



St Anthony's Parish

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



St Bernard's Parish

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

PENTECOST SUNDAY -YEAR B

19th May 2024

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Alex Clemente
ASSISTANT PRIESTS: Fr Wilford Urmaza and Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Lesley Morffew
Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson

Parish Office Hours:

Tuesday—Friday 9.30am-4.30pm
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 Lawrence of Brindisi School **Principal:** Bill Hill
31 Waterway Boulevard, Weir Views, 3338

Phone: 8099 6699
Email: principal@slweirviews.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.slweirviews.catholic.edu.au

ST BERNARD'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Dolores Turcsan
Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson

Bookkeeper: Naim Chdid
Pastoral Worker for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

Parish Office Hours:

Tuesday—Friday 9.30am-1.30pm
Email: bacchusmarsh@cam.org.au
Website: www.stbernardsbacchusmarsh.com.au
Facebook link:
<https://www.facebook.com/stbernardsbacchusmarsh>

St Bernard's School **Principal:** Sr Mary Sarah Galbraith
19a Gisborne Rd, Bacchus Marsh VIC 3340

Phone: (03) 5366 5800
Email: principal@sbbacchusmarsh.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.sbbacchusmarsh.catholic.edu.au

St Francis Catholic College- Melton (Years 7-12)

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

109-141 Bulmans Rd, West Melton, 3337 / Bridge Rd, Cobblebank 3338 **Website:** www.sfcc.vic.edu.au

In the case of urgent situations-sickness etc. please call 0422 869 646

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

Godwin Barton	0425 734 449
Naim Chdid	0437 004 790
Lillian Christian - Vice Chair	0400 441 257
Amy Honrade	0457 042 695
Natalie Howard - Chair	0492 947 201
Rose Ma'ae	0460 672 571
EX-OFFICIO: Fr Alex Clemente PP, Fr Wilford Urmaza, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint, Damien Schuster and Bill Hill	
Council Secretary: Judy Johnson	

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

Rob Brennan OLHC	0430 312 684
Shane Cook -School Advisory Board	0419 999 052
Annette Marum	0417 525 617
Moir Ross	0400 675 056
Aaron Russell - Chair	0401 927 502
EX-OFFICIO: Fr Alex Clemente PP, Fr Wilford Urmaza, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint and Sr Mary Sarah Galbraith	

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Coordinator/Officer: Godwin Barton (0425 734 449) **Officers:** St Anthony's - Allison Pereira 0422 775 245 Lorraine Tellis 0409 110 259
Geetha Vincent 0478 112 996
St Bernard's - Margaret Love (0437 247 779) Ron Geurts, Vikki Benson & Marj Tung

For any queries regarding the newsletter please contact Judy Johnson 0414 007 009

Items for the newsletter must be submitted by Wednesday midnight please email judyparishnews@gmail.com

MASS AND DEVOTIONS

ST ANTHONY'S MELTON SOUTH 20/5/2024-26/5/2024

MASS TIMES:

Monday	20/5	6.30pm
Tuesday	21/5	9.30am
St Anthony's Novena 10th Week-Adoration 6pm Novena 6.15pm Followed by Benediction & Mass		
Wednesday	22/5	9.30am
Thursday	23/5	9.30am
Friday	24/5	9.30am
Saturday	25/5	9.00am

Rosary **9.00am prior to weekday masses &**

Rosary **8.30am prior to Saturday mass**



Sunday Masses

Saturday Vigil	25/5	5.00pm
Sunday	26/5	8.30am & 10.30am

Confession is available and begins 30 minutes prior to each Mass and will cease 5 minutes before Mass commences.
No Confession on Monday.

ST BERNARD'S BACCHUS MARSH 20/5/2024-26/5/2024

MASS TIMES:

Monday	20/5	No Mass
Tuesday	21/5	7.30am
Holy Hour		7.00pm
Wednesday	22/5	9.30am
Thursday	23/5	7.30am
Friday	24/5	<u>Feast of Mary Help of Christians</u> 7.30am & 9.30am
Saturday	25/5	9.00am

Sunday Masses

Saturday Vigil	25/5	6.30pm
Sunday	26/5	8.30am & 10.30am
(Rosary in the Chapel 10.00am on Sundays)		

Confession is available and begins 30 minutes prior to each Mass and will cease 5 minutes before Mass commence.

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS KOROBET MASS TIMES

Saturday Vigil	26/5	5.00pm
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PARISHIONER'S FIRST COLLECTION/SECOND COLLECTION

Parishioners who normally give cash each weekend for the collections, and wish to pay electronically 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. Thank you.

PENTECOST (May 19, 2024)- Fr Wilford Urmaza

Fifty days after Jesus rose from the dead, Christians commemorate the Solemnity of Pentecost, which also signifies the conclusion of Easter.

Jewish people have celebrated Pentecost, also known as the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot), for fifty days following the planting and sheaf offering during the Passover celebration. This is their way of giving thanks for the wheat crop. It also honors the day that God gave Moses the Law. Pentecost is still observed by Jewish communities worldwide as one of the main holidays.

In his farewell discourse, Jesus promised his apostles and disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit to remind them of the truth and all that he taught them. The evangelist Luke narrates in his second book that while they were celebrating the Feast of Pentecost in the upper room, many of them were present, including Jesus' mother, Mary.

A sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them.

In the readings today, the first reading narrates the coming of the Holy Spirit at the Pentecost event in the Acts of the Apostles, while the gospel speaks about the event when Jesus came back to life three days after his death. He breathed on his apostles, telling them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

This enabled them to encounter the Holy Trinity as a whole, as fully revealed by the outpouring of the Spirit in abundance. Such revelation opened their hearts and minds to the understanding that Pentecost (the outpouring of the Spirit) is the consummation of Christ's Passover on the cross for the forgiveness of their sins. Furthermore, the Spirit empowered and prepared them for the great commission to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Trinity.

Essentially, Pentecost is perceived as the birth of the church, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that empowers and enables the disciples to embrace the mission entrusted to them by Christ and to make present and active his saving mission to humanity.

PARISH & EVENTS NOTICES

NEWS FROM THE PARISH OFFICES

FAMILY ENRICHMENT AUSTRALIA

Family Enrichment Australia presents a marriage enrichment course for couples who want to make their good marriages great! This online course is self-paced over 6 fortnightly sessions to help couples draw closer together. See flyer for details. Registration closes 24th May. Book via this link: [Bit.ly/MECourse2024](https://bit.ly/MECourse2024) Contact Renee 0403080632 for any questions.

MELBOURNE ARCHDIOCESE- MASS COUNT

The annual Mass count will take place in May, the four weekends of 4-5 May, 11-12 May, 18-19 May and 25-26 May have been selected for the count. This annual count taken in May is important for our pastoral planning activities and allows for comparisons to be made across the years. The count maintains an up-to-date picture of Mass attendance in the Archdiocese.

ST ANTHONY'S

PARISH CENSUS 2024

Dear Parishioners to support our pastoral leadership teams, in their role of acknowledging, guiding and empowering our Parish community, please fill in the census card. This information is used only for pastoral and administrative purposes within this parish and will not be shared. Thanks to those who have filled up the census cards. To those who are yet to fill up the census card please do so. Any queries, please contact either Natalie Howard, Lillian Christian, Godwin Barton or Lesley Morffew. Thank you.

INTERNATIONAL FOOD FESTIVAL-THIS WEEKEND

We will be holding our International Food Festival this Sunday, Pentecost Sunday -19th May 2024, following the 10.30am Mass, in the Padua Hall. Come along and enjoy food from the many cultures that make up our vibrant Parish community. All funds raised will go towards the extension of the Padua Hall.

TRIVIA NIGHT

Save the date! There will be a Trivia night facilitated by St Anthony's youth Saturday 1st June 2024. It will be a night of competitive fun, food & some entertainment. Come and support the youth & parish on this night. Please see flyer in the foyer.

PRIME TIMERS

Our next outing will be to Flanagan's, 139 Main St. Bacchus Marsh. Tuesday 28th May, 12 o'clock. We can meet at the old Bunnings car park at 11.30am. If you need a lift that can be arranged too. RSVP Friday 24th to confirm booking numbers. Thank you. Enquiries contact Ineke on 0400 120 401 or ineke49@yahoo.com.

MOTHER'S DAY BINGO SPECIAL

POSTPONED TILL 11th JUNE 2024

Join us for a night of fun. \$200 package=47games
Contact Rose for further details on 0460 672 571
Remember, we have bingo every Tuesday evening at 7pm in the Padua Hall, come along and enjoy a great evening.

ST BERNARD'S

FEAST OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

Please come and honour Australia's patroness Mary, Help of Christians on Friday 24th of May. The Solemnity Mass will be held at 9.30am. Morning tea will be held in the hall after the 9.30am Mass.

PARISH OFFICE

The Parish Office will be closed Tuesday 21st May. Please contact the St Anthony's Parish office if you need assistance 9747 9692.

CAKE AND CRAFT STALL

THANK YOU to everyone who supported and contributed to our Cake and Craft stall last weekend.
We RAISED \$460! This will go towards costs for the 150th Anniversary Celebration.

THE CRAFT GROUP

The Craft Group are looking for donations of craft items to help offset costs. If you are able to donate any of the following items, it would be greatly appreciated! material, yarn, buttons, baskets for raffles, cellophane rolls, ribbon, unused plastic rectangle containers to sell sweets. Please place items in the basket in the foyer.

FAMILY WORKING BEE

Family working bee at St. Bernard's Church on Saturday 8th June, starting at 10.00am. Please come and help us clean up the grounds in preparation for the 150th Anniversary Celebration.
Please bring gloves and any gardening tools you have.
FREE SAUSAGE SIZZLE for those attending.



WORSHIP NEWS

ALL VOLUNTEERS IN OUR PARISH MUST HAVE A CURRENT VALID WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK AND A CODE OF CONDUCT FORM SIGNED.

ST ANTHONY'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 25th & 26th 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: Gavin Pereira & Liza Fernandes

8.30am: Eva Caliguran & Geoff Sutton

10.30am: Anakin Anderson & Niel Evangelista

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Aloysioud Dacunha & Dolores Turcsan

8.30am: Philip Anyayahan & Roa Seufatu

10.30am: Frank Carreon & Cita Carreon

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

MASS COORDINATORS

5.00pm: Natalie & Ron

8.30am: Josephine & Godwin

10.30am: Leonia & Olen

ST BERNARD'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 25th & 26th May

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

6.30pm: Maureen Zahra

8.30am: Margaret Love

10.30am: Volunteer needed

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

6.30pm: John Thorne

8.30am: Volunteer needed

10.30am: Cheryl Stevens

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

May: Maureen Zahra

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased:

Lorraine Doyle

The funeral service for Lorraine Doyle will be held at St Anthony's Church on Wednesday 29th May at 11.00am.

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

Helen Debrincat, Alistair Knox, Sr Irene McCormack, Albert Micallef, John Nicotra, Tarcisio Scerri, Edith Stone, Fuatino Taulapapa & Peduru Wisidagama.

Please pray for the Sick:

Bruce Amoa, Teresita Arrozal, Nickolia & Klara Butkovic, Maria Caruana, Mary Caruana, Christabelle, Lydia De Vega, Ann Eskdale, Melanie Fue, Bruce Hynes, Kotinis Cornelia Kani, Judy Layton, Faamu Leiataua, Peter Manicaro, Damien Michael, Hazel Michael, Tony Michael, Veronica Michael, Nickol, Caleb O'Brien, John Osborne, Anna Samy, Samantha Smith, Sina, Saleri, Charlie Spiteri, Janko Stojanovic, Uatoa Tuigamala, Clint Abela Wadge, Wai Walsh, Remy Zografidis 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 PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased:

Desmond Clarken. Fr Ivanhoe, Ian Robinson & Salvatore Scifo

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

John Carr, Gwyneth Davies, Isabel Fitzpatrick, Gloria Rogers, Ray Stevens, Frank Sammut & Aldo Vescovi.

Please pray for the Sick:

Noah Barlow, Michael Barrett, Stephen Beaton, Peter Bennett, Carmel Berry, Steven Braszel, Tina Bower, Tracey Burn, Alex, Fred Capuano, Charlie, Gary Ching, Josephine Cilia, Brendan Coburn, Robyn Cola, Ted Cooling, Lindsay & Kathleen Dally, Judy Delahey, Theresa Dockter, Allison Evans, Helen Evans, Evelyn, George Farrell, Yvonne Felicieux, Justin Fernandez, Pasquale Gagliardi, Mario Galea, Cynthia Goodyear, Gwen Green, Joe Gristi, Adam Hillier, Leonie Kervin, Elle Hillman, Kiahni Holamotutama, Alicia Holborn, Matthew Jansen, John & Frances, Joe, David Kasprzak, Michael Larkin, Marie Maloney, Patricia Marechal, Brian Marshall, Debbie Marshall, Jordanis Mary Pauline McDonald, Ian McKechnie, Marcus Meno, Paul Mullin, Nancy Pace, Arthur Pape, Michael Paterson, Georgia Peacock, Mitchell Prendergast, Peter Roberts, Ken Shaw, Terry Sims, Marian Smith, Elizabeth Stehmann, Colin Taffe, Catherine Time, Susan Trist, Stephen Van Eede, John Van Orsouw, Angela Vicum, Louis Vogels, Barry Walsh, Jayne Wilkins, Nathan Witmore, Patricia Yazbek, & Betty Young and all those who have requested our prayers. **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 VALID WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK AND A CODE OF CONDUCT FORM SIGNED.

ST ANTHONY'S

WEEKEND VOLUNTEERS: 25th & 26th May

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

5.00pm Vigil: Dolores Turcsan
8.30am: Mercy Seufatu
10.30am: Elizabeth Underwood

CHURCH FLOWERS May: Rosabella

CUPPA VOLUNTEERS– 25th & 26th May

5.00pm Vigil: Julie Sequiera, Cristal D'Souza,
Isabella Dawn Jusayan, Jojo Dimapilis

8.30am: Sam & Pat Chiles, Mary Saliba,
Remie Peroy, Raymund Sumayed

10.30am: Kathleen McCurry, Romeo & Maribel
Sacres, Melissa Battaglia,
Marianne McCullagh

Thank you for the plates to share.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

Welfare Number: 1800 305 330

The Melton South Conference meet every 1st Tuesday of the month in the Mackillop 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.

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.
100 Coburn's Road Melton South 9747 6811

*The Harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;
Pray therefore (**Rogate Ergo...**) to the Lord of the Harvest that He may send Good workers into His vast vineyard. (Mt. 9:37-38).*

Prayer is the answer to the perennial problem of the lack of good evangelical workers. It is a command and not just a simple request or an invitation. The Church needs holy workers. She needs committed, faithful, and zealous ministers of the Gospel. But if we will not beg the Lord, we will never be blessed with Good and Holy Vocations.

St. Hannibal Ma. Di Francia, the Patron of Vocations said; Vocations come from on High, if we do not pray, vocations will not come. Let us therefore implore the Master of the Harvest with this short prayer:

Send, O Lord, Holy Apostles into Your Church!

ST BERNARD'S

WEEKEND VOLUNTEERS : 25th & 26th May

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

Saturday: 6.30pm: Jackie Tabone
Sunday: 8.30am: Lyn Shea

CHURCH FLOWERS

May: Tup Shea

PRESBYTERY & CHURCH GROUNDS-MOWING

Colm Carragher, Ron Geurts and Michael Love.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY:

Welfare number 1800 305 330.

Bacchus Marsh Vinnies Store 164-190 Main Street is in urgent need of donations. All donations gratefully appreciated and can be dropped at the Store 7 days a week. Any enquiries 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 \$2000 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

Baptisms will be held at St Anthony's on the 1st & 3rd Saturdays of the month at 11.00am and Baptisms will be held at St Bernard's on the 2nd & 4th Saturdays of the month at 11.00am.

Please go to [St Anthony of Padua Catholic Parish | Melton South](#) click on 'Faith Formation' and then 'Baptism of Infants' for all the information and the application form.



THEY WILL BE NO BAPTISMS ON THE 15TH JUNE AT ST ANTHONY'S.

THEY WILL BE NO BAPTISMS ON THE 22ND JUNE AT ST BERNARD'S

Please contact the Parish Offices if you need any assistance. Thank you.

ADULT PREPARATION Adult preparation for the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist or Confirmation are through the R.C.I.A Program. Please see Fr Alex, Fr Wilford, Fr Lucas or Naim Chdid .

FATIMA STATUE—ST ANTHONY'S

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

Group 1:	Uili & Lagi Maiava	0429 340 404
Group 2:	Gordon & Gladys Clarke	0402 021 435
Group 3:	Anthony & Mary Saliba	0418 358 090

DIVINE MERCY NOVENA

1st Sunday of the month 3pm.



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

Lord, we ask you to continue

to be with us as we

‘ TAKE THE WAY OF THE GOSPEL ’

together in prayer.

May we open ourselves to you

with a new depth of trust and conviction

in your guiding hand,

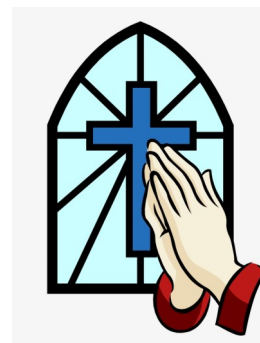
so that we may discern our journey

with compassionate and humble hearts

and come to know your Holy Spirit

Moving within and amongst us,

And so be transformed Amen.



LITURGY OF THE WORD

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

The Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole world
and that which contains all things
understands what is said, alleluia.

FIRST READING Acts 2:1-11

When Pentecost day came round, the apostles had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech. Now there were devout men living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, and at this sound they all assembled, each one bewildered to hear these men speaking his own language. They were amazed and astonished. 'Surely' they said 'all these men speaking are Galileans? How does it happen that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; people from Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya round Cyrene; as well as visitors from Rome - Jews and proselytes alike - Cretans and Arabs; we hear them preaching in our own language about the marvels of God.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 103

Commentator: Lord, send out your Spirit
and renew the face of the earth.

All: Lord, send out your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.

Bless the Lord, my soul!
Lord God, how great you are,
How many are your works, O Lord!
The earth is full of your riches.

You take back your spirit, they die,
returning to the dust from which they came.
You send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the Lord last for ever!
May the Lord rejoice in his works!
May my thoughts be pleasing to him.
I find my joy in the Lord.

Lord, send out your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.

SECOND READING Galatians 5:16-25

If you are guided by the Spirit you will be in no danger of yielding to self-indulgence, since self-indulgence is the opposite of the Spirit, the Spirit is totally against such a thing, and it is precisely because the two are so opposed that you do not always carry out your good intentions. If you are led by the Spirit, no law can touch you. When self-indulgence is at work the results are obvious: fornication, gross indecency and sexual irresponsibility; idolatry and sorcery; feuds and wrangling, jealousy, bad temper and quarrels; disagreements, factions, envy; drunkenness, orgies and similar things. I warn you now, as I warned you before: those who behave like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. What the Spirit brings is very different: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control. There can be no law against things like that, of course. You cannot belong to Christ Jesus unless you crucify all self-indulgent passions and desire. Since the Spirit is our life, let us be directed by the Spirit.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SEQUENCE

Holy Spirit, Lord of Light,
From the clear celestial height
Thy pure beaming radiance give.

Come, thou Father of the poor,
Come with treasures which endure
Come, thou light of all that live!

Thou, of all consolers best,
Thou, the soul's delightful guest,
Dost refreshing peace bestow.

Thou in toil art comfort sweet
Pleasant coolness in the heat
Solace in the midst of woe.

Light immortal, light divine,
Visit thou these hearts of thine,
And our inmost being fill:

If thou take thy grace away,
Nothing pure in man will stay
All his good is turned to ill.

Heal our wounds, our strength renew
On our dryness pour thy dew
Wash the stains of guilt away:

Bend the stubborn heart and will
Melt the frozen, warm the chill
Guide the steps that go astray.

Thou, on us who evermore
Thee confess and thee adore,
With thy sevenfold gifts descend:

Give us comfort when we die
Give us life with thee on high
Give us joys that never end.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL John 15:26-27; 16:12-15

Jesus said to his disciples:

'When the Advocate comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who issues from the Father, he will be my witness. And you too will be witnesses, because you have been with me from the outset. 'I still have many things to say to you but they would be too much for you now.

But when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth, since he will not be speaking as from himself but will say only what he has learnt; and he will tell you of the things to come. He will glorify me, since all he tells you will be taken from what is mine. Everything the Father has is mine; that is why I said: All he tells you will be taken from what is mine.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit
and spoke of the marvels of God, alleluia.

The Blessed Virgin Mary 1

Our Lady's life before the Annunciation

Mary's early years are shrouded in mystery. The Bible doesn't tell us much about her existence before the Annunciation. However, the few details that the Gospel of Luke provides allow us to catch a glimpse of Mary's life before the fateful day when she would become the mother of the Messiah.

Nowhere Nazareth: A surprising choice

Consider what we can learn about Mary's pre-Annunciation life in the following verses:

"In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary." (Luke 1:26-27)

Admittedly, there is not a lot here to give us a portrait of Our Lady's early years, but there are at least three important facts we can unpack for all they're worth.

The first fact we discover about Mary is that she dwelt in "a city of Galilee named Nazareth". This small geographical detail is important because Nazareth would have been a very unlikely place for the messianic era to begin. Nazareth was a small, secluded agricultural village in Galilee. Far from the social-religious centre of the Jerusalem Temple, Nazareth had only a few hundred inhabitants and was not on any major trade route. Moreover, there are no prophecies explicitly about Nazareth in the Jewish tradition, and the Old Testament never even mentions the town.

The fact that Jesus comes from Nazareth will cause him trouble later in his public ministry. Nathaniel's famous line, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46), illustrates how at least some Jews held Nazareth in rather low esteem.

In the first-century Jewish world, Nazareth probably would not have made it into the Top 10 of likely candidates for the Messiah's hometown. That God chose a woman from this lowly city to become the mother of the Messiah would have been quite surprising.

From Zechariah to Mary

The surprising nature of God's choice becomes even clearer when we consider how Luke's Gospel juxtaposes Gabriel's announcement to Mary with the same angel's announcement to Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, in the previous scene. First, Luke tells us that Gabriel's announcement to

Zechariah took place in the large city of Jerusalem and right in the heart of Israel's religious centre, the Temple. In contrast, Gabriel's announcement to Mary occurs in the small, obscure village of Nazareth, and Luke doesn't even mention the setting in which this annunciation takes place.

Next, Gabriel's first announcement is given to an honourable priest, representing a whole multitude of Jewish people in the midst of the Temple liturgy; while the second announcement was given to an unknown woman, apparently in the midst of her ordinary daily life.

Finally, the annunciation to Zechariah had immediate public impact, as the multitude of people perceived that their priest had had a vision (Luke 1:10, 21-22), while the announcement to Mary seems to escape the notice of everyone around her, even though she had just received the most important angelic announcement in salvation history!

In his book *Theotokos*, Pope St John Paul II points out how the contrast between these two announcements underscores the extraordinary nature of God's intervention in Mary's life. "In the Virgin's case, God's action certainly seems surprising. Mary has no human claim to receiving the announcement of the Messiah's coming. She is not the high priest, an official representative of the Hebrew religion, nor even a man, but a young woman without any influence in the society of her time. In addition, she is a native of Nazareth, a village which is never mentioned in the Old Testament."

By highlighting Mary's lowliness in contrast to Zechariah's high social status as a priest, "Luke stresses that everything in Mary derives from a sovereign grace. All that is granted to her is not due to any claim of merit, but only to God's free and gratuitous choice."

Mary thus stands in the biblical tradition of God choosing the people we'd least expect to play a crucial role in His plan of salvation. God surprisingly chose a man named Moses who was slow of speech and unsure of his leadership abilities to lead the people out of slavery in Egypt. He unexpectedly chose from all of Jesse's children the youngest boy, David, to become Israel's next king.

Likewise, God chose from among all the people in first-century society not a woman from the Jewish aristocracy, nor the daughter of a chief priest in Jerusalem, nor the wife of a famous lawyer, scribe, or Pharisee, but an unknown virgin named Mary from the little village of Nazareth to become the mother of Israel's long-awaited Messiah-King.

To Be Continued