



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 ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME—YEAR B

13th June 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
Rose Ma'ae	0460 672 571

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



St Anthony's
QR code

Location code E2B Y8D



St Bernard's
QR code

Location code C7N T6M

MASS AND DEVOTIONS

ST ANTHONY'S 14/6– 20/6 MELTON SOUTH

MASS TIMES:

No pre-booking for weekday Masses

Pre-booking will not be required for weekday Masses.

Attendees at weekday Mass must wear masks and check-in with the QR code upon arrival.

Our weekday timetable:

Monday 14th June	6.30pm
Tuesday 15th June	9.30am & 6.30pm
Wednesday 16th June	7.30am & 9.30am
Thursday 17th June	9.30am
Friday 18th June	7.30am & 9.30am

Pre-booking essential for Sunday Masses

Please go to our website for current information on our **Weekend Services**.

Please book through the Parish website or ask someone with internet access to book on your behalf.

[St Anthony of Padua Catholic Parish | Melton South](#)

Confession available 30 minutes prior to each Mass.

ST BERNARD'S 14/6-20/6 BACCHUS MARSH

MASS TIMES:

No pre-booking for weekday Masses

Pre-booking will not be required for weekday Masses.

Attendees at weekday Mass must wear masks and check-in with the QR code upon arrival.

Our weekday timetable:

Monday 14th June *	No Mass
Tuesday 15th June **	7.30am
Wednesday 16th June	9.30am
Thursday 17th June	7.30am
Friday 18th June	9.30am
Saturday 19th June (EF Latin 1962)	9.00am

* Rosary and Adoration every Monday evening 7.30pm

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

Confession available 30 minutes prior to each Mass.

Pre-booking essential for Sunday Masses

Saturday Vigil 19th June	5.00pm
Sunday 20th June	8.30am 10.30am

Please book through the parish

website www.stbernardsbacchusmarsh.com.au <<http://www.stbernardsbacchusmarsh.com.au>> or ask someone with internet access to book on your behalf.

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

KOROBEIT

MASS TIME

Saturday Vigil

6.30pm

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

PARISH & EVENTS NOTICES

NEWS FROM THE PARISH OFFICES

ST ANTHONY'S

ST BERNARD'S

PRE-BOOKING ESSENTIAL FOR SUNDAY MASSES

We are glad to be able to resume the public celebration of Mass. **Mass numbers are limited.**

This means that **pre-booking is essential for the Vigil and Sunday services.**

Please book through the parish website or ask someone with internet access to book on your behalf.

NO PRE-BOOKING FOR WEEKDAY MASSES

Pre-booking will not be required for weekday Masses.

Attendees at all Masses must wear masks and check in with the QR code, if you are unable to use the QR code service, an alternate check-in method will be available.

CATHOLIC REGIONAL COLLEGE MELTON- YEAR 7 2023 ENROLMENTS NOW OPEN

Enrolment applications for Year 7 2023 at our West Melton and Cobblebank campuses are due on Friday 20 August 2021.

Apply online now at www.crcmelton.com.au/join-us/enrolment.

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

Thank you to everyone that supported our International Food Day. It was a great success and a very enjoyable day. We raised \$ 5271.00 from the sale of the food and we received \$1860.00 in donations. The total raised for the Bay window-chapel is **\$7131.00**. The remaining funds needed will be taken from the Church Account.

THE MEETING ROOM -(THE MACKILLOP ROOM)

The meeting room in the foyer of St Anthony's Church will now be called 'The MacKillop Room'. We will put a sign up shortly.

ST ANTHONY'S FEAST DAY CELEBRATION EVENT

Due to the Victorian Government restrictions this social event will be cancelled. We will celebrate the completion of the Church's extension and renovation on a date to be advised.

St Anthony's Feast Day 13th June

Family Prayer to St Anthony

O God, our good and merciful father, who chose St. Anthony as a witness to the gospel and a messenger of peace among your people, hear the prayer that we send to you through St Anthony's intercession. Sanctify our families, and help them to grow in faith. May our homes be blessed with unity, peace and serenity. Bless our children and protect our young in their years of growth and development. Help them to be pure in heart and faithful to good relationships. Bless those members of our family in advanced years. Grant them the comfort of their faith, their family and their friends. Lend your help to those who are afflicted by sickness, suffering or loneliness. Help us to face our everyday trials by giving us your love.



We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen

FR BRIAN GLASHEEN GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Parishioners, please be advised the date for this celebration is to be confirmed. Thank you.

REFLECTION ON A SEED

Have you ever gazed at a carrot seed and marvelled at the potential latent within it? Yet given the right conditions, a red vegetable appears, one that can be eaten raw, cooked, in soups and cakes.

Jesus tells the story of the mustard seed and its potential to be big enough to shelter birds.

When we were conceived as a tiny embryo in our Mother's womb, God saw the potential in this new life. Our parents probably dreamed of us becoming famous, well-educated, parents, even Prime Minister! God saw a different potential and at Baptism gave us this new life, a life we share with God, who provided the right conditions for us. Jesus, the Son, was sent to show us the way and this is recorded in the Gospel. We have the Church, which provides the environment for us to develop, where we can be nourished with the Bread of Life, confirmed in the Holy Spirit, hear the Word of God and find opportunities to live like Jesus.

Have I reached the potential God has longed for, that God made me for, that God dreamed about for me? Ask God. Listen carefully in the silence of your heart. Let God speak to you.

Mary Fermio rsj



WORSHIP NEWS

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

ST ANTHONY'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 19th & 20th June
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: Gavin Pereira
8.30am: John Brewis
10.30am: Regina Tuala
5.00pm: Dolores Turcsan

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm Vigil: Lorraine Tellis & Aloysious Dacunha
8.30am: Lois Brewis & Lillian Christian
10.30am: Richard Tuala & To be advised
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:

Emmanuel Bonnici, Marya Assunta Borg,
John Ian Church, Frank Consiglio & Joan Unferdorben.

Please pray for the Sick: Nickolia & Klara Butkovic, Maria Caruana, Mary Caruana, Melanie Fue 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: 19th & 20th June

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

5.00pm: Kratochvil Family
8.30am: Moira Ross
10.30am: Carmel Shea

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Mary Beaton
8.30am: Ben Kratochvil
10.30am: Tup Shea

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

June: Margaret Love

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased.

Kathleen Canavan

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

Kathleen Cox, Anna Falzon, Jack O'Donohue,
Sophie Parsons, Evelyn Walsh.

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, Chris, 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

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

ST ANTHONY'S

WEEKEND VOLUNTEERS: 19th & 20th June

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

5.00pm Vigil: Tunya Sant
8.30am: Ineke Allen
10.30am: Geetha Vincent

CUPPA VOLUNTEERS 26th/27th June

5.00pm Vigil: Tunya, Jason Sant & Liza Fernandes
8.30am: Roa & Julie Seifatu
10.30am: Olina Moore & Kathleen McCurry

Cuppa weekend will be subjected to the easing of

Government restrictions

CHURCH FLOWERS

June: Ana

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

ST BERNARD'S

WEEKEND VOLUNTEERS : 19th & 20th June

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

Sunday: Jan Farmelo

CHURCH FLOWERS

May: Francis McDaid



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

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



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 24th June 2021**

Location: **St Bernard's Parish Centre**

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: **Michelle Parr** St Bernard's: **To be advised**



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: Allen & Ellen Johnson 0418 200 144

Group 2: Maria & Juan Dumandan 0402 177 623

Group 3: Kristina Scerri 0458 857 479

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

O Lord, hear my voice, for I have called to you; be my help.
Do not abandon or forsake me, O God, my Saviour!

FIRST READING Ezekiel 17:22-24

The Lord says this:

'From the top of the cedar,
from the highest branch I will take a shoot
and plant it myself on a very high mountain.
I will plant it on the high mountain of Israel.
It will sprout branches and bear fruit,
and become a noble cedar.
Every kind of bird will live beneath it,
every winged creature rest in the shade of its branches.
And every tree of the field will learn that I, the Lord, am the one
who stunts tall trees and makes the low ones grow,
who withers green trees and makes the withered green.
I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will do it.'
The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 91

Commentator: Lord it is good to give thanks to you.

All: Lord it is good to give thanks to you.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord
to make music to your name, O Most High,
to proclaim your love in the morning
and your truth in the watches of the night.

The just will flourish like the palm-tree
and grow like a Lebanon cedar.

Planted in the house of the Lord
they will flourish in the courts of our God,
still bearing fruit when they are old,
still full of sap, still green,
to proclaim that the Lord is just.
In him, my rock, there is no wrong.

Lord it is good to give thanks to you.

NEXT WEEK'S READING

12th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

First Reading: Job 38:1, 8-11;
Second Reading: 2 Cor 5:14-17;
Gospel: Mk 4:35-41



SECOND READING 2 Corinthians 5:6-10

We are always full of confidence when we remember that
to live in the body means to be exiled from the Lord, going
as we do by faith and not by sight - we are full of confi-
dence, I say, and actually want to be exiled from the body
and make our home with the Lord. Whether we are living
in the body or exiled from it, we are intent on pleasing
him. For all the truth about us will be brought out in the
law court of Christ, and each of us will get what he de-
serves for the things he did in the body, good or bad.
The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower;
all who come to him will live for ever.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 4:26-34

Jesus said to the crowd, 'This is what the kingdom of God
is like. A man throws seed on the land. Night and day,
while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting
and growing; how, he does not know. Of its own accord
the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the
full grain in the ear. And when the crop is ready, he loses
no time; he starts to reap because the harvest has come.'
He also said, 'What can we say the kingdom of God is
like? What parable can we find for it? It is like a mustard
seed which at the time of its sowing in the soil is the
smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet once it is sown it
grows into the biggest shrub of them all and puts out big
branches so that the birds of the air can shelter in its
shade.'

Using many parables like these, he spoke the word to
them, so far as they were capable of understanding it. He
would not speak to them except in parables, but he ex-
plained everything to his disciples when they were alone.
The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

There is one thing I ask of the Lord, only this do I seek:
to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

Year of Saint Joseph XIV

Theological reflections on Saint Joseph (3)

Saint Joseph was married to Mary

When the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she was to become the Mother of God, she was, according to Saint Luke's account, "espoused to a man named Joseph". The wording of the text is common to all modern versions of the Bible.

Commenting on this text, scripture scholars warn us that the word "espoused" is not to be equated with the word "engagement". The words "espousal" and "engagement" are allied terms that are related to marriage, but they are not perfectly synonymous. The word "espousal" refers to the making of vows of marriage rather than to the ceremonies that surround the wedding; it implies that the couple have, in the strict legal sense, entered upon the state of wedlock.

Engagement, on the other hand, connotes only the "promise" of one day entering the state of matrimony, providing the present wishes of the couple endure. Thus, to understand the phrase, "espoused to a man named Joseph" as meaning that Mary was engaged to him at the time, would not do justice to the text. Saint Luke is simply saying that Mary and Joseph were already married when Mary became the Mother of God.

Why, then, does Saint Luke use the word "espoused" instead of "married"? Would it not have been simpler and clearer to use the second?

It must be remembered that according to the Jewish custom of the time there were two steps that lead to marriage as we understand it today. First, the couple exchanged their *matrimonial consent* in a special ceremony. Today we would say they pronounced their marriage vows.

In virtue of this they were joined together as man and wife in the eyes of God and in the eyes of the law. From that time they had all the rights and privileges accorded to husbands and wives. According to Jewish law if the man died, the woman was considered his widow and was entitled to his inheritance. If the woman was unfaithful to him, she would be punished as an adulteress; neither could she remarry without first obtaining a bill of divorce.

The second step was the *solemnisation* of the marriage, or the celebration of the wedding festivities. According to the means of the couple, the wedding feast was celebrated as elaborately as

possible. The man would come to the home of the bride and in public procession he would escort her to his home. Then they would begin their life together.

This second part of the ceremony took place many months after the exchange of the wedding vows. And it is for this reason that Saint Luke tells us that they were "espoused" at the time of the Annunciation. The meaning is clear. At the time of the apparition of the Angel they were not living together as man and wife for the wedding festivities had not as yet taken place; but they were married in the eyes of God since they had already exchanged matrimonial consent.

Theologically speaking, there can be no doubt about the marriage of Mary and Joseph. It was not a fictitious marriage. The marriage was real; it was also a valid marriage. As we have already seen, the marriage existed from the time of the exchange of the marriage rights and not from the time of the solemnisation of the wedding ceremony.

The only reason for again insisting on this point is to make clear that Christ was born (though miraculously) in wedlock. Had Christ been born out of wedlock, the people of the time would have considered Christ to have been an illegitimate child, and they would have suspected Mary of being guilty of fornication. Their reputations would have been darkened in the eyes of men and this would have seriously harmed the cause of the Redemption.

Later in Jesus' life, the scribes and the pharisees sought in every possible way to throw discredit upon the Messiah. They surely would have resorted to this argument, had it been available. When Christ said to them: "Which one of you will convict Me of sin?", we know that no one could accuse Him of any fault.

When did Mary and Joseph decide to remain virgins? Was it before they took their marriage vows that they made this extraordinary agreement of being joined in wedlock and yet never making use of their marital rights? Or was this mutual agreement reached only after the marriage had been contracted?

We do not know anything of the specific circumstances that attended such an agreement, we know only of the constant tradition of the Church dating back to the earliest times that, enlightened by the grace of God, Mary and Joseph made this agreement and remained faithful to it always.