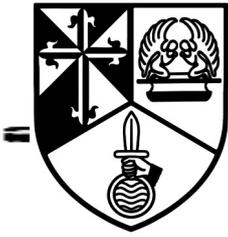


Catholic Parish of Blackiriars

Under the care of the Dominican Fathers



Issue 46
3 October 2021
Year B

VERITAS

Twenty Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

HOLY ROSARY CHURCH

Parish Priest
Fr Mannes Tellis OP
(To contact Please Text)
0414 396 532

Assistant Priest
Fr Rafael Cabezon OP

Dominican in residence
Br Francis McKinnon OP

Holy Rosary Church
Cnr Phillip Avenue &
Antill Street, Watson ACT

Postal Address
PO Box 900, Dickson
Ph. 6248 5925

Office Hours -
Monday, Tuesday,
Thursday, Friday
9am to 12.30pm

Office Staff
Jacquie Cortese
Jim Smith

Email:
watson@cg.org.au
Website:

www.cg.org.au/watson

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/Holy-Rosary-Parish-Watson

Mass Times

Monday - NO Mass

Tuesday & Thursday
8.00am

Wednesday & Friday
5:30pm

Saturday - 9:00am

Vigil - 5:pm

Sunday - 8:00am, 10:00am,
5:00pm

Reconciliation

Saturday 12pm—12.30pm
and 4pm—4.30pm

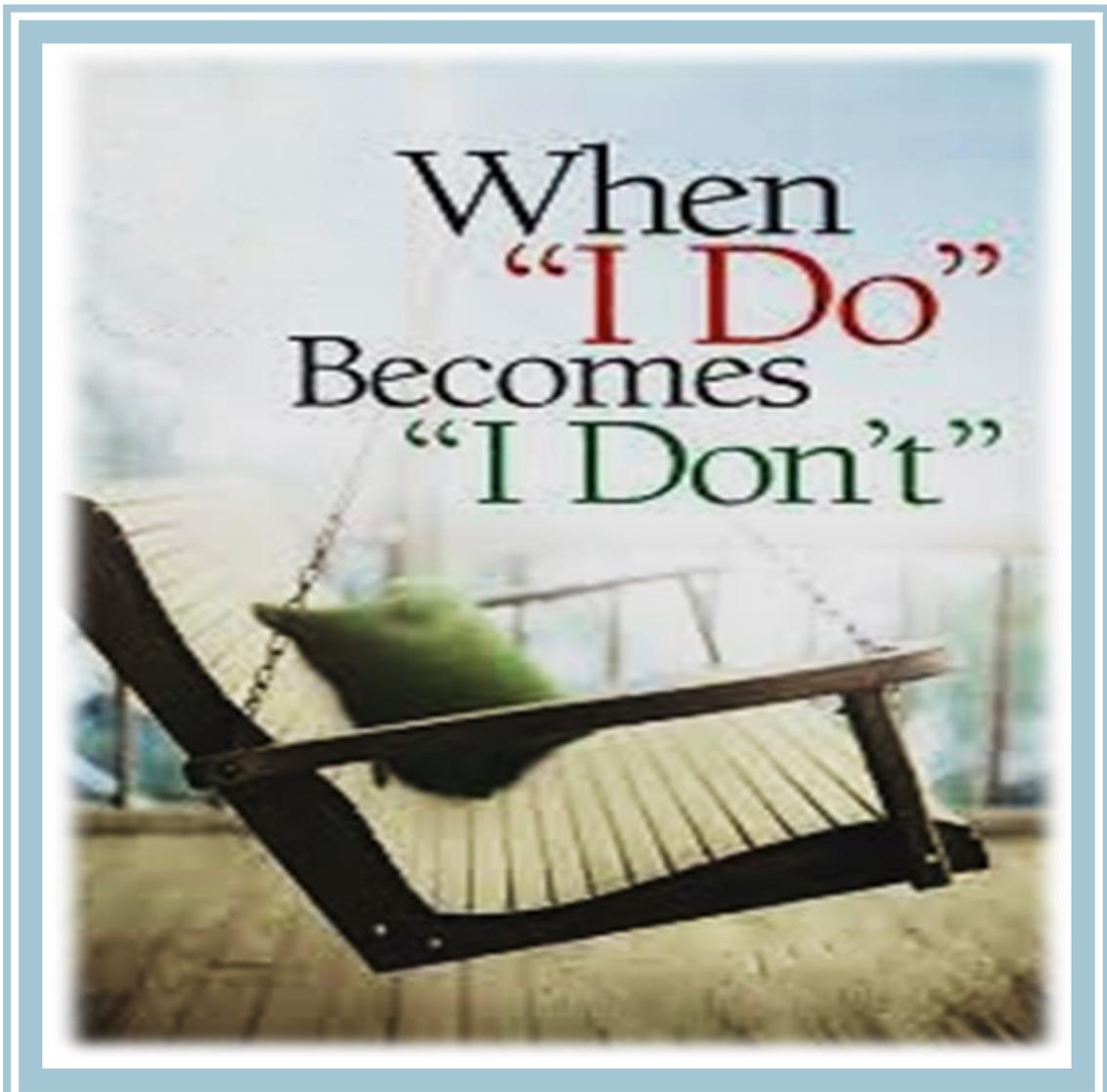
Adoration - Holy Hour

Tuesday 12 Noon - 1:00pm

Pray the Rosary

First Saturday each month 3.30pm

**If you are in Urgent need of a Priest
out of office hours call - 6248 8253**



BOOKINGS FOR WEEKEND MASSES ARE ESSENTIAL.

If you are feeling unwell please **DO NOT** come to church.

Please scan the QR Code & record your name, alternatively please write your name and contact number on the register provided.

PLEASE sanitise your hands on entering the foyer or parish centre.

Please **DO NOT** return your bulletin to the basket,
if you are not taking it home put it in the bin.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Entrance Antiphon: Cf. Ester 4: 17

Within your will, O Lord, all things are established,
and there is none that can resist your will.
For you have made all things, the heaven and the earth,
and all that is held within the circle of heaven;
you are the Lord of all.

FIRST READING

First Reading: Genesis 2:18-24

A reading from the book of Genesis

The Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate.' So from the soil the Lord God fashioned all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven. These he brought to the man to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts. But no helpmate suitable for man was found for him. So the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep. And while he slept, he took one of his ribs and enclosed it in flesh. The Lord God built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man. The man exclaimed:

'This at last is bone from my bones,
and flesh from my flesh!
This is to be called woman,
for this was taken from man.'

This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife, and they become one body.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 127(128)

May the Lord bless us all the days of our lives.

O blessed are those who fear the Lord
and walk in his ways!

By the labour of your hands you shall eat.
You will be happy and prosper.

Your wife like a fruitful vine
in the heart of your house;
your children like shoots of the olive,
around your table.

Indeed thus shall be blessed
the man who fears the Lord.

May the Lord bless you from Zion
in a happy Jerusalem
all the days of your life!

May you see your children's children.
On Israel, peace!

May the Lord bless us all the days of our lives.

SECOND READING

Second Reading: Hebrews 2:9-11

We see in Jesus one who was for a short while made lower than the angels and is now crowned with glory and splendour because he submitted to death; by God's grace he had to experience death for all mankind.

As it was his purpose to bring a great many of his sons into glory, it was appropriate that God, for whom everything exists and through whom everything exists, should make perfect, through suffering, the leader who would take them to their salvation. For the one who sanctifies, and the ones who are sanctified,

SECOND READING

Cont...are of the same stock; that is why
he openly calls them brothers.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Gospel Acclamation: 1 John 4:12

Alleluia, alleluia!
If we love one another,
God will live in us in perfect love.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Gospel: Mark 10:2-16

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

Some Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, 'Is it against the law for a man to divorce his wife?' They were testing him. He answered them, 'What did Moses command you?' 'Moses allowed us' they said 'to draw up a writ of dismissal and so to divorce.' Then Jesus said to them, 'It was because you were so unteachable that he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. This is why a man must leave father and mother, and the two become one body. They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide.' Back in the house the disciples questioned him again about this, and he said to them, 'The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery too.'

People were bringing little children to him, for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, but when Jesus saw this he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Communion Antiphon: Lamentations 3: 25

The Lord is good to those who hope in him,
to the soul that seeks him.

Text - Copyright © 1996-2020 Universalis Publishing Ltd

WHAT GOD HAS UNITED MAN MUST NOT DIVIDE....

In the Western world today, somewhere between one-third and one-half of marriages end in divorce. It is a statistic that we hear wheeled out as a sign of the family unit's collapse in our society. However, the reverse statistic is also true: somewhere between one-half and two-thirds of marriages are lasting ones. In the last 30-40 years, divorce has transformed from being a shameful scandal to an accepted, even commonplace, fact of life. It would be uncommon not to know someone affected by divorce. Despite those who argue that divorce is too easy, it is an emotional and difficult decision for couples to reach and has rippling impacts on children, extended family, and friends.

Cont...When the Pharisees in the gospel asked Jesus about the law regarding divorce, they really weren't interested in divorce; they wanted to check Jesus's orthodoxy—that is how he stood in relation to traditional teaching. Rather than respond to them directly, Jesus asks them first of all to name the teaching to which they refer. He then explains that Moses only ever wrote the instruction because the people were so unwilling to listen to God's way.

We see in our first reading what God's plan for man and woman is. Men and women are not called to be alone but to be joined together as husband and wife, becoming in a sense one unit, called a family. By becoming 'one body' the couple is commanded by God to cling to each other for the rest of their lives, in good times and in bad, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death shall part them. Yet we know in our society that this is not always the case. For some marriage is viewed as an anachronism and 'living together' has become the norm, for others marriage has been an awful experience, one they never wished to repeat, others do in fact marry without realizing all that it involves—to their detriment.

Even still others wish to redefine marriage altogether and create this divine institution in their own image and likeness rather than respect thousands of years of tradition, and even still the natural law. Respectfully, this is why the Church can never move with society regarding so called "Gay Marriage". The Church basing itself on God's Word namely scripture and the Tradition of Church teaching over two millennia, has taught and will continue to teach, that only a man and a woman, free to do so, may engage in the marital covenant. In the same breath however we cannot overlook the many same-sex couples who have been faithful to each other over many years, we need to respect those friendships, but we can never equate them with marriage.

Yet set before us today we listen to Jesus' teaching on marriage:

"what God has united, man must not divide."
Back in the house the disciples questioned him again about this, and he said to them, 'The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery too.'

How do we as the people of God respond to this in faith? Do we grit our teeth and say yeah Jesus is right and it's tough but it's what Jesus teaches, or do we create our own way of dealing with the situation? Would Jesus teach us this if it weren't for our benefit?

The issue here really is the notion of remarrying after a divorce. This is where Jesus points out that there is a possibility of adultery occurring. He says this because as far as God is concerned the bond of marriage cannot be broken by man "what God has united, man must not divide", that means sometimes having to live with, or apart from a difficult spouse. The Church does not say however a couple cannot separate in a certain situation, say domestic violence; obviously reason has to govern here.

What Christ, and therefore the Church teaches, is marriage is a permanent state for the couple unless it can be proved otherwise. Unless it can be proved there was no marriage from the very beginning The Church's remedy to marital breakdown is an annulment. **An annulment is not a Catholic divorce.** A civil divorce says the parties that were married are not now. An annulment says that there were factors, often unknown to the couple on the day of

Cont...marriage, which meant that there was never a full and true Christian marriage in the first place. The sacrament is therefore null and void. The Church is the moderator of all the sacraments, she has been given this power of administration by Christ himself, therefore it is within the power of the Church to investigate the marital bond and it is for this reason that Catholics who have experienced marriage breakdown may inquire of the Church about the status of their marriage. If a Matrimonial Tribunal judges that there is a true marriage fidelity to the covenant sworn before God's altar must be upheld, if the Tribunal finds that there was never a marriage that Catholic individual is free to marry.

What about those Catholics who have divorced and want to come to communion? In a recent pastoral letter Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP of Sydney states:

"there is no impediment to full communion with the Church if you are separated or divorced. By itself civil divorce is not an obstacle to Communion." His Grace notes further that **"those who are remarried without an annulment,[should] participate in the Church's life to the extent possible, including participation in Mass, Eucharistic adoration, devotions and so on, and hope that they will work toward full sacramental participation."**

It is clear that those who have not inquired of the Church about the status of their marriage and have gone ahead and attempted marriage after a civil divorce are putting themselves at odds with Our Lord's teaching in today's gospel "'The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery too.'" These are the notoriously hard sayings of Jesus, how we judge them is a matter for our consciences but these consciences must be truly informed by the teaching of Jesus and the community of believers that follows him. Ultimately, we are called as Christians to follow Jesus through thick or thin, carrying the cross, sometimes the cross is presented in difficult situations as these.

The subject of divorce is not an easy one to discuss; it has touched the lives of most of us. The Church continues to uphold the noble ideal of marriage as a permanent and concrete sign of Christ's love for the Church. Yet the Church also realizes that many are fragile and have been unable, for whatever reason, to live up to that ideal, we pray for all of those who find themselves in this situation today, hoping and believing that by God's grace they may truly do God's will.

God love you all.

Fr Mannes OP



DECIDING TO LOVE

*Twenty-Seventh Sunday of the Year.
Fr Gordian Marshall OP preaches on
the 'judgement' of love.*

Adam sounds just like a teenager when God introduces him to Eve:

This is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. 'We were made for each other! We're a perfect match.'

Cont...It's the experience of falling head over heels in love, no thought of difficulties to come, of the many compromises that have to be made if a relationship is to survive.

And then Mark's gospel brings things down to earth with its talk of divorce. It touches on the pain of falling out of love, on the sense of betrayal and deception -- often self-deception as much as being deceived by one's partner -- that sometimes follows in the years when that initial excitement dies away and the love that was promised is no longer alive.

But what is that love and how can it be kept alive? In his book, *The Art of Loving* the psychologist Erich Fromm says something quite illuminating.

To love somebody is not just a strong feeling -- it is a decision, it is a judgment, it is a promise. If love were only a feeling, there would be no basis for the promise to love each other forever. A feeling comes and it may go. How can I judge that it will stay forever, when my act does not involve judgment and decision?

This is not suggesting that feelings are unimportant, especially when it comes to marriage, but feelings on their own are not enough to carry people through. Feelings fluctuate, sometimes from one day to the next or even from one minute to the next. They are affected by our health, by the weather, by the sort of pressure we are under and so on. If love is to stay alive, we need something more stable than that.

And so Fromm talks about love being a judgment. We make a judgment that our wholeness and well-being and the wholeness and well-being of others are best served by the commitment that we make to each other.

It is a decision: we decide to make that commitment, to give ourselves to a way of life that may well curtail us in some respects but is nevertheless in keeping with our judgment of what is best for all. And it is a promise: what we offer is not just for now but is to endure through all the changes that will come in the future.

That is why Jesus is able to say,

A new commandment I give to you,
that you love one another. (Jn 13:34)

No one can tell you how you should feel and the very fact that Jesus uses the word 'command' suggests that he too is thinking of decisions and actions and not about feelings. And what is true of all his disciples is particularly true between partners in a marriage.

The judgment and decision that is made on entering into marriage, or any other path of life for that matter, is not something that is made once and never needs to be revisited. But making and remaking that judgment is what marks people out as Jesus' disciples.

That sounds all right in theory but how do you do it in practice? It isn't easy and there are no foolproof solutions but here are two suggestions. The first is to try and act in a loving way. A teacher I had many years ago said that when he was teaching an unruly class he pretended to be angry in order to control the pupils. After a very short time of acting as if he were angry, he found himself actually feeling angry. The same principle can work in reverse: if we 'pretend' to love, if we act in a loving way, love rather than anger can grow.

And the second suggestion is prayer. If Jesus commands love, then when we find that loving seems to be beyond us, we have a right to demand that he supports us in our efforts to love. And taking time to pray can also give us a little space away from thinking about everything that is stressing us and offer a chance to offload our frustrations onto God instead of taking them out on each other.

<http://english.op.org/torch>

RESTART FROM THE BEGINNING

Twenty-Seventh Sunday of the Year.

Fr Robert Ombres OP preaches on Christian marriage.

Think of the church weddings you have been to. Everything seems designed to make the occasion a celebration beyond the ordinary. Not only do the bride and groom wear special clothes but everyone dresses up. There are flower arrangements, a colourful carpet perhaps, the organ is played and there can be singing and even trained musicians. Generally there follows a reception or party, and there could well be dancing at the end.

The whole wedding invites joy and emotions beyond the ordinary. Some people, however, will find sceptical thoughts crossing their minds. Isn't it all too optimistic these days? How long is the marriage going to last? Better to be realistic and celebrate less fully.

Celibate clergy may also feel a little hesitant when having to preach about marriage. The story goes that after listening to a priest preach enthusiastically for about half an hour on the joys of marriage, a man in the congregation turned to his wife and children and muttered 'I wish I knew as little about marriage as he does!' But, chiefly, the preacher about marriage is to proclaim God's truth as received by the Church.

Today's gospel wants us to value and benefit from that special union in love between a man and a woman that is marriage, a union fundamental enough to be made into a sacrament in Christ. Marriage is at the same time a basic human institution and an extraordinary relationship, and it contributes to the well-being of the whole of society. Also, because sacraments build up the Church, they concern all believers, which makes the sacrament of marriage very significant not just for the couple marrying.

Jesus's answer to the Pharisees recalls what God has done and intended at the very start of things: 'But from the beginning of creation...'. What an extraordinary and marvellous outcome! The two become one flesh. Our origins are shaped by the sure and guiding hand of God, and his providential plan can be trusted even in the time of weakness and sin.

There are those who think that Jesus's teaching about marriage has become out of date nowadays. It does not fit the facts or the experience of so many. Such people forget that Jesus's teaching not only differed from Jewish law and practice as mentioned in the gospel, but also from Roman law and culture.

Divorce in ancient Rome was very easy, to the point that a famous inscription in praise of a wife who had died after more than forty years of marriage says that such marriages, ending in death and not in divorce, were rare. What Jesus taught about divorce and remarriage was counter-cultural at the start. It did not fit in easily at the time he said it.

We should not get used to sin and moral weakness, seeing them as our deepest and most natural condition. It is goodness and love that are at the heart of creation, and marriages are built on them. On hearing today's gospel our minds may well start to focus on the issue of divorce and remarriage, but Jesus wants us to discover or rediscover how it was in the beginning, at creation, and to live and love accordingly.



Cont...So we are not to put asunder what God has joined. Starting from texts in the New Testament itself, the Church has developed a nuanced understanding of what God has joined and what it might mean to divide. But discussion of annulments and dissolutions of marriage cannot be the starting point. The central and sustaining image is that the two spouses become one indivisible flesh. As Jesus says, we must go back to the beginning, to creation, and, to help fill our minds and imaginations before we hear the gospel, today's first reading is in fact from *Genesis*.

You should be able to tell Christians by their realism and by their founded belief that God is greater than any weakness or sin. It is fashionable to say that we are all sinners. True enough, but this is only part of the truth. We are also *repentant* sinners, and we seek the grace of deeper conversion during the whole of our lives.

SENSITIVE

Any pastor would be aware that no Sunday Gospel read out through the year that will require more sensitive handling than this one. Any congregation today will include a considerable number of people in second marriages or people with family members in that situation. In many, if not most cases, the situation will have come about through circumstances beyond their control or from which they cannot now responsibly free themselves. To simply read out the rulings of Jesus in the Gospel without comment or nuance would be to turn Gospel into Law and simply add to a burden of guilt that may already be oppressive.

It does seem clear from the New Testament record that Jesus did rule out divorce and remarriage. This was something that set his community's standards in the matter clearly apart from what prevailed in the Judaism of his day and in the wider Greco-Roman world. That said, we must take into account that life expectancy in the ancient world was less than half that prevailing in developed Western societies today. Moreover, Jesus and the early community lived in the expectation that the world as presently constituted was soon – perhaps in the very same generation – going to pass away (cf. Mark 9:1).

Contemplation of a second marriage in such a situation would have been a very different proposition from what it is in societies where people live much longer and where the sense that the present shape of the world is going to be around indefinitely prevails. Already the "exceptive clause" in the version of Jesus' rulings on divorce in Matthew's Gospel (5:32; 19:9) shows some accommodation to new situations in which believers found themselves. Moreover, the reality is that people make mistakes and relationships fail – something which longer life span and the high premium currently placed upon personal freedom and development make more prevalent. The Church has to find a way to help people grow through failure and find in it an experience of grace and deepened knowledge of God.

Excerpt from a homily Fr Brendan Byrne SJ

NOTE

It may help, when reading this Gospel, to know that in Jesus's time, the Law of Moses concerning divorce was being interpreted to allow a man to divorce his wife for quite trivial reasons, perhaps leaving her destitute without support. Jesus invokes an older tradition that made women and men equal in marriage, thus showing his support of women, and disapproval of their abuse.

Many folks want to serve God, but only as advisers.

DIVORCE

There are many reasons for divorces and one of them is domestic violence. It's true that there are women and men who experience domestic violence and never leave the marriage; they only want to cleave while others leave for their dear life. Domestic violence can be viewed as family violence but there are family members from whom we may rarely hear in these situations, namely children. Most certainly, domestic violence impacts the perpetrator and victim yet if there are children in the same space, they, too, will be affected. They, too, may even be beaten, battered, and bruised. This is the blues-inflected struggle of life.

The book of Mark focuses a lot on the suffering of Jesus. Pain seems to have some privilege in the way Mark preaches the gospel. He keeps it real. Mark is a truth-teller because even today many travel a "trail of tears". The level of pain and the type of pain vary. But the honest truth is that life is not a bouquet of sweet-smelling roses. There are thorns and fractures. There is brokenness--broken bodies and relationships--so it is of no surprise per se when we see Jesus and the Pharisees engage in a conversation about marriage and divorce, topics that may heighten our awareness of human brokenness in our society. It's no secret that many marriages fail and end in divorce, whether they are people of faith or not.

Through this lens, it might not be a coincidence that directly following the teaching about marriage and divorce (vv.2-12) is a short story about how Jesus blesses children (vv.13-16). We can't avoid this literary connection that points to existential realities. Children are affected by divorce, not just the partners. Children may be torn between two parents but one could also say that we, adults, may be prone to divorcing children, that is, separating from them and their needs, neglecting their voice and place in the home or broader society, ignoring how they may be impacted by domestic violence.

Dr Marie Hunter

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

On Thursday we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary and during the month of October the practice of saying the Rosary is recommended to us by the Church and especially by Pope Francis this year.

Why should we then pray the Rosary in our daily lives? Prayer can take many forms in our lives. All prayer, even wordless prayer, can be enormously worthwhile. Conversation with God, talking and listening can be so beneficial to the furthering of our mystical life, a life of intercourse with God.

To quote Fr Henri Nouwen (1932 – 1996), a writer of deep spirituality in a most practical, human way: "Mary calls me back to where I most want to be".

What makes prayer to Mary so special? It seems fitting that as we celebrate this Feast of the Rosary, we recall that Mary was, above all, the Mother of Christ and the wife of Joseph, the three forming the model of a Holy Family. This is an additional reason why we should observe this feast as something special, because it helps us to reflect on the importance of families.

What better way is there for us to support family life, than by reciting the Rosary? It helps us to visualise and contemplate the events of Christ's life on this earth, from the angel Gabriel's Annunciation to Mary that she had been chosen by God to be the Mother of his divine Son, right through to the crowning of our Lady as Queen of Heaven.

Fr Leo Edgar OP <http://english.op.org/torch>

THE ROSARY

The Rosary means "Crown of Roses". Our Lady has revealed to several people that each time they say a Hail Mary they are giving her a beautiful rose and that each complete Rosary makes her a crown of roses. the rose is the queen of flowers, and so the Rosary is the rose of all devotions and it is there fore the most important one.



The Holy Rosary is considered a perfect prayer because within it lies the awesome story of our salvation. With the Rosary in fact we meditate the mysteries of joy, of sorrow, of glory and of light of Jesus and Mary. It's a simple prayer, humble so much like Mary. It's a prayer we can all say together with Her, the Mother of God. With the Hail Mary we invite Her to pray for us. Our Lady always grants our request. She joins Her prayer to ours.

Therefore it becomes ever more useful, because what Mary asks She always receives, Jesus can never say no to whatever His Mother asks for.

In every apparition, the heavenly Mother has invited us to say the Rosary as a powerful weapon against evil, to bring us to true peace. With your prayer made together with Your heavenly Mother, you can obtain the great gift of bringing about a change of hearts and conversion. Above all each day, through prayer you can drive away from yourselves and from your homeland many dangers and many evils. It can seem a repetitive prayer but instead it is like two sweethearts who many times say one another the words: "I love you"...

PRAYING



This reflection is quite enlightening:

"When Brother Bruno was at prayer one night he was disturbed by the croaking of a bullfrog.

All his attempts to disregard the sound were unsuccessful so he shouted from his window.

'Quite! I'm at my prayers.' Now Brother Bruno was a saint so his command was instantly obeyed. Every living creature held its voice so as to create a silence that would be favourable to prayer. However, another voice intruded on Bruno's worship – an inner voice that said, 'Maybe God is as please with the croaking of that frog as with the chanting of your psalms.' 'What can please the ears of God in the croak of a frog?' was Bruno's scornful rejoinder. But the voice refuse to give up: 'Why would you think God invented the sound?'

Bruno decided to find out why. He leaned out of his window and gave the order. 'Sing!'

The bullfrog's measured croaking filled the air to the ludicrous accompaniment of all the frogs in the vicinity. As Bruno attended to the sound, their voices ceased to jar for he discovered that, if he stopped resisting them, they actually enriched the silence of the night. With that discovery. Bruno's heart became harmonious with the inverse and, for the first time in his life, he understood what it means to pray.' Anthony de Mello

THE PLENARY COUNCIL

Those who gather throughout Australia to consider what 'God is asking of us in Australia at this time' will be listening for the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Next week the Fifth Plenary Council of the Australian Catholic Church will assemble for the first time. Getting to this point has been a long process that began three and a half years ago. We now seem to live in a different country, in a different age. Its planning and initial stages began before the bushfires, before coronavirus, before the restrictions and lockdowns that have been part of our daily lives. It was conceived as a process that would bring people together personally in their local churches and finally in large gatherings. Its final stage come when people cannot gather to celebrate Mass in much of Australia and the members of the Council will meet electronically.



In the face of so much change it is helpful to remind ourselves of what the Council is about and what we might hope for from it. Pastoral councils are held from time to time in the Church to discuss issues of national importance for the Church. This is the first to be held in Australia since 1937. Their structure was regulated at a time when it was conceived as a gathering of Bishops, but it takes place when Pope Francis has pressed for Church governance in which all Catholics are involved. In this Council only Bishops will vote on its decisions, and clergy and Religious form the majority of the Council members. Despite these limitations, the preparations for the Council tried to involve as many Catholics as possible at parish level, in naming the main issues facing the Church today, giving feedback in the preparation of material for the Council discussions. Lay people from each diocese will be among the members of the Council.

This complex process began with a simple question: 'What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?' The question is deliberately broad: it can be asked of the internal life of the Church as it is expressed in our liturgy, teaching, parish and diocesan organisation and decision making. It can also be asked, as Pope Francis has emphasised, about the relationship of the Church to the wider society in our outreach to people who are not Catholic or marginalised by society, and in our contribution to public life and conversation.

At the Council, the members will have the benefit of the feedback from people in its earlier stages. They will be expected to take account not only of what we have said but of the passion with which we have brought to particular issues.

What might we hope that the Council will deliver? Pope Francis has recently spoken much of his own hopes. He is more concerned with good process than with good conclusions. He does not see the Council as a parliamentary meeting in which positions are debated and decided by vote. He sees them as exercises in listening in which all present are taken beyond their initial convictions. People may continue to differ but they will have recognised deeper truths behind the difference. In this respect we all will be listening for the voice of the Spirit.

That process puts much emphasis on reflective prayer. This does not mean saying more prayers but making more space for reflection on what people have heard and said

Cont...and on our own inner response.

We do not stop at the point of agreement or disagreement but keep listening to what is being said beyond the words and behind our own instinctive response. The Council relies on a process of listening enriched and purified through prayer.

Over the sessions of the Council multiple answers to the simple question with which the process began will emerge and be refined. They shall then need to be received by people like us at the grass roots. It is understandable that many people have been sceptical about the Council. It takes a lot of trust in the Holy Spirit to invest effort and to place hope in such a process. But who better to trust?

Fr Andrew Hamilton SJ

FIRST ASSEMBLY

The First General Assembly of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia opens with Mass at 2pm (AEDT-11am AWST) from St Mary's Cathedral, Perth on Sunday, 3 October.

The journey to the Plenary Council has been long (and made longer by the coronavirus pandemic), nor will it not end with the First General Assembly. Work toward a Council began in 2016 when the Australian Bishops confirmed a plan to host one in 2020. In March 2018 Pope Francis granted formal approval for the Church in Australia to hold the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia.

The listening and dialogue phase began in May 2018, inviting people to consider the question 'What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?' In July 2019 the National Centre for Pastoral Research published 'Listen to What the Spirit is Saying', and then the Listening and Discernment phase opened, inviting people to reflect on the six National Themes for Discernment through prayer, listening, sharing and discernment. With the coming of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Plenary Council assemblies planned for October 2020 and April 2021 were postponed until October 2021 and July 2022.

While originally hoped to meet in person, the pandemic has meant the first assembly will be a mix of in-person and online delivery. The historic event will develop concrete proposals to create a more missionary, Christ-centred Church in Australia. Following the assembly, it is expected a number of documents will be produced to be reviewed, considered and hopefully approved at the next assembly.

In the meantime as the first assembly gets underway, you are invited to watch the live-streamed Mass and access other information on the **Plenary Council website**.

"Let us generously open our hearts and make room for everything that faith itself allows".

40th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to Jacque & Joe Cortese on the celebration of their 40th Wedding Anniversary.

Married on
3rd October 1981
Sacred Heart Church,
Mildura.

Thank You for your example of commitment to God, to each other, and to our Parish community. God's blessings to you both.



PLENARY COUNCIL TRACKER

Next week's Plenary Council Tracker, including background and [Registration to receive the one web link](#) (that allows you to join each night) is also in the Garratt email copied below. Parishioners who are interested in next week's Plenary will find this useful, especially if this Garratt email with the full information can be placed in your Parish e-bulletin news this week.

WHEN: Daily. October 3-10, 2021 : **TIME:** 7.30pm

WHERE: VIA ZOOM : **COST:** Free

Please register, and join us nightly throughout this most historic and crucial time in the life of the Australian Catholic Church.

In Your Prayers please remember those in our community who are ill:

Greg O'Neill, Ruth Burke, Frank Zobec, Carol Hallam, Mary Martin, Barbara Wilson, June Pollard, Anne Corver, Ursula Ramsay, Edith Jensen, Philip Bailey, Fr Ellis Clifford, Mimma Gia, Awny El-Ghitany, Bob Hackett, Joe Schimizzi, Rosa Maria Santos, Margaret Sullivan, Mary Lou Pentony, Elizabeth Webster, Pamela Sandy, Maureen Blood, Beth Delos Santos, Peter Catlin, Terry Stephens, Bernard Druett, Veronica & Paul Cornelly, Denis Lawrence

In Loving Memory

Ronald Stevens

IMPORTANT WWVP CARDS

Please forward to the Parish Office any confirmation emails from Access Canberra or new cards for anyone who has been volunteering especially those who will continue volunteering after the lockdown period. If anyone has not provided a new card or email confirmation, can you please ensure that you do so before volunteering again in a role requiring a WWVP.

Please check to see if your card will expire over the next few months and remember to renew.

PRAYING THE ROSARY

A message from *Aid to the Church in Need Australia*: **One Million Children Praying the Rosary**: ACN invites you to join the prayer campaign 'One Million Children Praying the Rosary' for unity and peace in the world on the 18th of October. Be part of this prayer campaign and join many others! Register and learn more at www.aidtochurch.org/one-million-children

CG YOUTH MINISTERS

At the heart of our Church is a call to belong, believe and become. To invite young people to answer this call, and draw them into the life and mission of the Church, schools and Parishes across the Archdiocese have established Youth Minister positions. If you are a young adult and want to be employed on a year of formation and mission, become a Youth Minister in 2022 in the [Parish/school name] community. For more information, visit cgyouth.org.au/youth-ministers or email youth@cgyouth.org.au

**The glory of friendship is not the outstretched hand,
Not the kindly smile, nor the joy of companionship;
It is the spiritual inspiration that comes to one
when you discover that someone else believes you
and is willing to trust you with a friendship.**