



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

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT –YEAR C

12th December 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 9am-1pm
Tue 9am-4pm Wed 9am-5.30pm Thu-Fri 9am-4pm
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:
Tue-Thu 9am-1pm
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

Naim Chdid	0437 004 790
Lillian Christian - Vice Chair	0400 441 257
Stephen Fernandes	0439 743 533
Amy Honrade	0457 042 695
Natalie Howard– Chair	0492 947 201
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

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Coordinator: Godwin Barton (0425 734 449) **Officers:** St Anthony's -Karina Dunne, Lorraine Tellis & Geetha Vincent
St Bernard's –Margaret Love (0437 247 779)



St Anthony's
QR code

Location code E2B Y8D



St Bernard's
QR code

Location code C7N T6M

MASS AND DEVOTIONS

ST ANTHONY'S 13/12-19/12 MELTON SOUTH

MASS TIMES: WEEKDAYS (no booking required)

Monday 13/12	6.30pm
Tuesday 14/12	9.30am
5.30pm Holy Hour followed by Mass at	6.30pm
Wednesday 15/12	7.30am & 9.30am
Thursday 16/12	9.30am
Friday 17/12	7.30am & 9.30am

MASS TIMES: WEEKENDS

No booking required. Proof of double vaccination required

Saturday Vigil 18/12	5.00pm
Sunday 19/12	8.30am & 10.30am

Booking essential. Proof of vaccination NOT required

Sunday 19/12	5.00pm
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[St Anthony of Padua Catholic Parish | Melton South](#)

Confession available 30 minutes prior to each Mass.

No Confession available on Monday

ST BERNARD'S 13/12-19/12 BACCHUS MARSH

MASS TIMES: WEEKDAYS (no booking required)

Tuesday 14/12	7.30am
7.30pm Holy Hour	
Wednesday 15/12	9.30am
Thursday 16/12	7.30am
Friday 17/12	9.30am
Saturday 18/12	9.00am

MASS TIMES: WEEKENDS

No booking required. Proof of double vaccination required.

Sunday 19/12	8.30am
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Bookings essential. Proof of vaccination NOT required.

Saturday Vigil 18/12	5.00pm
Sunday 19/12	10.30am

[St Bernard's Catholic Parish | Bacchus Marsh](#)
(stbernardsbacchusmarsh.com.au)

Confession available 30 minutes prior to each Mass.

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

KOROBEIT

MASS TIME

6.30pm

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

PARISHIONERS 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.

ADVENT REFLECTION 3RD SUNDAY

Every day we make choices – when to get up, what to eat, what to cook, what presents to buy, what clothes to wear...

When John the Baptist was teaching the people from various areas, some asked, "What must we do?" John stated three main ways depending on their circumstances – "Share with those in need", "Be fair in your dealings with others", "don't abuse your power".

Even today these are real-life issues, often written about in newspapers, announced on the Radio and for us as Christians in a complex world, we have to be aware of injustices and poverty around us.

We need to realise that being a Christian means more than an hour of worship each week. As Christmas approaches each of us needs to ask the same question: **What must I do?** and listen for an answer. The Holy Spirit, we all received at Baptism, can enlighten and empower us to make the right choices in line with the values of God's Kingdom. Are we ready, willing and able?

Sr Mary Fermio rsj



ADVENT DINNER AND FORMATION SERIES

&

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

What are you doing to prepare for Christmas? Perhaps you are buying gifts, planning meals, or cleaning the house. These things are important, but after the difficulties of the last couple of years we all need something more. Our parishes are hosting a four-week Advent formation series to help you prepare your heart and mind for the birth of the Lord Jesus.

St Anthony's Church Meeting Room

7.00pm – 8.30pm Mondays of Advent
13/12/21 – Session 3: Watch and Pray
20/12/21 – Session 4: The Gift

St Bernard's Parish Centre

7.00pm – 8.30pm Thursdays of Advent
16/12/21 – Session 3: Watch and Pray
23/12/21 – Session 4: The Gift

Each session will begin with dinner at 7.00pm. Please bring a dish to share with the other participants. Please bring a pen for the formation sessions.

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH

Advent Reflection Monday Evening's 7pm

Sacrament of Reconciliation – **Wed 22nd Dec**
First Rite 7pm-8pm Visiting Priests Available

Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve Friday 24th December

6pm Fully Vaccinated
8pm Fully Vaccinated
10pm Vaccination Status Unknown. (Must Book Online on Midday 20th)
Midnight Fully Vaccinated

Christmas Day Saturday 25th December

8am Vaccination Status Unknown. (Must Book Online on Midday 20th)
9:30am Fully Vaccinated

Sunday 26th December

Feast of the Holy Family
8:30am Fully Vaccinated
10:30am Fully Vaccinated
5pm Vaccination Status Unknown. (Must Book Online on Thursday 23rd)

ST BERNARD'S PARISH

Advent Reflection Thursday Evening's 7pm

Sacrament of Reconciliation – **Tue 21st Dec**
First Rite 7pm-8pm Visiting Priests

Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve Friday 24th December

6pm Fully Vaccinated
10pm Fully Vaccinated
Midnight (Must Book Online on Midday 20th)

8pm-Korobeit (Must Book. Please call Gabriel & Pat 53687273 by Monday 20th)

Christmas Day Saturday 25th December

8:30am Fully Vaccinated
10:30am (Must Book Online on Midday 20th)

Sunday 26th December

Feast of the Holy Family
8:30am Fully Vaccinated
10:30am Vaccination Status Unknown. (Must Book Online on Thursday 23rd)

Korobeit

8:30am **Vaccination Status Unknown.**
10:30am **Vaccination Status Unknown.**

PARISH & EVENTS NOTICES

NEWS FROM THE PARISH OFFICES

FATHER'S DAY APPEAL-SPECIAL COLLECTION

We had a special collection on the weekend of the 27th/28th November for the annual Father's Day Appeal. The money raised through this special collection supports our retired Priests in the Archdiocese. Our collection totals: St Anthony's \$947.00 and St Bernard's \$250. 00. Thank you for your generosity.

ST ANTHONY'S

DONATED CLOTHING AVAILABLE

St Anthony's Parish has received generous donations of clothing and will be availing this clothing for parishioners for free. The clothing will be available after Masses on the **18 & 19 of December**. As these materials have been donated, please note the following conditions apply:

1. Items are to support families needing support often as a result of circumstances beyond their control and are therefore strictly not for resale or fundraising purposes
2. Items are to be used as they are designed and not to be repurposed
3. Items cannot be sent overseas or stored.

Our thanks to the volunteers at St Anthony's Parish and to the organisations involved in donating the goods. We hope that you will find them valuable for members of your family. Thank you for respecting the donation guidelines. If you require assistance more urgently, please contact the parish via email: stanthonyparishoutreach@outlook.com

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS FOR CHRISTMAS MASSES

We are in need of Extraordinary Ministers for our Christmas Masses. We also need Readers and Extraordinary Ministers for Sunday 26th January- Feast of the Holy Family. We have a clipboard in the Church foyer, could you please add your name and contact number if you are able to assist. Thank you.

ST ANTHONYS PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING 2/12/21

Some points discussed:

Vision of a New Mission-Take the Way of the Gospel Parish Revival

- * New ways of building community
- * New Baptism Preparation Program/New Sacramental Preparation Program- new ways of engaging in the sacramental programs
- *SEARCH program

Minutes of the last PPC (29th July 2021) are available in the foyer.

ST BERNARD'S

KSC MEETING

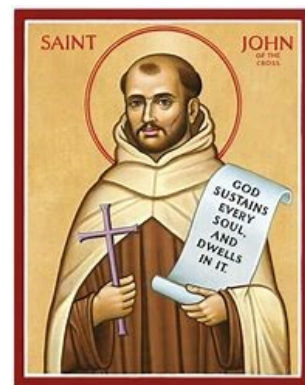
KSC meeting on Monday December 13, 8pm, parish meeting room.

St John of God

Feast Day 14th December

Quote

"In the twilight of life, God will not judge us on our earthly possessions and human success, but rather on how much we have loved."



FORMED

We now have a parish FORMED subscription

FORMED is a Catholic streaming service. We have purchased a parish subscription that you can access for free at home. Please limit yourselves to one account per household. To register under our subscription, follow these steps:

1. Visit <https://signup.formed.org/>
2. Input *St Anthony's & St Bernard's Catholic Parishes* in the "Find your Parish" box.
3. Input your name and email address.
4. Visit formed.org on your preferred device to begin watching.

If you enjoy using FORMED, consider making a donation to our parish to help us keep providing this service.

WORSHIP NEWS

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

ST ANTHONY'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 18th & 19th December
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: Marian Muller
8.30am: John Brewis
10.30am: Anastasia Mavaega
5.00pm: Rosabella Tuala

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm Vigil: Philip Anyayahan
8.30am: Lois Brewis
10.30am: Doris 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: Leonia & Annonica
8.30am: Natalie & Ron
10.30am: Deepa & Godwin
5.00pm: Leonia & Godwin

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE

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

Arthur Abela, Rita Christian, Alessandro Martino, and Anthony Merceica.

Please pray for the Sick: Nickolia & Klara Butkovic, Maria Caruana, Mary Caruana, Melanie Fue, Bruce Hynes, Judy Layton, Peter Manicaro, Reg Marslen, Lisa Melia, Damien Michael, Tony Michael, Veronica Michael, Maiava Kuno Nickol, Caleb O'Brien, John Osborne, Catherine Roberts, Peter Roberts, Pat Roberts, Charlie Spiteri, Janko Stojanovic, Uatoa Tuigamala, Dolores Turcsan, Clint Abela Wadge & Wai Walsh 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: 18th & 19th December

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

5.00pm:
8.30am: To be advised
10.30am:

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm:
8.30am: To be advised
10.30am:

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

December: Jan Carragher

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased:

Dorothy Joyce (Dot) Wilkie

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

Marita Miesen, Damien McConnell and Robert Taggart.

Please pray for the Sick:

Patricia Allison, 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, Frank, 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, Tristan, 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: 18th & 19th December

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

5.00pm Vigil:

8.30am: To be advised

10.30am:

CUPPA VOLUNTEERS

5.00pm Vigil:

8.30am: To be advised

10.30am:

CHURCH FLOWERS

December: Gloria



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.

We cannot accept re-packaged food. 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 : 18th & 19th November

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

Sunday: Marj Tung

CHURCH FLOWERS

December: Melinda Martin/Blooms



PRESBYTERY & CHURCH GROUNDS-MOWING

December: Colm Carragher & Ron Geurts

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

Dear Parishioners

Keeping in line with the Archbishop's vision for Mission, the Parishes of St Anthony's and St Bernard's going forward will put together a new Baptism Preparation Program, for any parents who wish to have their child Baptised.



Preparations for Baptisms will take place on Saturdays alternating between both Parishes.

Parents must attend two sessions. Sessions will run from 12.00pm-3.30pm.

Baptisms will be held on Saturday mornings at 10.30am.

The new program will begin in February 2022. Bookings must be made to attend these sessions.

More information will be provided in the coming weeks.

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: Ben & Joan Antony

9743 8154

Group 2: Kalolaine & Sam Foma

0432 295 121

Group 3: Amy & Ronald Honrade

0457 042 695

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

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.
Indeed, the Lord is near.

FIRST READING Zephaniah 3:14-18

Shout for joy, daughter of Zion,
Israel, shout aloud!

Rejoice, exult with all your heart,
daughter of Jerusalem!

The Lord has repealed your sentence;
he has driven your enemies away.

The Lord, the king of Israel, is in your midst;
you have no more evil to fear.

When that day comes, word will come to Jerusalem:

Zion, have no fear,

do not let your hands fall limp.

The Lord your God is in your midst,
a victorious warrior.

He will exult with joy over you,

he will renew you by his love;

he will dance with shouts of joy for you

as on a day of festival.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Isaiah 12:2-6

Commentator: Cry out with joy and gladness: for among
you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

All: Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the
great and Holy One of Israel.

Truly, God is my salvation,
I trust, I shall not fear.

For the Lord is my strength, my song,
he became my saviour.

With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.

Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name!

Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples!

Declare the greatness of his name.

Sing a psalm to the Lord

for he has done glorious deeds,

make them known to all the earth!

People of Zion, sing and shout for joy

for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great
and Holy One of Israel.

SECOND READING Philippians 4:4-7

I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I re-
peat, what I want is your happiness. Let your tolerance be
evident to everyone: the Lord is very near. There is no
need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it,
asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that
peace of God, which is so much greater than we can un-
derstand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in
Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;

he sent me to bring Good News to the poor.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL Luke 3:10-18

When all the people asked John, 'What must we do?' he
answered, 'If anyone has two tunics he must share with
the man who has none, and the one with something to eat
must do the same.' There were tax collectors too who
came for baptism, and these said to him, 'Master, what
must we do?' He said to them, 'Exact no more than your
rate.' Some soldiers asked him in their turn, 'What about
us? What must we do?' He said to them, 'No intimidation!
No extortion! Be content with your pay!'

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people,
who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ,
so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with wa-
ter, but someone is coming, someone who is more power-
ful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his san-
dals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His
winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor
and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will
burn in a fire that will never go out.' As well as this, there
were many other things he said to exhort the people and
to announce the Good News to them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear.

Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

NEXT WEEK'S READING

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT —YEAR C

First Reading: Micah 5:1-4;

Second Reading: Heb 10:5-10;

Gospel: Lk 1:39-44



Advent III

Sweet, Beautiful, Soul-Saving Joy: Gaudete Sunday

This Sunday is Gaudete Sunday, based on the Latin of the Introit for the day: *Gaudete in Domino semper, iterum dico, Gaudete* (Philippians 4:4) (“Rejoice in the Lord always, again, I say, Rejoice”). This theme is developed in the second reading, from 1 Thessalonians. It also begins with the imperative, “Rejoice always”.

What is meant by the admonition to “rejoice”? The Greek word translated as “rejoice” is χαίρετε (*chairete*). However, more is intended than merely rousing an emotional state. Note that the root word *charis* refers to grace. Thus, *chairete* means to delight joyfully in and by God’s grace, to experience God’s favour (grace), to be conscious of and glad for His grace.

Because it is a work of grace, this sort of joy is more fully understood as serene, confident, and stable, a joy not rooted merely in our passing moods.

The text continues further to identify three basic ways that our joy can become both stable and deeply rooted in our personality and psyche. In effect, the text does not merely instruct us to rejoice always, but tells us how this can be done. Let’s look at these three ways.

I. PERSEVERANCE IN PRAISE. The text says: “Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit.” Hence we see the first three foundations for rejoicing always. Let’s take them a little out of order.

“In all circumstances give thanks.” Thanksgiving is an important discipline that trains our mind to focus on reality. We tend to be negative, perhaps due to our fallen nature, but the reality is that every day trillions of things go right while only a few go wrong. Now you may think that’s an exaggeration, but it’s not. Consider all the things that have to go right with every cell in your body. Add to that all the many things on this earth — indeed in the whole universe — that must be perfectly balanced in order for you and me to even be here at all, alive and flourishing. Trillions is not an exaggeration.

Giving thanks disciplines our mind to focus on our countless blessings. Some of the mishaps of a day can even be blessings in disguise. Hence we are told to give thanks in all circumstances. Daily thanksgiving disciplines our mind to focus on the astonishing number of blessings. What you feed grows; so, if the negative is fed, it will grow; but, if the positive is fed, it will grow and become an important basis of stable joy in our life.

“Pray without ceasing.” Prayer is also a discipline of the mind. Paul does not mean to say that we should stay in a chapel all day long. He means that we should lay hold of the normal Christian life, which is to be living in conscious contact with God at every moment of our day. To the degree that we are consciously aware of God’s presence and in a dialogue of love with Him all day, our joy is deeper and becomes more stable. Thereby we are enabled to “rejoice always.”

Mons Charles Pope, www.catholiceducation.org

“Do not quench the Spirit.” That such gifts (ongoing prayer and thanksgiving) are “God’s will for us” means that God wants to give us these gifts. Hence, we should not quench the Spirit, which bids us to seek these things. Rather, we should heed His promptings and seek these gifts, even pester God for them. Too often we quench the Spirit by not taking seriously the promises He offers us in Christ Jesus. We are not convinced that the Spirit can give us a whole new life and can deepen our prayer and gratitude, so we don’t even ask. We also quench the Spirit by cluttering our lives with endless distractions, never sitting still long enough to listen to the small, still voice of God.

II. PERSPECTIVE THROUGH PROPHECY. The text says: “Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good.”

First, the phrase “prophetic utterances” refers to Scripture itself. Scripture is a prophetic interpretation of reality. It describes the world as it truly is and sets forth a clear vision. It is an antidote to the muddled and murky suppositions of worldly thinking that at best grope in the darkness and at worst are deceitful and erroneous. We ought not to despise God’s Word in any way, but rather should accept it wholeheartedly. To the degree that we do so, we are assured of the ultimate victory of God, His truth, and His Kingdom. Our own victory is also set forth in the paschal mystery of God’s Word, wherein every cross, faithfully carried, produces for us a weight of glory beyond all compare (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:17).

“Prophetic utterances” also refers to the teachings of the Church, the words of the Fathers of the Church, and the teachings of the saints down through the ages. A great deposit of faith has been carefully collected and lovingly handed down from apostolic times. The dogmas and doctrines of the faith are like the precious fragments gathered up by the Apostles at the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. For the Lord had told them that nothing was to go to waste. We, too, ought to seek out every instruction uttered by Mother Church, allowing nothing to fall to the ground.

III. PROGRESS TOWARD PERFECTION. The text says: “Refrain from every kind of evil. May the God of peace make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it.”

The greatest source of sorrow in our life, the biggest killer of joy, is our sin. To the degree that we indulge it, our joy is sapped, but to the extent that we allow the Lord to deliver us from sin and make us more and more holy, our joy becomes deeper and more lasting.

The words “holy” and “whole” are not far removed from each other. As we become more whole, more perfected, freer from sin, more holy and blameless, our joy deepens and we can increasingly “rejoice always”. God will do this for us if we are willing and if we ask Him.