



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, KOROBEIT
309 MYRNIONG-KOROBEIT ROAD 3341

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT-YEAR C

1st December 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 2/12/2024-8/12/2024

MASS TIMES:

Monday	2/12	6.30pm
Tuesday	3/12	9.30am
Novena Mass and Blessing of the Bread		
Wednesday	4/12	9.30am
Thursday	5/12	9.30am
Friday	6/12	9.30am
First Friday Devotion		7.30pm
Saturday	7/12 (First Saturday)	9.00am

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

Rosary **8.30am prior to Saturday mass**

Sunday Masses

Saturday Vigil	7/12	5.00pm
Sunday	8/12	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 2/12/2024-8/12/2024

MASS TIMES:

Monday	2/12	Divine Mercy Chaplet – 3.00pm	No Mass
Tuesday	3/12		7.30am
Holy Hour			7.00pm
Wednesday	4/12		9.30am
Thursday	5/12		7.30am
Friday	6/12		7.30am
Saturday	7/12		9.00am

Sunday Mass

Saturday Vigil	7/12	5.00pm
Sunday	8/12	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 KOROBET MASS TIMES

Saturday Vigil	1st & 3rd Saturdays of the month	6.30pm
Saturday 7th & 21st December		

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 1ST SUNDAY ADVENT- YEAR C 2024

We read every day of someone who has died suddenly – in a farm accident, on the roads, stroke or heart attack, or stabbed by a violent person, who leave home and never return. As well floods, volcanoes, landslides and fire take the lives of others, suddenly, unexpected, unprepared for.

The prophetic words used by Jesus can be frightening and the events above can also be terrifying for those involved. Jesus talks of signs in the sun, moon and stars, of the heavens being shaken and the ocean in tumult. Every age has suffered disasters, causing people to think the end has come. Jesus warns us to be alert and always ready for when he comes, to lead good lives, praying for the strength to accept whatever happens.

Advent is a time when we can consider am I ready for when Jesus comes? What if it is tomorrow? How do I prepare myself? Today's reading from Thessalonians has the answer – how to live the life that God wants me to live, remembering "God loves each one of us as if there were only one of us!"



PARISH & EVENTS NOTICES

NEWS FROM THE PARISH OFFICES

FAITH FORMATION Monday 2/12 7.15pm in the Mackillop Room.
Topic Week 15: The Greatest Work on Earth; The Liturgy is God's Work and the Sacraments are his new covenant.

HOPE DOES NOT DISAPPOINT -3rd DECEMBER 2024
Please join us for a retreat night ushering Jubilee Year 2025 at St Anthony's Church, Melton South on Tuesday 3rd December 2024 7:15pm-9:30pm.
Inspirational speaker: Deacon David Reaves.
A night of reflection, prayer & songs on the real value of the sacrament of reconciliation during this 'Year of Hope'.

ST ANTHONY'S

SOLDIERS OF CHRIST-CHILDREN'S CATECHISM

Children's Catechism sessions will be held this Sunday 1st December. Suitable for children aged 5-12 years of age. After the 10.30am mass, in the Mackillop Meeting Room. The sessions will include games, Catechism activities and fun!

ST LUKE'S SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM 2025

The St Luke's Sacramental Program is for children who attend non-Catholic schools or Catholic Secondary schools and would like to receive their Sacraments— Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation. The information night will be held Thursday 30th January 2025 at St Dominic's Parish Hall 7.00pm sharp. Cost \$120.00 per child, per sacrament. Please see the application form for further details. Applications forms are available in the foyer

OLIVEWOOD BIBLICAL ITEMS FOR SALE

Next weekend 7th & 8th December there will be handcrafted olivewood biblical items for sale. These items are hand crafted in Bethlehem the Holy Land by the catholic families. Any purchase will help support the catholic community in the Holy Land and improve their livelihood and also support maintaining the Holy sites there.

ST BERNARD'S

NOVENA TO OUR LADY OF THE IMMACULATE

CONCEPTION There will be a novena to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception which will be prayed each day in the church, starting 29th November and finishing on Sat 7th December.

ST BERNARD'S CHRISTMAS LUNCH

To welcome our new parish priest and celebrate the Advent season, a Christmas Pot Luck lunch will be held on Sunday 8th December after the 10.30am mass.

Everyone is invited to bring a plate. Coffee, tea and drinks provided. There will possibly be a visit from St Nicholas depending on his schedule. Lolly bags for all good children!

CRAFT STALL AT ALL MASSES ON THE WEEKEND OF 7th and 8th DECEMBER.

Please support this Fundraising effort from the Parish Craft and Cuppa group. Great gift ideas for Christmas! Thank you!

UPCOMING SAFEGUARDING ESSENTIALS TRAINING (S.E.T.)

We will be conducting a safeguarding training session on December 11th at 6:30- 8:00p.m in our Parish Centre. All volunteers need to complete this training every 3 years.

The office has a register of volunteers' training status.

If you believe you need to update your training or would like to renew your training, please sign the clipboard in the Gathering space. The office will make contact if necessary. If you would rather complete the training online, please see below for information you will need:

Here is the link for the safeguarding training online which also gives you instructions & information about the training.
<https://melbournecatholic.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-training-and-upcoming-events/safeguarding-training-modules/>

This is the link to the training module - [Login \(melbournecatholic.org\)](https://melbournecatholic.org)

WORKING BEE

A working bee will be held to clear the grounds of the former convent 90a Main St -enter via Convent Lane - on Sat 14th Dec from 9.30am till about 1pm. It is an adult only task because of the broken glass on site so please -no children under 16.

We would appreciate help with this job. If helpers have a ute or trailer and can take rubbish to the transfer station/tip, that would be appreciated.

If you can help, please add your name to the clipboard in the Gathering Space.

ASSISTANCE NEEDED PLEASE.

There are quite a few statements and Thanksgiving envelope packs which have not been collected. In the interest of saving postage, we are calling on volunteers to help deliver these. If you are able to assist, could you please pop into the office and see Dolores about arranging the collection of these for delivery? Your help is very much appreciated.



ALONE FOR CHRISTMAS?
IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAVE NO
FAMILY OR FRIENDS TO SPEND CHRISTMAS
DAY WITH THIS YEAR...

You are welcome to join Elizabeth & family
for a delicious

Christmas Lunch

WHEN: Christmas Day
WHERE: Padua Hall
TIME: 12pm to 4pm

Please enter your name and mobile phone number on
the clipboard provided in the church foyer.

For catering purposes, the cut-off date is
Wednesday 18 December 2024.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This year we are requesting you
please bring a cash donation which will go towards our
parish hall renovations.

Contact Elizabeth on 0422 882 562 for more
information.

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: 7th & 8th December 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: Gavin Pereira & Lisa Marshall

8.30am: Leonia Jessop & Mercy Seufatu

10.30am: Rosabella Tuala & Rhys Tuala

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Aloysious Dacunha & Leo Felix

8.30am: Ron Howard & Volunteer needed

10.30am: Doris Bonello & George Bonello

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

MASS COORDINATORS

5.00pm: Annonica & Godwin

8.30am: Natalie & Ron

10.30am: Leonia & Lillian

ST BERNARD'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 7th & 8th December 2024

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

5.00pm: John Thorne

8.30am: Margaret Love & Peter Kennedy

10.30am: Dominic Van der Linden

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Vicki Benson

8.30am: John Wilson

10.30am: Vanina Isah

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

December: Jan Carragher

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased: Vilma Pinto

Vilma Pinto's funeral details :Wednesday 4th December

12.45pm Rosary and 1.00pm Funeral Mass at St Anthony's

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

Tom Dagge

Please pray for the Sick:

Teresita Arrozal, Nickolia Maria Caruana, Mary Caruana, Christabelle, Lydia De Vega, Melanie Fue, Bruce Hynes, Estela James, Kotinis Cornelia Kani, Judy Layton, Peter Manicaro, 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, Josephine Xuereb and all those who have requested our prayers. **PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED ON THIS LIST.**

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

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

Guiseppe Bacchin, Ann Bourke, Bill Cassar, Guinness Connell, Laurie Cumper, John Dodd, John Glide, Marita Miesen, Peter Mullins, Helen Rayner, Con Rigby, Gavan Shea, & Anna Spacapan.

Please pray for the Sick:

Brendan Coburn, Kathleen Dally, Dean Elms, Frances, Caleb Silas Ginger (baby), Michael Johnston, John & Patricia Kelly, Michael Larkin, Joanne Mumford, Peter Roberts, Liz Shelly 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



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: 7th & 8th December

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

5.00pm Vigil: Kim Barton
8.30am: Pat Chiles
10.30am: Geetha Vincent

CHURCH FLOWERS

December: 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 : 7th & 8th December PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

Saturday: 5.00pm: Jackie Tabone
Sunday: 8.30am: Lyn Shea

CHURCH FLOWERS

December: 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

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:	Lillian Christian	0400 441 257
Group 2:	Kalolaine & Sam Foma	0432 295 121
Group 3:	John & Pauline Osborn	9743 1437



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,

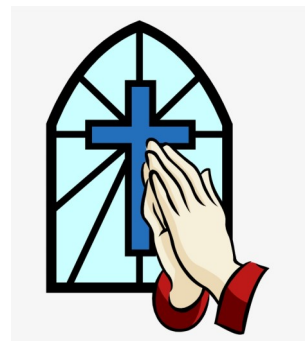
so that we may discern our journey

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

To you, I lift up my soul, O my God.
In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame.
Nor let my enemies exult over me;
and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 33:14-16

See, the days are coming - it is the Lord who speaks - when
I am going to fulfil the promise I made to the House of Israel
and the House of Judah:

'In those days and at that time,
I will make a virtuous Branch grow for David,
who shall practise honesty and integrity in the land.
In those days Judah shall be saved
and Israel shall dwell in confidence.
And this is the name the city will be called:
The Lord-our-integrity.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 24

Commentator: To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

All: To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

Lord, make me know your ways.
Lord, teach me your paths.
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:
for you are God my Saviour.

The Lord is good and upright.
He shows the path to those who stray,
he guides the humble in the right path;
he teaches his way to the poor.

His ways are faithfulness and love
for those who keep his covenant and will.
The Lord's friendship is for those who revere him;
to them he reveals his covenant.

To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

NEXT WEEKEND'S READINGS

2nd SUNDAY OF ADVENT-YEAR C

FIRST READING: Baruch 5:1-9

SECOND READING: Phil 1:3-6, 8-11

GOSPEL: Lk 3:1-6



SECOND READING 1 Thessalonians 3:12 - 4:2

May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and
make you love one another and the whole human race as
much as we love you. And may he so confirm your hearts
in holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of our
God and Father when our Lord Jesus Christ comes with all
his saints.

Finally, brothers, we urge you and appeal to you in the
Lord Jesus to make more and more progress in the kind of
life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants, as
you learnt from us, and as you are already living it. You
have not forgotten the instructions we gave you on the
authority of the Lord Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Lord, show us your mercy and love,
and grant us your salvation.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

Jesus said to his disciples: 'There will be signs in the sun
and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered
by the clamour of the ocean and its waves; men dying of
fear as they await what menaces the world, for the powers
of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of
Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When
these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your
heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.'

'Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with
debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and
that day will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap. For it
will come down on every living man on the face of the
earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to
survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with
confidence before the Son of Man.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its
increase.

The Blessed Virgin Mary 26

The Visitation (11)

On Mary's Magnificat, and ours (cont.)

In the light of these principles (see bulletin for November 3) let us now try to apply Mary's canticle to ourselves, to the Church and soul, to learn what we must do to "be like" Mary not only in words but also in deeds.

Where Mary proclaims the putting down of the powerful and proud, the Magnificat reminds the Church of the essential message it must announce to the world. It teaches the Church to be "prophetic". The Church lives and practises the Virgin's canticle when it repeats with Mary: "He has put down the mighty from their thrones, the rich he has sent empty away!"

The Church repeats this with faith, making a distinction between it and all the other announcements it also has the right to make concerning justice, peace, and the social order in so far as it is the qualified interpreter of the natural law and the guardian of Christ's commandment on fraternal love.

If the two views are distinct, they are not, however, separate and without reciprocal influence. On the contrary, the proclamation of faith of what God *has done* in the history of salvation (the view of the Magnificat) becomes the best indication of what man in his turn *must do* in his own personal history, and, rather, of what the Church itself must do on account of the charity it must show to the rich, in view of their salvation.

More than "an incitement to pull down the powerful from their thrones to exalt those of low degree", the Magnificat is a healthy warning addressed to the rich and powerful about the tremendous risk they run just as the parable of the rich man will later on be in the intentions of Jesus.

The Magnificat is not therefore the only way of facing the problem that is very much felt today of wealth and poverty, of hunger and having too much; there are other

legitimate ways that come to us from history, and not from faith, and to which Christians rightly give their support and the Church its discernment. But the evangelical way must be proclaimed by the Church always and to all men as its specific mandate and through which it must support the common efforts of all men of good will. It is always universally valid and relevant.

If by chance a time and place existed in which there was no longer any injustice or social inequality among men, but everyone was rich and satisfied, the Church would still have to proclaim, as Mary did, that God has sent the rich away empty. Actually, it would have to proclaim it with even greater energy. The Magnificat is just as relevant in rich countries as in poor countries.

There are plans and aspects of life which can be grasped only with the help of a special light, the bare eye is not sufficient; we need infra-red or ultra-violet rays. The image this special light gives is very different and surprising to those who are used to seeing the same phenomena in a natural light.

Thanks to the word of God, the Church has a different image of the world situation, the only lasting image, because it is obtained with the light of God and it is the image God himself has.

The Church cannot keep this image hidden. It must spread it untiringly, make it known to all men because their eternal destiny is at stake. It is the image that will remain when the "pattern of this world" has passed.

At times it must make it known through simple, direct and prophetic words, like those Mary used; in the way we express things we are intimately and serenely persuaded of. This must be done even at the cost of appearing ingenuous and cut off from this world according to the prevailing opinion and spirit of the time.

Cardinal Rahniero Cantalamessa, aleteia.org

To be continued