

The Catholic Community of North Harbour

IN THE CARE OF THE AUGUSTINIANS



Cnr White & Wanganelia Sts

Parish Priest: Fr Dave Austin OSA

Parish Office: 9949 4455



FIFTH SUNDAY

In Lent

Year A

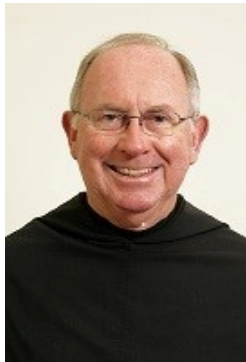
29th March 2020



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PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE – 'We are the Church and we remain open...'

Dear Friends,

At this time each of us needs what Faith we have and the support of our community – the community of family, friends, school, Parish and Church, and other groups that sustain us. You, like me, may at times feel confused, afraid, anxious or adrift – understandable in the face of a new reality – but we also need one another's Faith to help us through... and they need ours!

Every experience can be a call to love more, and we need to care for each other and for ourselves too. How disappointing that our churches must now be closed to the public – this in addition to the recent suspension of public Masses by the Diocese of Broken Bay. We must remain people of Hope.

Might this period be a **time of reimagining** for us personally, as a community and as Church? Perhaps a time to revisit what we truly believe, to reconnect with the God within, the God who holds us in the palm of his hand. I find great strength in the following wisdom:

'Buildings are closed, not the Church. We are the Church... and we remain open in faith, hope and love!'

As Church, we are invited to look beyond what is good for us to what is good for all – our act of love as Christians and as Church. St Augustine wrote about the 'Whole Christ' - the Body of Christ where we are part of one another, responsible for the good of all - echoes of St Paul's reflections on how, when one part suffers, we all suffer in the Body of Christ. In the face of our human vulnerability, one positive outcome for us may be a deeper appreciation of Jesus' taking on our humanness in the first place, **'His state was divine but he did not cling to his equality with God, but emptied himself... and became as we are!'** (Philippians 2:6-7).

During this time, many concerns come to mind for families where the dynamic will change significantly, even if only for a few weeks. Loss of employment and income will be real for some, an area of stress, along with the challenge of spending extra time with one another, perhaps moving us out of our comfort zones and customary routines. Children's routines may be disrupted too, particularly if they are engaged in 'distance learning' and their customary sport and entertainment outlets are not available to them.

When we are thrown back on our own personal and spiritual resources, we need to look after our inner self, our heart, so some attention to journaling or prayer is really important – perhaps praying as a household. During this time, the parish bulletin will contain the Sunday readings and a Gospel reflection. As well, there are many suitable sites on the internet, including live streaming of Sunday Mass or weekday Masses if you find that helpful. In the parish we hope to live-stream Mass on a Saturday evening. Other sites are listed in this bulletin.

Be assured of our pastoral concern for you all. The Augustinians are offering Mass for you privately each day, including for Mass intentions you have requested. While aged care and nursing home facilities are in lockdown, the priests are available to visit the sick if required and for emergency calls. The Parish Office remains open as usual.

For Christians, **'reimagining'** includes the call to find strength and hope in St Augustine's words: **'We are Easter People and Alleluia is our song!'**

Fr Dave

A LENTEN REFLECTION – ‘When Jesus weeps...’



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Some world events have the power to heighten our sense of common humanity, like the World Wars, 9/11, the Bali bombing, our drought and bushfires, but COVID-19 reminds us of our absolute vulnerability as it affects our whole country and lifestyle, the family too as members spend more time together, as children’s routines are disturbed and outlets for work and recreation are narrowed. Stress is very real and then there is the sadness of our locked churches where at times like this we can find some solace together.

During difficult times, the words of the Scriptures leap off the page, their meaning sharpened not only by our own circumstances but also by the often much worse plight of others as individuals and whole communities. This Sunday’s responsorial psalm is the *De profundis* – ‘*Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord, Lord, hear my voice!*’ Pray this psalm and you may be moved to tears, but you will be reassured of God’s intimacy in the response – ‘*With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.*’

Our present time is a time to work on ‘family Faith’! Family energises us through its groundedness and intimacy. Today’s Gospel story is familiar, as Jesus visits his close friends, a family we’ve met before – the too busy Martha and the prayerful Mary. Yet this encounter is much different as they are dealing with the death of their brother Lazarus.

This is a story we know; all the dimensions of our story are here - friendship, deep love, sickness, death, family support... but also grief and loss, passion, pathos,

human anxiety, feelings of inadequacy. This is a story of Jesus’ humanness - Jesus with his close friends, genuinely sad and distressed at the death of Lazarus.

Jesus feels acutely the grief of Martha and Mary and we gain fresh insight into these sisters. As expected, Martha goes to meet Jesus but here we see the woman of faith, the woman who needs to talk about her loss. Mary stays inside, needing her own space.

This is Jesus at his most human, overwhelmed at Lazarus’ death. The words in John 11:35 describe a classic and very powerful moment - ‘*Jesus began to weep*’ – and we discover something very special about the kind of God we have. St Augustine has this to say, ‘*Jesus wept for us; he wept to teach us to weep, to weep for our own failings, and also for the way in which sin is still active in the world.*’ And so Jesus, having reassured Martha that he is the resurrection and the life, calls his friend Lazarus forth from the grave!

In both the **Gospel** and first reading from **Ezekiel**, there is a promise to bring people forth from their graves but this is about much more than physical death. For us, each day is full of living and dying. When Ezekiel speaks of God opening our graves, one dimension is about drawing us back from the things that separate us from God... and we do have our own ‘graves’. Think of our daily deaths – personal setbacks, disappointments, family misunderstandings, fatigue, loss of motivation and self-esteem – those aspects of ourselves that we bury. Yes, each of us knows this so well. Our present losses as a result of COVID-19, some temporary, are many – loss of life and health, freedom, peace of mind, settled lifestyle... each has his/her own ‘graves’ - ‘*Jesus began to weep*’.



FIRST RITE OF RECONCILIATION –

Saturday 28th March- 5.00-6.00pm

in the Parish Centre



BLESSING OF PALMS

Even though there is no public Mass on Palm Sunday, the palms will still be blessed. Parishioners who can donate palms are asked to leave these at the Parish Centre no later than midday on Saturday, please. Blessed palms will be available from Sunday onwards.



CW THE Catholic Weekly
Catholic news from Australia and the world

In light of the closure of churches by order of the federal government, the Archdiocese of Sydney has this week decided to temporarily halt printing **The Catholic Weekly**. There will be no editions of **The Catholic Weekly** this

weekend and for coming weeks until the matter is reconsidered. We will therefore be publishing online in the interim so that you can stay up to date and informed with developments on all local, national, and international Catholic news by going to our website: www.catholicweekly.com.au

You can also connect with our **Facebook page** by going online to facebook.com and searching at the top of the page for **The Catholic Weekly**.

FIRST READING: EZEKIEL 37:12-14

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

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

The Lord says this: I am 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.

The word of the Lord.

PSALM: 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

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: ROMANS 8:8-11

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

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.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL JN 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33B-45

The sisters of Lazarus sent word to Jesus, saying, "Master, the one you love is ill."

When Jesus heard this he said, "This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home.

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Martha said, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day."

Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

He became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?"

They said to him, "Sir, come and see." And Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him."

But some of them said, "Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?"

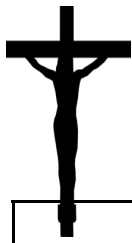
So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said,

"Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me." And when he had said this,

He cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."

Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what he had done began to believe in him

The Gospel of the Lord



PRAYER REQUESTS
"Come to me! I will give you rest." (Matt 11:28)

ANNIVERSARIES

Edna & John Evans	Sr Mary Gerard McGlynn
Iria Mascarenhas	Niko Seput
John & Gina Grupelli	Peter Coates
Abbie Connell	John Moscrop

RECENTLY DECEASED

Tom Hukins	Joan Baldwin
Gregory Brown	Anne O'Donnell
John Nielson	Luis Galvan
Graeme Booth	Miroslava Bricic

For those with ILLNESS

Aurora Kogovsek	Bruno Kogovsek	Daniella Takchi	Cathy Ewing
Elsa Monsour	Irene Martin	Helen Richardson	Irene Hurrell
Stella Brown	Cecily Smellie	Jane Manning	Maria Kogovsek
Norma Kogovsek	John & Joan Killick	Simone Young	Bob McEwan
Christopher Newman	Vincenzo Mandile	Yvonne Hickey	Margot Massey
Justin Torralba	Kevin Smith	Kathy Osborne	Bill Rein
Bojna Nevjestic			

This list will be reviewed every few weeks—contact the office for continued prayers



Do not despise me, O God my salvation, nor reject me as a mortal daring to seek eternity. You, O God, heal the wound of my sin!
Commentary on Psalm 26 (1), 9

NEED A PRIEST URGENTLY Please call 0490 898 464

If the matter is not urgent, please contact Priests via the Parish Office 9949 4455.

PARISH LENTEN ACTIVITIES

Due to closure of the church, the Stations of the Cross on Friday evenings have been cancelled. The Lenten Discussion group at St Kieran's on Thursdays has also been cancelled.

MASS AND PRAYER 'AT HOME'

Various resources are being made available for parishioners for prayer at home:

Mass for You at Home – Sunday mornings on Channel 10

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference – information online about streamed Masses and prayers on ACBC website in coronavirus portal: www.catholic.org.au/coronavirus

10:30 Mass at St Mary's Cathedral - Available at: <https://www.stmaryscathedral.org.au>

Daily Mass—<http://www.northsydneycatholics.com/spirituality/liturgy/mass-on-demand>

Additional Prayer Resources – Google specific devotions or 'Catholic Prayers'

Please check the Parish website for other links: www.northharbourcatholic.org.au

PRAYER UNITED AGAINST THE CORONAVIRUS

- Provided by the Augustinians:

Almighty and merciful God, refreshment in our weariness,
 support in our weakness, comfort in our sadness.

We come to you to invoke your mercy,
 since today we still experience the fragility of the human condition
 in the presence of a new viral pandemic.

Listen to the prayer we offer, comfort your children,
 save us from the present distress and open our hearts
 to be people of hope.

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.

Amen.



CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF NORTH HARBOUR

Fr David Austin OSA Parish Priest

Fr Paul Maloney OSA

Fr Senan Ward OSA

Fr Abel van der Veer OSA

Fr Peter Jones OSA

Assistant Priest and Prior

Chaplain – St Augustine's College

Retired

Provincial—In Residence

Jacky Worthington

Ursula Halloway

Janette Davidson

Anne Ross

Jane Filacuridi

Parish Manager

Catechist Coordinator

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