of the world, / have mercy on us; / you take away the sins of the world, / receive our prayer; / you are seated at the right hand of the Father, / have mercy on us. / For you alone are the Holy One, / you alone are the Lord, / you alone are the Most High, / Jesus Christ, / with the Holy Spirit, / in the glory of God the Father. / Amen.

COLLECT

P. Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING Isa 45:1, 4-6

A reading from the prophet Isaiah
I have taken the hand of Cyrus to subdue nations before his countenance.

Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus,

whom he has taken by his right hand to subdue nations before him and strip the loins of kings, to force gateways before him that their gates be closed no more:

It is for the sake of my servant Jacob, of Israel my chosen one, that I have called you by your name, conferring a title though you do not know me.

I am the Lord, unrivalled; there is no other God besides me. Though you do not know me, I arm you that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that, apart from me, all is nothing.

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

RESP PSALM Ps 95:1, 3-5, 7-10. R. v. 7

R. Give the Lord glory and honour.

1. O sing a new song to the Lord, / sing to the Lord all the earth. / Tell among the nations his glory / and his wonders among all the peoples. **R.**

2. The Lord is great and worthy of praise, / to be feared above all gods; / the gods of the heathens are naught. / It was the Lord who made the heavens. **R.**

3. Give the Lord, you families of peoples, / give the Lord glory and power, / give the Lord the glory of his name. / Bring an offering and enter his courts. **R.**



4. Worship the Lord in his temple. / O earth, tremble before him. / Proclaim to the nations: 'God is king.' / He will judge the peoples in fairness. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 Thess 1:1-5

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians
We are mindful of your faith, hope, and love
From Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the Church in Thessalonika which is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; wishing you grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We always mention you in our prayers and thank God for you all, and constantly remember before God our Father how you have shown your faith in action, worked for love and persevered through hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We know, brothers, that God loves you and that you have been chosen, because when we brought the Good News to you, it came to you not only as words, but as power and as the Holy Spirit and as utter conviction.

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Phil 2:15-16

Alleluia, alleluia! / Shine on the world like bright stars; / you are offering it the word of life. / Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mt 22:15-21

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

P. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

R. Glory to you, O Lord.

Give to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar and to God the things that are God's.

ST MARTHA'S PARISH STRATHFIELD



Parish Priest: Fr Jacek (Jack) Cichy

Administration Coordinator: Nicolle Mazzaferro (Mon-Thurs) admin@stmarthas.org.au

Administration Support: Larissa Argiro (Fridays) office@stmarthas.org.au

Sacramental Coordinator: Patricia Saad (Fridays) sc@stmarthas.org.au

Safeguarding Officer: Dianne Dawson safeguarding@stmarthas.org.au

Parish Ministries Coordinator: Helen Williamson

Music Ministry: Marcella Ayoub & Agnes Lee

Children's Liturgy Coordinator: Rachel Suriano

Youth Ministry: Jessica Gereis youth@stmarthas.org.au



'They all ate and were satisfied' ... Matthew 14

70 Homebush Rd Strathfield NSW 2135

Phone: 9746 6131 Fax: 9764 3040

Email: office@stmarthas.org.au

Website: www.stmarthas.org.au

Parish Office: Mon- Fri 9.00am-3.00pm



St Martha's School: 9764 1184
Email: info@stmstrathfield.catholic.edu.au

Principal: Judy Gastin

Assistant Principal: Leanne Meehan

REC: Attilia Kazacos

THE PARISH OF ST MARTHA'S ACKNOWLEDGES THE WANGUL PEOPLE AS THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND ON WHICH THE CHURCH IS BUILT

Vision:

**Welcoming
Eucharistic
Transformed by the Word
Full of Grace
Proclaiming Good News**



Mission:

**Alive with the Spirit
Inspired by St Martha
We Celebrate & Witness
God's love
Using our Gifts & Talents**

MASS TIMES



Tuesdays: 7.30am Wednesdays: 9.10am

Thursdays: 9.10am Fridays: 9.10am

Saturdays: 9.10am, 5pm Vigil Mass

Sundays: 8.00am; 10.00am & 6.00pm

1st Saturday of every month: 8-9am Adoration, 9am Benediction,
9.10am Healing Mass and Anointing of the Sick, followed by
reconciliation

RECONCILIATION:

Saturday after 9.10am Mass or by appointment.

BAPTISM:

Available Every 2nd & 4th Sunday of the Month

Next Preparation Session:

4th October 2020.

Contact Parish office for more information.



MARRIAGES: By appointment only.
(6 months' notice is required).



ROSARY: Tuesday & Saturday after morning Mass, Wednesday, Thursday
& Friday 8.30am and 7.30pm on Fridays in conjunction with Marian
Movement of Priests Cenacle and Divine Mercy Chaplet.

PRAYER GROUP / ADORATION AT ST MARTHA'S CHURCH:

Temporarily unavailable during COVID-19



**Please continue to support the
St Vincent De Paul Society
through the Church Poor Boxes.**

*In the Spirit of St Martha,
let us continue to help others and Carry
Hope Everywhere.*



SAFE GUARDING

**A reminder to parents that the Notice-Board located
at the side entrance contains various resources for
children regarding Safeguarding.**

A MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY.

Abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with a crime are the police. If you – or anyone you know – have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office at 9390 5810 or safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org. You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and guidance.

The Archdiocese has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.

Please be aware that if you "TAG" St Martha's in photos on your Facebook page, the images also appear on an "unofficial" St Martha's Facebook page. This "unofficial" page was created automatically by Facebook and is not controlled by St Martha's. We kindly remind you to take care when uploading photos of any children without parent consent.



**Office of the
Children's Guardian**

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

**IF YOU PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING MINISTRIES YOU
ARE REQUIRED TO SIGN IN - ACOLYTES; READERS; EUCHARISTIC
MINISTERS; CHOIR; CHILDREN'S LITURGY (LEADERS & CHILDREN) &
SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM (LEADERS & CHILDREN). SIGN IN
FOLDERS ARE KEPT IN THE SACRISTY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-
OPERATION.**

**ALTAR SERVERS ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THE SACRISTY WITHOUT A
PARENT/TEACHER. THE SIGN IN FOLDER IS LOCATED IN THE
CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE SACRISTY.**



MASS INTENTIONS

Recently Deceased:

Terry Stewart, Joseph Touma, Jill Watson, Frances Spicer, Shirley White, Clare Kenny, Sr Christin McIntosh, Sr Patricia Lindner, Doctor Ron Burke, Francesco & Stefano Colagiuri, Maria Do Thi Men, John Marianos, Simon Raheb, Marie Verschwer, Amirda marie Shanthy, Lorna Redolfi, Gloria & Bill Wallace, Helena Ibrahim, Mick Rigby, Tom Gaha, Maria Casimiro, Sr Maura McAvoy op, Sr Thecla Caruana, Sr Cecily Gaudry, Sr Marie Gaudry, Noeleen Smith, Bernard Nader, Philip Huynh, Mary Bentley

Repose Of The Soul:



Tim & Eileen Cobbin, Agnes Mary Glass, Susan Ryan, Stefano Colagiuri, Philip & Monica Choi, Clara Sue, Elias Nohra, Antonio Sahyoun, Elie Sahyoun, Hortance Fernandez, Joan Ophel, Salvatore Puglisi, Nazih Stanton, John Lahood, Vincent Coorey Elias, Simon Stanton (Snr), Frank Monaghan, Fr Adrian Horgan, Fr Paul Ryan, Br Ray Dowding, Gerald Wilson, John Ferguson, Ken Fraser, Connie Wong, Aldo Amarino, Salvatore (Phillip) Puglisi, William (Bill) & Dorothy Starr, Roger O'Reilly, Stefano, Estelle Thurn, Anne Cecilia Glass, Reginald & Agnes Glass, Gerald & Frances Gleeson, Faado & Alice Herro.

Anniversaries:

Stephaine Kehoe, Terry Stewart, Caterina & Matteo Genova, Tom & Michelle Christy, Eric Sidoti, Steven Elias, Dorothea Starr, Bernard & Mark Kelly, Eric Leahy & Marie Leahy, Joy Quinlan & Kevin Quinlan, Giuseppe & Raffaele Pagano, Mary Campion, John Liu & Mary Liu, Netta O'Hara, Norman Gode, Jan Loney, Harold Crocker, Albert Khoury, Doreen McNamara, Mary Loscocco, Ivan Skuric, Francesco & Maria Colagiuri, Francis & Roslyn Sinnadurai, John Ferguson, Lough Campion, Antonious Katrib, Julia Georges, Joseph Moussa Tannous, Reg Jones.

Sick Intentions:

Newborn Alice Ladd needing Open-Heart Surgery, Margaret Davidson with Multiple fractures from car accident, The Ladd Family, Marc Kayrouz, Br Jude Butcher cfc & Peter Starr.

Special Intentions:

The soul of Mario Barone, Tony Chow, Michael Kenny, Thomas Wehbe, For the Souls in Purgatory, Siva & Sothy of Good Health & Wellbeing, Father's day Mass for John McManus, Jack Craig, Annie Craig, Eileen Crocker, Bertha & Clem Jones, Deceased Friends & Benefactors of the Dominican Order Phil Robinson, Sarah Argiro, Members of the Lucich & Argiro Families, Members of the Casmiro & Martins Families.

24th & 25th October

24th & 25th OCTOBER	5.00PM VIGIL	8.00AM	10.00AM	6.00PM
SPECIAL MINISTERS	Peter McCluskey	Yvonne Martins	Relyn Ponce	Andrew Bova
	Marian McCluskey	Peter Yamin	Anne Marrins	Mary L'Estrange
			Maria Soares	
	5.00PM VIGIL	8.00AM	10.00AM	6.00PM
READERS	Natalie Baini	Daniel Martins	Mark Soares	Theresa Kuk
	Patricia Saad	Sandor Toth	Melanie Yates	Anne Chow
	5.00PM VIGIL	8.00AM	10.00AM	6.00PM
ALTAR SERVERS	Lincoln M.	Julian M.	Zachariah B.	Marina B.
	Hayden M.	Lucas M.	Antoinette B.	Oliver B.
	Therese S.	Jacob M.	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed
	Sophia S.	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed
WARDENS	5.00PM VIGIL	8.00AM	10.00AM	6.00PM
	Ken Goodrick	Georgette Sahyoun	Trudie Rogers	Phil Robinson

If you are unable to attend your rostered Mass kindly organise a replacement.



First Eucharist Dates for 2020



Parent information night	Tuesday 13 October 7pm- parents only
Lesson 1 plus commitment mass	Saturday 17 October 3.30pm followed by 5pm commitment mass
Lesson 2	Saturday 24 October 3.30pm followed by 5.00pm mass
Lesson 3	Saturday 31 st October @3.30pm followed by 5.00pm mass
Lesson 4	Saturday 7 November @3.30pm followed by 5.00pm mass
Retreat	November 14 2.00pm-4.30pm
First Holy Communion Masses	Sunday 15 November 12pm, Saturday 21 November 11am and 22 November 12pm

The Pharisees went away to work out between them how to trap Jesus in what he said. And they sent their disciples to him together with the Herodians, to say, 'Master, we know that you are an honest man and teach the way of God in an honest way, and that you are not afraid of anyone, because a man's rank means nothing to you. Tell us your opinion, then. Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' But Jesus was aware of their malice and replied, 'You hypocrites! Why do you set this trap for me? Let me see the money you pay the tax with.' They handed him a denarius and he said, 'Whose head is this? Whose name?' 'Caesar's' they replied. He then said to them, 'Very well, give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar – and to God what belongs to God.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

HOMILY

PROFESSION OF FAITH APOSTLES' CREED

Or the Nicene Creed may be said.

I believe in God, / the Father almighty, / Creator of heaven and earth, / and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, / who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, / born of the Virgin Mary, / suffered under Pontius Pilate, / was crucified, died and was buried; / he descended into hell; / on the third day he rose again from the dead; / he ascended into heaven, / and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; / from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. / I believe in the Holy Spirit, / the holy catholic Church, / the communion of saints, / the forgiveness of sins, / the resurrection of the body, / and life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

After the priest raises the paten with the bread and prays, and then the chalice, we respond to each prayer:

R. Blessed be God for ever.

P. Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

R. May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

P. Grant us, Lord, we pray, a sincere respect for your gifts, that, through the purifying action of your grace, we may be cleansed by the very mysteries we serve.

Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

P. Lift up your hearts.

R. We lift them up to the Lord.

P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

R. It is right and just.

PREFACE I-VIII OF THE SUNDAYS IN ORDINARY TIME

After the Preface, we sing or say:

All: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

THE MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

P. The mystery of faith.

All: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

COMMUNION RITE

P. At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven ...

P. Deliver us, Lord, we pray ...

All: For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

P. Lord Jesus Christ, who said ...

R. Amen.

P. The peace of the Lord be with you always.

R. And with your spirit.

P. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

All exchange a sign of peace

LAMB OF GOD

All: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P. Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

R. Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON cf. Ps 32:18-19

Behold, the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, who hope in his merciful love, to rescue their souls from death, to keep them alive in famine.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P. Grant, O Lord, we pray, that, benefiting from participation in heavenly things, we may be helped by what you give in this present age and prepared for the gifts that are eternal. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

P. May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

P. Go forth, the Mass is ended.

R. Thanks be to God.

REFLECTIONS ON THE GOSPEL

OBEDIENCE TO GOD

Having entered Jerusalem as its messianic King, Jesus is drawn into a power struggle with representatives of various groups who, under the overall control of the Romans, currently wield power. To remove the threat he poses, they need to portray him to the Romans as dangerous and, at the same time, to lessen his authority with the people.

The tax question is a perfect stratagem to achieve these ends. If Jesus supports the payment of the unpopular poll tax, he will lose standing with the people; if he forbids payment, he risks being identified with groups rebellious towards Rome and so of appearing as a threat to peace and public order.

Jesus' majestic response not only frees him from the dilemma, it actually goes onto the offensive. By requiring *them* to produce a coin with Caesar's image on it he shows them up as already collaborating with the Romans. They carry around the offensive coinage. He does not.

Then his dual 'Render ...' instruction throws the dilemma back upon them. They had set the issue simply in terms of obligation to Rome; they had not brought God into the equation at all. Jesus takes possession of the religious and moral high ground by setting responsibility to the civil power (which he does not deny) within the broader and higher framework of obedience to God.

We can find here the beginnings of the later Christian sense of the separation of Church and State. We also have a recognition that believers have responsibilities in both realms that oblige in conscience before God.

BRENDAN BYRNE, SJ

A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL

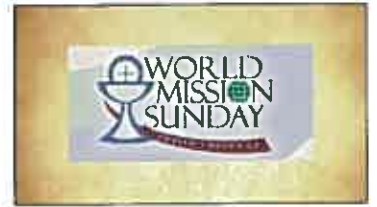
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World Mission Sunday

Sunday 18th October 2020



Pope Francis released his annual Message for World Mission Sunday 2020 on Pentecost Sunday. Its theme is taken from Isaiah: "Here am I, send me" (6:8). World Mission Sunday is celebrated on October 18 in 2020.



The Pope began his message recalling the words he expressed on the occasion of the extraordinary moment of prayer on 27 March. Even in the disorientation and fear provoked by the current international crisis, Pope Francis says the Lord continues to ask "Whom shall I send?" Even as we touch our frailty in the pain and death we are experiencing, we are also reminded "of our deep desire for life and liberation from evil". This is where the call to mission emerges as an "invitation to step out of ourselves for love of God and neighbour" through "service and intercessory prayer", he writes.

Pope Francis says at the conclusion of his message. World Mission Sunday will be a day on which we will be able to reaffirm through prayer, reflection and material help our active participation in Jesus's mission in His Church. Pope Francis specifies that the collection taken up on 18 October will support "the missionary work carried out in my name by the Pontifical Mission Societies, in order to meet the spiritual and material needs of peoples and Churches throughout the world, for the salvation of all."

(As written by Sr Bernadette Mary Reis in the Vatican News)

A copy of Pope Francis's Annual Message for World Mission Sunday 2020 can be found on St Martha's website. Extra copies can also be obtained from the back of the Church.



Holy Father's Appeal

Our thanks go to all of you who opened your hearts and gave generously towards the Holy Father's Appeal. Because you chose to give, you have given hope to those who are in most need of our generosity and compassion. If you have missed appeal weekend, you can still give by phoning the Fundraising Office during Office Hours on **1800 753 959**.

A few words by Greg Glass, Parishioner and Former Pilgrim to The Holy Land

This appeal normally takes place on Good Friday. But 2020 has been anything but a normal year. The pandemic has had a terrible impact around the world. Millions of disruptive lives. In the Holy Land, it is the city of Jerusalem most affected. Preventative measures were taken world wide, precluding the normal events surrounding Holy Week and Easter. At that time St Martha's was also in complete lock down. In the circumstances, Pope Francis approved tht the Pontifical Good Friday collection for the Holy Land, so vital to the mission of the church in the Middle East, take place this year on Sunday 13th September, a date close to the Feast of the Exaltation (the Triumph) of the Holy Cross. The date commemorates the rediscovery by Saint Helena, in the year 326, of the Relics of the True Cross, and also the recent re-openings, with restrictions, of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre and the Basilica of the Nativity. Over the past 800 years, the Franciscans have sought to make certain, that when danger threatens, the Holy sites would remain places of prayer, and that is what they continue to do so today. Despite the regulations, which limit the numbers who can be present during the celebration of Mass, the parishioners of St Martha's Strathfield, responded to the Appeal with the most generous heart, raising the sum of \$4025. On behalf of the Franciscan Custos of the Holy Land, Father Francesco Patton OFM, the Commissary of the Holy Land in Austrlaia, Father Mario Debattista OFM, our lay 'brothers and sisters', who continue to live the Gospel of Jesus on the very land where "IT ALL BEGAN", I thank you Sincerely.

NEW SETS OF WEEKLY PLANNED GIVING ENVELOPES ARE AVAILABLE FOR COLLECTION IN THE CHURCH.

We encourage all Parishioners to join the giving system by either Weekly Envelope or Monthly Credit Card as this is the main income of the parish, by means of which we run everyday expenses, funds projects and plan for the future. If you would like to join, forms are available in the Church Foyer which can be returned via any collection plate or directly to the parish office.



Special Prayers for our HSC Students

Today we pray for all Year 12 HSC students as they begin their Higher School Certificate Examinations. In particular, we pray for **Samuel Debbo, Joseph Jabbour, Eddie Tannous, Carlos Hasham, William Ayoub, Jayden Nasr, George Akiki, Michael Gittani, Nicholas Ellul & Anthony Cheaib.**

Lord, we ask that our students feel your presence during the HSC exam period. We pray that you give them calm nerves and quiet confidence in the knowledge that you hold them in the palm of your hand. Bless them with keen understanding, retentive memories and the ability to grasp questions correctly. We pray that you will send them your gifts of wisdom and knowledge. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

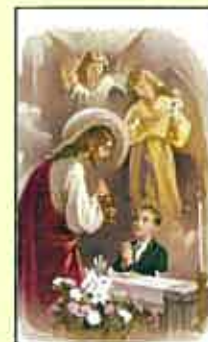
First Holy Communion Candidates



We pray for our 54 First Holy Communion Candidates who start their preparation this Saturday. May this period of preparation provide the candidates with many graces as they approach our Lord in the Holy Eucharist.

“O Jesus, who has loved us with such exceeding great love as to give us the ineffable gift of the Holy Eucharist, inflame us with a burning zeal to promote your glory by preparing worthily the little children who are to approach your Holy Table for the first time. Protect, O Sacred Heart

of Jesus, these young souls from the assaults of evil, strengthen their faith, increase their love, and endow them with all the virtues that will make them worthy to receive you. Amen”



Welcome back Nicole

I am pleased to advise that following an extended absence, Nicolle will be returning to the Parish Office from Monday 19 October.

Nicole took leave after an anonymous, malicious and threatening letter was hand-delivered to her home on 21 July. The letter purported to be on behalf of four unnamed parishioners. This letter caused much distress to Nicole, and we as a parish wish to extend our sincere sympathy and support to her and to a few other people mentioned in that letter.

Because of the disturbing, destructive and personal nature of this letter, the Sydney Archdiocesan Chancery investigated the matter, and a report was made to the NSW Police.

We strongly condemn such cowardly and vicious conduct, as it undermines the very essence of what St Martha's Community aspires to be, as stated in our parishes' Vision and Mission statement on our website and parish bulletins.

I am delighted to welcome Nicolle back to the parish office as a valued staff member of St Martha's for the past 8 years, and acknowledge all your kind wishes and support for her safe return. I know that Nicolle is very grateful for the support she has received during this difficult time.

I also take this opportunity to thank Susan Nehme for all her help in assisting us in the parish office during Nicolle's absence. Father Jack



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR WORLD MISSION DAY 2020

Here am I, send me (Is 6:8)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I wish to express my gratitude to God for the commitment with which the Church throughout the world carried out the Extraordinary Missionary Month last October. I am convinced that it stimulated missionary conversion in many communities on the path indicated by the theme: “Baptized and Sent: the Church of Christ on Mission in the World”.

In this year marked by the suffering and challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the missionary journey of the whole Church continues in light of the words found in the account of the calling of the prophet Isaiah: “Here am I, send me” (6:8). This is the ever new response to the Lord’s question: “Whom shall I send?” (ibid.). This invitation from God’s merciful heart challenges both the Church and humanity as a whole in the current world crisis. “Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying ‘We are perishing’ (v. 38), so we too have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this” (*Meditation in Saint Peter’s Square*, 27 March 2020). We are indeed frightened, disoriented and afraid. Pain and death make us experience our human frailty, but at the same time remind us of our deep desire for life and liberation from evil. In this context, the call to mission, the invitation to step out of ourselves for love of God and neighbour presents itself as an opportunity for sharing, service and intercessory prayer. The mission that God entrusts to each one of us leads us from fear and introspection to a renewed realization that we find ourselves precisely when we give

ourselves to others.

In the sacrifice of the cross, where the mission of Jesus is fully accomplished (cf. *Jn* 19:28-30), God shows us that his love is for each and every one of us (cf. *Jn* 19:26-27). He asks us to be personally willing to be sent, because he himself is Love, love that is always “on mission”, always reaching out in order to give life. Out of his love for us, God the Father sent his Son Jesus (cf. *Jn* 3:16). Jesus is the Father’s Missionary: his life and ministry reveal his total obedience to the Father’s will (cf. *Jn* 4:34; 6:38; 8:12-30; *Heb* 10:5-10). Jesus, crucified and risen for us, draws us in turn into his mission of love, and with his Spirit which enlivens the Church, he makes us his disciples and sends us on a mission to the world and to its peoples.

“The mission, the ‘Church on the move’, is not a programme, an enterprise to be carried out by sheer force of will. It is Christ who makes the Church go out of herself. In the mission of evangelization, you move because the Holy Spirit pushes you, and carries you” (*Senza di Lui non possiamo fare nulla: Essere missionari oggi nel mondo. Una conversazione con Gianni Valente*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana: San Paolo, 2019, 16-17). God always loves us first and with this love comes to us and calls us. Our personal vocation comes from the fact that we are sons and daughters of God in the Church, his family, brothers and sisters in that love that Jesus has shown us. All, however, have a human dignity founded on the divine invitation to be children of God and to become, in the sacrament of Baptism and in the freedom of faith, what they have always been in the heart of God.

Life itself, as a gift freely received, is implicitly an invitation to this gift of self: it is a seed which, in the baptized, will blossom as a response of love in marriage or in virginity for the kingdom of God. Human life is born of the love of God, grows in love and tends towards love. No one is excluded from the love of God, and in the holy sacrifice of Jesus his Son on the cross, God conquered sin and death (cf. *Rom* 8:31-39). For God, evil – even sin – becomes a challenge to respond with even greater love (cf. *Mt* 5:38-48; *Lk* 22:33-34). In the Paschal Mystery, divine mercy heals our wounded humanity and is poured out upon the whole universe. The Church, the universal sacrament of God’s love for the world, continues the mission of Jesus in history and sends us everywhere so that, through our witness of faith and the proclamation of the Gospel, God may continue to manifest his love and in this way touch and transform hearts, minds, bodies, societies and cultures in every place and time.

Mission is a free and conscious response to God’s call. Yet we discern this call only when we have a personal relationship of love with Jesus present in his Church. Let us ask ourselves: are we prepared to welcome the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to listen to the call to mission, whether in our life as married couples or as consecrated persons or those called to the ordained ministry, and in all the everyday events of life? Are we willing to be sent forth at any time or place to witness to our faith in God the merciful Father, to proclaim the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ, to share the divine life of the Holy Spirit by building up the Church? Are we, like Mary, the

Mother of Jesus, ready to be completely at the service of God's will (cf. *Lk* 1:38)? This interior openness is essential if we are to say to God: "Here am I, Lord, send me" (cf. *Is* 6:8). And this, not in the abstract, but in this chapter of the life of the Church and of history.

Understanding what God is saying to us at this time of pandemic also represents a challenge for the Church's mission. Illness, suffering, fear and isolation challenge us. The poverty of those who die alone, the abandoned, those who have lost their jobs and income, the homeless and those who lack food challenge us. Being forced to observe social distancing and to stay at home invites us to rediscover that we need social relationships as well as our communal relationship with God. Far from increasing mistrust and indifference, this situation should make us even more attentive to our way of relating to others. And prayer, in which God touches and moves our hearts, should make us ever more open to the need of our brothers and sisters for dignity and freedom, as well as our responsibility to care for all creation. The impossibility of gathering as a Church to celebrate the Eucharist has led us to share the experience of the many Christian communities that cannot celebrate Mass every Sunday. In all of this, God's question: "Whom shall I send?" is addressed once more to us and awaits a generous and convincing response: "Here am I, send me!" (*Is* 6:8). God continues to look for those whom he can send forth into the world and to the nations to bear witness to his love, his deliverance from sin and death, his liberation from evil (cf. *Mt* 9:35-38; *Lk* 10:1-12).

The celebration of World Mission Day is also an occasion for reaffirming how prayer, reflection and the material help of your offerings are so many opportunities to participate actively in the mission of Jesus in his Church. The charity expressed in the collections that take place during the liturgical celebrations of the third Sunday of October is aimed at supporting the missionary work carried out in my name by the Pontifical Mission Societies, in order to meet the spiritual and material needs of peoples and Churches throughout the world, for the salvation of all.

May the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of Evangelization and Comforter of the Afflicted, missionary disciple of her Son Jesus, continue to intercede for us and sustain us.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 31 May 2020, Solemnity of Pentecost

Franciscus

