

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT- MARCH 29TH,

THIS NEWSLETTER IS TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOU, GOOD PARISHIONERS, TO UPDATE AND SHARE NEWS ACROSS THE ARCHDIOCESE.

Message from Archbishop Prowse & Updated Archdiocesan Protocols, as of 25 March 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

On this great Solemnity of the Annunciation, I wish to update you on the developing situation regarding the coronavirus pandemic and its implications for the pastoral life of our people.

☐ Overnight updates by the Prime Minister and clarifications by other authorities in recent days now necessitate not simply the cessation of liturgical or any other gatherings in our Churches but also the **LOCKING of our Churches**. Funerals and weddings can be accommodated with strict numbers in attendance. Baptisms are to be postponed. See attached updated protocols for further details. It is with a very heavy heart indeed that I ask you to attend to these matters immediately.

☐ **Pope Francis** is daily reaching out to us from Rome. He asks us today to join all Christian leaders in the recitation of the Our Father. This coming Friday (27th March) he will impart a special blessing upon the entire world (Urbi et Orbi) gripped in this terrible pandemic. He has asked us all to participate spiritually. This is available through the Vatican news portal (www.news.va). On this portal the Pope also offers daily Masses for us all. Please visit it often and publicise the address.

☐ I am hearing of all sorts of wonderful **creative pastoral initiatives** respecting the current protocols blossoming right now in our parishes. Thank you! For example, the creation of “telephone trees” which link parishioners (often youth) with people alone in their homes without any internet access or competency. There are regular phone calls to “check in”. Also there is the offer of hard copies of prayers and practical assistances (e.g shopping) to the house bound. Please let us know your initiatives so we can share ideas with others.

May I conclude for the moment with the assurance to you all of my prayers and blessings – especially today with the intercession of *the young woman of Nazareth who changed the world by saying a hearty YES to the initiative of God*.

Archbishop Christopher Prowse
Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn
Apostolic Administrator of Wagga Wagga Diocese.

SUNDAY AND WEEKDAY READINGS

Sunday FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (see below)
Ezekiel 37, 12 – 14; Psalms 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8/Romans 8:8-11/John 11:1-45

Monday of the Fifth Week of Lent
Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62/Psalms 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6/John 8:1-11

Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Lent
Number 21: 4-9; John 8: 21-30

Wednesday of the Fifth Week of Lent
Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95/Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56/John 8:31-42

Thursday of the Fifth Week of Lent
Genesis 17:3-9/Psalms 105:4-5, 6-7, 8-9/John 8:51-59

Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent (First Friday of the Month of April)
Pray with the Holy Family for healing.
Jeremiah 20: 10-13; John 10: 31-42

Saturday of the Fifth Week of Lent
Ezekiel 37:21-28/Jeremiah 31:10, 11-12/John 11:45-56

Sunday FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

First Reading - Ez 37:12-14

I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live.

The Lord says this: I am now going to open your graves; I mean to raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel. And you will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, my people. And I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live, and I shall resettle you on your own soil; and you will know that I, the Lord, have said and done this – it is the Lord who speaks.

Responsorial Psalm 129.

(R.) With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!

O let your ear be attentive
to the voice of my pleading. R.

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
Lord, who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness:
for this we revere you. R.

My soul is waiting for the Lord,
I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord
more than watchman for daybreak.
(Let the watchman count on daybreak
and Israel on the Lord.) R.

Because with the Lord there is mercy
and fullness of redemption,
Israel indeed he will redeem
from all its iniquity. R.

Second Reading - Rom 8:8-11

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he will give life to your own mortal bodies.

People who are interested only in unspiritual things can never be pleasing to God. Your interests, however, are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him. Though your body may be dead it is because of sin, but if Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

Gospel Acclamation See Jn 11:25. 26

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!
I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;
whoever believes in me will not die for ever.
Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel - Jn 11:3-7. 17. 20-27. 33-45

I am the resurrection and the life.

The sisters Martha and Mary sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.'

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.'

On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said:

'I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

'Yes, Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.' Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'See how much he loved him!' But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man's death?' Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha said to him, 'Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.' Jesus replied, 'Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said: 'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer. I knew indeed that you always hear me, but I speak for the sake of all these who stand round me, so that they may believe it was you who sent me.'

When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.' Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

Fifth Sunday of Lent REFLECTION

The other morning I was out walking. This ritual has not been a regular, but saving grace in these days of “social distancing” and isolation while we continue working together as a global family to curb the spread of COVID-19. It was a beautiful morning sunrise. The ground was freshly wet from a heavy overnight rain. Looking down at my shoes as I pondered the heavy cloud this pandemic has brought upon our world, creation gave me a gift of hope, earthworms. Across the glistening street were worms slowly slithering along, brought up from their dark, subterranean resting places. The recurring narrative of our time has been one of death. The headlines stream daily updates of statistics on infection counts and numbers of those who have succumbed to the illness. Tragic realities have been reported from every corner of the planet. These certainly feel like Lenten days. If I do not stay close to Jesus, I can easily find myself getting overwhelmed by it all and burying myself in a tomb of fear.

In today’s Gospel, the tomb is right where God meets us. Like many of our brothers and sisters across the world right now, Jesus received news that his good friend Lazarus had fallen ill. By the time he is able to make the journey to pay him a visit he has died. Upon arriving in Bethany, Jesus is met separately by Lazarus’ sisters Mary and Martha who both have the same words for him: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” In our current reality of this pandemic, we might be saying the same thing to God. Our sadness and our anger is real. The Psalmist puts words to how we might be feeling: “Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.” (PS 130:1)

God’s response to our cry is provided today by the prophet Ezekial: *“I mean to raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel.”* (Ez 37:12) Jesus steps forward to the tomb of his friend with three powerful commands:

“Take the stone away.”

“Lazarus, come out!”

“Unbind him and let him go.”

Jesus calls us out of dark, death-dealing tombs and into the healing, holy light of his love. It might be hard to hear the voice of Jesus in these fearful times over the voices of dark spirits that tempt us to panic and isolate and keep the tomb’s stone right where it is. In a recent interview, Pope Francis provides a simple way to step into the light:

“We must rediscover the concreteness of little things, small gestures of attention we can offer those close to us, our family, our friends...We must understand that in small things lies our treasure. These gestures of tenderness, affection, compassion are minimal and tend to be lost in the anonymity of everyday life, but they are nonetheless decisive, important.”

Like the earthworms stretching their bodies into autumn time, my hope is that we can come up and out of these dark, uncertain, hard graves of fear through “small gestures” that keep us connected to each other amidst our social distance. As others have offered to date, the words of CS Lewis written in his essay “On Living in an Atomic Age” in 1948 seem to apply to us today in 2020:

“This is the first point to be made: and the first action to be taken is to pull ourselves together. If we are all going to be destroyed by an atomic bomb, let that bomb when it comes find us doing sensible and human things—praying, working, teaching, reading, listening to music, bathing the children, playing, chatting to our friends over a pint and a game of cards—not huddled together like frightened sheep and thinking about bombs. They may break our bodies (a microbe can do that) but they need not dominate our minds.”

Let what dominates our minds and hearts be the firm commitment God has made to us: *“And I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live...I the Lord, have said and done this.”* (Ezk 37, 14)

Catholics need to think about this and be imaginative in finding ways to make sure the liturgical and sacramental lockdown doesn't lead them to merely "watching" the Mass on TV or the internet. Or worse, that it doesn't lead to a temporary time-out from prayer or their regular "religious observance."

We're being challenged to seek out fresh springs and green pastures in this desert in which we've suddenly been thrust. We should not demand nor expect our spiritual leaders, including the pope, to know the way any better than us at this moment.

As Pope Francis has said many times, the shepherd leads the flock, but mostly by walking in the midst of the sheep. However, sometimes he must follow behind to keep those in the rear from wandering off.

And it is in those moments he realizes that his sheep have a natural instinct to find the greenest fields.

Catholics need to follow their instincts and search for the spiritual nourishment that their shepherds, at least for now, cannot provide. Eucharist.

Updated Archdiocesan Protocols
COVID 19
Effective Immediately

- Churches are to be closed **24 hours each day**.
- There are to be **no** catechetical, spiritual or social gatherings in parishes.

Given that Churches are to be closed, the following liturgical and pastoral protocols are to be followed, without exemption.

Eucharist

1. No public Masses are to be celebrated until further notice.

Communion to Sick People and Elderly Persons

2. No Communion to sick persons in hospitals, aged care homes or private homes until further notice.

Anointing of the Sick

3. In hospitals

- a. Priests to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), i.e., gown, gloves, mask, goggles.
- b. Priests must be accompanied by a medical health worker to ensure correct donning and doffing.
- c. PPE must be used if the sick person has COVID 19 or not.
- d. Laying on of hands above the head.
- e. Oil of the Sick administered only with gloves, using cotton buds/swabs.

4. In aged care homes

- a. Priests to use PPE.
- b. PPE must be used if the sick person has COVID 19 or not.
- c. PPE may be obtained from the Vicar General.
- d. If PPE is unavailable, anointing of the sick should not be given.
- e. Prayers for the sick and dying are to be prayed remotely (with electronic means) using prayers from the ritual.

5. In private homes

- a. Priests to use PPE if the sick person has COVID 19.
 - i. PPE may be obtained from the Vicar General.
 - ii. If PPE is unavailable, anointing of the sick should not be given.
 - iii. Prayers for the sick and dying are to be prayed remotely (with electronic means) using prayers from the ritual.
- b. Priests to use normal sanitising protocols if the sick or elderly person does not have COVID 19.

Training for PPE

<https://utmb.ensemblevideo.com/hapi/v1/contents/permalinks/Nk9n7Q6H/view>

Funerals and Weddings

- 6. Graveside funerals only with a maximum of 10 people, including celebrant.
- 7. Weddings to be conducted outside the sacred space only, with a maximum of 5 people, including celebrant.

Baptism

- 8. Baptisms are suspended until further notice, including RCIA candidates, except in the case of emergency.
- 9. Remind the faithful of “baptism of desire” (CCC 1258).

Penance

- 10. First rite of penance should be conducted in an open space, with priest and penitent observing 1.5m spacing.
- 11. When the penitent is under 18 years of age, the confession should be witnessed by an adult, who can see, but not hear the confession.
- 12. Second rite of penance is suspended until further notice.

First Penance, First Holy Communion & Confirmation

13. Suspended until further notice.

Holy Week

14. There will be no liturgical celebrations with a congregation. Online resources will be forthcoming.

~

Daily Mass is available on the Catholic Voice website online from 6am each day.

Additional resources for personal and family prayer are available on the Catholic Voice website. Visit: www.catholicvoice.org.au

Father Anthony Percy VG 25 March 2020

**A PRAYER AT A TIME OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC
ARCHBISHOP CHRISTOPHER PROWSE**

**CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP OF CANBERRA GOULBURN
APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF THE DIOCESE OF WAGGA WAGGA**

Heavenly Father,

We praise and thank you for your loving presence, especially in the Lent/Easter season.

We offer heartfelt thanks, dear Lord, particularly for our recent rains.

Once again, we come to you in our need. As your children we are in need of your healing and protection.

Just as we have been recovering from our dangerous bushfire summer, we have now been thrown into a fearful coronavirus (COVID 19) autumn.

We are tired and frightened. We feel a sense of panic and future uncertainty on a global scale.

Be with us now, Loving Master. Without you all is nothing – only empty hearts and a total reliance on our own feeble resources.

But with you “there is mercy and fullness of Redemption” (Psalm 130/7).

With you there is “the loving mercy of the heart of our God (who) will give light to those who sit in darkness, those who dwell in the shadow of death, and guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1/79).

It seems that so many public gatherings are now postponed or cancelled.

There is virus death, the sick, and the anxious. We are spending more time on our own, or with family or friends.

We pray for the sick and those looking after them. Help us to offer practical help to those who struggle.

Let us use these times, O Lord, for your greater glory, especially during Lent and Easter. Let us pray more, and truly listen to you more in loving silence, stillness and simplicity.

Almighty Father, you always journey with us in life’s challenges. Help us to meet you often in the scriptures and our sacraments. Increase in us faith, hope and trust.

Protect us from this coronavirus. Remove it from our common home. Heal those who are sick and dying.

Mary, Help of Christians, as always we fly to you in our need. Be close to us and point out your Son, Jesus, to us in this pandemic. St Therese of Lisieux and her parents, Saints Louis and Zelig Martin, pray for us.

We make this and all our prayers through Jesus, Our Lord and Saviour, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever, AMEN

THE SICK

As we journey with our Lord through this tough time let us remember in our prayers our family, parishioners and all those who are sick. May the healing power of God touch and give them strength and heal them.

The Deceased

Please remember in your prayers the repose of the soul of Lyn Matthews’ mother who passed away this past weekend and for Lyn’s family to be comforted during this grieving and difficult time.

*May all the Faithful Departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Amen*

THE DIVINE MERCY OF JESUS

3 O’clock Prayer - THE HOUR OF GREAT MERCY

Jesus said: *Call upon My mercy on behalf of sinners; I desire their salvation. When you say this prayer, with a contrite heart and with faith on behalf of some sinner, I will give that person the grace of conversion.*

This is the prayer: “O Blood and Water which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a Fount of Mercy for us, I trust in you.” Jesus I trust in You

NEED A PRIEST???

I am available for any urgent call on contact number 64951880. If there is no answer please leave a short message with your contact detail and I will attend your call asap. Fr Pale

ST CORONA

Did you know there is actually a St. Corona? Who is St. Corona? She's being called on in Northern Italy where her remains are. She was a teenager, and was in a married relationship. She and her brother-in-law, St. Victor (they kind of go hand-in-hand) were martyred. As Roman soldiers gouged out St. Victor's eyes, she cried out to encourage him to not give up. He kept the faith and boldly proclaimed it. He was martyred and then they captured her, and essentially, tied her to two bent-over palm trees and they ripped her from limb-to-limb.

She was definitely sought after from that period of time on because of how many miracles came from her intercession, as well as St. Victor, as it relates to epidemics and pandemics. St. Corona is a very, very powerful witness.

St. Corona, please pray for our deliverance from the coronavirus pandemic!

Stay safe everyone and have a prayerful weekend.

Fr Pale Leota

St. PETER'S CATHOLIC PARISH OF PAMBULA

79 Main Street, Merimbula, NSW 2548; (P.O. Box 249)

Tel: (02) 64951880; email: pambula@cg.org.au

Website: www.cg.org.au/pambula