



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

23rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME-YEAR C

4th September 2022

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: 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 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 **Acting Principal:** Larissa Feketa
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	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
Maira Ross	0400 675 056
Aaron Russell - Chair	0401 927 502

EX-OFFICIO:
Fr Fabian Smith PP, Fr Lucas Kyaw Myint and Fr Samuel Kapani

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 Wednesday 1.00pm. Please email judyparishnews@gmail.com or call 0414 007 009

MASS AND DEVOTIONS

ST ANTHONY'S MELTON SOUTH 5/9/2022-11/09/2022

MASS TIMES:

Monday 5/9	6.30pm
Tuesday 6/9	9.30am & 6.30pm
Wednesday 7/9	7.30am & 9.30am
Thursday 8/9	9.30am
Friday 9/9	7.30am & 9.30am

Rosary 9.00am before 9.30am weekday Mass.



Sunday Masses

Saturday 10/9	5.00pm
Sunday 11/9	8.30am, 10.30am & 5.00pm

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

ST BERNARD'S BACCHUS MARSH 5/9/2022-11/09/2022

MASS TIMES:

Monday 5/9	No Mass
Tuesday 6/9	7.30am
Holy Hour	7.30pm
Wednesday 7/9	9.30am
Thursday 8/9	7.30am
Friday 9/9	9.30am
Saturday 10/9	9.00am

Sunday Masses

Saturday 10/9	5.00pm
Sunday 11/9	8.30am & 10.30am

Confession available 30 minutes prior to each Mass.

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

KOROBET

VIGIL MASS	10/9	6.30pm
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If you need a Priest in the case of a genuine emergency please call 0403 435 471

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 23rd SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME– Mary Fermio rsj.

REFLECTION FATHERS' DAY

To be present at the birth of their child can be a life-changing event for a father. To realise this child of his, is totally dependent, helpless and needy a miracle of God.

In his document *The Joy of the Gospel*,

Pope Francis urges fathers to 'waste time' with their children, to love and communicate with them. To have a regimented home like Captain Von Trapp in Sound of Music is not productive. Giving them a good house, education, activities etc is not enough. The father needs to be personally involved with them.

In the Gospel today Jesus reminds us that we will have burdens to carry - children will disappoint, leave, reject a parent and die. Fathers may find this too heavy a cross, but can turn to God, who watched the Son, Jesus, die as a criminal on a cross. God who must be often disappointed in us, who reject, hurt others and turn away from the only one who gives unconditional love. St Joseph worked and provided for a Son, not his own. Alexander MacKillop, who himself made things difficult for his family, but is the father of a Saint. All each can do is the best they can, to pray and reflect on how they shape up as a father.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY to all fathers and may those who have gone before us pray for you.



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+). **This week's Topic is "The Existence of God"** Why have we given up on Him? Do we think society is better off without him?

FOSTERING MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH FAITH!-by Dr Benjamin Arulanandhu

These sessions are intended to strengthen our knowledge about mental health, and how to improve mental health outcomes through faith. Who should attend? All are welcome and is not limited to those with mental health concerns. These sessions are intended to journey together in Faith.

YOU CAN JOIN THESE SESSIONS AT ANY TIME. 5 sessions left, every Wednesday until 5th October in St Anthony's Meeting room 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

Scan QR Code to register



ST ANTHONY'S

FATHER'S DAY RAFFLE

This weekend the Social Committee will be selling raffle tickets for the Father's Day hampers. Please support this fundraiser as all money raised will go towards the Padua Hall Extension. The raffle will be drawn after the 10.30am Mass this weekend. Thank you for your generosity.

MESSAGE FROM SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

All volunteers are required to have a current valid Working with Children Check and a Code of Conduct form signed. Any queries, please see or contact any of the Safeguarding Officers - Lorraine Tellis, Geetha Vincent or Godwin Barton. Contact details are on the front page of the newsletter.

ST ANTHONY'S PARISH CORPORATE DINNER

Venue: Tabcorp Park, 2 Ferris Rd, Melton 3337

Date: 22nd October 2022

Time: 6pm till late

Dress Code: Black Tie

Adult: \$100 per head **Child:** \$50.00 (12 years and under)

RSVP: 1st October 2022

Contacts: Julie S 0402182 458 & Ana T 0406 503 363

LIVE BAND-FUN FOR ALL-GROUP ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR SUPPORT IS MUCH APPRECIATED AND WILL

GO TOWARDS FUNDING THE EXTENSION OF PADUA HALL

FATHER'S DAY THIS WEEKEND

This weekend we will be conducting the Annual Father's Day Appeal for Sick and Retired Priests. This is a great way of showing your gratitude for the enormous work our priests have done for us in the past and present day and to give them comfort and respite in the later years. Please give generously.

THERE WILL BE A CUPPA AFTER ALL MASSES THIS WEEKEND FOR FATHER'S DAY.

ST BERNARD'S

MORNING TEA

Next Sunday 11th September, Morning Tea will be held after both 8:30am and 10:30am Masses. All are welcome.

ST BERNARD'S FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The financial position of our parish remains a concern. The operating deficit for the 2022 Jan 1st to June 30th period is \$32,990.00. This is not a sustainable situation. Certainly covid has been a contributing factor. Thanksgiving Offerings are showing a significant reduction. Father Fabian and the committee would appreciate, where possible, any improvement to this situation. Unexpected and non-budgeted items – termite control \$7655.00, tree removal \$1920.00, have added to the deficit.

Flower expenditure has increased in the past year but hopefully with less restrictions on our activities the flower roster can resume and more flowers from parishioner gardens will again be available.

The committee has determined that only urgent items be considered for expenditure. From Margaret Love

PROVIDENCE AND FRIENDS MASS

Parishioners are invited to the monthly Providence and Friends Mass on Friday 9th September at 11am.

Please bring a plate for morning tea/lunch.

If transport is required please let the Parish Office know or call Margot Short 0419 507438.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL FESTIVAL MASS

Thank you to everyone who attended our St Vincent de Paul Festival Mass and Celebration of the 60th Anniversary of our Conference.

Special thanks to Father Fabian, Father Glasheen and the Byham Family.

Please take a commemorative bookmark of our Anniversary from the Gathering Space.

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: 10th & 11th September

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: Gavin Pereira
8.30am: Amy Honrade
10.30am: Romeo Sacris
5.00pm: Rebecca Comini

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

5.00pm Vigil: Philip Anyayahan
8.30am: Ron Howard
10.30am: Doris 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: Ron & Natalie
10.30am: Olen & Lillian
5.00pm: Leonia & Annonika

ST ANTHONY'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for those whose death anniversaries occur at this time: Cassie O'Keefe

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, 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, 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: Sonia Smith
8.30am: Moira Ross
10.30am: Beatrice Younger

MINISTERS OF THE WORD: 10th & 11th September

5.00pm: Evana Miesen
8.30am: Nathan Costin
10.30am: Samantha Butler

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

September: Sr Mary Fermio

ST BERNARD'S PASTORAL CARE

We pray for the recently deceased: Brian Salt

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

Angelina Baiti, Hormankia Gixti, Noreen Matthews, Rosa Pollino, Margaret Scott, Peg (Margaret) Shanahan, Fr Peter Sinnema, Monica Steele, Edward Thorne, Jim White.

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, 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: 10th & 11th September

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

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

CUPPA VOLUNTEERS 24th September

5.00pm Vigil: Cristal D'Souza & Marion Muller
8.30am: Ineke Allen & Mary Saliba
10.30am: Bonello family & Gerard Anderson

CHURCH FLOWERS

September: Ana Taunuu



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 : 10th & 11th September

PIETY STALL VOLUNTEERS

Piety Stall is open after all Masses

Saturday: 5.00pm Jackie Tabone
Sunday: 8.30am Sean Giani
10.30am Dagmar Van Der Linden

CHURCH FLOWERS

September: Frances McDaid



PRESBYTERY & CHURCH GROUNDS-MOWING

September: Colm Carragher & Ron Guerts

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@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

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 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 Samuel or Fr Lucas .

FATIMA STATUE—ST ANTHONY'S

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

Group 1: Joe & Jacqueline Spiteri 0402 512 841

Group 2: Tunya & Jason Sant 0422 178 260

Group 3: Rohini Selvanayagam 0425 868 967

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

You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right;
treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

FIRST READING *Wisdom 9:13-18*

A reading from the book of Wisdom

What man can know the intentions of God?
Who can divine the will of the Lord?
The reasonings of mortals are unsure
and our intentions unstable;
for a perishable body presses down the soul,
and this tent of clay weighs down the teeming mind.
It is hard enough for us to work out what is on earth,
laborious to know what lies within our reach;
who, then, can discover what is in the heavens?
As for your intention, who could have learnt it, had you not
granted Wisdom
and sent your holy spirit from above?
Thus have the paths of those on earth been straightened
and men been taught what pleases you,
and saved, by Wisdom.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 89

In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.

You turn men back in to dust
and say: 'Go back, sons of men.'
To your eyes a thousand years
are like yesterday, come and gone,
no more than a watch in the night.

You sweep men away like a dream,
like grass which springs up in the morning.
In the morning it springs up and flowers:
by evening it withers and fades.

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

In the morning, fill us with your love;
we shall exult and rejoice all our days.
Let the favour of the Lord be upon us:
give success to the work of our hands.

NEXT WEEKEND'S READINGS-

24th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

First Reading: Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14

Second Reading: 1 Tim 1:12-17

Gospel: Lk 15:1-32



SECOND READING *Philemon 1: 9-10, 12-17*

This is Paul writing, an old man now and, what is more, still a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for a child of mine, whose father I became while wearing these chains: I mean Onesimus. I am sending him back to you, and with him - I could say - a part of my own self. I should have liked to keep him with me; he could have been a substitute for you, to help me while I am in the chains that the Good News has brought me. However, I did not want to do anything without your consent; it would have been forcing your act of kindness, which should be spontaneous. I know you have been deprived of Onesimus for a time, but it was only so that you could have him back for ever, not as a slave any more, but something much better than a slave, a dear brother; especially dear to me, but how much more to you, as a blood-brother as well as a brother in the Lord. So if all that we have in common means anything to you, welcome him as you would me.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Let your face shine on your servant,
and teach me your laws.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL *Luke 14:25-33*

Great crowds accompanied Jesus on his way and he turned and spoke to them. 'If any man comes to me without hating his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes, and his own life too, he cannot be my disciple. Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

'And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, the onlookers would all start making fun of him and saying, "Here is a man who started to build and was unable to finish." Or again, what king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who advanced against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace. So in the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Like the deer that yearns for running streams,
so my soul is yearning for you, my God;
my soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

The Crusades IV

What the Crusades were really like (Part 2)

Myth 3: When the Crusaders captured Jerusalem in 1099 they massacred every man, woman and child in the city until the streets ran ankle deep with the blood. This is a favourite used to demonstrate the evil nature of the Crusades.

It is certainly true that many people in Jerusalem were killed after the Crusaders captured the city. But this must be understood in historical context. The accepted moral standard in all pre-modern European and Asian civilisations was that a city that resisted capture and was taken by force belonged to the victorious forces. That included not just the buildings and goods, but the people as well. That is why every city or fortress had to weigh carefully whether it could hold out against besiegers. If not, it was wise to negotiate terms of surrender.

In the case of Jerusalem, the defenders had resisted right up to the end. They calculated that the formidable walls of the city would keep the Crusaders at bay until a relief force from Egypt could arrive. They were wrong. So, when the city fell, it was put to the sack. Many were killed, yet many others were ransomed or allowed to go free.

By modern standards this may seem brutal. Yet a medieval knight would point out that many more innocent men, women and children are killed in modern bombing warfare than could possibly be put to the sword in one or two days. It is worth noting that in those Muslim cities that surrendered to the Crusaders the people were left unmolested, retained their property and were allowed to worship freely.

As for supposed "streets of blood", no historian accepts them as anything other than a literary convention. Jerusalem is a big town. The amount of blood necessary to fill the streets to a continuous and running three-inch depth would require many more people than lived in the region, let alone the city.

Myth 4: The Crusades were just medieval colonialism dressed up in religious finery.

It is important to remember that in the Middle Ages the West was not a powerful, dominant culture venturing into a primitive or backward region. It was the Muslim East that was powerful, wealthy and opulent. Europe was the Third World.

The Crusader States, founded in the wake of the First Crusade, were not new plantations of Catholics in a Muslim world akin to the British colonisation of America. Catholic presence in the Crusader States was always tiny, easily less than

10 per cent of the population. These were the rulers and magistrates, as well as Italian merchants and members of the military orders. The overwhelming majority of the population in the Crusader states was Muslim.

They were not colonies, therefore, in the sense of plantations or even factories, as in the case of India. They were outposts. The ultimate purpose of the Crusader States was to defend the holy places in Palestine, especially Jerusalem, and to enable Christian pilgrims to visit those places in safety.

There was no mother country with which the Crusader States had an economic relationship, nor did Europeans economically benefit from them. Quite the contrary, the expense of Crusades to maintain the Latin East was a serious drain on European resources. As an outpost, the Crusader States kept a military focus.

So long as the Muslims warred against each other, the Crusader States were safe. But once the Muslims united, they were able to dismantle the strongholds, capture the cities and, in 1291, expel the Christians completely.

Myth 5: The Crusades were also waged against the Jews.

No pope ever called a Crusade against Jews. During the First Crusade, a large band of riffraff, not associated with the main army, descended on the towns of the Rhineland and decided to rob and kill the Jews they found there. In part this was pure greed. In part it stemmed from the incorrect belief that the Jews, as the crucifiers of Christ, were legitimate targets of the war.

Pope Urban II and subsequent popes strongly condemned these attacks on Jews. Local bishops and other clergy and laity attempted to defend the Jews, although with limited success. Similarly, during the opening phase of the Second Crusade, a group of renegades killed many Jews in Germany before St Bernard was able to catch up to them and put a stop to it.

These misfires of the movement were an unfortunate by-product of Crusade enthusiasm, but they were not the purpose of the Crusades. To use a modern analogy, during World War II, some Allied soldiers (Americans, Australians) committed crimes while overseas. They were arrested and punished for those crimes. But the purpose of World War II was not to commit crimes.