



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

6th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME-YEAR A

12th February 2023

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Fabian Smith
ASSISTANT PRIESTS: Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint and Fr Samuel Kapani

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Lesley Morffew

Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson

Parish Office Hours: Mon 9.00am-12.00noon

Tue 9.00-4.00pm Wed 9.00-5.30pm

Thu/Fri 9.00-4.00pm

Email: parishsecretary83@gmail.com

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

Sacramental Coordinator/ Bookkeeper: Naim Chdid

Parish Office Hours:

Tue 9.00am-11.30am Wed & Thu 9.00am-1.00pm

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 **Website:** www.crcmelton.com.au

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

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

Naim Chid	0437 004 790
Lillian Christian - Vice Chair	0400 441 257
Stephen Fernandes	0439 743 533
Amy Honrade	0457 042 695
Natalie Howard - Chair	0492 947 201
Rose Ma'ae	0460 672 571

EX-OFFICIO: Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint,
Fr Samuel Kapani, Damien Schuster and Bill Hill
Council Secretary: Judy Johnson

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

Shane Cook -School Advisory Board	0419 999 052
Peter Farren	0418 594 501
Peter Kennedy - Secretary	0407 778 119
Moir Ross	0400 675 056
Aaron Russell - Chair	0401 927 502

EX-OFFICIO:

Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint and Fr Samuel Kapani
Sr Mary Sarah Galbraith

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Coordinator/Officer: Godwin Barton (0425 734 449) **Officers:** St Anthony's - Lorraine Tellis 0437 658 423 & Geetha Vincent 0478 112 996
St Bernard's - Margaret Love (0437 247 779) Evana Miesen & Ron Geurts

Items for the newsletter must be submitted by Tuesday 6.00pm. Please email judyparishnews@gmail.com or call 0414 007 009

Judy Johnson's office hours: Mon-Wed 9am-1pm

MASS AND DEVOTIONS

ST ANTHONY'S MELTON SOUTH 13/2/2023-19/2/2023

MASS TIMES:

Monday 13/2	6.30pm
Tuesday 14/2	9.30am & 6.30pm
Wednesday 15/2	7.30am & 9.30am
Thursday 16/2	9.30am
Friday 17/2	9.30am

Rosary at 9.00am before 9.30am morning masses



Sunday Masses

Saturday 18/2	5.00pm
Sunday 19/2	8.30am & 10.30am

Confession available 30 minutes prior to each Mass.
No Confession on Monday.

ST BERNARD'S BACCHUS MARSH 13/2/2023-19/2/2023

MASS TIMES:

Monday 13/2	No Mass
Tuesday 14/2	7.30am
Holy Hour	7.30pm
Wednesday 15/2	9.30am
Thursday 16/2	7.30am
Friday 17/2	7.30am

Saturday 18/2	9.00am
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Sunday Masses

Saturday 18/2	5.00pm
Sunday 19/2	8.30am & 10.30am

(Rosary in the Chapel 10.00am on Sundays)
Confession available 30 minutes prior to each Mass.

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

KOROBET

MASS TIMES

VIGIL	18/2	6.30pm
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PARISHIONER'S FIRST COLLECTION/SECOND COLLECTION

Parishioners who normally give cash each weekend for the collections,
if they wish to donate, are now able to go to the link below and make their payments online.

The link to the St Anthony's Parish is: <https://bit.ly/CDFpayMeltonSouth>

The link to the St Bernard's Parish is: <https://bit.ly/CDFpayBacchusMarsh>

Please put your name and thanksgiving number if you know it as a reference. Thank you.

REFLECTION 6th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – Sr Mary Fermio rsj

We are all called to life in the Kingdom of Heaven and the way we live determines that, just as the way we live our ordinary lives determines our happiness and serenity here and hereafter.

If Jesus was giving this talk **today**, what would he say? Would he accuse us of killing creation, the creatures given to us? Of killing each other with the illicit use and sale of drugs and alcohol? Of breaking road rules and driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol or over the speed limit?

What would Jesus say about the wide use of pornography, human trafficking, skimpy clothing, all of which show a lack of respect for others and that God lives within us through Baptism? Would he talk about broken marriage vows, domestic violence, abuse of children, bullying, the misuse of Social Media and failure to be truthful and straightforward?

Only a deep and loving relationship with our God will enable us to find our way through the forest of temptations we may meet. Communication and listening through prayer and reflection on Scriptures will show the way to Jesus who said: I am the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE.

Are the lines of communication open between me and my God?



PARISH & EVENTS NOTICES

NEWS FROM THE PARISH OFFICES

FAITH FORMATION

Our Faith Formation sessions begin at 7.00pm every Tuesday at St Anthony's Church of Padua, 67-75 Exford Road, Melton South (Age 16+) Faith Formation topic this week: Baptism and Confirmation.

PASTORAL CARE APPEAL 2023 –THIS WEEKEND

This weekend is the Pastoral Care Appeal. Donations from our parish community will help the Chaplaincy programs to support the most vulnerable people in our community. Your support and generosity will ensure that Catholic Chaplains can continue to be the messengers of God's mercy, love and compassion. Parishioners are encouraged to offer prayers and financial support to help provide continued spiritual and emotional comfort to individuals and families in Victoria facing, illness, pain, loneliness, grief and death. You can donate using the envelopes available in the foyer or online at www.catholiccarevic.org.au or call (03) 9287 5513

PALMS

We have a basket in the foyer for your palms, from last year. These palms will be burnt on Tuesday 21st February and the ashes will be used for our Ash Wednesday Masses on the 22nd February.

LAMPS ALIGHT SPEAKER SERIES 2023

Fr Paschal Corby OFM, will present our first talk on *The Dignity of Woman and the Order of Love* at St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Parish on Saturday 18 Feb. We'll begin at 9am with Holy Mass followed by Adoration and an opportunity for Confession. Father's talk and discussion begins at 10:30am and concludes at midday. No cost, donations gratefully accepted. Please book using the Trybooking code www.trybooking.com/CFDVR. Contact: Sr Mary Sarah, melbourne@op-tn.org for more information. Bring a friend and we look forward to seeing you soon!

FAMILY ENRICHMENT AUSTRALIA – VICTORIA

The Family enrichment Australia-Victoria invites you to participate in First Steps, a course designed for parents with children ages 0-3 years or even parents-to-be. This course aims to help you gain the skills you need to navigate the different challenges that arise whilst raising kids in this age group. The Course uses the Harvard Case Study Method as a means to explore common parenting issues and to learn to think of other possible solutions to situations other than your own.

For each topic, couples will meet in the meeting room at the rear of Saint Catherine of Siena, Catholic Church, Caroline Springs on a Sunday from 1:30-4pm. beginning 5th March

The cost of the program is \$250 per couple. You may register online at: www.fea.org.au

Registrations close Feb 26, however places are limited!

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Tara on 0434 636 719.



Please join Catholic Theological College to
celebrate 50 years of theological education at the
Sung Celebration of Evening Prayer
Guest Speaker Dr Graeme Blackman AO
Chancellor of University of Divinity
Date: Sunday 5th March 2023 at 3.30pm
Location: St Patrick's Cathedral, East Melbourne
Enquiries: sarah.styring@ctc.edu.au or Phone 9412 3333

ST ANTHONY'S

VALENTINE'S DAY DANCE-NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday 18th February

6pm –10pm Padua Hall

\$10 adults \$5 Child (6-12years)

Food available for purchase

DJ

Tickets available after all weekend masses this week.

BINGO

Bingo is held every Tuesday night at 7pm in the Padua Hall, St Anthony's Parish. Complimentary tea and coffee available.

Canteen services available. Come along and enjoy a great night, and with a bit of luck you could be one of our lucky winners!

ST BERNARD'S

ST. BERNARD'S SOCIAL EVENT!

Come and join us as we celebrate Shrove Tuesday with Pancakes (a variety of toppings available) and a cuppa in the Parish centre, followed by a short Lenten talk.

When? Tuesday 21st February

Time? 6.00pm

Cost? Gold coin donation

For catering purposes, please fill in the attendance form in the foyer. Hope to see you there!

MORNING TEA-THIS WEEKEND

There will be a morning tea after the 8.30am and 10.30am Masses this Sunday, February 12th. All welcome.

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: 18th & 19th February

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

8.30am: Sefulu Seufatu

10.30am: Susan Malinov

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Ann Tennakoon

8.30am: Geoff Sutton

10.30am: Frank Carreon

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

MASS COORDINATORS

5.00pm: Annonica & Coleen

8.30am: Leonia & Lillian

10.30am: Annonica & Lillian

ST BERNARD'S MINISTRIES

MINISTERS OF THE WORD : THIS WEEKEND

5.00pm: Maureen Zahra

8.30am: Dominican Sisters

10.30am: Beatrice Younger

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Vikki Benson

MINISTERS OF THE WORD: 18th & 19th February

5.00pm: John Thorne

8.30am: Nathan Costin

10.30am: Chloe Lindorff

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Colin Remedios

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

February: Sr Mary Fermio

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased:

John Paul Montejo

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

Tamafuata Sefo Amoa, Gina Barker, Arthur Chiles & Falanai Aukuso Kelsall.

Please pray for the Sick:

Hazel Michael, Nickolia & Klara Butkovic, Maria Caruana, Mary Caruana, Christabelle, Lydia De Vega, Melanie Fue, Bruce Hynes, Kotinis Cornelia Kani, Judy Layton, Peter Manicaro, Reg Marslen, Lisa Melia, Damien Michael, Tony Michael, Veronica Michael, Nickol, Ian Novak, Kathleen Novak, Caleb O'Brien, John Osborne, Vaivasa Ruth Perez, Catherine Roberts, Peter Roberts, Pat Roberts, Anna Samy, Samantha Smith, Charlie Spiteri, Janko Stojanovic, Christina Tuigamala, Uatoa Tuigamala, Clint Abela Wadge, Wai Walsh and all those who have requested our prayers. **PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED ON THIS LIST.**

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Father we lift up all those who are facing illness. We ask that You bring healing, comfort and peace to their bodies. Calm their fears and let them experience the healing power of your love. Amen



ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased:

John Fermio and Ernie Cook

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

Guido Boratto, Dee, Elizabeth Jones, Telly Khomar, Samara Vereker, Noeline Wadey, Stanley Walsh, Laurie Wheelahan.

Please pray for the Sick:

Patricia Allison, Susan Alvarez, Noah Barlow, Chaiel Balcombe, Michael Barrett, Peter Bennett, Carmel Berry, Steven Braszel, Tina Bower, Fred Capuano, Gary Ching, Chris, Josephine Cilia, Robyn Cola, Ted Cooling, Lindsay & Kathleen Dally, Judy Delahey, Theresa Dockter, Allison Evans, Helen Evans, George Farrell, Justin Fernandez, Pasquale Gagliarbi, Mario Galea, Cynthia Goodyear, Gwen Green, Joe Gristi, Adam Hillier, Leonie Kervin, Elle Hillman, Kiahni Holamotutama, Alicia Holborn, Chaiel Jackson, Matthew Jansen, David Kasprzak, Michael Larkin, Marie Maloney, Patricia Marechal, Brian Marshall, Debbie Marshall, Jordanis Mary Pauline McDonald, Ian McKechnie, Marcus Meno, Paul Mullin, Arthur Pape, Michael Paterson, Georgia Peacock, Mitchell Prendergast, Peter Roberts, Ken Shaw, Terry Sims, Marian Smith, Elizabeth Stehmann, Colin Taffe, Catherine Time, Susan Trist, Stephen Van Eede, John Van Orsouw, Angela Vicum, Louis Vogels, Barry Walsh, Cath Wheelahan, Jayne Wilkins, 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: 18th & 19th February

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

5.00pm Vigil: Julie Sequiera
8.30am: Ineke Allen
10.30am: Gilles Maitre

CUPPA VOLUNTEERS

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

CHURCH FLOWERS

February: Tuala Family



ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

Welfare Number: 1800 305 330
The Melton South Conference meet every 3rd Tuesday morning in the Meeting Room 10.30am.
New members most welcome, training provided.
Non perishable items within the use by date can be left in the 'drop box' in the Church foyer.
We cannot accept re-packaged food.

COMBINED CHURCHES CARING MELTON INC

We're here to support City of Melton residents get ahead through access to our foodbank and other community programs. It's never just about the food or the budget help, it's about recognising the beauty that is in the person and bringing it out so they can be their best.
Address: 100 Coburn Road Melton South 9747 6811

God, strengthen and sustain all those who volunteer in our Churches; that with patience and understanding they may love and care for your people; and grant that together they may follow with Jesus Christ offering to you their gifts and talents.



ST BERNARD'S

WEEKEND VOLUNTEERS : 18th & 19th February

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

Saturday: 5.00pm Marj Tung
Sunday: 8.30am Dianne Shelly
10.30am Natalia Klenkowski

CHURCH FLOWERS

February: Deborah Hosking



PRESBYTERY & CHURCH GROUNDS-MOWING

February: Stuart Robertson & Sean Gianì

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY:

Welfare Number is 1800 305 330.
The Vinnies Store is now located at Shop 19, The Village, 164-190 Main Street Bacchus Marsh
The store is open 7 days a week. If you are able to volunteer and would like some more information, please contact the Store Manager on 8199 4205.

THE NEIGHBOURS PLACE

The Neighbours' Place is a Christian not-for-profit organisation whose aim is to serve people of the **Moorabool Shire**, west of Melbourne Australia, who are disadvantaged, at risk or temporarily unable to feed themselves or their family and who are in need of emergency food relief.

NILS is a **No Interest Loans Scheme** for assistance of up \$1500 for things like white goods, furniture and minor car repairs to keep life going.

We are located at [77 Main Street, Bacchus Marsh](#)
Phone: 03 5367 6222
Email: neighbourspl@iinet.net.au
Hours of Operation: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9.30am-12.30pm. Closed on public holidays.

SOUL FOOD

Soul Food provides a free community meal each Wednesday (excluding school holidays), in the Uniting Church Hall, Gisborne Rd, Bacchus Marsh. Meals are served up at 12noon. All are welcome and this is a free event. No need to book, just come along.

PARISH CENTRE BOOKING

Tel: 5367 3427 Mon—Fri 9.00am to 6.00pm
Hall Managers: Marie & Terry Casey

FAITH FORMATION

ST ANTHONY'S AND ST BERNARD'S

BAPTISM PREPARATION PROGRAM– ST ANTHONY'S AND ST BERNARD'S

Dear Parishioners, the Parishes of St Anthony's and St Bernard's have updated their Baptism Preparation Program.

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.

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 Fabian, Fr Samuel or Fr Lucas .

FATIMA STATUE—ST ANTHONY'S

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

Group 1:	Darian & Hoan Pertz	0431 961 958
Group 2:	Kathleen McCurry	0429 685 180
Group 3:	Aubrey & Doreen Smith	0433 003 322

DIVINE MERCY NOVENA

1st Sunday of the Month-3.00pm



PRAYER TO ST MICHAEL

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle,
be our protection against the wickedness
and snares of the Devil; may God rebuke him,
we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the
heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits, who prowl
through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.



NEO-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

[bow during the next line]

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen



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

Be my protector, O God,
a mighty stronghold to save me.
For you are my rock, my stronghold!
Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

FIRST READING Sirach 15:15-20

If you wish, you can keep the commandments,
to behave faithfully is within your power.
He has set fire and water before you;
put out your hand to whichever you prefer.
Man has life and death before him;
whichever a man likes better will be given him.
For vast is the wisdom of the Lord;
he is almighty and all-seeing.
His eyes are on those who fear him,
he notes every action of man.
He never commanded anyone to be godless,
he has given no one permission to sin.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 118

Commentator: Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord!

All: Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord!

They are happy whose life is blameless,
who follow God's law!
They are happy those who do his will,
seeking him with all their hearts.

You have laid down your precepts
to be obeyed with care.
May my footsteps be firm
to obey your statutes.

Bless your servant and I shall live
and obey your word.
Open my eyes that I may consider
the wonders of your law.

Teach me the demands of your statutes
and I will keep them to the end.
Train me to observe your law,
to keep it with my heart.

Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord!

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 2:6-10

We have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age, which are coming to their end. The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began. It is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; we teach what scripture calls: the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him.

These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth;
you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 5:17-37

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish them but to complete them. I tell you solemnly, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved. Therefore, the man who infringes even one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of heaven; but the man who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of heaven.

'For I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

'You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court; if a man calls his brother "Fool" he will answer for it before the Sanhedrin; and if a man calls him "Renegade" he will answer for it in hell fire. So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering. Come to terms with your opponent in good time while you are still on the way to the court with him, or he may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. I tell you solemnly, you will not get out till you have paid the last penny.

'You have learnt how it was said: You must not commit adultery. But I say this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye should cause you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body thrown into hell. And if your right hand should cause you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body go to hell.

'It has also been said: Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a writ of dismissal. But I say this to you: everyone who divorces his wife, except for the case of fornication, makes her an adulteress; and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

'Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not break your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. But I say this to you: do not swear at all, either by heaven, since that is God's throne; or by the earth, since that is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, since that is the city of the great king. Do not swear by your own head either, since you cannot turn a single hair white or black. All you need say is "Yes" if you mean yes, "No" if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

They ate and had their fill,
and what they craved the Lord gave them;
they were not disappointed in what they craved.

NEXT WEEKEND'S READINGS

7th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME- YEAR A

First Reading: Lev 19:1-2, 17-18;

Second Reading: 1 Cor 3:16-23;

Gospel: Mt 5:38-48



The Psalms XVI

Psalm 119 (118) (Part Two of two parts)

The Law of the Lord, the object of the passionate love of the Psalmist, as well as of every believer, is a source of life. The desire to understand it, to observe it and to direct the whole of one's being by it is the characteristic of every righteous person who is faithful to the Lord, and who "on his law ... meditates day and night", as Psalm 1 recites (v. 2). The law of God is a way to be kept "in the heart", as the *Shema* in Deuteronomy says: "Hear, O Israel: And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."

The Law of God, at the centre of life, demands that the heart listen. It is a listening that does not consist of servile but rather of filial, trusting and obedience. Listening to the word is a personal encounter with the Lord of life, an encounter that must be expressed in concrete decisions and become a journey and a "*sequela*". When Jesus is asked what one should do to inherit eternal life, he points to observance of the Law but indicates what should be done to bring it to completion: "But you lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me! (Mark 10: 21ff). Fulfilment of the Law is the following of Jesus, travelling on the road that Jesus took, in the company of Jesus.

Psalm 119 thus brings us to the encounter with the Lord and orients us to the Gospel. There is a verse in it on which I would now like to reflect: it is verse 57: "The Lord is my portion; I promise to keep his words."

In other Psalms too, the person praying affirms that the Lord is his "portion", his inheritance: "The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup," Psalm 16 (15) says. "God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever" is the protestation of faith of the faithful person in Psalm 73 (72). And, again, in Psalm 142 (141), the Psalmist cries to the Lord: "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living."

The term "portion" calls to mind the event of the division of the Promised Land among the tribes of Israel, when no piece of land was assigned to the Levites because their "portion" was the Lord himself.

Two texts of the Pentateuch, using the term in question, are explicit in this regard. The Lord said to Aaron: "You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any *portion* among them; I am your *portion* and your inheritance among the people of Israel." As the Book of Numbers (18:20) declares and as Deuteronomy reaffirms: "Therefore Levi has no *portion* or inheritance with his brothers; the Lord is his inheritance, as the Lord your God said to him" (Deuteronomy 10:9).

The Priests, who belong to the tribe of Levi, cannot be landowners in the land that God was to bequeath as a legacy to his people, thus bringing to completion the promise he had made to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-7). The ownership of land, a fundamental element for permanence and for survival, was a sign of blessing

because it presupposed the possibility of building a house, of raising children, of cultivating the fields and of living on the produce of the earth.

Well, the Levites, mediators of the divine blessing, unlike the other Israelites could not own possessions, this external sign of blessing and source of subsistence. Totally dedicated to the Lord, they had to live on him alone, reliant on his provident love and on the generosity of their brethren without any other inheritance since God was their portion, God was the land that enabled them to live to the full.

The person praying in Psalm 119 then applies this reality to himself: "the Lord is my portion." His love for God and for his word leads him to make the radical decision to have the Lord as his one possession and also to treasure his words as a precious gift more valuable than any legacy or earthly possession.

There are two different ways in which verse 57 may be translated. It could also be translated: "My portion, Lord, as I have said, is to preserve your words." The two translations are not contradictory but complete each other: the Psalmist meant that his portion was the Lord but that preserving the divine words was also part of his inheritance, as he was to say later in verse 111: "Your testimonies are my heritage for ever; yea, they are the joy of my heart." This is the happiness of the Psalmist: like the Levites, he has been given the word of God as his portion, his inheritance.

These verses are also of great importance for all of us. First of all, for priests, who are called to live on the Lord and his word alone with no other means of security, with him as their one possession and as their only source of true life. In this light, one understands the free choice of celibacy for the Kingdom of Heaven in order to rediscover it in its beauty and power.

Yet these verses are also important for all the faithful, the People of God that belong to him alone, "a kingdom and priests" for the Lord (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6,5:10), called to the radicalism of the Gospel, witnesses of the life brought by Christ, the new and definitive "High Priest" who gave himself as a sacrifice for the salvation of the world (Hebrews 2:17). The Lord and his word: these are our "land", in which to live in communion and in joy.

Let us therefore permit the Lord to instil this love for his word in our hearts and to grant that we may always place him and his holy will at the centre of our lives. Let us ask that our prayers and the whole of our lives be illuminated by the word of God, the lamp to light our footsteps and a light on our path, as Psalm 119 says, so that we may walk safely in the land of men. And may Mary, who generously welcomed the Word, be our guide and comfort, the polestar that indicates the way to happiness.

Then we too shall be able to rejoice in our prayers, like the praying person of Psalm 16, in the unexpected gifts of the Lord and in the undeserved legacy that fell to us: "The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup ... the lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage" (Psalm 16:5,6).