



St Anthony's Parish



St Bernard's Parish

67-75 EXFORD ROAD, MELTON SOUTH, 3338.
P.O BOX 2152 MELTON SOUTH 3338
TEL: 9747 9692

61 LERDERBERG STREET, BACCHUS MARSH 3340
TEL: 5367 2069
OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, KOROBET
309 MYRNIONG-KOROBET ROAD 3341

The Ascension of the Lord

16th May 2021

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Fabian Smith
ASSISTANT PRIESTS: Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint /Father Marcus Goulding

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Lesley Morffew

Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson

Parish Office Hours:

Mon/Wed/Thu/Fri 9.00am-4.00pm

Tuesday 9.00am-1.00pm

Email: meltonsouth@cam.org.au

Website: www.stanthonyofpadua.com.au

St Anthony's School Principal: Damien Schuster

Wilson Road, Melton South 3338

Phone: 8099 7800

Email: principal@sameltonsth.catholic.edu.au

Website: www.sameltonsth.catholic.edu.au

ST BERNARD'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Dolores Turcsan

Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson

Sacramental Coordinator/ Bookkeeper: Naim Chdid

Parish Office Hours:

Tuesday-Friday 9.00am-1.00pm

Email: bacchusmarsh@cam.org.au

Website: www.stbernardsbacchusmarsh.com.au

St Bernard's School Principal: Emilio Scalzo

19a Gisborne Rd, Bacchus Marsh VIC 3340

Phone: (03) 5366 5800

Email: principal@sbbacchusmarsh.catholic.edu.au

Website: www.sbbacchusmarsh.catholic.edu.au

Catholic Regional College - Melton (Years 7-12)

Principal: Marlene Jorgensen **Phone:** 8099 6000

Website: www.crcmelton.com.au

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

Sue Alexander	0400 171 843
Naim Chdid	0437 004 790
Lillian Christian - Vice Chair	0400 441 257
Stephen Fernandes	0439 743 533
Amy Honrade	9747 0078
Natalie Howard - Chair	0492 947 201
Rose Ma'ae	0431 386 473
Sally Markulin	0405 814 490

EX-OFFICIO:
Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint, Fr Marcus Goulding
and Damien Schuster Council Secretary: Judy Johnson

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

Shane Cook -School Advisory Board	0419 999 052
Peter Farren	0418 594 501
Peter Kennedy	0407 778 119
Maira Ross	0400 675 056
Aaron Russell - Chair	0401 927 502

EX-OFFICIO:
Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint, Fr Marcus Goulding
and Emilio Scalzo

CHILD SAFETY OFFICERS

Coordinator: Godwin Barton (0425 734 449) **Officers:** St Anthony's -Karina Dunne, Lorraine Tellis & Geetha Vincent
St Bernard's -Dolores Turcsan

PARISHIONER'S FIRST COLLECTION/SECOND COLLECTION

Parishioners who normally give cash each weekend for the collections, if they wish to donate, are now able to go to the link below and make their payments online.

The link to the St Anthony's Parish is: <https://bit.ly/CDFpayMeltonSouth>

The link to the St Bernard's Parish is: <https://bit.ly/CDFpayBacchusMarsh>

Please put your name and thanksgiving number if you know it as a reference.

If you need a Priest in the case of an emergency please call 0403 435 471

MASS AND DEVOTIONS

ST ANTHONY'S 17/5-23/5 MELTON SOUTH

MASS TIMES:

Monday 17th May:	6.30pm
Tuesday 18th May:	9.30am
Holy Hour	5.30pm
Week 10 Novena to St Anthony	6.15pm
Mass	6.30pm
Wednesday 19th May:	7.30am & 9.30am
Thursday 20th May: St Bernardine of Siena	9.30am
Friday 21st May:	7.30am & 9.30am
Saturday Vigil 22nd May: St Rita of Cascia	
5.00pm	
Sunday 23rd May:	8.30am
	10.30am
	5.00pm

Confession available 30 minutes prior to each Mass

ST BERNARD'S 17/5-23/5 BACCHUS MARSH

MASS TIMES:

Monday 17th May: *	No Mass
Tuesday 18th May: **	7.30am
Wednesday 19th May:	9.30am
Thursday 20th May: St Bernardine of Siena	7.30am
Friday 21st May:	9.30am
Saturday 22nd May: (EF Latin 1962)	9.00am
Saturday Vigil 22nd May: St Rita of Cascia	5.00pm
Sunday 23rd May:	8.30am
	10.30am

* Rosary and Adoration every Monday evening 7.30pm.

** A Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration will be held every Tuesday evening at 7.30pm

Confession available 30 minutes prior to each Mass

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

KOROBEIT

MASS TIME

Saturday Vigil 6.30pm

REFLECTION ON HEAVEN

When we were small Heaven was a place up there. The early Israelites saw the sky as a tent covering the earth. As our knowledge and exploration of space grew, we realised Heaven was not up there but a never ending space. So where is Heaven? Where did Jesus ascend to?

We know there is some place where bodies must exist. Jesus appeared to his apostles, as flesh and blood they could feel. But he could appear without opening the door!. Our Lady, whom we believe was assumed body and soul into Heaven, has appeared numerous times to children and adults at Fatima, Lourdes, Rome, Africa, USA, Mexico. She even left her image on a peasant's cloak, which is preserved over 400 years in a Church in Guadalupe.

Mary MacKillop has appeared to people: to a Scottish Protestant in his paintings, to a woman suffering from cancer to ask for a novena so that doctors would find a cure for cancer in children. She helped Sharon Simpson lift 10 year old Jack back into bed when she dropped him on the floor. Jack suffered from MS and then cancer and is now a healthy 30 year old.

So where is Heaven? My belief that it is the fourth dimension of time which we can only enter on death when we meet our God. I believe that those we love who have died are still with us in a different way. As St Paul wrote: Life is changed, not ended. How exciting not knowing what God has planned for us: what eye has not seen, ear has not heard nor the mind imagined.

Mary Fermio rsj

PARISH & EVENTS NOTICES

NEWS FROM THE PARISH OFFICES

ST ANTHONY'S

ST BERNARD'S

SERIES OF FAITH FORMATION ON OUR LADY

Lectio on Mary. **Venue:** St Anthony's Meeting Room **Time:** 7.00pm **Monday 17th of May:** Mother of Messiah. **Monday 24th of May:** The Queen Mother **Monday 31st of May:** The Perpetual Virgin **Monday 7th of June:** Mother of Sorrows.

MASS COUNT

2021 National Count of Attendance (Mass Count) will take place over the first four weekends in May (starting 1 May 2021).

CHAPLAINCY APPEAL 2021

This weekend is the Chaplaincy Appeal. Donations from our parish community will help the Chaplaincy programs to support the most vulnerable people in our community. Your support and generosity will ensure that Catholic chaplains can continue to faithfully meet the emotional and spiritual needs of the vulnerable, isolated and marginalised in our community by providing pastoral and spiritual support. Parishioners are encouraged to offer prayers and a financial donation to help provide continued spiritual and emotional comfort to individuals and families in Victoria facing loneliness, illness, pain, grief and death. You can donate using the envelopes available or online at www.ccam.org.au or call (03) 9287 5513.

ARCHBISHOP PETER'S VISIT

Archbishop Peter will visit our Parish on **Sunday 25th July (10.30am Mass)** to bless our newly renovated Church.

INTERNATIONAL FOOD DAY- NEXT SUNDAY

Please join us for some delicious food at our International Food Day. Stalls will include Indian, Samoan, Maltese, Aussie, Sri Lankan, Filipino, Malaysian and many more.

Sunday 23rd May, (Pentecost Sunday) after 10.30am Mass.

All proceed will go towards the bay window on Wilson Rd that will house our St Anthony's statue. The cost of the window-chapel will be approximately \$8500.00.



ST RITA OF CASCIA -FEAST DAY 22nd MAY

St Rita received partial stigmata when she was praying in front of a crucifix. Suddenly a wound appeared on her forehead as if from a thorn of Jesus' 'crown of thorns'. She was then about 60yrs. The wound and associated pain remained with her for the rest of her life. St Rita is the Patron Saint of abused and heartbroken wives and, along with St Jude, lost causes. St Rita's incorrupt body is interred at the Basilica of Cascia, Italy.

O Holy Patron of those in greatest need, you shine as a star of hope in the midst of darkness. Blessed St Rita, bright mirror of God's grace, in patience and courage you are a model to all of us.



SOURCE : www.daily-prayers.org/novenas/saint-rita-of-cascia

EUCCHARISTIC PROCESSION AND POT-LUCK LUNCH FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI

St Bernard's will celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) on Sunday 6th of June with the following activities: 10.30am Solemn Mass; 11.30am Eucharistic Procession & Benediction; 12.30pm 'Open House' Pot-Luck Lunch. Please bring a sweet or savoury dish to share at lunch. Food can be dropped at the Parish Centre before Mass. Alcohol and soft drinks will be available for a donation. Join us for a day of faith and fellowship.

TWO SACRISTANS REQUIRED

We are seeking expressions of interest for two volunteer sacristans at St Bernard's - one for the Saturday night Vigil Mass and another for the 10.30am Sunday morning Mass. The sacristan assists the priest before and after Mass with various tasks such as opening and closing the church, turning lights and mics on/off, preparing and packing up the sacred vessels used at Mass, coordinating Altar Servers, Lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Musicians, and Collectors. The role involves a weekly time commitment of approx 2 hours - arriving 45 minutes before Mass and finishing approx 15 minutes after Mass. Training will be provided to those appointed to the roles. Interested parishioners will need the following skills: good social and communication skills, a willingness to learn, punctuality and reliability, and the ability to commit to the role every week. For more information please see Fr Marcus. Expressions of interest should be submitted to St Bernard's Parish Office by email. Expressions of interest will close at 5pm on Friday 28th May 2021.

THE KSC RACING GAME IS ON AGAIN.

The Bacchus Marsh branch of the Knights of the Southern Cross is holding it's annual fund raiser towards our St Bernard's Primary School Scholarships.

Every week for 26 weeks, each participant will get a horse starting with a consecutive letter of the alphabet. Winners accumulate points. No skill involved.

OK.... explaining it is difficult, but the method is simple, so just take a chance; pay \$26 for each entry and leave the rest to us!!

This year's game will finish before Christmas, with 1st receiving \$200, 2nd \$100 and 3rd \$50.

Only 26 entries will be sold, so get in early for a June start. Call or leave a message with Hugh 53682796, John 53672025 or Mark 0416251025.

WORSHIP NEWS

ALL VOLUNTEERS IN OUR PARISH MUST HAVE A CURRENT WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

ST ANTHONY'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 22nd & 23rd May
Please present yourself to the Mass Coordinator 15 minutes before the scheduled Mass time or a replacement will be found. Thank you.

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

5.00pm Vigil: Liza Fernandes
8.30am: Amy Honrade
10.30am: Annonica Mavaega
5.00pm: To be advised

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm Vigil: Ann Tennakoon
& Aloysious Dacunha
8.30am: Lillian Christian & Geoff Sutton
10.30am: Doris Bonello & George Bonello
5.00pm Not rostered

If you are unavailable for these dates please contact Lesley at the Parish Office Thank you

MASS COORDINATORS

5.00pm Vigil: Annonica & Carmen
8.30am: Lina & Julie
10.30am: Lillian & Godwin
5.00pm: Leonia & Godwin

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for those whose death anniversaries occur at this time:

Taumasina Pela Amoa, Emilia Borges, Emidia Buhagiar, Ivan Cornelisz, Helen Debrincat, Peter Jones, Alistar Knox, Robert Marley, Sr Irene McCormack, Jon Nicotra, Edith Stone & Fuatino Taulapapa

Please pray for the Sick:

Nickolia & Klara Butkovic, Maria Caruana, Mary Caruana, Bruce Hynes, Judy Layton, Peter Manicaro, Reg Marslen, Damien Michael, Kevin Tony Michael, Veronica Michael, Maiava Kuno Nickol, Caleb O'Brien, John Osborne, Sherine Pereira, Peter Poole, Irene Rahilly, Catherine Roberts, Peter Roberts, Pat Roberts, Charlie Spiteri, Janko Stojanovic, Uatoa Tuigamala, Dolores Turcsan, Clint Abela Wadge, Wai Walsh & John Xuereb and all those who have requested our prayers. (PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED ON THIS LIST)

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Father we lift up all those who are facing illness. We ask that You bring healing, comfort and peace to their bodies. Calm their fears and let them experience the healing power of your love.
Amen



ST BERNARD'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 22nd & 23rd May

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

5.00pm: Kratochvil Family
8.30am: Michael Baddeley
10.30am: Lindorff Family

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Geraldine Vereker
8.30am: Volunteer needed
10.30am: John Wilson

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

May: Maureen Zahra

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased:

Josephine Calleja & Mary Foley (formerly Sr Michael Foley)

We pray for those whose death anniversaries occur at this time:

Gus Baselmans, Gwyneth Davies, Kevin Heap, Edward Hehir, Neil Loughlin, Mary Walta & Irene West.

Please pray for the Sick:

Patricia Allison, Daniel Andrews, Noah Barlow, Chaiel Balcombe, Michael Barrett, Peter Bennett, Steven Braszel, Tina Bower, John Canty, Fred Capuano, Gary Ching, Josephine Cilia, Robyn Cola, Ted Cooling, Marianne Cuskelly, Lindsay & Kathleen Dally, Judy Delahey, Jack DeLuca, Theresa Dockter, Allison Evans, Helen Evans, Justin Fernandez, Pasquale Gagliarbi, Mario Galea, Cynthia Goodyear, Gwen Green, Joe Gristi, Adam Hillier, Leonie Kervin, Elle Hillman, Kiahni Holamotutama, Alicia Holborn, Chaiel Jackson, Matthew Jansen, David Kasprzak, Michael Larkin, Marie Maloney, Patricia Marechal, Brian Marshall, Debbie Marshall, Jordanis Mary Pauline McDonald, Ian McKechnie, Marcus Meno, Paul Mullin, Arthur Pape, Michael Paterson, Georgia Peacock, Mitchell Prendergast, Peter Roberts, Ken Shaw, Terry Sims, Marian Smith, Elizabeth Stehmann, Catherine Time, Susan Trist, Dolores Turcsan, Stephen Van Eede, John Van Orsouw, Angela Vicum, Louis Vogels, Barry Walsh, Cath Wheelahan, Jayne Wilkins, Patricia Yazbek, & Betty Young.

(PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED ON THIS LIST)

SERVICE / COMMUNITY

ST ANTHONY'S

WEEKEND VOLUNTEERS: 22nd & 23rd May

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

5.00pm Vigil: Joanne Zerafa
8.30am: Edwina La Rose
10.30am: Geetha Vincent

CUPPA VOLUNTEERS 22nd & 23rd May

5.00pm Vigil: Tunya & Jason Sant
8.30am: Sam & Pat Chiles
10.30am: Dwi Rochfort & Kathleen McCurry

CHURCH FLOWERS

May: Ropeta



CHURCH CLEANING

Lorelle Porter and a Team of Volunteers.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

Welfare Number: 1800 305 330

The Melton South Conference meet every 3rd Tuesday morning in the Meeting Room 10.30am.

New members most welcome, training provided. Non perishable items within the use by date can be left in the 'drop box' in the Church foyer. Thank you.

COMBINED CHURCHES CARING MELTON INC

We're here to support City of Melton residents get ahead through access to our foodbank and other community programs. It's never just about the food or the budget help, it's about recognising the beauty that is in the person and bringing it out so they can be their best. Address: 100 Coburn Road Melton South 9747 6811

God, strengthen and sustain all those who volunteer in our Churches; that with patience and understanding they may love and care for your people; and grant that together they may follow with Jesus Christ offering to you their gifts and talents.

Amen



ST BERNARD'S

WEEKEND VOLUNTEERS : 22nd & 23rd May

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

Sunday: Sean Gianì

CHURCH FLOWERS

May: Katie Lindorff



PRESBYTERY & CHURCH GROUNDS-

Front Garden:
Back/Side Garden:
Parish Centre: Roster Pending
Carpark/Pines:
Back Paddock:

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY:

Welfare Number is 1800 305 330.

The Vinnies Store is located at 8 Grant Street, Bacchus Marsh. The store is open 7 days a week. If you are able to volunteer and would like some more information, please contact the Store Manager on 8199 4205.

THE NEIGHBOURS PLACE

The Neighbours' Place is a Christian not-for-profit organisation whose aim is to serve people of the **Moorabool Shire**, west of Melbourne Australia, who are disadvantaged, at risk or temporarily unable to feed themselves or their family and who are in need of emergency food relief.

NILS is a **No Interest Loans Scheme** for assistance of up \$1500 for things like white goods, furniture and minor car repairs to keep life going.

We are located at [77 Main Street, Bacchus Marsh](#)
Phone: 03 5367 6222

Email: neighbourspl@iinet.net.au

Hours of Operation: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9.30am-12.30pm. Closed on public holidays.

SOUL FOOD

Soul Food provides a free community meal each Wednesday (excluding school holidays), in the Uniting Church Hall, Gisborne Rd, Bacchus Marsh. Meals are served up at 12noon. All are welcome and this is a free event. No need to book, just come along.

PARISH CENTRE BOOKING

Tel: 5367 3427 Mon—Fri 9.00am to 6.00pm
Hall Managers: Marie & Terry Casey

FAITH FORMATION

ST ANTHONY'S AND ST BERNARD'S

BAPTISM PREPARATION PROGRAM– ST ANTHONY'S AND ST BERNARD'S

The Baptism Preparation Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month.

Time: **6.30pm-7.45pm.**

Next preparation meeting : **Thursday 27th May 2021**

Location: **St Anthony's Church Meeting Room**

Baptisms are held on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month.

Both parents are required to attend these meetings. **We kindly request adults only** and a copy of the birth certificate. **Please be advised that Baptism applications must be submitted 2 months in advance.**

Please contact the Parish Office if you have any queries.

BAPTISM TEAM: St Anthony's: **Agnes & Merla** St Bernard's: **Dolores**



ADULT PREPARATION

Adult preparation for the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist or Confirmation are through the R.C.I.A Program. Please see Fr Fabian, Fr Marcus or Fr Lucas .

FATIMA STATUE—ST ANTHONY'S

These families are praying together for the mission of the Parish:

Group 1: **Darian & Hoan Pertzel**

0413 961 958

Group 2: **Gregory McCutcheon**

0455 457 645

Group 3: **John & Joyce Sultana**

9747 9925



DIVINE MERCY NOVENA

1st Sunday of the Month-3.00pm

PRAYER TO ST MICHAEL

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil; may God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.



NEO-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

[bow during the next line]

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen

LITURGY OF THE WORD

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

Men of Galilee, why gaze in wonder at the heavens?
This Jesus whom you saw ascending into heaven
will return as you saw him go, alleluia.

FIRST READING Acts 1:1-11

In my earlier work, Theophilus, I dealt with everything Jesus had done and taught from the beginning until the day he gave his instructions to the apostles he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. He had shown himself alive to them after his Passion by many demonstrations: for forty days he had continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God. When he had been at table with them, he had told them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. 'It is' he had said 'what you have heard me speak about: John baptised with water but you, not many days from now, will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'

Now having met together, they asked him, 'Lord, has the time come? Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know times or dates that the Father has decided by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth.'

As he said this he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took him from their sight. They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men in white were standing near them and they said, 'Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, this same Jesus will come back in the same way as you have seen him go there.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 46

Commentator: God mounts his throne to shouts of joy:
a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

All: God mounts his throne to shouts of joy:
a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

All peoples, clap your hands,
cry to God with shouts of joy!
For the Lord, the Most High, we must fear,
great king over all the earth.

God goes up with shouts of joy;
the Lord goes up with trumpet blast.
Sing praise for God, sing praise,
sing praise to our king, sing praise.

God is king of all the earth.
Sing praise with all your skill.
God is king over the nations;
God reigns on his holy throne.

God mounts his throne to shouts of joy:
a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

SECOND READING *Ephesians 1:17-23*

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit and how infinitely great is the power that he has exercised for us believers. This you can tell from the strength of his power at work in Christ, when he used it to raise him from the dead and to make him sit at his right hand, in heaven, far above every Sovereignty, Authority, Power, or Domination, or any other name that can be named, not only in this age, but also in the age to come. He has put all things under his feet, and made him as the ruler of everything, the head of the Church; which is his body, the fullness of him who fills the whole creation.
The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Go and teach all people my gospel.

I am with you always, until the end of the world.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 16:15-20

Jesus showed himself to the Eleven, and said to them, 'Go out to the whole world, proclaim the Good News to all creation. He who believes and is baptised will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned. These are the signs that will be associated with believers: in my name they will cast out devils; they will have the gift of tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison; they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover.'

And so the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven: there at the right hand of God he took his place, while they, going out, preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs that accompanied it.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Behold, I am with you always,
even to the end of the age, alleluia.



NEXT WEEK'S READING **PENTECOST SUNDAY**

First Reading:

Acts 2:1-11;

Second Reading:

Gal 5:16-25;

Gospel:

Jn 15:26-27, 16:12-15

Year of Saint Joseph X

Saint Joseph was a just man (Part 1)

Saint Matthew tells us that Saint Joseph was “a just man”. In biblical language, this means one who is adorned with all the virtues. Matthew stresses the justice of Saint Joseph when he describes the doubt that tormented him when Mary is “found to be with child”.

We have already seen that Mary and Joseph were married, though not living together, at the time that Christ was conceived. In all probability, Mary did not feel she had a right to inform Joseph of the mysterious event. Yet she was anxious for him to know, and knew he would be profoundly disturbed if he learned of her pregnancy and did not know of its miraculous origin.

This is exactly what came to pass. Joseph learned that his wife was with child, and knowing that he himself was not the natural father of the child, his mind was in a state of agonising confusion.

Now that Joseph knew of the pregnancy of his wife, how did he account for this fact? Did he, as a few of the Fathers of the Church held, think that Mary had been raped or that she had committed adultery? Or are we to surmise that Joseph came to the conclusion that Mary had miraculously conceived a child by the power of God? Some have suggested a third possibility: that Saint Joseph admitted to himself that he did not know how this could have happened and that at first he simply did not know what to do.

The first opinion, that Joseph thought she had been unfaithful, is not acceptable to modern scholars. It is extremely unlikely that Joseph entertained such an opinion. He knew Mary to be the holiest person he had ever met and he was aware that his young wife was a woman of profound spiritual insight and totally committed to the faithful fulfillment of the will of God. Never for an instant could we imagine him questioning her innocence.

He would, under the circumstances, be much more likely to be sympathetic to the second opinion: that she had miraculously conceived a child by the power of God. Rather than harbour any suspicion against his wife, he

would have been prepared to accept this possibility on blind faith. Nevertheless, it is not likely that he came to this conclusion. A miraculous virginal conception was unheard of. Such an event would never have entered the mind of man without the aid of a divine revelation.

Thus, by a process of elimination, we come to the third possibility: Saint Joseph was baffled; he just did not know what to think. He was dumbfounded.

Since Joseph was convinced of Mary’s innocence, he naturally did not believe that he had an obligation of accusing Mary to the authorities who, in turn, would be obliged to have her stoned as an adulteress. All his feelings told him that Mary was more truly and fully good than any other person he had ever known.

More than anything else, he did not want to be separated from her. The heart has its reasons, said Pascal; it has reasons that cannot always be formulated in concepts, as we know from the teachings of the great mystics. And if ever that were true, it was true of the sentiments that Joseph experienced in wanting to take Mary to be his wife.

The great mystical writers have described the condition of the soul that “feels” that it has been abandoned by God though it knows full well “by the obscure light of faith” that such is not the case. In the case of Saint Joseph, it may well have been a mystical struggle that he was experiencing in which his deepest feelings and sentiments told him that he must never give Mary up; whereas, reason (in the absence of any clear revelation from on high) made him suspect that he was obliged in conscience (a judgement of the practical intellect that is not *infallible* without a special revelation) to do the thing that he dreaded most — namely, to be forever divorced from Mary.

Surely he prayed for light. And waited. And God responded to his faith: “Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying: Do not be afraid, Joseph, Son of David, to take to thee Mary thy wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit.”