

# PARISH AND SHRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

48-50 Princes Highway (PO Box 14) Unanderra NSW 2526

[www.unanderraparish.org.au](http://www.unanderraparish.org.au)



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(PO Box 358) Unanderra NSW 2526  
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**School Principal:** Mrs Pauline Chrostowski  
**Parish Secretaries:** Mrs Magda Pires (Mon)  
Mrs Sue Briscoe (Wed/Thu/Fri)

**Parish Office:** Mon: 8.30am–3pm (Magda)  
Wed/Thu: 8.30am–1.30pm (Sue)  
Fri: 9.30am–2.30pm (Sue)  
Phone: 4271 1068 | Fax: 4271 1298  
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## FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT – YEAR A – SUNDAY 22 MARCH 2020

**ALL PUBLIC MASSES ARE SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**  
**PLEASE JOIN OUR ONLINE PARISH COMMUNITY**

Please see Fr Duane's message for more details. If you would like to receive the weekly Parish Bulletin to stay up to date with the Readings for Mass, the homily from Fr Duane and ongoing Parish news, please send an email to [unanderra@dow.org.au](mailto:unanderra@dow.org.au) and put 'Parish Bulletin' in the subject line and request to be added to the email list.

### *Message from Fr Duane*

It can be tempting as people of faith to underestimate the importance of practical precautionary measures during the Coronavirus crisis, thinking that it is a virtue to trust rather that God will look after us instead. However remember that Jesus himself was tempted by the devil, as we heard in our First Sunday of Lent, to throw himself off a parapet because God would look after him – and remember the response of Jesus: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test". Therefore, while we trust in God's loving care for us, some of the ways God does care for us include the medical expertise of others, the wise counsel of civil and Church leaders, and our own gifts of reason and common sense. It is on this basis that Bishop Brian has joined with most other Bishops of Australia to provide directives, as a means of minimising risk to all of us but especially those who are most vulnerable at this time. The directives are listed on the following page. Please also check out this page from the World Health Organization with practical guidelines and reasons behind them: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus2019/advice-for-public>

The suspension of Parish events, and especially Sunday Mass, is something we have done with great sadness, but also with confidence that this is the safest course of action as we see the disastrous effects of Coronavirus in other countries. While I have emphasized the importance of not merely trusting God to look after us, but also doing our part, let me now also emphasize the importance of still trusting God, and intensifying our personal prayer life at this time, for ourselves, our loved ones, and our world. And though we grieve the loss of the opportunity to gather for the Eucharist and look forward to the chance to reunite at Church, let us still strive to "keep the Lord's Day holy" by spending an hour or so, if possible with our loved ones, to pray, reflect, give thanks to God for all his blessings, and draw strength from the assurance that we are all praying for each other on the day of the Lord's Resurrection.

You may wish to watch the Mass online, for example at <https://www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass/> or in other online sites, until Bishop Brian's Masses become available. Note also the following prayer of "spiritual Communion", given to us by St Alphonsus Liguori:

***My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.***

Finally, as part of your prayer and reflection you may wish to read the Sunday readings yourself, either out loud with your family or quietly and reflectively. You may also wish to reflect on my homily (overleaf), provided as requested by the Bishop's directives – please see the Bishop's Directives effective Saturday 21 March 2020 (overleaf).

**\*\*\*\*Immaculate Conception Church at Unanderra will be open for personal prayer every Monday 7am-9am and Thursday 4pm-6pm (Reconciliation will be available Thursday 4pm-6pm only)\*\*\*\***

Fr Duane Fernandez — Parish Priest

### PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

#### Anniversaries

Beryl GARDINER  
Wally SERELAK Mary GALVIN  
Mother Angelica  
Fr Patrick LANDERS

### PARISH OFFICE — COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Parish Office staff are currently working limited days/hours — please call first if you need to visit. Magda will be working on Mondays and Thursdays, and Sue (who is high-risk of contracting CoVid-19) is self-isolating and working from home on Fridays only.

# Bishop Brian's Directives re Coronavirus

## MASS ATTENDANCE

- All public masses are suspended until further notice.
- Mass will continue to be said privately by priests throughout the diocese on behalf of the faithful on a daily basis.
- The faithful can keep holy their Sunday by setting aside some time for prayer at home, reading the Scriptures of the day, watching Mass on television or online, and asking God for the graces they would normally receive in Holy Communion (canon 87 §1, canon 1248 §2).
- Churches will, as far as possible, remain open for private prayer.
- Priests should consider continuing to publish their weekly parish bulletin online with advice and a weekly homily/reflection.
- Sunday Mass and Holy Week services will be celebrated privately by the bishop and made available on the diocesan website from the fifth Sunday of Lent (29 March 2020).

## BAPTISM

All parishes in the Diocese of Wollongong are asked to observe some practical changes concerning the Sacrament of Baptism until COVID-19 is contained. At this time, Baptisms are still possible based on pastoral need, but should be deferred if possible. However, where a Baptism is celebrated, the number of family and guests attending is to be restricted to immediate family and godparents in order to limit any potential spread of the virus.

## CONFESSION

During Lent, we especially want to offer people the opportunity to experience the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Giving people access to this sacrament is an important and essential way in which we minister the healing and merciful love of God. The Second and Third Rites of Reconciliation are not to be used. The Sacrament of Reconciliation according to the First Rite will continue to be celebrated. To help minimise the risk of exposure, the principles of social distancing are to be applied.

## SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS AND CELEBRATIONS OF THE SACRAMENTS

Preparation for and celebration of First Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Communion for children should be postponed until the pandemic is over.

## WEDDINGS

Where weddings are to be held, the celebration of the sacrament should be a smaller event in accordance with current Government limits of 100 people and social distancing guidelines.

## FUNERALS

Funerals should be small with close family and friends in attendance and must be in accordance with current Government limits of 100 people and social distancing guidelines.

## HOLY WEEK

At this time, the ceremonies of Holy Week will be celebrated privately by the Bishop and made available on the diocesan website ([www.dow.org.au](http://www.dow.org.au)) so they can be viewed and prayed.

## ANOINTING OF THE SICK

The Sacrament for the Anointing of the Sick will continue. However, for the protection of our most vulnerable parishioners, clergy have been given revised instruction on how to proceed. Clergy should only visit the sick or infirm with COVID-19 in a hospital or aged care facility if requested by the patient, family or hospital personnel. Clergy are requested to contact hospital personnel to confirm that the appropriate precautions are met prior to administering the sacraments.

## OTHER MINISTRIES TO BE SUSPENDED

Communion to the sick and housebound by extraordinary ministers of holy Communion should follow current guidelines set down by NSW Department of Health. Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion must refrain from visiting the sick and housebound who have been diagnosed or suspected of having COVID-19, or if the minister themselves have underlying health issues that may endanger their own wellbeing. All parish meetings are to be suspended at this time.

## SOCIAL DISTANCING AND HYGIENE

All parishes and parishioners are required to follow social distancing and hygiene guidelines as provided by the health authorities, including:

- Good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene.
- Distancing of at least 1.5 metres.
- Self isolation if diagnosed with COVID-19 or when exposed to symptomatic or diagnosed COVID-19 persons.

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**PASTORAL CARE NEEDS:** If anyone is experiencing any pastoral need, please do not hesitate to contact me at [duane.fernandez@dow.org.au](mailto:duane.fernandez@dow.org.au) or 4229 1074. I should actually be more available than usual, with the cancellation of many events and meetings now having taken place.

## SUSPENDED ACTIVITIES IN OUR PARISHES

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alpha</li> <li>• RCIA meetings (will continue via email)</li> <li>• Lenten Group, Iron Youth, Ascend Youth and Messy Church</li> <li>• Stations of the Cross</li> <li>• Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Council meetings (communication continuing via email)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saturday Rosary</li> <li>• Scripture classes</li> <li>• Nursing home visits</li> <li>• All school Masses and liturgies</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

## ROSTER – NEXT WEEKEND

March	Church Washing	Fiona Fernandez	
Sat 28 Mar	Church Cleaning	F Fernandez, B Rice S Walsh	
Sat 28 Mar	Lawns	Winner Family, P Briscoe, M Walsh	
	Acolytes	Lectors	Welcomers
Sat 28 Mar 6pm Mass	A Carlotto	A Kelly	S Briscoe
Sun 29 Mar 8am Mass	M Walsh	C Walsh	H Murphy
Counters	A Gunning, M Cauduro, C Garrett		
Children's Liturgy	L Galea, S Walsh		

## PARISH ACTIVITIES

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Catholic Women's League:</b>       | 2nd Thursday of the month - 10.30am in St Joseph's room<br><i><b>New members always welcome!</b></i><br>Please contact: Barbara - 4271 1584 |
| <b>St Vincent de Paul Conference:</b> | Every Tue 7.30pm in St Joseph's room  |
| <b>Parish Pastoral Council:</b>       | Mark Walsh (PPC President)<br><a href="mailto:Mark.Walsh@bluescopesteel.com">Mark.Walsh@bluescopesteel.com</a><br>0407 604 498              |
| <b>Nursing Home Masses:</b>           |   |
| <b>Hillside Nursing Home:</b>         | 1st Tuesday of the month - 2pm  |
| <b>Figtree Nursing Home:</b>          | 2nd Tuesday of the month - 10.45am  |
| <b>Villa Maria Nursing Home:</b>      | 3rd Tuesday of the month - 9.30am   |
| <b>Uniting Nursing Home FarmHts:</b>  | 3rd Friday of the month - 9.30am  |

## Homily from Fr Duane

**Note - a written homily has quite a different feel from a spoken one. For one thing, I can't hear people laughing at my jokes - actually, come to think of it, not so different after all! Also I can't tell when you're falling asleep - but the good news is if you fall asleep in the middle of this homily you can wake up and continue where you left off!**

In this Gospel passage, we see the question that is so deep in our hearts at so many times in our lives but especially at this time throughout our world: "why suffering"? In response to this timeless question, we see a common mistake among Jesus's contemporaries - one that many still explicitly or implicitly believe - "it must be a punishment for sin, right?". Haven't we all, at some time when everything seems to be going against us, wondered - is this some kind of punishment? Is God with me, or against me?

Jesus emphatically corrects this misunderstanding. This blind man's suffering is not a punishment from God; it is rather "so that the works of God might be displayed in him". And then he says: "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" and he heals him.

But what about now - where is the light of the world now, if Jesus is no longer in the world? The exciting answer to this question is that Jesus is indeed still in the world - especially through us Christians! And so we hear St Paul in our 2nd reading: "you were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth. Try to discover what the Lord wants of you, having nothing to do with the futile works of darkness but exposing them by contrast."

We don't have all the answers to the question, "why suffering". But we do know that our part, as Christians, is to be a light in the darkness. We do know that suffering provides unique opportunities for "the works of God to be displayed". And we do know that the "works of God" are not limited to miraculous healings. As St Therese once wrote, "Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word; always doing the smallest thing right and doing it all for love."

Jesus's miraculous "works of God" are continued in our own little seemingly innocuous daily sacrifices of love - and moreover, these little works of God continue to bring healing. Not always miraculous physical healings, but always healing of souls, of hearts, of minds. These simple works of God are more powerful than we realize, to bring light into the darkness; to change someone's day; to change someone's life. There are many things out of our control at this time. But there are also many little things within our control - countless "works of God" that God is asking of us: little acts of caring for ourselves and each other at this time; bringing comfort to the anxious, through a kind word to stressed retail workers, or to anxious fellow shoppers; reaching out to friends, relatives, or strangers with a helping hand (which has been appropriately sanitized of course); taking the opportunity to get to know our own family more deeply.

And the most important work of God that is in our control, the source of all the other good works that we do, is every little decision we make to spend some quiet time with our God; our Lord who reminds us in our Psalm that he is our Good Shepherd, close to us now and always, and that what we cannot control is in His control, so that we have nothing to fear: "If I should walk in the valley of darkness, no evil would I fear. You are there with your crook and your staff; with these you give me comfort."

### RELICS OF ST THERESE OF LISIEUX

In light of the current situation concerning the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the itinerary for the Diocese of Wollongong has been revised to only two locations: St Columbkille's Catholic Church, Corrimal and the Shrine of Our Lady of Mercy, Penrose Park.

Please note, due to the changing nature surrounding government and Church directives in relation to the management of the risk of the coronavirus, the itinerary is subject to change. Please refer the page listed below or contact the diocesan director of Catholic Mission, David Harrison on 0449 716 363, or Corrimal Parish and Penrose Park to confirm details on the day.

[www.dow.org.au/pilgrimage-of-st-therese-of-lisieux-and-her-parents-to-visit-the-diocese/](http://www.dow.org.au/pilgrimage-of-st-therese-of-lisieux-and-her-parents-to-visit-the-diocese/)



### THE JOURNEY

#### CATHOLIC RADIO PROGRAMME

— AIRS SUNDAY 22 MARCH 2020 —

This week on the Journey, Bishop Brian Mascord proclaims the Gospel; Fr Chris Sarkis provides a Gospel reflection on Spiritual blindness; and Sr Anastasia Reeve helps us to consider deeper meaning.

Go to [www.jcr.org.au](http://www.jcr.org.au) or [www.itunes.jcr.org.au](http://www.itunes.jcr.org.au) where you can listen any time and subscribe to weekly shows via email



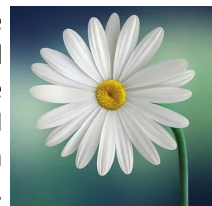
### CONTACTING SR KERRY

Sr Kerry no longer has a landline. All phone calls to Sr Kerry will now be to her mobile which is **0421 463 871**.

### MESSAGE FROM SR KERRY

How could I ever thank those who gave my garden and backyard such a wonderful makeover? Without exaggeration, the backyard was looking like a jungle. Now I feel it could be entered into the Chelsea Garden Show. Thank you to all concerned.

Sr Kerry



### PROJECT COMPASSION



Thirty-two-year-old Sakun lives in a village in central east India. She developed polio as a child and has difficulty walking. Until now Sakun, an indigenous Gond woman, has been isolated in her community, unable to earn a livelihood and without knowledge of government schemes that could help her. After joining a Caritas Australia-funded program, Sakun has learned new skills and gained important mobility. Through their strategic guidance and support, Sakun now earns her own income and makes a small profit which goes towards her family's basic needs. She is more resilient, more confident and more independent.

Please donate to Project Compassion 2020 to help uplift vulnerable communities and support the rights of indigenous peoples around the world.

*Let's Go Further, Together — when we Go Further Together in love and compassion, the whole world thrives.*

You can donate through Project Compassion boxes and/or envelopes (located near side door of church), or by visiting [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion) or phoning 1800 024 413



### CANCELLED — PASSION PLAY

**CANCELLED** — Penrose Park Good Friday Passion Play.

As we experience an increasing spread of the coronavirus, the Pauline Fathers have had to make the difficult decision to cancel the re-enactment of Our Lord's Passion on Good Friday 10 April 2020.

### EASTER CARDS

Easter Cards are now available for purchase from Aid to the Church in Need (ACN). Each packet contains 12 Easter cards and envelopes. Prices: First packet \$23 (includes postage); and extra packets \$15 each. The Easter cards feature the religious paintings of Swiss artist Bradi Barth and include a Bible verse inside. Proceeds raised go toward ACN projects that support the Church where she is unable to support herself. You can order over the phone on **1800 101 201** or online at [www.aidtochurch.org](http://www.aidtochurch.org)



## SUNDAY 22 MARCH 2020 — FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (YEAR A)

**First Reading** — 1 Samuel 16:1,67,10-13 — *In the presence of the Lord God, they anointed David king of Israel.*

The Lord said to Samuel, 'Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen myself a king among his sons.' When Samuel arrived, he caught sight of Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed one stands there before him,' but the Lord said to Samuel, 'Take no notice of his appearance or his height for I have rejected him; God does not see as man sees; man looks at appearances but the Lord looks at the heart.' Jesse presented his seven sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen these.' He then asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' He answered, 'There is still one left, the youngest; he is out looking after the sheep.' Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send for him; we will not sit down to eat until he comes.' Jesse had him sent for, a boy of fresh complexion, with fine eyes and pleasant bearing. The Lord said, 'Come, anoint him, for this is the one.' At this, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him where he stood with his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord seized on David and stayed with him from that day on.

**Responsorial Psalm** — *The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.*

1. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.  
Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.  
Near restful waters he leads me, to revive my drooping spirit. R.
2. He guides me along the right path; he is true to his name.  
If I should walk in the valley of darkness, no evil would I fear.  
You are there with your crook and your staff; with these you give me comfort. R.
3. You have prepared a banquet for me in the sight of my foes.  
My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing. R.
4. Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life.  
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for ever and ever. R.



**Second Reading** — St Paul to the Ephesians 5:8-14 — *Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.*

You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth. Try to discover what the Lord wants of you, having nothing to do with the futile works of darkness but exposing them by contrast. The things which are done in secret are things that people are ashamed even to speak of; but anything exposed by the light will be illuminated and anything illuminated turns into light. That is why it is said:

Wake up from your sleep, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

**Gospel Acclamation** — John 8:12

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ! I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life.  
Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

**Gospel** — John 9:1-41 — *The blind man went off and washed himself and came away with his sight restored.*

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind?' 'Neither he nor his parents sinned,' Jesus answered, 'he was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 'As long as the day lasts I must carry out the work of the one who sent me; the night will soon be here when no one can work. As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world.' Having said this, he spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored. His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man.' So they said to him, 'Then how do your eyes come to be open?' 'The man called Jesus' he answered 'made a paste, daubed my eyes with it and said to me, "Go and wash at Siloam"; so I went, and when I washed I could see.' They asked, 'Where is he?' 'I don't know' he answered. They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.' Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the sabbath.' Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet' replied the man. However, the Jews would not believe that the man had been blind and had gained his sight, without first sending for his parents and asking them, 'Is this man really your son who you say was born blind? If so, how is it that he is now able to see?' His parents answered, 'We know he is our son and we know he was born blind, but we don't know how it is that he can see now, or who opened his eyes. He is old enough: let him speak for himself.' His parents spoke like this out of fear of the Jews, who had already agreed to expel from the synagogue anyone who should acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. This was why his parents said, 'He is old enough; ask him.' So the Jews again sent for the man and said to him, 'Give glory to God! For our part, we know that this man is a sinner.' The man answered, 'I don't know if he is a sinner; I only know that I was blind and now I can see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He replied, 'I have told you once and you wouldn't listen. Why do you want to hear it all again? Do you want to become his disciples too?' At this they hurled abuse at him: 'You can be his disciple,' they said 'we are disciples of Moses: we know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we don't know where he comes from.' The man replied, 'Now here is an astonishing thing! He has opened my eyes, and you don't know where he comes from! We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but God does listen to men who are devout and do his will. Ever since the world began it is unheard of for anyone to open the eyes of a man who was born blind; if this man were not from God, he couldn't do a thing.' 'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away. Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe', and worshipped him. Jesus said: 'It is for judgement that I have come into this world, so that those without sight may see and those with sight turn blind.' Hearing this, some Pharisees who were present said to him, 'We are not blind, surely?' Jesus replied: 'Blind? If you were, you would not be guilty, but since you say, "We see", your guilt remains.'