



St Patrick's Parish

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Parish Priest: Rev. Fr. Francis Denton

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Secretary: Mrs Sharon Jacob

Pastor Emeritus: Fr John Dupuche

Pastoral Worker: Mrs Debbie Edwards

5TH & 6TH September 2020

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (Year A)

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Ezekiel 33:7-9

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel
If you have not warned the wicked man, then I will hold you responsible for his death.

The word of the Lord was addressed to me as follows, 'Son of man, I have appointed you as sentry to the House of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth, warn them in my name. If I say to a wicked man: Wicked wretch, you are to die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked man to renounce his ways, then he shall die for his sin, but I will hold you responsible for his death. If, however, you do warn a wicked man to renounce his ways and repent, and he does not repent, then he shall die for his sin, but you yourself will have saved your life.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 94:1-2, 6-9

R. O that today you would listen to his voice!

Harden not your hearts.

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;

hail the rock who saves us.

Let us come before him, giving thanks,
with songs let us hail the Lord.

R. O that today you would listen to his voice!

Come in; let us bow and bend low;
let us kneel before the God who made us
for he is our God and we
the people who belong to his pasture,
the flock that is led by his hand.

R. O that today you would listen to his voice!

O that today you would listen to his voice!

'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as on that day at Massah in the desert
when your fathers put me to the test;

when they tried me, though they saw my work.'

R. O that today you would listen to his voice!

Second Reading: Romans 13:8-10

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans
Love is the fulfilment of the Law.

Avoid getting into debt, except the debt of mutual love. If you love your fellow men you have carried out your obligations. All the commandments: You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and so on, are summed up in this single command: You must love your neighbour as yourself. Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour; that is why it is the answer to every one of the commandments.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation: 2 Corinthians 5:19

Alleluia, alleluia!

God was in Christ, to reconcile the world to himself;
and the Good News of reconciliation he has entrusted to us.

Alleluia!

Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20A reading from the holy A
reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
If your brother or sister listens to you, you will have won that person back.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain any charge. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community; and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a pagan or a tax collector. 'I tell you solemnly, whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.

'I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by

my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them.'
The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

General Intercessions

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

All Masses in our Parish Have Now Been Suspended

All Masses suspended until further notice Fr Francis and Fr John will continue to pray for us in their private Masses, and we as a Parish join our prayers to theirs. The Sacrament of Reconciliation can be arranged on request, please phone Sharon on 0448 658 418



PARISH PRAYER LIST

Recently Deceased: Elana Kasso

Anniversaries:

Sick: Joan Keuken, Angela Del Guidice, Lynne Fleming, Jo Payne, Kim J, Cherie, Izaak, Anne-Maree Sullivan, Jim Reid, Peter & Aurelia Di Ciero, Tony Cunningham, Claudette & Gilbert, Florens, Kate, Tim Lawson, John Hopper, Cassandra, Mary and John Hamilton, Carmel O'Healy, Michelle, Pat Robb, Robert Taylor, Nancy Leonard, Brian Walsh, Michael Paola, Barbara De Vincentiis, Emma, Wayne, Julian Monteiro, Dolly Maher, Salvacion Santos, Ricky, Giovanna Zammit, Michael Jordan, Anne Moroney, Catherine Fields, Sam Lawson, Trish Macpherson, Geoff, Grace Quinlivan, Bianca, , Mary Ovans, Stephen, Gael Holliday, Rob Meridith, Bill Meyer, Cathie & Jose Grima, Rose Roberts, Roman De Angelis, Tedi & Santi, Stephen Wakeham, Joe Di Battista, Gwen Weaver, Stella Martin, Peter Murphy, June, Jenny Goh, Zerda Val, Bill Moxey

Reconciliation By appointment

Anointing of the sick By appointment

Marriages: Please give at least six months' notice.

Baptism: Please contact parish office for details.

Parish office - Please call 0448 658 418

Pastoral worker - Please call 0448 664 731

St Vincent de Paul - If assistance is required please contact 1800 305 330 Mon-Fri 10.00am – 4.00pm

Care group Ann McCann, Debbie Edwards, Sharon Jacob, Contact Parish Office 0448 658 418



We are a child safe Parish



We have recently switched to NBN and having trouble accessing our office phone message bank. If you need to contact the office please call 0448 658 418



Our first morning tea was a great success!

If you would like to join in our next zoom on **Sunday 13th August at 11am** please

email the office on lilydale@cam.org.au

Link to weekly mass

A reminder that Fr Francis' Sunday Masses are recorded each weekend and are available on St Brigid's You Tube Channel each Sunday morning. Fr Francis records Masses from St Brigid's, St Patrick's and St Aloysius churches. The link is accessible through St Brigid's Healesville's website, <http://www.stbrigidshalesville.cam.org.au/> or by searching St Brigid's Healesville on You Tube, or using the link: <https://bit.ly/StBsHville>

WEEKLY THANKSGIVING

Pledged Amount **\$1404.50**

Thanksgiving received 30th August

Thanksgiving Collection \$ 725.00

Presbytery \$ 67.00

Restoration \$

**HAPPY
FATHER'S
Day!**

Wishing all the Dads and significant others a very special day!

Bible study group will commence Thursday 10th September at 4pm. If you would like to join this online zoom please email the office lilydale@cam.org.au



MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER ONLINE WEEKEND

If you are spending time together, but feel the distance between you ... A great opportunity to spend a weekend improving your communication in the comfort of your own home. This VIRTUAL Weekend gives couples the chance to sleep in their own beds and check-in on kids or animals during meal times. Come and learn how to keep/rekindle the passion in your relationship and how to keep your love growing! The weekend we offer is based around Catholic values but couples of all faiths are welcome. Couples from regional areas may find this option ideal. Next weekend is on 9-11th October 2020. Information/Bookings: Mercy & James 0409 183 676 or vicbookings@wwme.org.au Website: wwme.org.au

Introduction to Prayer: Part 3 Self-Knowledge and Humility

"Who are you, Lord my God, and who am I?" (St Francis of Assisi)

I recently stumbled across the film *Florence Foster Jenkins* (2016) featuring the ever-brilliant Meryl Streep. It tells the story of the New York heiress, Florence Foster Jenkins, who rose to social prominence as a patron of the local music scene. With the encouragement of the sycophantic (and rather unscrupulous) assistant director of the Metropolitan Opera, Florence is catapulted forward in her dreams of becoming a professional opera singer. Unfortunately, Florence's passion for singing is not matched by her ability. Her attempts to sing turn wildly comical, though the joke is apparent to everyone save poor Florence. The mounting drama of the film turns on the fact that the more Florence's delusions of operatic grandeur are entertained, the harder it becomes to protect her from humiliating herself before the whole world. By the end, the story has the feel of a parable about the folly of self-deception.

In ancient Greece, the Temple of Apollo at Delphi had inscribed at the entrance of the temple the words, "Know Thyself". The idea was that before you entered the temple to pray to 'the gods' it was necessary to firstly know yourself, that is, to see yourself as you truly are, neither better nor worse. Most of us don't entertain self-delusions to quite the same degree as Florence Foster Jenkins, however we can all develop blind-spots or distortions of reality in our self-knowledge. The civil law upholds the principle of *nemo iudex in sua causa* ("no-one can judge his own cause") because the fact is our ability to make objective, impartial judgements is undermined by self-interest. Most of us are quite expert at magnifying our qualities and diminishing our flaws. Nowhere is this more evident today than on social media platforms like Facebook. People have become masterful 'curators' of their own lives, selectively posting photos of themselves that make their lives appear at least ten times more glamorous than they actually are, while air-brushing away all the ugly aspects of their lives. Sometimes one is left wondering: are you trying to convince the world or yourself that this is who you are?

What, you might ask, does all this have to do with prayer? In fact, I think this question of self-knowledge is foundational to the work of prayer. In the first part of this series I reflected on the fundamentally *relational* nature of Christian prayer. Prayer is our 'coming to know God' in Jesus Christ. Yet, as with all relationships it is in the act of coming to know 'the other' that we often arrive at new and unexpected insights into ourselves. Authentic Christian prayer will always draw us into a deeper knowledge of ourselves, and that can be a rather terrifying process once the façade starts to crumble. When we engage with our peers we adopt all manner of stratagems to make others think well of us. By contrast

when we place ourselves before our omniscient ('all-knowing') God the mask falls off, and we're disarmed of all our defences and pretences. We can trick others; we can even deceive ourselves, but there is no fooling God. God is Truth (cf. John 14:6) and the ground of all reality. He sees us with 20/20 vision, warts and all. When we enter into that loving encounter with God called prayer, it is very likely that he will want to show us parts of ourselves that we would rather not see. This he does not because he desires to condemn us, but because in revealing our flaws they might be corrected and our character perfected in charity. There is one vital ingredient required to begin this process: the virtue of humility.

In a letter written to a friend who was seeking advice on how to advance in the spiritual life St Augustine counselled: *"I wish you to submit with complete devotion, and to construct no other way for yourself of grasping and holding the truth than the way constructed by Him who, as God, saw how faltering were our steps. This way is first humility, second humility, and third humility, and however often you should ask me I would say the same!"* Elsewhere St Augustine wrote, "Humility is the foundation of all the other virtues hence, in the soul in which this virtue does not exist there cannot be any other virtue except in mere appearance." Humility truly is the foundation of the Christian life because it is the virtue that Jesus himself models for us in 'self-emptying' (*kenosis*) of the incarnation. St Paul writes in Philippians: "Have this mind [of humility] among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." (Phil 2:5-8). One simply cannot understand Christianity without understand the mystery of God's humility manifested in the Incarnation of Christ. This was what so enthralled St Francis of Assisi in his life-long devotion to humility. In his last will and testament St Francis wrote to his brothers these stirring words: *"O humble sublimity! O sublime humility! that the Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humbles Himself that for our salvation He hides Himself under a morsel of bread. Consider, brothers, the humility of God and pour out your hearts before Him, and be ye humbled that ye may be exalted by Him!"* St Francis of Assisi who better than anyone grasped the central paradox of Christianity, soared to the dizzying heights of sanctity by his relentless self-abasement. St Peter writes: "Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'" Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." (1Peter 5:5-6)

In our age of proud self-exaltation and self-assertion we can so easily find ourselves swept along by the currents of egoism: our need to win arguments; to tear down our

competitors; to have to last word. If we take this attitude to prayer the result will be rather fruitless. To make the point Jesus tells the parable of the prayer of the Pharisee and the tax-collector (Luke 18:9-14). The Pharisee, for all his many words, merely honours himself. In his pride he entertains delusions of sanctity. The tax-collector precisely because he possesses sufficient humility to *know himself* to be a sinner offers God the acceptable prayer: "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God" (Luke 18:13-14).

Humility is the only basis from which authentic prayer can arise. Contrary to popular opinion true humility does not mean cultivating a pathological self-hatred, for this too is a distortion of the truth. *True* humility means coming to know ourselves as God knows us, neither exaggerating nor diminishing either our faults or our virtues. Humility enables us to see the goodness of God in spite of our flaws, opening wide the door of gratitude. For this reason, humility is the mother of joy, as surely as pride is the father of discontentment. A much-neglected practice in the spiritual life is a regular (ideally daily) examination of conscience. St Ignatius of Loyola supposedly considered the 'examen' the most important of all the spiritual exercises. One final cautionary word: given the naval-gazing tendency of our age we should remember that self-knowledge is not the primary focus of prayer (which is obviously growing in the love of God). Note well: 'Adoration of God' does not consist in staring at a mirror!!! Yet, I would maintain that self-knowledge is the necessary precondition for authentic prayer, grounding us in reality, lest our prayer becomes an empty routine, a performance or worse, an act of self-deception. Humility prepares the human heart to encounter the God who first humbled himself: "For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." (Luke 18:14)

Fr Francis Denton



From Debbie's Desk

Congratulations dads!! As we enjoy Father's Day this year, from a distance, we ask God to pour out abundant blessings on all of our dads, and on those other special people who act as dads do. We ask him to shower those who have been given the gift of fatherhood with the inspiration and the strength to be the best 'me' they can be for their families. We also ask God to reward those dads who may have already completed their journeys home to him for the love they shared with their families in life, remembered by those who miss them this weekend. A family meal over zoom has become the new norm for many tech savvy families. For our less technological friends, treasuring memories and perhaps sorting through happy photos could allow us to celebrate a little

more quietly and reflectively. Whichever way it goes, whatever our relationship with our dads and our children, we are real people living in a real world, and the ideal is sometimes just out of our reach.

Living up to the important vocation of being a parent is a huge ask, well done to all the dads (and mums) taking on the challenge of each new day as a parent, especially in this time of home schooling. I recently listened to some words of wisdom in honour of the Feast of St Monica, celebrated throughout the Church on 27th August. St Monica prayed for her son Augustine throughout his lifetime, no doubt beginning her prayers as soon as she knew she was to be his mother. Prayer was, in fact, the only course of action open to St Monica, as nothing else that she said or did changed Augustine's choices. His great mission in life seemed to be getting in to worse and worse trouble, and each passing day brought bigger and better things for Monica to worry about. Like many parents, she grieved that Augustine's behaviour rejected everything she had tried to teach him throughout his early years. Mums and dads, grandparents and great-grandparents the world over know all about working hard to have their kids avoid mistakes in life. Yet children must choose their own path as they mature, equipped by the lessons passed on to them through family life in their early years. Like St Monica, frustrated at watching her child jump from one crocodile pit to the next, prayer is our most enduring means of caring for those we love, given that children do need to grow up and take responsibility for their own choices, generally moving from the direct care of their parents in the process. St Monica is a much-admired Saint of the Church, she simply loved God with all of her heart, despite the immense challenges that she faced in living out her vocation as Augustine's mum. She prayed for him with perseverance and faith, and eventually Augustine's life turned around, and he went on to become St Augustine, one of the greatest Saints in the Church's history. St Augustine's Feast Day is the day after his mum's, the 28th August! St Monica prayed for a miracle, and God heard her persistent prayers, rewarding her confidence in a way that she could never have considered could be possible. She could not see that her prayers for her son had been heard and granted, but she faithfully trusted in God, and following her death, St Augustine turned his whole life around. Through his mother's prayers, St Augustine not only reached heaven himself, but has been instrumental in bringing countless numbers of others to God along with him.

I constantly reassure parents and grandparents that God hears each and every prayer we form in our hearts. We pray for our children and grand-children, and not one prayer ever goes unheard. Today we pray for all parents in our turn, and for the considerable responsibilities they bear. We pray especially for all dads, no matter where they may be. Well worth a cake with lots of icing!