



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

THE 28th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME -YEAR B

13th October 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 **Acting Principal:** Caitlyn Lalor

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, 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: Aloysious Dacunha 0431 012 511 **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, Vicki Benson & Marj Tung

Email: parish.safeguard@gmail.com

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 Judy Johnson's office hours are Tue, Wed and Thu 9.30am-1.30pm

MASS AND DEVOTIONS

ST ANTHONY'S MELTON SOUTH 14/10/2024-20/10/2024

MASS TIMES:

Monday	14/10	6.30pm
Tuesday	15/10	9.30am 6.30pm
Wednesday	16/10	9.30am
Thursday	17/10	9.30am
Friday	18/10	9.30am
Saturday	19/10	9.00am

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

Rosary **8.30am prior to Saturday mass**

Sunday Masses

Saturday Vigil	19/10	5.00pm
Sunday	20/10	8.30am & 10.30am

(Rosary 10.00am on Sundays)

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 14/10/2024-20/10/2024

MASS TIMES:

Monday	14/10	Divine Mercy Chaplet – 2:45pm	No Mass
Tuesday	15/10	7.30am	
		Holy Hour	7.00pm
Wednesday	16/10	9.30am	
Thursday	17/10	7.30am	
Friday	18/10	7.30am	
Saturday	19/10	9.00am	

Sunday Mass

Saturday Vigil	19/10	5.00pm
Sunday	20/10	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 commences.

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS KOROBEIT MASS TIMES

Saturday Vigil	2nd & 3rd Saturdays of the month	5.00pm
	Saturday 12th & 19th October	

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 : <https://www.melbcatholic.org/s/donate?id=0012w00000LOj5yAAD>

The link to the St Bernard's Parish is: <https://www.melbcatholic.org/s/donate?id=0012w00000LOj42AAD>

REFLECTION 28th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME—Fr Alex Clemente RCJ

Jesus' words in the gospel show us that clinging to wealth can hinder our relationship with God. True discipleship requires letting go of material attachments and trusting fully in Jesus.

In the first reading Solomon prays for wisdom, asking for it above all other things. He says that wisdom is more valuable than power, wealth, and even health. This teaches us that true wisdom comes from God and is more precious than anything we can possess.

Solomon's choice shows that seeking God's wisdom should be our priority. Worldly riches and honors are temporary and can lead us away from God. But wisdom helps us live according to God's will and leads us to eternal life.

The book of Hebrews, in the second reading reminds us that God's word bestows wisdom. It not just written text but it is active and speaks to us personally. It reveals our innermost thoughts and guides us in the right path. We must read and reflect on the Scriptures, allowing them to shape our hearts and minds.

By embracing God's word, we let it guide our lives. It helps us discern right from wrong and keeps us on the path of righteousness which is the way leading closer to Jesus.

What am I asking for in our prayers?

Am I looking for a share in eternal life?

PARISH & EVENTS NOTICES

NEWS FROM THE PARISH OFFICES

FAITH FORMATION Sessions are held every **Tuesday at 7.15pm** in the Mackillop meeting room at St Anthony's church.

Everyone is encouraged to attend especially those who seek to deepen their faith or learn about the catholic faith or want to receive the Sacraments of the Catholic Church and be baptised a Catholic. **Week 8: The Life of Jesus.**

RECONCILIATION PREPARATION PROGRAM Sessions will begin Saturday 5th Oct, for 8 weeks-Saturdays 3.00pm –6.00pm at St Anthony's.

NOVEMBER, MONTH OF THE HOLY SOULS MASS INTENTIONS

As we approach November, we have the opportunity to honour our departed loved ones in a special way. We are encouraged to use dedicated envelopes to inscribe the names of our cherished departed family and friends. These envelopes will be placed before the altar, where Masses will be offered for their souls throughout the entire month of November. The envelopes will be blessed with holy water, symbolizing our baptism and our connection to the Church.

We believe that the use of holy water is a powerful representation of our love for the Trinity and our commitment to living according to Christ's teachings. This tradition provides a beautiful way to honour our departed loved ones and deepen our connection to the Sacraments and to God. It's important to note that public announcement of the names in the envelopes is not necessary for the effectiveness of the prayers. The intention is a spiritual act, and its effectiveness is not influenced by public announcement.

Additionally, we kindly ask for your support in offering mass intentions with a donation, which will concretely show our participation in the celebration. This year, the proceeds of the donation through the November envelopes will go to the Rogationist Mission in Kigali, Rwanda for the construction of a school for underprivileged children in the countryside.

We understand that there may be special occasions during November, such as death anniversaries or birthdays of loved ones, and we will still accept separate mass intentions for them. These special occasions will be mentioned in the bulletin and prayers of the faithful. However, for all other intentions for our departed loved ones, we kindly request that they be channelled through the November envelopes.

Your participation and support in this meaningful initiative are greatly appreciated. Let us come together as a community to remember and honour our departed loved ones and to support a noble cause.

With gratitude, Fr Alex Clemente RCJ

ST ANTHONY'S

OFFERTORY GIVING PROGRAM

Dear Parishioners,

This weekend, we will commence the Offertory Giving program in our parish community which will run over the next three weeks. The call to generosity is God's invitation to us to deepen our faith and is a vital part of our identity as Christians. You are encouraged to prayerfully engage with this time. We look forward to growing deeper in our relationship with Christ through this process.

MELBOURNE CUP FUNDRAISER DANCE

Date: Saturday 2nd November 6.30pm-11.30pm **Venue:** Padua Hall

Entry: \$20.00 **DJ:** Marez **\$6.00 Suppers**

3 Prizes for Best Dressed TICKETS ON SALE AT ALL WEEKEND MASSES

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are currently seeking volunteers especially for the 5pm and 10.30am weekend masses. Training will be provided.

If you can volunteer, please put your name on the clipboard in the church foyer, or please contact **Kim on 0425 770 618**. Thank you.

PRIME TIMERS: Our October outing will be to Stoney's, 59 Grant St. Bacchus Marsh, Tuesday 29th at 12 o'clock. Seniors menu available. Enquiries: Ineke 0400120401 or ineke49@yahoo.com.

BINGO CALLER VOLUNTEER NEEDED

We urgently need a caller for Bingo. This involves a commitment on Tuesdays 5.30pm-10.00pm. If you are able to help please speak to **Rose Ma'ae 0460 672 571**. Bingo financially supports our Parish so we are dependant on this for our financial well being.

ST BERNARD'S

SOUL FOOD PROGRAM INC

Soul Food Program Inc has seen a huge increase in our numbers of Guests over the last few years. Last year, we provided gifts for 78 children in need. Soul Food are once again looking for generous people to be a Sponsor for one of our children this Christmas. You will be given a first name and age, and asked to buy some presents for the child, to put into a gift bag (unwrapped) and deliver to Soul Food for distribution. The present will be handed to your child at our Christmas function, or to the parent for use on Christmas Day. For many of our children, these are the only gifts they will receive for Christmas. We would like to collect the presents by the end of November, so we can be organized early. If this is something you would like to do, please call Jenny on 0408 104 155, and you will be allocated a local child in need of a little help.

SAFEGUARDING FORUM

Dear Parishioners, as notified, we have two safeguarding officers from the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne (CAM) conducting an information session in our St Bernard's Parish Centre on Wednesday, 16th October from 6.30pm to 7.30pm. We hope as many of our parishioners as possible can attend. Fr. Alex.

KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS

The Knights of the Southern Cross October meeting will be held in the Parish Centre at 8pm, Monday October 14.

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: 19th & 20th October 2024

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: Liza Fernandes & Mary Felix

8.30am: Mercy Seufatu & Geoff Sutton

10.30am: Niel Evangelista & Susan Malinov

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Dolores Turcsan & Leo Felix

8.30am: Ron Howard & 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: Josephine & Julie

8.30am: Natalie & Ron

10.30am: Leonia & Godwin

ST BERNARD'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 19th & 20th October 2024

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

5.00pm: Vicki Benson

8.30am: Moira Ross

10.30am: Beatrice Younger/Allan McManus

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Colin Remedios

8.30am: Colm Carragher

10.30am: Vanina Isah/Jenny Kearney

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

October: Greta/Grace Kratchotvil

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased:

Gladys Clarke (40 day Anniversary)

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

Donald Abela, Savior Borg, Amaggio Cushcioni, Shyamalee Candappa, Philip D'Cruz, Wildredo de Guzman, Laura Leslie, Beryl Lloyd, Giovanni Madafferi, Michelina Madafferi, Rio Manion, Franklin Michael, Salvador Pereira, Kathleen Pinto and Josephine Scicluna

Please pray for the Sick:

Teresita Arrozal, Nickolia & Klara Butkovic, Maria Caruana, Mary Caruana, Christabelle, Lydia De Vega, Melanie Fue, Bruce Hynes, Estella James, Kotinis Cornelia Kani, Judy Layton, Faamu Leiataua, Peter Manicaró, Gregory McCutcheon, Pam Meier, Damien Michael, Hazel Michael, Tony Michael, Veronica Michael, Jan Mifsud, Nickol, Caleb O'Brien, John Osborne, Anna Samy, Samantha Smith, Sina, Saleri, Charlie Spiteri, Janko Stojanovic, Uatoa Tuigamala, Clint Abela Wadge, Wai Walsh, and all those who have requested our prayers.

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

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

Isabel Aquino, William Duffy, Patricia Knight, Maureen Orr, Margaret Scott and Tim Shea.

Please pray for the Sick:

Brendan Coburn, Kathleen Dally, Frances, Caleb Silas Ginger (baby), John & Patricia Kelly, Michael Larkin, Joanne Mumford, Peter Roberts, Liz Shelley and all those who have requested our prayers.

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

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

If you would like to add a name to the list, please fill in a slip, which can be found on the Liturgy board in the Gathering space, and return the slip via the collection at mass. Please ensure you have the permission of the person or their family to add their name. Thank you.

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



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: 19th & 20th October

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

5.00pm Vigil: Julie Sequiera

8.30am: Ineke Allen

10.30am: Gilles Maitre

CHURCH FLOWERS

October: Ana

CUPPA VOLUNTEERS

To be advised.

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 : 19th & 20th October

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

Saturday: 5.00pm: Margot Short

Sunday: 8.30am: Carmel Shea

CHURCH FLOWERS

October: 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 to \$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

All use of the Parish Centre must be authorised by either the parish office or by contacting Marie Casey. Mass coordinators will unlock & lock the Parish centre before & after masses so that the toilets can be accessed.

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](#)

[Baptism of Infants | St Bernard's Catholic Parish \(stbernardsbacchusmarsh.com.au\)](#)

click on 'Faith Formation' and then 'Baptism of Infants' for all the information and the application form.

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:	Barry & Rosanna Melder	9743 5063
Group 2:	George & Doris Bonello	0431 459 668
Group 3:	Santos & Liz Schembri	0466 854 476



DIVINE MERCY NOVENA

1st Sunday of the month 3pm.

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,

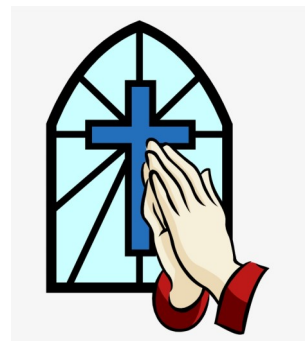
so that we may discern our journey

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

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?
But with you is found forgiveness,
O God of Israel.

FIRST READING: Wisdom 7:7-11

A reading from the book of Wisdom

I prayed, and understanding was given me;
I entreated, and the spirit of Wisdom came to me.
I esteemed her more than sceptres and thrones;
compared with her, I held riches as nothing.
I reckoned no priceless stone to be her peer,
for compared with her, all gold is a pinch of sand,
and beside her silver ranks as mud.
I loved her more than health or beauty,
preferred her to the light,
since her radiance never sleeps.
In her company all good things came to me,
at her hands riches not to be numbered.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 89:

COMMENTATOR: Fill us with your love, O Lord,
and we will sing for joy!

ALL: Fill us with your love, O Lord,
and we will sing for joy!

Make us know the shortness of our life
that we may gain wisdom of heart.
Lord, relent! Is your anger for ever?
Show pity to your servants.

In the morning, fill us with your love;
we shall exult and rejoice all our days.
Give us joy to balance our affliction
for the years when we knew misfortune.

Show forth your works to your servants;
let your glory shine on their children.
Let the favour of the Lord be upon us:
give success to the work of our hands.

NEXT WEEKEND'S READINGS

28th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING: Is 53: 10-11

SECOND READING: Heb 4:14-16

GOSPEL: Mk 10:35-45



SECOND READING Hebrews 4:12-13

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double-edged sword but more finely: it can slip through the place where the soul is divided from the spirit, or joints from the marrow; it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts. No created thing can hide from him; everything is uncovered and open to the eyes of the one to whom we must give account of ourselves.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Happy the poor in spirit;
the kingdom of heaven is theirs!
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 10:17-27

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

Jesus was setting out on a journey when a man ran up, knelt before him and put this question to him, 'Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You must not kill; You must not commit adultery; You must not steal; You must not bring false witness; You must not defraud; Honour your father and mother.' And he said to him, 'Master, I have kept all these from my earliest days.' Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him, and he said, 'There is one thing you lack. Go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' But his face fell at these words and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth.

Jesus looked round and said to his disciples, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!' The disciples were astounded by these words, but Jesus insisted, 'My children,' he said to them, 'how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' They were more astonished than ever. 'In that case' they said to one another 'who can be saved?' Jesus gazed at them. 'For men' he said 'it is impossible, but not for God: because everything is possible for God.'

Peter took this up. What about us? He asked him. "We have left everything and followed you." Jesus said, "I tell you solemnly, there is no one who has left house, brothers, sisters, father, children or land for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not be repaid a hundred times over, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and land - not without persecutions - now in this present time and, in the world to come, eternal life."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

When the Lord appears, we shall be like him,
for we shall see him as he is.

The Blessed Virgin Mary 22

The Visitation (7)

St Luke narrates in his Gospel how the Virgin Mary, after receiving news about her cousin's remarkable conception in her old age, "arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth" (Luke 1:39-40).

It is traditionally believed that Mary received the message of Elizabeth's pregnancy while at her home in Nazareth. Elizabeth was living in Ein Karem at the time, and the distance between the two villages is roughly 160 kilometres.

Ein Karem is on the outskirts of Jerusalem and is about 754 metres above sea level, while Nazareth is at 347 metres. This means Mary had to trek uphill more than 400 metres in elevation!

Besides the physical toll it must have taken on the newly pregnant Virgin Mary, the path she took had many hidden dangers. The dirt path that wound through the mountainous region is believed to have been a popular place for bandits, who would surprise unsuspecting travellers.

However, the Virgin Mary was likely not alone. While the Gospel only mentions Mary, it makes sense that Joseph would have ensured the safety of his betrothed.

According to writer J.A. Loarte, "Most likely it was Joseph who arranged the trip, looking for a caravan in which the Blessed Virgin could travel safely. He himself may have accompanied her, at least as far as Jerusalem; some commentators even think he went with Mary right to Ein Karem, which is only five miles from the capital. If so, he would have needed to return immediately to his workshop in Nazareth."

With this in mind, it's no surprise that Mary went "in haste" to visit Elizabeth, hoping that their caravan wouldn't be overrun by those who lurked in the shadows and caves of the mountains.

The Visitation presented many risks to Mary, yet she trusted that God would protect her and allow her to assist her cousin. It is a beautiful mystery, one that only deepens when you learn about the geography and the obstacles Mary had to overcome to visit Elizabeth.

Philip Kosloski, aleteia.org

Was John the Baptist born free of original sin?

The Church celebrates only three births throughout the entire year: Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and St John the Baptist. Many claim that one of the reasons for this selection of John the Baptist is tied to a popular belief that John was born free of original sin.

Is that true? The Church has never proclaimed in an official document or statement that St John the Baptist was born without original sin. On the other hand, the Church does not dismiss the idea either.

The reason why the faithful entertain such a belief is because St Luke records this in the Visitation narrative: "And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe [St John the Baptist] leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit."

This, many theologians have argued, implies that, while John was conceived with original sin, he was purified in the womb and born without it.

The Catholic Encyclopaedia summarises this argument: "Now, as the presence of any sin whatever is incompatible with the indwelling of the Holy [Spirit] in the soul, it follows that at this moment John was cleansed from the stain of original sin."

Some theologians view this episode as a type of "baptism" through which, as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains, "all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin".

Yet, however convincing this argument may be, there is no binding doctrine that declares this idea as a necessary part of Catholic belief. It may have been the case, but Catholics are not bound to believe in it.

Whatever the reality, however, this does not put John on par with the Virgin Mary.

Pope Pius IX, in a dogmatic declaration, affirmed that "the Blessed Virgin Mary, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, was preserved free from every stain of original sin is a doctrine revealed by God and, for this reason, must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful".