



St Bernard's Parish

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10th March 2024

Fourth Sunday of Lent Year B

Reflection

As I prayed the Office of Readings, I found a sermon by St Peter Chrysologus who lived in the early 5th Century and known as 'Doctor of Homilies' for the concise but theologically rich reflections he delivered during his time as the Bishop of Ravenna. Here is his explanation about Prayer, fasting and mercy.

'There are three things, my brethren, by which faith stands firm, devotion remains constant, and virtue endures. They are *prayer, fasting and mercy*. Prayer knocks at the door, fasting obtains, mercy receives. Prayer, mercy and fasting: these three are one, and they give life to each other.

Fasting is the soul of prayer, mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. Let no one try to separate them; they cannot be separated. If you have only one of them or not all together, you have nothing. So if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others. If you do not close your ear to others you open God's ear to yourself.

When you fast, see the fasting of others. If you want God to know that you are hungry, know that another is hungry. If you hope for mercy, show mercy. If you look for kindness, show kindness. If you want to receive, give. If you ask for yourself what you deny to others, your asking is a mockery.

Let this be the pattern for all men when they practise mercy: show mercy to others in the same way, with the same generosity, with the same promptness, as you want others to show mercy to you.

Therefore, let prayer, mercy and fasting be one single plea to God on our behalf, one speech in our defence, a threefold united prayer in our favour.

Let us use fasting to make up for what we have lost by despising others. Let us offer our souls in sacrifice by means of fasting. There is nothing more pleasing that we can offer to God, as the psalmist said in prophecy: A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit; God does not despise a bruised and humbled heart.

Offer your soul to God, make him an oblation of your fasting, so that your soul may be a pure offering, a holy sacrifice, a living victim, remaining your own and at the same time made over to God. Whoever fails to give this to God will not be excused, for if you are to give him yourself you are never without the means of giving.

To make these acceptable, mercy must be added. *Fasting bears no fruit unless it is watered by mercy.* Fasting dries up when mercy dries up. Mercy is to fasting as rain is to earth. However much you may cultivate your heart, clear the soil of your nature, root out vices, sow virtues, if you do not release the springs of mercy, your fasting will bear no fruit.

When you fast, if your mercy is thin your harvest will be thin; when you fast, what you pour out in mercy overflows into your barn. Therefore, do not lose by saving, but gather in by scattering. Give to the poor, and you give to yourself. You will not be allowed to keep what you have refused to give to others.'

Our community prays :

For those who have died:

John 'Jack' McNamara

Mary Matthew

For those who are unwell:

Riley Swander

Christie Raj

Isobel Symons

David Butler

Iris Appleton

Rita Croft

John Orders

Frank Whyte

Frances Butler

Marion Andrew

Katherine D'Arcy

George Koch

Jennifer London

Jeanette Freijah

Melissa Bann

Lila Moorfoot

Josephine Mariah

Vanessa Eldridge

Judy Robertson

Colin & Linda Boyd

Lynette Stott

Margaret Walker

Maria Pereira

Gerry O'Donoghue

Brittany Schultz

Rev Alan Ansell

Sofia Solisty

Joan Hepworth

We welcome for Baptism:

Leo & Jack DiBlase

Heaven & Adrianna Sim

Noah Farnsworth

Percy Farrington



Chrism Mass

Every year before Easter, at cathedrals around the world, the people of God celebrate the Chrism Mass. Ancient and symbolically rich, it is one of the most significant liturgical events in the Church outside of Christmas and Easter. Although it might not feature strongly in many people's minds, participating in the Chrism Mass is a great way to come to a deeper appreciation of the sacramental life of the Church.



This year's Chrism Mass will be celebrated at St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne on Wednesday, 20th March at 10:30am. All are warmly invited to attend.

Tenebrae

Tenebrae is Latin for 'darkness' or 'shadows'. Tenebrae, from the Middle Ages recreates the emotional aspects of the Passion. As Tenebrae progresses, candles are extinguished except for one which symbolizes the light of Christ. Tenebrae ends in darkness and with a striking sound, the 'Strepitus' that signifies the closing of the Tomb and the tumult in Heaven

Celebrating 170 years of St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia 1854–2024

Fr Gerald Ward arrived in Melbourne in 1850 from England where he was familiar with the work of the Society of St Vincent de Paul. After serving a number of parishes, he was appointed parish priest of St Francis's in the city.

Fr Gerald Ward established the first conference in Australia at St Francis church in Melbourne on 5 March 1854. He became our first official 'conference president' and set about addressing problems, such as the devastatingly high numbers of homeless and deserted children roaming the streets – the direct result of parents leaving for the Gold Rush fields, such as Ballarat and Bendigo.



In 1855, Fr Ward became responsible for five orphaned children and, after discussions with the government, he witnessed the laying of the foundation stone for the St Vincent de Paul Orphanage in South Melbourne, where the first children were accepted in 1857. This was considered the first 'Special Work' of the Society in Australia.

Fr Ward told the Victorian Government (in the language of the day) that '*the new conference aims to provide relief for the destitute, in a manner as much as possible permanently beneficial and the visitation of poor families*'. Tragically, he died in 1858 (less than 10 years of arriving in Australia) and was widely known as 'one in whom many a widow and orphan had found a good friend'.

In 1874, St Mary's Conference (Geelong) was the first women's conference established in Victoria on 18 July

Fr Ward's enduring legacy is the continuation of his early work through the Society's 242 conferences, 3,632 members, 6,434 volunteers and 113 Vinnies Shops across Victoria.

While the works of our Society have evolved over the past 170 years to cater for ongoing changes in our communities, our Mission, Vision and Purpose remain the same. The continuing story of the Society in Victoria and, more broadly, Australia relies on the Vincentian community which gathers in conferences across Victoria and our vast nation.

On 5 March 2024, Vinnies celebrated our milestone birthday – the 170th anniversary of the establishment of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia. St Vincent de Paul Society

St Bernard's Parish Groups— Passionist Family Group 2

'The Ryan Family Group' started a very long time ago. Karen and Ray Zanardo took over as leaders in about 2017. Beforehand, Kathy and Peter Ryan were leaders of the group. Back when the group started the majority of the families had very young or primary aged children. We had many wonderful gatherings. The children are all grown up now. As our group consists of older families now, our children no longer come along to our functions as they have grown up and moved on with their lives.



We now only have 4 gatherings a year – one in each school term. We have two families who organise the function each school term. We usually now go out for a meal together. We have 8 couples (one lady who still wants updates of what is happening but hasn't attended in a very long time) and usually about five couples attend each function.

Karen & Ray help coordinate the roster for the group to take turns to organise a get together and send out reminders to families if needed. It has been fun watching the children grow from a very young age and now starting to have families of their own.

If you are interested in the possibility of a new group or joining an existing Passionist Family group please contact the Parish Office: 52432739 or belmont@cam.org.au

Please consider attending this Real Deal Action Forum Thursday 14/3. We need you to show up to send a message to politicians that we want action on this social justice issue; we can no longer ignore the housing crisis, and increasing homelessness in Geelong. *You don't have to do anything just turn up!*

We do have some good news this week!! - Premier Allan has announced that there will be 72 new social and affordable homes out of 400 new homes to be built on the Commonwealth Games village site at Waurin Ponds. There are many questions we have about this announcement which we hope to find out at our upcoming Community Action Forum on the Housing crisis.

Thursday March 14, 6.45pm for 7pm start **Real Deal Community Forum** Geelong West Town Hall, 153 Pakington Street, Geelong West. Please [register here](#).

Our Christian tradition believes that *'right judgment'* is a gift of the Holy Spirit and that it's best exercised with *humility and compassion*.

When I hear people say I should not judge others, I assume they are telling me that I should not condemn other people. There is a world of difference between judging and condemning. *To judge is to make an assessment. To condemn is to damn.* As Christians we judge because we have to keep discerning how the things of the world can be reconciled with the things we hold to be true. *Condemnation is the prerogative of God alone, who sees all, knows all and loves all.* In today's Gospel, however, John tells us that even God has forfeited the right to condemn the world, but has sent Jesus to be the world's *light, life, truth and saviour*.

The Gospel reminds us that if we feel condemned for what we have done and said, then it's because we have condemned ourselves, not because God condemns us. John tells us that even when we find ourselves lost in the darkness of our most destructive behaviour, the saving love of Christ is always available to us, inviting us to come out of the darkness into his light.

May this Lenten Eucharist enable us to let go of the desire to condemn others and ourselves, and to receive again the compassionate, just and humble gift of right judgment that helps us to see the darkness for what it is, and keeps us walking in the light of Christ.

Edited extract Fr Richard Leonard SJ

Pope Francis Prayer Intention March— For new martyrs.



**Pope's Worldwide
Prayer Network**



Let us pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world might imbue the Church with their courage and missionary drive.

Christians who never renounce their love for Christ and are faithful to the point of death are a blessing for everyone, Pope Francis says.

'There will always be martyrs among us. This is a sign that we're on the right path. The courage of the martyrs, the witness of the martyrs, is a blessing for everyone,' he said in his message, noting that it is estimated there are more martyrs today than during the time of the early church.

'Let us pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world might imbue the church with their courage and missionary drive. And to be open to the grace of martyrdom,' he said.

The Pope recognises that their suffering is a gift for the whole Church. This leads him to pray that their generosity and courage will be infectious and will encourage those who live in societies where it is less dangerous to believe in Christ to live our faith boldly.

Edited extract Cathnews and Fr Andrew Hamilton SJ

Project Compassion—For Future Generations

Growing up in the Mwanza district in southern Malawi, 26-year-old Memory was born to a low income family who relies on subsistence farming for survival. Memory's parents struggled to pay for her school fees and supplies, and she often had to walk to school barefoot. As the eldest of five children, Memory also faced the challenge of balancing her education with domestic chores, such as farming, cooking, cleaning, and carrying water.



Despite the challenges she faced, Memory understood that education was her best chance of breaking the cycle of poverty, 'I told myself I can't stop going to school because this is the only way I can get a better life.'

With the support of Caritas Australia and the Catholic Development Commission in Malawi (CADECOM) – Caritas Australia's local partner in Malawi – Memory enrolled in a technical college where she undertook a three-year carpentry course. Her tuition and boarding fees were partially funded by CADECOM through funds provided by Caritas Australia.

Memory now stands proudly as the first female carpenter from her village, working at one of Malawi's largest hydroelectric power stations. With the income from her job, she can now support her family while inspiring other young women in her community to finish their education and seize opportunities within male dominated industries. '*Being a female carpenter sets an example to others in my community,*' she said. '*They see a woman can do what a man can do.*'

Prayer of Intercession - We pray for all people who make things. We thank God for their skill. May our support of Project Compassion help people around the world find the opportunity to use their talents to support their families and communities. Lord, hear us.

We pray for Mohammad

We pray for Mohammad that he be comforted while he awaits a decision on his application for a visa.



For the people of Israel, Palestine, Ukraine & other war torn countries.
May there be peaceful resolutions.

St Bernard's community

On Fridays during Lent Stations of the Cross will be prayed **before the Midday Mass at 11.30am**

Lenten Reflections Mondays 10.00am & 7.30pm in the Church. Enquiries the Parish Office 5243 2739 or belmont@cam.org.au

The Geelong Community ...

Saturday 16th March, 1.30 -4.00pm. Rescheduled due to heat. Faith and Light Geelong St Mary's Parish Offices, ground floor, 150 Yarra Street. Share your Lenten journey with the Gospel, Prayer, & Activities Includes shared Afternoon Tea. Enquiries : Tricia 0414672267

Thursday, 21st March, 6.30 pm A journey through the Passion of Christ at Holy Family Church, Bell Park. We invite you to a prayerful and spiritual lenten experience including Holy Mass and healing adoration with Fr. Rojan George VC - Director of Vincentian Retreat Centre in Melbourne.

Clonard College Open Day Wednesday 13 March until Friday 22 March. Multiple Information and tour sessions. Bookings via www.clonard.vic.edu.au Enrolments for Year 7 close on Friday 3 May 2024.

Espod Geelong Inc Emotional Support for Pregnancy Outcome Decisions. www.espodgeelong.org.au. Membership \$20.00. Information brochures/ membership forms in the foyer.



The Journey. Australian Catholic Radio freely available: Subscribe or listen <https://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/journey-radio/>

Clean Up Australia - March Campaign

A great opportunity during this month to conserve the environment, eliminate litter and reduce waste pollution.

Some neighbourhood actions you might like to consider - Pick up litter, adopt a highway, report graffiti, organise a neighbourhood clean up.

To assist you, there is some Clean Up Aust. equipment such gloves, litter bags etc. in the Church storeroom next to the toilets.

The Graffiti Hotline is 03 5272 4319 or email graffiti@geelongcity.vic.gov.au
Laudato Si Goal 1: Cry of the Earth



Slavery Free Chocolate for Easter

Purchase chocolate that has the Rainforest Alliance, Cocoa Horizons or Fairtrade certification logos. This means these companies are working to eliminate slavery in the coco industry.

'In the spirit of reconciliation, St Bernard's Parish acknowledges the Wadawurrung People, the Traditional Custodians of country and their connections to land, sea and community.

We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.'

Mass Times this week

Saturday: **6pm**
Sunday: **9am & 10.30am**
Tue & Fri: **12 noon**
Wed & Thurs : **9.30am**

*The **Rosary** is prayed after each weekday Mass*
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament held **First Friday** of each month after 12pm mass

To receive the **bulletin** by **email** please subscribe via the parish website:

<https://stbernards.org.au/>

Contact the Office - 52 432 739 to arrange :

**** Communion at home (Friday am)**

New volunteers welcome to assist with this ministry.

**** To receive an email link to the Passionist Fathers recorded Mass each weekend.**

**** To receive an emailed worksheet for children, linked to the Sunday readings.**

Sunday Mass on Radio :

7.00am Light FM 89.9

10.00am Pulse 94.7 FM (*St Mary's*)

Sunday Mass on TV :

Channel 10 6-6.30am

Channel 31 or 44 11am *St Patrick's Cathedral*

Parish Office hours

Mon: 9am—4pm

Tues: 10am—3pm

Wed: 9am—4pm

Thurs: 10am—1pm

Fri: 9am—4pm

*** St Bernard's Play Group** Every Tuesday of school term 9-10.30am Gold coin donation

*** St Vincent De Paul** Membership enquiries : through Parish Office

*** Men's Group - 2nd Tues** of the month 10.30am Church cafe

*** Charismatic Prayer** meeting will resume in March 2023

*** Ladies Coffee and Chat Group, 3rd Mon** of the month, 10.30am at **FULL Circle**, Belmont opposite Car Wash, cnr Roslyn Rd.

*** Mill Market donation & Book Fair drop off** Saturdays 9am and 10am.



To assist the Mannyas communities :

direct bank trf to :

BSB : **BSB 083347**

ACC# **358514559**

Ref : **surname & support project**
i.e *Hall or education or General needs.*

Please note new account details

Readings this week :

2 Chronicles 36:14-16. 19-23 ; Ps 136 ; Ephesians 2:4-10 ; John 3:14-21

Next Week's Readings : Jeremiah 31:31-34 ; Ps 50:3-4. 12-15 ; Hebrews 5:7-9 ; John 12:20-33

