



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 MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST-YEAR C

19th June 2022

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Fabian Smith
ASSISTANT PRIESTS: Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint /Father Marcus Goulding

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Lesley Morffew
Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson
Parish Office Hours: Monday 9.00am-12noon
Tue 9am-4pm Wed 9am-5.30pm Thu /Fri 9am-4pm
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: 0477 155 210
Email: principal@slweirviews.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.slweirviews.catholic.edu.au

Catholic Regional College - Melton (Years 7-12)

Principal: Marlene Jorgensen **Phone:** 8099 6000
109-141 Bulmans Rd, West Melton, 3337 **Website:** www.crcmelton.com.au

ST BERNARD'S PARISH

Parish Secretary: Dolores Turcsan
Admin Assistant: Judy Johnson
Sacramental Coordinator/ Bookkeeper:
Naim Chdid
Parish Office Hours:
Tue 10.30am-1.00pm Wed & Thu 9.00am-1.00pm
Email: bacchusmarsh@cam.org.au
Website: www.stbernardsbacchusmarsh.com.au

St Bernard's School **Principal:**
19a Gisborne Rd, Bacchus Marsh VIC 3340
Phone: (03) 5366 5800
Email: principal@sbbacchusmarsh.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.sbbacchusmarsh.catholic.edu.au

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL COUNCIL

Naim Chid	0437 004 790
Lillian Christian - Vice Chair	0400 441 257
Stephen Fernandes	0439 743 533
Amy Honrade	9747 0078
Natalie Howard - Chair	0492 947 201
Rose Ma'ae	0460 672 571

EX-OFFICIO: Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint,
Fr Marcus Goulding, 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
Maira Ross	0400 675 056
Aaron Russell - Chair	0401 927 502

EX-OFFICIO:
Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint and Fr Marcus Goulding

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Coordinator: Godwin Barton (0425 734 449) **Officers:** St Anthony's -Karina Dunne, Lorraine Tellis & Geetha Vincent
St Bernard's - Margaret Love (0437 247 779) Evana Miesen & Ron Geurts

Items for the newsletter must be submitted by Wednesday 1.00pm. Please email judyparishnews@gmail.com or call 0414 007 009

MASS AND DEVOTIONS

ST ANTHONY'S MELTON SOUTH 20/6/22-26/6/22

MASS TIMES:

Monday 20/6	6.30pm
Tuesday 21/6	9.30am
Holy Hour	5.30pm
followed by Mass at	6.30pm
Wednesday 22/6	7.30am & 9.30am
Thursday 23/6	9.30am
Friday 24/6	7.30am & 9.30am

Rosary 9.00am before 9.30am weekday Mass.



Sunday Masses

Saturday 25/6	5.00pm
Sunday 26/6	8.30am, 10.30am & 5.00pm

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

ST BERNARD'S BACCHUS MARSH 20/6/22-26/6/22

MASS TIMES:

Monday 20/6	No Mass	Rosary	7.30pm
with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for one hour			
Tuesday 21/6			7.30am
Holy Hour			7.30pm
Wednesday 22/6			9.30am
Thursday 23/6			7.30am
Friday 24/6			9.30am
Saturday 25/6			9.00am

Sunday Masses

Saturday 25/6	5.00pm
Sunday 26/6	8.30am & 10.30am

Confession available 30 minutes prior to each Mass.

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

KOROBET

VIGIL MASS

6.30pm

If you need a Priest in the case of an emergency please call 0456 718 965

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.

REFLECTION FOR THE FEAST OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST-Mary Fermio rsj

Sharing a meal together is a way of developing a relationship or family unity. Bread is usually a common denominator and often wine is included in a meal, especially a celebratory one.

The feeding of the crowd with bread and fish reveals Jesus' caring nature for the people. Without nourishment he knew they would not be able to journey home and could fall from weakness and hunger. Jesus used what was generously shared by a child.

We could sit and imagine the conversation in the crowd as the disciples went around distributing a seemingly endless supply of bread and fish with even twelve baskets over. Where did this come from? No one left to do shopping! Nowhere to go to do shopping!

At our Mass Jesus uses common elements of bread and wine to nourish us with his own Body and Blood thus strengthening us for our journey. We are never refused, there is always enough.

This sharing in our Parish Community unites us and we become the living Body of Christ.

What does this mean for me?

What does this call forth from me?

What am I called to share with my parish family?



PARISH & EVENTS NOTICES

NEWS FROM THE PARISH OFFICES

THINKING OF BECOMING CATHOLIC?

Looking for love? Needing hope? Seeking God's love?

Find peace, hope and love through the Catholic Faith. Call our Catechist Naim Chdid to learn more 0437 004 790.

Classes begin on the 23rd August at 7.00pm at St Anthony's Church of Padua 67-75 Exford Road, Melton South (Age 16+).



SAFEGUARDING WORKSHOP – SAVE THE DATE

The Victorian Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) has released 11 new Victorian Child Safety Standards (VCSS) that will come into effect on 1 July 2022.

Your friendly and caring 'Safeguarding Team' at St Anthony's Catholic Parish, Melton South is running a Workshop on

Saturday, 16 July 2022 to facilitate the understanding and implementation of the necessary changes.

It is a requirement that all Parish Leaders, Coordinators, current and future Volunteers attend the Workshop to keep abreast with the updates and new required processes.

The invitation is also extended to all Parishioners, including Parents/Carers, who have a keen interest in the safety of young children and vulnerable adults.

Any queries, please call Godwin Barton on 0425 734 449 or Margaret Love on 0437 247 779

Save the Date: Saturday, 16 July 2022 - 9:30am – 11:00am in the Padua Hall

ST ANTHONY'S

PRIME TIMERS

Our June outing will be Tuesday 28th June at noon to Back to Bacchus. 178 Main st Bacchus Marsh. Senior meal is \$12.00.

RSVP 24th June to confirm numbers.

Email ineke49@yahoo.com or 0400120401.

The Werribee Zoo trip was cancelled due to the bad weather.

Thanks, hope to see you there..

ST BERNARD'S

THIS SUNDAY

CELEBRATE CORPUS CHRISTI AT ST BERNARD'S

Sunday, 19th June 2022

10.30am Solemn Mass

11.30am Eucharistic Procession & Benediction

On the Solemnity of Corpus Christi we celebrate the gift of Christ's Body and Blood in the Most Holy Eucharist. We will mark this feast at St Bernard's with a Eucharistic Procession along Manor St, Crook St and Lerderderg St. In case of inclement weather, we will have a Holy Hour instead of the Procession.

FATHER MARCUS' FAREWELL

Fr Marcus will celebrate his last weekend Masses at St Bernard's on the 2nd and 3rd of July. A farewell lunch will be held in St Bernard's Parish Centre following the 10.30am Mass on Sunday 3rd July. Please bring a plate of food to share. Contact Dagmar van der Linden on 0431 676 017 for more information.

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH CORPORATE DINNER

VENUE: Tabcorp Park
2 Ferris Road Melton 3337

DATE: 22nd October 2022

TIME: 6pm till late

DRESS CODE: Black Tie

ADULT: \$100 per head (3-course meal)

CHILD: \$50 (12 years and under)

LIVE BAND—FUN FOR ALL—GROUP ENTERTAINMENT

RSVP: 1st October 2022

YOUR DONATION IS MUCH APPRECIATED AND WILL GO TOWARDS FUNDING THE EXTENSION OF PADUA HALL

CONTACT: JULIE S: 0402 182 458
ANA T: 0406 503 363



WORSHIP NEWS

ALL VOLUNTEERS IN OUR PARISH MUST HAVE A CURRENT AND VALID WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

ST ANTHONY'S MINISTRIES

NEXT WEEKEND ROSTER: 25th & 26th June

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 Vigil: Stephen Fernandes

8.30am: Mercy Seufatu

10.30am: Romeo Sacris

5.00pm: Dolores Turcsan

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm Vigil: Gavin Pereira

8.30am: Geoff Sutton

10.30am: George Bonello

5.00pm: Not rostered

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

MASS COORDINATORS

5.00pm: Coleen & Godwin

8.30am: Natalie & Ron

10.30am: Godwin & Lillian

5.00pm: Leonia & Olen

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE

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

Nellie Chiles, Phyllis Gilder, Margherita Grech, Salvina Pace, Sergio Robert Pin, Lucia Savona & Victor Vella

Please pray for the Sick:

Hazel Michael, Nickolia & Klara Butkovic, Maria Caruana, Mary Caruana, Jamie Coghlan, Christabelle, Melanie Fue, Bruce Hynes, Judy Layton, Peter Manicaró, Reg Marslen, Lisa Melia, Damien Michael, Tony Michael, Veronica Michael, Nickol, Paul Nowak, Caleb O'Brien, John Osborne, Catherine Roberts, Peter Roberts, Pat Roberts, Samantha Smith, Charlie Spiteri, Janko Stojanovic, Christina Tuigamala, Uatoa Tuigamala, Clint Abela Wadge, and 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 MINISTRIES

MINISTERS OF THE WORD : THIS WEEKEND

5.00pm: Vikki Benson

8.30am: Margaret Love

10.30am: Charlotte Lindorff

MINISTERS OF THE WORD: 25th & 26th June

5.00pm: Evana Miesen

8.30am: Gerard O'Shea

10.30am: Dominic Van Der Linden

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

June: Margaret Love

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased: John Nabbs

Funeral Mass will be held for John Nabbs on Monday 20th June at 1:30pm.

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

Fairy Bellman, John Cavka, Maria de Freitas, Frances Farrugia, Henry Hocking, Anton Jakobovic, John Madigan, Dorothy Shelly, James Vallence, Magdalena Wasilewski, Noreen Wheelahan, & Jean Young.

Please pray for the Sick:

Patricia Allison, Noah Barlow, Chaiel Balcombe, Michael Barrett, Peter Bennett, Steven Braszel, Tina Bower, Fred Capuano, Gary Ching, Chris, Josephine Cilia, Robyn Cola, Ted Cooling, Lindsay & Kathleen Dally, Judy Delahey, Jack DeLuca, 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, Catherine Time, Susan Trist, Stephen Van Eede, John Van Orsouw, Angela Vicum, Louis Vogels, Barry Walsh, Cath Wheelahan, Jayne Wilkins, Patricia Yazbek, & Betty Young. **(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 AND VALID WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

ST ANTHONY'S

WEEKEND VOLUNTEERS: 25th & 26th June

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

5.00pm Vigil: Liza Fernandes
8.30am: Mercy Seufatu
10.30am: Gilles Maitre

CUPPA VOLUNTEERS—25th & 26th June

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

CHURCH FLOWERS

June: Ana



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. Thank you.

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

ST BERNARD'S

WEEKEND VOLUNTEERS : 25th & 26th June

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

Piety Stall will open after Saturday 5pm Mass & Sunday 8.30 Mass
25th June: Margot Short
26th June: Carmel Shea

CHURCH FLOWERS

June: Frances McDaid



PRESBYTERY & CHURCH GROUNDS-MOWING

June: Colm Carragher & Ron Geurts

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY:

Welfare Number is 1800 305 330.
The Vinnies Store is located at 8 Grant 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

***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.***

Amen



FAITH FORMATION

ST ANTHONY'S AND ST BERNARD'S

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

Dear Parishioners

Keeping in line with the Archbishop's vision for Mission, the Parishes of St Anthony's and St Bernard's have put together a new Baptism Preparation Program, for any parents who wish to have their child Baptised.

Preparations for Baptisms will take place on Saturdays alternating between both Parishes.

A welcome Mass must be attended prior to the Baptism. Baptisms will be held on

Saturday mornings at 11.00am. Parents must attend two sessions.

Sessions will run from 12.00pm-4.00pm. Godparents must attend the 2nd session.

Bookings must be made to attend these sessions. Please visit our website for a detailed

description of the new program. Contact the Parish Office to book your Baptism Preparation and Baptism.



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 Marcus or Fr Lucas .

FATIMA STATUE—ST ANTHONY'S

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

Group 1: Brian Barker 0408 974 322

Group 2: Carolyn Cruz 0401 875 410

Group 3: Mary & Tony Galea 0401 169 224



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

He fed them with the finest wheat
and satisfied them with honey from the rock.

FIRST READING Genesis 14:18-20

Melchizedek king of Salem brought bread and wine;
he was a priest of God Most High. He pronounced this
blessing:

'Blessed be Abraham by God Most High, creator of
heaven and earth,
and blessed be God Most High for handing over your
enemies to you.'

And Abraham gave him a tithe of everything.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 109

Commentator: You are a priest for ever,
in the line of Melchizedek.

All: You are a priest for ever,
in the line of Melchizedek.

The Lord's revelation to my Master:
'Sit on my right:
I will put your foes beneath your feet.'

The Lord will send from Zion
your sceptre of power:
rule in the midst of all your foes.

A prince from the day of your birth
on the holy mountains;
from the womb before the daybreak I begot you.

The Lord has sworn an oath he will not change.
'You are a priest for ever,
a priest like Melchizedek of old.'

You are a priest for ever,
in the line of Melchizedek.

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

This is what I received from the Lord, and in turn passed
on to you: that on the same night that he was betrayed,
the Lord Jesus took some bread, and thanked God for it
and broke it, and he said, 'This is my body, which is for
you; do this as a memorial of me.' In the same way he
took the cup after supper, and said, 'This cup is the new
covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this as a
memorial of me.' Until the Lord comes, therefore, every
time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are
proclaiming his death.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the living bread from heaven, says the Lord;
whoever eats this bread will live for ever.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL Luke 9:11-17

Jesus made the crowds welcome and talked to them
about the kingdom of God; and he cured those who were
in need of healing.

It was late afternoon when the Twelve came to him and
said, 'Send the people away, and they can go to the
villages and farms round about to find lodging and food;
for we are in a lonely place here.' He replied, 'Give them
something to eat yourselves.' But they said, 'We have no
more than five loaves and two fish, unless we are to go
ourselves and buy food for all these people.' For there
were about five thousand men. But he said to his disci-
ples, 'Get them to sit down in parties of about fifty.' They
did so and made them all sit down. Then he took the five
loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to heaven, and
said the blessing over them; then he broke them and
handed them to his disciples to distribute among the
crowd. They all ate as much as they wanted, and when
the scraps remaining were collected they filled twelve
baskets.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.

NEXT WEEKEND'S READINGS-

13th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

First Reading: 1Kg 19:16,19-21;

Second Reading: Gal 5:1,13-18;

Gospel: Lk 9:51-62



St Bernard of Clairvaux XIV

The experience of God in this life

Mystery into Words

What is it like, in practice, for a human being really to experience God in this life? Is an experience of this kind possible? And, if so, are there signs by which we can tell if the experience is genuine? And, when it is genuine, can it be described? And is it wise, in any case, to try to communicate something of this experience to others with whom we are speaking about God or to whom we are preaching?

Is such experience not something that is attained only by a few rare contemplatives in this life? And is the task of the preacher, then, simply to proclaim certain truths about God — the central dogmas — but, for the rest, never to attempt to speak out of any kind of personal faith-experience?

In this context I note a statement made by Pope Saint John Paul II in *Donum et Mysterium*: “The minister of the Word must possess and pass on that knowledge of God which is not a mere deposit of doctrinal truths but a personal and living experience of the Mystery.”

Experience — the word “experience” — may seem like a rather obvious word to use in this context, even a necessary word. But, for a good part of the 20th century — let us say, the first 30 or 40 years — the majority of Catholic theologians tended to avoid using the term. They did this largely because of its associations with Modernism, and because of the Modernist tendency to set up, over against the authority of tradition, and against even the great common statements of faith and dogma, the authority of individual religious experience.

Since the middle of the 20th century, however, and certainly since the time of the Second Vatican Council, there has been a return by teachers in the Church and by theologians to an earlier, more confident use of the word “experience”.

(a) Bernard and “the book of experience”

Of all the great Doctors of the Church, Bernard of Clairvaux, the 12th-century mystic and reformer, is probably the one who uses the term “experience” most often, and uses it to the greatest effect. Speaking, for example, of what happens when an individual believer has received, in profound depth, the grace of the Spirit, and has become “wholly

aflame with divine love”, Bernard states that “then God is indeed experienced”. But Bernard goes on at once to say that, even here, God is not experienced “as he truly is” (that is, not in his inmost being), “a thing impossible for any creature”.

Bernard is well aware that at least as challenging as the question of experience, is the question of the communication of experience. And yet, in Sermon 74 of his Commentary on the Song of Songs, he is clearly intent on trying somehow to talk about what he calls “the wisdom hidden in the mystery”. But how can he do it? How can such an infinite mystery be contained in mere finite words? How can he, an individual believer, and a limited human being, presume to preach “the mystery”?

In answer to those among his brethren and friends who had asked that he share with them something of his own interior life and experience, Bernard says: “You force me to walk in great matters and mysteries which are beyond me. Alas! how afraid I am to hear the words, ‘Why do you speak of my delights and put my mystery into words?’ Hear me then as a man who is afraid to speak yet cannot remain silent.”

Having made this statement in Sermon 74 of his Commentary, he continues: “Now bear with my foolishness for a little. I want to tell you of my own experience, as I promised. Not that it is of any importance. But I make this disclosure only to help you; and if you derive any profit from it I shall be consoled for my foolishness; if not, my foolishness will be revealed. I admit that the Word has also come to me — I speak as a fool — and has come many times.”

What, in effect, Bernard is proposing to do here is to preach the Word of God by relating to his brethren something of his own individual experience of the Word. That experience carries with it a certain authority, of course, but not one that can be compared, obviously, with the authority of the Word in Scripture. The contemplative experience is, at root, always a response to a visit from the Word.

In this unique drama of love, it is always the Word that takes the initiative, and the human heart that responds. And so the experience, when it is authentic, can be thought of almost as an echo of the Word, or even a cave for the Word in which to echo, a place or space that welcomes the Word with living faith and with love. But it is not the Word itself.

To be continued