



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

3rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME-YEAR A

22nd January 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 23/1/2023-29/1/2023

MASS TIMES:

Monday 23/1	6.30pm
Tuesday 24/1	6.30pm
Wednesday 25/1	9.30am
Thursday 26/1	9.30am
Friday 27/1	9.30am

Rosary at 9.00am before 9.30am morning masses

Sunday Masses

Saturday 28/1	5.00pm
Sunday 29/1	8.30am & 10.30am

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

ST BERNARD'S BACCHUS MARSH 23/1/2023-29/1/2023

MASS TIMES:

Monday 23/1	No Mass
Tuesday 24/1 (No Holy Hour)	9.30am
Wednesday 25/1	9.30am
Thursday 26/1	9.30am
Friday 27/1	9.30am

Saturday 28/1 No 9.00am Mass

Sunday Masses

Saturday 28/1	5.00pm
Sunday 29/1	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	28/1	6.30pm
-------	------	--------

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 3rd SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME-Sr Mary Fermio

When I told my mother I was leaving my employment of six years to join the Josephites, she paused in her ironing and replied: "Whatever makes you happy, Mary," and I have been, despite many changes new and strange in my life.

One wonders what the parents of Peter and Andrew thought when they up and left a thriving and profitable business to follow a wandering Rabbi. Such a change in their life – from certainty to uncertainty. But following Jesus seemed the best thing to do. Following Jesus meant seeing him act contrary to their established beliefs- met with tax collectors, prostitutes, showed respect for women, healed on the Sabbath. Yet because it was Jesus they stayed, accepting these changes as part of their new life, believing he had the authority to do this.

Throughout history there has been hundreds of changes in the church – its doctrine, its liturgy, its rules and regulations.

But the Church is a living being, the Body of Christ, so change is inevitable.

Some find it hard to accept changes, but for each of us it is a call from Jesus to "Come, follow me!"

Do I do so willingly, or do I turn my back to stay in my comfort zone, afraid or unwilling to change? Or do I think I know better and like the Pharisees refuse to see Jesus acting in His Church?



PARISH & EVENTS NOTICES

NEWS FROM THE PARISH OFFICES

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 talks this Tuesday 24th January 2023. Topic: God's plan for sexuality.

MEMORIAL MASS FOR POPE EMERITUS BENEDICT XVI-CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

Please join us at St Patrick's Cathedral on the evening of Sunday 29th January 2023, when Archbishop Peter A Comensoli will celebrate a memorial Mass for Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. The Mass will take place approximately one month after his death, providing an opportunity for the People of God in Melbourne to gather together and to remember and pray for Pope Benedict. St Patrick's Cathedral 1 Cathedral Place, East Melbourne— Sunday 29th January at 6.30pm.
For all queries contact communications@cam.org.au

PROCESS FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE SACRAMENTS FOR CHILDREN RECEIVING FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST EUCHARIST IN 2023

Dear Parents, The Parishes of St Anthony's and St Bernard's continues to search for better ways to support you in your mission of bringing up your children in the Catholic faith, and help them in their journey with God in the best possible way.

Over the years we tried different processes according to the availability of our volunteers. Some years the classes were long, while others years were shorter. We tried our best to catechize the children in the faith, as well as prepare them for Sacraments at the same time. This year we will be splitting the Classes, Catechism classes in the First term and Sacrament preparation in the Second term.

Why Catechism?

Catechism is an essential way of teaching our children about God, the Trinity, Heaven, Angels, Saints, Prayer and other doctrine of the faith. Learning the catechism early in the intellectual and spiritual building material of a strong Christian life, and it is the best use of time on the part of both parents and their children.

Catechism is a proven method for fulfilling our calling as parents to instruct our children in the truth.

Term One Catechetical Classes begin 11th February 2023 and end 1st April 2023

Term Two Sacramental Classes—dates to be advised

NB: your child is required to attend **ALL Catechetical Classes** to be able to receive the Sacraments

Contact Sacramental Coordinator: Naim Chdid Email: enrol4sacraments@gmail.com

Or call the Parish Offices for further information.

ST ANTHONY'S

WANTED - QUALIFIED ELECTRICIAN FOR OUR PARISH

If you are qualified electrician with experience, in particular to C-BUS system, we need you.

Please contact the Parish Office on 9747 9692.

FLOWER ROSTER

We would like more volunteers to help with the Church flowers, if you would like to be added to the roster please contact Lesley –Parish Office 9747 9692

PRIME TIMERS

Our first meeting for 2023 will be Tuesday 31st January at the Leisure Centre, Lifestyle Village, Melton. Start 11.30am. We will discuss what plans and activities we hope to enjoy the coming year. If you have any ideas bring them along. BYO lunch and tea/coffee provided. Enquiries contact Ineke 0400120401 or ineke49@yahoo.com.

PARISH OFFICE

The Parish Office will be closed on Thursday 26th January for the Australia Day Public Holiday.

BINGO

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

MORNING TEA

Morning teas after 8.30am and 10.30am Masses will resume in February.

PARISH OFFICE

The Parish Office will be closed on Thursday 26th January for the Australia Day Public Holiday.

FORMED

Just a reminder that we have a parish FORMED

Subscription FORMED is a Catholic streaming service. We have purchased a parish subscription that you can access for free at home. Please limit yourselves to one account per household.

To register under our subscription, follow these steps:

1. Visit <https://signup.formed.org/>
2. Input *St Anthony's & St Bernard's Catholic Parishes* in the "Find your Parish" box.
3. Input your name and email address.
4. Visit [formed.org](https://www.formed.org) on your preferred device to begin watching.

If you enjoy using FORMED, consider making a donation to our parish to help us keep providing this service.

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: 28th & 29th January

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
8.30am: Amy Honrade
10.30am: Annonica Mavaega

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm: Ann Tennakoon
8.30am: Geoff Sutton
10.30am: Cita Carreon

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

MASS COORDINATORS

5.00pm: Godwin & Coleen
8.30am: Natalie & Ron
10.30am: Annonica & Godwin

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE

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

Anton Belacic & Romauld Correa

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, 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 MINISTRIES

MINISTERS OF THE WORD : THIS WEEKEND

5.00pm: John Thorne
8.30am: Maggie Kratochvil
10.30am: Samantha Butler

MINISTERS OF THE WORD: 28th & 29th January

5.00pm: Vikki Benson
8.30am: Margaret Love
10.30am: Charlotte Lindorff

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

January: Office Staff

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased:

Margaret Bolger, Robert Green, Patricia Wilson, and Mary

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

Mary Blood, Janet Bourke, Katherine Caldwell, Barry Dean, Mary Gaidzkar, Mary Griffith, Jeanette Hurley, Joe Marshall, Sam Provenzano & Joan Welsh.

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, Theresa Dockter, Allison Evans, Helen Evans, George Farrell, John Fermio, 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: 28th & 29th January

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

5.00pm Vigil: Liza Fernandes
8.30am: Judy Johnson
10.30am: To be advised

CUPPA VOLUNTEERS

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

CHURCH FLOWERS

January: To be advised



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 : 28th & 29th January

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

Saturday: 5.00pm Jan & Colm
Sunday: 8.30am Jan Farnelo

CHURCH FLOWERS

January: Tup Shea



PRESBYTERY & CHURCH GROUNDS-MOWING

January: Stephen Millington

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 to \$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@inet.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 are updating 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.

Our websites will be updated shortly with all the information and the new Baptism application form.

Please contact the Parish Offices for further information. 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:	Carmen Vella	0429 435 724
Group 2:	Sr Therese Dagge	0418 480 880
Group 3:	Tony & Stella Cochrane	9743 6340

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

O sing a new song to the Lord;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
In his presence are majesty and splendour,
strength and honour in his holy place.

FIRST READING Isaiah 8:23 - 9:3

In days past the Lord humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in days to come he will confer glory on the Way of the Sea on the far side of Jordan, province of the nations.
The people that walked in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow
a light has shone.
You have made their gladness greater,
you have made their joy increase;
they rejoice in your presence
as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.
For the yoke that was weighing on him,
the bar across his shoulders,
the rod of his oppressor,
these you break as on the day of Midian.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 26

Commentator: The Lord is my light and my salvation.

All: The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The Lord is my light and my help;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
before whom shall I shrink?

There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
for this I long,
to live in the house of the Lord,
all the days of my life,
to savour the sweetness of the Lord,
to behold his temple.

I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness
in the land of the living.
Hope in him, hold firm and take heart.
Hope in the Lord!

The Lord is my light and my salvation.

NEXT WEEKEND'S READINGS

4th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME- YEAR A

First Reading: Zeph 2:3;3:12-13
Second Reading: 1 Cor 1:26-31
Gospel: Mt 5:1-12



SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17

I appeal to you, brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, to make up the differences between you, and instead of disagreeing among yourselves, to be united again in your belief and practice. From what Chloe's people have been telling me, my dear brothers, it is clear that there are serious differences among you. What I mean are all these slogans that you have, like: 'I am for Paul', 'I am for Apollo', 'I am for Cephas', 'I am for Christ'. Has Christ been parcelled out? Was it Paul that was crucified for you? Were you baptised in the name of Paul? For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the Good News, and not to preach that in the terms of philosophy in which the crucifixion of Christ cannot be expressed.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus preached the Good News of the kingdom
and healed all who were sick.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 4:12-23

Hearing that John had been arrested Jesus went back to Galilee, and leaving Nazareth he went and settled in Capernaum, a lakeside town on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. In this way the prophecy of Isaiah was to be fulfilled: Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali!
Way of the sea on the far side of Jordan,
Galilee of the nations!
The people that lived in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who dwell in the land and shadow of death
a light has dawned.
From that moment Jesus began his preaching with the message, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand'. As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast in the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.' And they left their nets at once and followed him.

Going on from there he saw another pair of brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they were in their boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. At once, leaving the boat and their father, they followed him.

He went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness among the people.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Look toward the Lord and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.

The Psalms XIII

Psalm 110

From Pope Benedict XVI's Wednesday catechesis, November 16, 2011 (Part Two of three parts)

This divine oracle concerning the king would thus assert a divine procreation, steeped in splendour and mystery, a secret and inscrutable origin linked to the arcane beauty of dawn and to the miracle of dew that sparkles in the fields in the early morning light and makes them fertile.

In this way, the figure of the king, indissolubly bound to the heavenly reality, who really comes from God, is outlined: the Messiah who brings divine life to the people and is the mediator of holiness and salvation. Here too we see that all this is not achieved by the figure of a Davidic king but by the Lord Jesus Christ, who really comes from God; he is the light that brings divine life to the world.

The first stanza of the Psalm ends with this evocative and enigmatic image. It is followed by another oracle, which unfolds a new perspective along the lines of a priestly dimension connected with kingship. Verse 4 says: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.'"

Melchizedek was the priest-king of Salem who had blessed Abraham and offered him bread and wine after the victorious military campaign the Patriarch had led to rescue his nephew Lot from the hands of enemies who had captured him (Genesis 14).

Royal and priestly power converge in the figure of Melchizedek. They are then proclaimed by the Lord in a declaration that promises eternity: the king celebrated in the Psalm will be a priest for ever, the mediator of the Lord's presence among his people, the intermediary of the blessing that comes from God, who, in liturgical action, responds to it with the human answer of blessing.

The Letter to the Hebrews makes an explicit reference to this verse (5:5-6, 10; 6:19-20), focusing on it the whole of chapter seven and developing its reflection on Christ's priesthood. Jesus, as the Letter to the Hebrews tells us in the light of Psalm 110, is the true and definitive priest who brings to fulfilment and perfects the features of Melchizedek's priesthood

Melchizedek, as the Letter to the Hebrews says, was "without father or mother or genealogy" (7:3a), hence not a priest according to the dynastic rules of Levitical priesthood. Consequently he "continues a priest for ever" (7:3c), a prefiguration of Christ, the

perfect High Priest, who "has become a priest, not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent but by the power of an indestructible life" (Hebrews 7:16).

In the Risen Lord Jesus, who had ascended into Heaven where he is seated at the right hand of the Father, the prophecy of our Psalm is fulfilled and the priesthood of Melchizedek is brought to completion. This is because, rendered absolute and eternal, it became a reality that never fades (Hebrews 7:24).

And the offering of bread and wine made by Melchizedek in Abraham's time is fulfilled in the Eucharistic action of Jesus, who offers himself in the bread and in the wine and, having conquered death, brings life to all believers. Since he is an eternal priest, "holy, blameless, unstained" (7:26), as the Letter to the Hebrews states further, "he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them" (7:25).

After this divine pronouncement in verse 4, with its solemn oath, the scene of the Psalm changes and the poet, addressing the king directly, proclaims: "The Lord is at your right hand" (Psalm 110:5a).

If in verse 1 it was the king who was seated at God's right hand as a sign of supreme prestige and honour, the Lord now takes his place at the right of the sovereign to protect him with his shield in battle and save him from every peril. The king is safe, God is his champion and they fight together and defeat every evil.

Thus the last verses of the Psalm open with the vision of the triumphant sovereign. Supported by the Lord, having received both power and glory from him (cf. v. 2), he opposes his foes, crushing his adversaries and judging the nations.

The scene is painted in strong colours to signify the drama of the battle and the totality of the royal victory. The sovereign, protected by the Lord, demolishes every obstacle and moves ahead safely to victory.

He tells us: "Yes, there is widespread evil in the world, there is an ongoing battle between good and evil, and it seems as though evil were the stronger. No, the Lord is stronger, Christ, our true King and Priest, for he fights with all God's power and, in spite of all the things that make us doubt the positive outcome of history, Christ wins and good wins, love wins, rather than hatred."

To be continued