

PARISH AND SHRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION 48

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PALM SUNDAY — YEAR A — SUNDAY 5 APRIL 2020



Message from Fr Duane

After the initial shock of “lockdown measures”, we are seeking a “new normal” as a society in Australia and indeed throughout the world. As a Parish Community, this new normal has seen us grieving the loss of many Parish activities – above all the Sunday Mass. At the same time, this past two weeks has seen many positive developments as we seek new ways to live out our Parish vision, growing in love for one another and working together to bring the overflowing love of Jesus to all people. How may you be able to get involved in these new initiatives?

1. The Parish emailing list: Weekly Messages from the Parish, including the Parish news, Sunday readings, my written homily, “Kids corner” reflections, and more. You are probably already on this list if you’ve received this – but who might you invite to join the email list?
2. The Parish Facebook Page: Stay connected with updates throughout the week. There will soon be video messages from Fr Duane and live streaming of Masses through Facebook. Who may you invite to “like” the Facebook page?
3. Corona Ministries: Last week’s call for volunteers to join “Corona ministries” has received a great response, including from many young people - thank you to all the volunteers! The most important thing we need now is for all parishioners to become our eyes and ears to help us discover where the needs are in our community – especially among those over 70 years old who have been strongly encouraged to self-isolate. With their permission you can email us their details and we’ll connect them with our wonderful volunteers.
4. Prayer intentions for Mass: Thank you to those who have sent through prayer intentions for Masses. It has helped me to feel close to you at the altar. I would love to hear from you all with any special prayer intentions for yourselves and loved ones, or even just your names and/or photos, which I will then place on the altar during my daily Masses.
5. Put a palm (or other branch) on your door: A creative way to celebrate Palm Sunday this Sunday! Place a palm or other branch on your door, and if you like, take a photo of it (possibly with you in it) and send it to us if you’re happy for us to share it on Facebook!
6. Easter Sunday will be live streamed! Thanks to some very clever and generous volunteers we have worked out how to live stream Mass, and will do so from St Therese Church for the first time on Easter Sunday at 9am. This will be streamed through Facebook and also available on the website. Looking forward to “seeing you” then! [TO JOIN OUR FACEBOOK PAGE](#): Please “like” our new Facebook page: “Immaculate Conception Unanderra Parish” and invite others to do the same! (There is also a new page for West Wollongong – “St Therese West Wollongong Parish”).

Fr Duane Fernandez
Parish Priest

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS ENDS THIS WEEKEND

Don't forget to turn your clocks BACK one hour from 3am to 2am on Sunday 5 April!

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Anniversaries

Elizabeth GREENING Leigh MARTIN
Tadeusz SEWERYN Elizabeth RAY
Dorris MURPHY Minnette VILLANUEVA
Concesa, Jose & Manuel MAMANGLU



CURRENT PARISH OFFICE DAYS/HOURS

The Parish Office staff are currently working limited days/hours — please call 4271 1068 or email unanderra@dow.org.au only (*please do not visit*). Magda is working on Mondays and Thursdays, and Sue is working from home on Fridays only.



— HOLY WEEK AND EASTER — ONLINE MASSES AND SERVICES

With Bishop Brian at www.facebook.com/WollongongCatholic or www.dow.org.au

Palm Sunday Mass 5 April: 9am

Holy Thursday Mass 9 April: 7pm

Good Friday 10 April:

- Stations of the Cross: 10am

- The Passion of the Lord: 3pm

Easter Vigil Mass 11 April: 7pm



And with Fr Duane at www.facebook.com/St-Therese-West-Wollongong-Parish-110018837306434/ or www.sttherese.com.au

Easter Sunday Mass 12 April: 9am

PASTORAL NEEDS

For any pastoral needs,

please contact

Fr Duane

on

0414 626 357

or

duane.fernandez@dow.org.au



MASS ONLINE AND OTHER SPIRITUAL RESOURCES FROM DOW

Bishop Brian Mascord, with the support of wonderful Diocesan staff members, will provide Sunday 9am this Sunday through www.dow.org.au and on the diocese's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/WollongongCatholic).

For daily Masses, parishioners throughout the Diocese are encouraged to access other home worship resources including:

- Daily Mass on Demand is available at CathNews YouTube channel
- Saturdays 5pm and Sundays 10am Mass from St Mary MacKillop Catholic Church, Oran Park
- Daily Mass from St John the Evangelist Catholic Parish, Campbelltown
- Daily 7pm Mass and Sunday 10am Mass from Mary Immaculate Catholic Church, Eagle Vale
- Daily 1pm Mass and Sunday 11am Mass from the Archdiocese of Melbourne
- Daily Mass from Bishop Robert Barron's chapel

For those without internet:

- Mass for You at Home is available across the Ten Network on Sundays at 6am
- Channel 7 will televise the Good Friday service and Easter Sunday Mass at 10.30am with Archbishop Anthony Fisher at St Mary's Cathedral

OTHER RESOURCES:

There are numerous resources available on the diocesan website www.dow.org.au/media-resources.



*** Due to the current pandemic, all churches are now closed, even for private prayer, and reconciliation has been suspended. Bishop Brian has stated in his most recent directive: "The Sacrament of Confession will be suspended during this time of pandemic. Physical and moral impossibility excuses a person from confession, in which case reconciliation may be attained by other means, for example an act of perfect contrition. (Canon 960) An act of perfect contrition can be made by saying these or similar words: 'My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. I should love you above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.'" ***

STAYING CONNECTED WITH GOD AND EACH OTHER

- Encourage others to join our emailing list by contacting unanderra@dow.org.au and ask to be added to the list.
- Join our new Facebook pages: "Immaculate Conception Unanderra Parish" and "St Therese West Wollongong Parish" - tell others too!

Other Resources:

- Sunday Mass with the Bishop is on every **Sunday at 9am**, through the Diocesan website (www.dow.org.au) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/WollongongCatholic)
- For those without internet, televised **Sunday Mass** is available weekly on **Channel 10 at 6am**.
- The key website for our diocesan response to the Coronavirus, including prayer resources: www.dow.org.au/covid-19/
- A national Church website on the Coronavirus at: www.catholic.org.au/coronavirus
- On the same national Church website – resources for praying at home, including daily Mass options at: www.catholic.org.au/prayathome

A MESSAGE FROM ST VINNIES

Due to the latest restrictions imposed by the Government, Unanderra Conference will cease to service calls as from 2 April 2020.

The Coniston Welfare Centre will be available for phone calls between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday (4228 9355)



The welfare centre will ask that if the person only requires food support, that they can go to the centre for a hot meal, frozen takeaway meal or small quantity of non-perishable food for overnight. Clothing and material assistance will be limited to emergency items only and through the welfare centre. Unfortunately, assistance for electricity and phone accounts is not available at this time due to the necessity for face-to-face interviews.

PLANNED GIVING

Some have asked how they can continue to donate to the Parish, in the absence of collections at Mass. Wollongong Diocese has provided the following link to facilitate any contributions that people still wish to make, in the absence of collections at Mass, and explains where the money goes. If you do wish to contribute through this link: www.dow.org.au/plannedgiving/ — please also inform our Parish for accounting purposes (unanderra@dow.org.au)



Holy Week Homily from Fr Duane

I'd like to share some reflections as we begin our journey through this holiest of weeks, together in spirit.

Holy Week begins with Jesus's triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday: "Hosanna" was their cry – which means "save us!" Just five days later they would turn on him and crucify him – seemingly the ultimate contradiction. And yet, we now know, as Jesus always knew – the very way he would save us was always to be through his cross.

This was not what his friends had expected – it was the furthest thing from their minds that first Palm Sunday. Their plans, their hopes, their dreams were shattered. And yet God was always planning to bring good out of evil – to save a suffering world precisely by entering into our suffering. At times when things go wrong for us, we can feel like God is against us, or has forgotten us, or simply doesn't understand. But this week we remember that God isn't just sitting back in heaven watching us from a safe distance as we struggle through life. We have a God who in Christ has entered into our human condition – into anxieties, isolation, suffering, even death itself.



God is close to us, no matter how dark things may seem. There is another word for this deep and lasting closeness: Communion. Which brings us to Holy Thursday when we will remember the greatest gift Christ gave us – the Eucharist. We speak often of "receiving Communion" – and indeed what better way for him to deepen our Communion with him, and through him with one another, than by giving his very Self to us in this sacred meal? But if that's the case – how do we respond to the present circumstances where we cannot gather to receive this precious gift of the Eucharist?

Think for a moment of long distance relationships: I know of couples who have been physically separated for many months and even years, and yet have grown even closer in communion of mind and heart. Conversely there are couples who are physically close but distant in mind and heart. True communion is not merely physical, but rather a communion of mind and heart, and our "spiritual communion" with God and one another can be maintained and deepened even now, through prayer and works of love. At the same time – like a loving couple separated by physical distance – let us look forward to being physically together again at Mass, where by his gift we can celebrate and deepen our communion with Jesus and each other in the most wonderful way.

Finally, let us remember that communion is something we need to constantly work at - and this starts in our own homes. On Good Friday we remember that we have all sinned – which means that in some way or other we all, at times, fail to maintain and deepen our communion with God and one another. But even more importantly, we will remember that God still loves us, forgives us and still longs to be close to us.

God showed the ultimate creativity, and paid the ultimate price, to restore our communion with himself and each other. May we too strive to creatively and generously build communion during these times. Let us frequently pray the prayer of "spiritual communion" given to us by St Alphonsus, not only receiving the loving presence of Jesus into our hearts, but also committing ourselves to living by his Spirit of love revealed perfectly that first Holy Week, building communion through "every little sacrifice, every glance and word, and the doing of the least actions for love" (St Therese of Lisieux).

PARISH WORKING BEE

Thank you to all our generous Parishioners who contributed during the Working Bee a few weeks ago, it was a great success! We had 18 people this time around, despite the weather, with quite a few parishioners coming in the days previous to attend to Sister Kerry's garden and lawns, and there was an excellent effort inside our church on the day. Thank you also to those who donated money for the roof repair which will be undertaken when we have more favourable weather.

Our church welcomes any attention at any time, so if you feel something would benefit from your attention, contact the Parish Office or let a member of the Parish Finance Council with your intentions, so we can arrange access.

Wayne Rodgers and the Parish Finance Council



THE JOURNEY CATHOLIC RADIO PROGRAMME – AIRS SUNDAY 5 APRIL 2020 –

Listen in this week for Palm Sunday on the Journey. Bishop Brian Mascord proclaims the Gospel and Sr Anastasia Reeves provides some great Spiritual Direction for the 5th week of Lent. You'll hear some uplifting music and encouragement.

Go to www.jcr.org.au or www.itunes.jcr.org.au

where you can listen any time and subscribe to weekly shows via email



PRAYER – 7PM EVERY EVENING

A Call to commit to Prayer during the Pandemic every evening at 7pm
The faithful across the Diocese of Wollongong are urged to join with other members of the National Council of Churches, so that all Christians pray 7pm every night through until Easter Sunday during the Pandemic crisis.

PRAYING FOR OUR WORLD, AMIDST COVID-19:

Gracious God,

We give thanks anew for your providence and presence.

We prayerfully seek your grace, amidst COVID-19 here and overseas.

We pray for those in need of healing.

We pray for your peace with those who are anxious or grieving.

We pray you will continue to strengthen and sustain all those who are serving in response.

We pray for your Holy Spirit's discernment amidst the many choices and decisions facing our national, community and medical leaders.

We pray we each might see quickly what more we can do to help those who are vulnerable.

This prayer for our nation in the family of nations, with all that is on our hearts,

we gather now and pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



PROJECT COMPASSION



Dominic, 47, is a father of six from Papua New Guinea. In 2016, he became involved with Caritas Australia's partner, Centre of Hope who runs a safe house and family anonymous programs and turned a difficult life and an unhappy relationship around.

Please donate to Project Compassion 2020 to help support the Safe House project and help bring greater harmony to families in Papua New Guinea.

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 or by visiting www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion or phoning 1800 024 413



SUNDAY 5 APRIL 2020 — PALM SUNDAY (YEAR A)

First Reading — Isaiah — *I did not cover my face against insult and I know I will not be ashamed.*

The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue. So that I may know how to reply to the wearied he provides me with speech. Each morning he wakes me to hear, to listen like a disciple. The Lord has opened my ear. For my part, I made no resistance, neither did I turn away. I offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who tore at my beard; I did not cover my face against insult and spittle. The Lord comes to my help, so that I am untouched by the insults. So, too, I set my face like flint; I know I shall not be shamed.

Responsorial Psalm — *My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?*

1. All who see me deride me. They curl their lips, they toss their heads.
'He trusted in the Lord, let him save him: let him release him if this is his friend.' R.
2. Many dogs have surrounded me, a band of the wicked beset me.
They tear holes in my hands and my feet, I can count every one of my bones. R.
3. They divide my clothing among them. They cast lots for my robe.
O Lord, do not leave me alone; my strength, make haste to help me! R.
4. I will tell of your name to my brethren and praise you where they are assembled.
'You who fear the Lord give him praise; all sons of Jacob, give him glory. Revere him, Israel's sons.' R.



Second Reading — Philippians 2:6-11 — *He humbled himself to become like us and God raised him on high.*

His state was divine, yet Christ Jesus did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave and became as men are; and being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all other names so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel Acclamation — Philippians 2:8-9

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory! Christ became obedient for us even to death, dying on the cross. Therefore God raised him on high and gave him a name above all other names. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

Gospel — Matthew 27:11-54 — *The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, the governor, and the governor put to him this question, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'It is you who say it.' But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders he refused to answer at all. Pilate then said to him, 'Do you not hear how many charges they have brought against you?' But to the governor's complete amazement, he offered no reply to any of the charges.

At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the people, anyone they chose. Now there was at that time a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas. So when the crowd gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over.

Now as he was seated in the chair of judgement, his wife sent him a message, 'Have nothing to do with that man; I have been upset all day by a dream I had about him.'

The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. So when the governor spoke and asked them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' they said 'Barabbas'. 'But in that case,' Pilate said to them 'what am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said, 'Let him be crucified!' 'Why?' he asked 'What harm has he done?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Let him be crucified!' Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said, 'I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern.' And the people, to a man, shouted back, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' Then he released Barabbas for them. He ordered Jesus to be first scourged and then handed over to be crucified.

The governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium and collected the whole cohort around him. Then they stripped him and made him wear a scarlet cloak, and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they knelt to him saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head with it. And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes and led him away to crucify him.

On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, and enlisted him to carry his cross. When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place of the skull, they gave him wine to drink mixed with gall, which he tasted but refused to drink. When they had finished crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots, and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard over him.

Above his head was placed the charge against him; it read: 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' At the same time two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said 'So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If you are God's son, come down from the cross!' The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way. 'He saved others,' they said 'he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He put his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, "I am the son of God."'" Even the robbers who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way.

From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' When some of those who stood there heard this, they said, 'The man is calling on Elijah,' and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he dipped in vinegar and putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink. 'Wait!' said the rest of them 'and see if Elijah will come to save him.' But Jesus again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.

At that, the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth quaked; the rocks were split; the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy men rose from the dead, and these, after his resurrection, came out of the tombs, entered the Holy City and appeared to a number of people. Meanwhile the centurion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that was taking place, and they were terrified and said, 'In truth this was a son of God.'