

# Grovely, Samford, Mitchelton GSM

## Faith Matters

### Posted Newsletter Articles

2024

#### November 30, December 1

How amazing that in a few short weeks we celebrate the birth of Jesus again. It seems just like yesterday that we were doing the same thing in 2023. Time goes so quickly, especially as we grow older.

When we walk around a large shopping centre we see people of all ages, but particularly young children – just born only a few weeks ago, one year old, 5 years old, 10 years old etc. As we enter Advent (next 4 weeks) it can be interesting to reflect that each child we see, at the various ages above, possesses a humanity exactly the same as Jesus in His early years. To think that He (God) had the same vulnerability as these young ones just blows one's mind.

We know that Jesus was truly God but we sometimes tend to forget that he was also truly man – in every respect just like us at every stage of our lives, except that He only got to the age of 33. The Scriptures basically deal with the last 3 years of His life when He often talked about “The Kingdom of God”. He taught us about many important truths, however many writers believe that His greatest and most important sermon was about the Beatitudes. Matthew speaks about 8 Beatitudes (Matthew 5: 3-10) while Luke mentions 4. (Lk 6: 20-26).

In early life we tend to be guided by the 10 commandments but as we progress through life we tend to live by the Beatitudes. In this way we take giant steps to become more like Christ in the second half of our life.

In an earlier newsletter we mentioned the most recent book about the Beatitudes – “Choices for Life – The Beatitudes for Daily Living” by Kevin Treston. We will have 6 more copies of this book by the start of next year to add to the 5 in the lending library in the St. Williams church shop. Samford and Mitchelton will each have 3 copies to be lent out to parishioners wishing to read the book. This is an impressive book – one of Kevin's best.

Maybe one way of preparing for Christ's coming during this Advent is to reflect occasionally on one of the Beatitudes and to make some decisions on how that Beatitude might assist you to become more like Jesus in your daily life.

#### November 23, 24

**Today's feast, Christ the King, has an interesting history.** The feast was established in **November 1925 by Pope Pius XI** to be celebrated at a certain time of year. In 1969 the feast was moved to its current place which is the last Sunday in Ordinary Time. So in 2024 we had the 33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time last week and this week we celebrate Christ the King. The first of the 4 weeks of Advent starts next Sunday which is the beginning of our Liturgical year for 2025.

Jesus had always said that His kingdom was not of this world. In a sense, his kingdom is neatly summed up by the 8 Beatitudes. Incidentally, the most recent book on the Beatitudes is “**Choices**

**for Life: The Beatitudes of Daily Living”, written by Kevin Treston.**

Kevin has written many books in his time, all challenging and inspirational, but many of his readers regard this book as one of his best. We have 5 copies of his latest book in the Faith Matters lending Library at Grovely and we are getting some more so that a few can be kept at both Mitchelton and Samford churches for people to borrow. We will let you know when this little scheme kicks off. Some parishioners may wish to buy the book themselves so they always have it on hand.

**Back to Christ the King.** The structures of our modern church, which Vatican 2 attempted to alter and which Pope Francis has been committed to continuing the process, were set in motion when Constantine the Great (c.280-337) allowed the Roman Empire to become Christian. Actually, he was baptised and became a Christian himself only just before he died. Through the centuries the Church took on many features which were part of the Roman structures at that time.

In so many ways we refer to God’s kingdom. Whenever we say the Our Father we do so – “Thy Kingdom Come”. In many of our actions and in living our daily lives following the beatitudes, we are following Jesus in extending His kingdom on earth. As we get older, God’s plan for us is that we live more by the Beatitudes rather than by the commandments. In this way we become more like the person God wished us to be when He created us and more like Him when we finally go to Him in eternity.

**November 16, 17**

**A few times in recent years we have mentioned the website “Pray as you can”, run by the Benedictine Nun, Sr. Kym Harris OSB.** The website is [www.prayasyoucan.com.au](http://www.prayasyoucan.com.au) . Basically the site is using the Gospel of the Sunday first of all (comprehensively) and then taking verses every other day of the week so that by the Saturday it has dealt with the whole Gospel of the previous Sunday.

The best way to see how comprehensively it deals with the Sunday reading is to go on the website and check it all out. The Gospel reading is not exactly what you would find in the Bible. It varies just a bit in the language in a way more like our language these days. **This is not a big deal as the message is exactly the same as in the Bible.**

Once you have signed up you get an email each day with a short reflection on the verses that day. Faith Matters, over the years, has mentioned a number of approaches to prayer, not that we are suggesting you should do any of them but that these are other ways to pray which might or might not suit you. The decision to use any of them is yours alone.

Actually this website is linked quite closely with the Diocese of Rockhampton and with the primary and secondary catholic schools in that Diocese.

Each one of us gradually works out how to have a relationship with God and settles on the prayers we say as we seek God’s help in our lives. Eventually we also come to realise that prayer does not always have to be the saying of words, and that sitting in silence for a period of time is a way of drawing closer to God in a meaningful way. **Above all, it gives God a chance to talk to us in our mind and heart.**

Remember the story of the Cure of Ars in France, a parish priest now a saint. He noticed someone just sitting in the church each day. When he enquired as to what the person was doing all the time, the answer was, **“I look at Him and He looks at me”**. Say no more. This was a great relationship. **By the way** – perhaps the Advent booklets, available in all the churches for \$5, might be something that appeals to you. Have a look at it this Sunday to see if it is for you. Remember the line used in advertising for tourism – “You will never ever know if you never ever go.” Why not have a look? Advent is just 2 weeks away.

**November 6, 7**

**A big thank you to Bishop Tim, Fr. Nigel and Sr. Ursula for being the panellists at the Q&A evening last Tuesday.** Thanks too, to all parishioners who attended and to all who asked questions or who prepared the event. What a great night. Bishop Tim, as you know, will leave the Archdiocese sometime in November to go to his new appointment as the Bishop of Broome. W.A. What a boon he will be for that Diocese. Broome's gain and our loss. Bishop Tim did not want anything for having been on the panel. **Instead he suggested that the parish might like to donate to his favourite charity here in Brisbane - The Emmanuel City Mission (a homeless centre at South Brisbane which is close to his heart.) Website <https://emmanuelcitymission.com/>.** It is inspirational to watch the video on the website as to what this group does for the marginalised people in Brisbane.

Sr Ursula also asked Faith Matters to donate to the Emmanuel Centre for her services last night and we will do so.

As a parishioner you can also make a donation to this charity whenever you feel inclined to do so. This leads on to the next paragraph.

**Did you know?** 5 copies of **Kevin Treston's** newest book have been added to the Faith Matters borrowing library – it is called **“Choices for Life – The Beatitudes for Daily Living”** and is an inspirational book. If you would like to borrow one, just email me on [pcondon@westnet.com.au](mailto:pcondon@westnet.com.au) or slip into the Grovely church shop at one of the Masses this coming weekend.

**Here is one comment on the back of the book.** “In Choices for Life, Kevin reflects on the 8 Beatitudes that are found in Matthew's Gospel. Jesus taught the Beatitudes as a series of paradoxes for holistic living. He explores how each beatitude reflects something of the mystery of who God is and how we are connected with every living thing in creation.”

**Advent approaches** Already available in the 3 churches is the Advent booklet for this year, **“Hope Reigns”**. It has become very popular over the years. Each day there is a passage from Scripture and a reflection. The \$5 price is still the same as last year.

The title of the booklet is associated with the start of **“The Year of Jubilee of Hope 2025”** later this year. **More on this another time as it is an interesting event, dating back 1000s of years before the time of Jesus Christ.**

**The Roman Synod on Synodality has just ended in Rome.** Tremendous article about some of its conclusions is on the Faith Matters website home page at the tag “Topical Articles”. Top of the list. A great read by a well-known American writer – Fr. James Martin S. J.

**October 26, 27**

**The time has arrived – Q&A will occur in the Grovely church this coming Tuesday at 7.30 pm. It must start promptly as there are many questions to get through. There is a cuppa afterwards for those who can stay for a while. Hope you can make it.**

Recently, at the Synod on Synodality, currently occurring in Rome, it was announced that **the question of the ordination of women deacons would not be discussed in this Synod.** It was reported that Francis said that the topic was not mature enough yet to proceed. However it seems that the Second Commission he set up on this topic in 2020 will “continue to work”, and the “partial conclusions” it has reached will be published when the time is right.

Related to the paragraph above, Cardinal Fernandez said that “women instituted as catechists

already can lead Catholic communities in the absence of a priest, but very few dioceses have taken advantage of the possibility. And only “a small percentage” of the world’s dioceses have instituted women as lectors and acolytes.

“Not to mention”, he said, “that many dioceses have not made use of the permanent diaconate even for men and when they have, how many times are they just ordained altar boys?”

“This couple of examples help us understand that rushing to ask for the ordination of deaconesses is not the most important way to promote women today.

“I am convinced that we can move forward step by step and arrive at very concrete things so that it is understood that there is nothing in women’s nature that prevents them from having very important roles in the leadership of the churches”.

**Note - The article “What is with the Roman Catholic Church and women?” from Catholic Outlook** is on the Faith Matters website under the tag “Topical Articles” on the home page. You may wish to read it from a distinguished overseas author.

**Pope Francis published the fourth encyclical of his pontificate on Thursday on “The human and divine love of the heart of Jesus Christ”.**

The encyclical is titled *Dilexit Nos*, meaning “he has loved us”. Pope Francis’ other encyclicals are *Fratelli Tutti*, published in 2020, *Laudato Si’* published in 2015, and *Lumen Fidei*, published in 2013.

**October 19, 20**

Venue for Questions and Answers (Q&A) on Tuesday October 29 at 7.30pm is the **Grovely church, not the Daley Centre**. No silver coin donation is required on this occasion, as was the usual practice for Faith Matters’ events prior to Covid. Cuppa afterwards for those who can stay awhile. Hope you can make it as it will be very informative.

**You may have heard that Bishop Tim Norris has been appointed by Pope Francis as the Bishop of Broome in W.A.** He is eminently suited to this role in that part of W.A. Despite his new role, the Q&A will still occur on Tuesday Oct. 29. He will leave for Broome some time after that.

**The second stage of the synod in Rome on the theme of “synodality” began on October 2 and will conclude on October 27.** It is an attempt by Pope Francis to expose the global church to this process of listening closely to what others are saying about any issue and seeking to find common ground through dialogue. There is an art in achieving this, especially if the opinions of some people are strongly opposed to the opinions of others in the group. Working quietly in the background of this process is the Holy Spirit.

Francis had championed this approach as the pathway towards meaningful change in the church not long after he became Pope. Of the 350 or so delegates at this Synod, among the lay people there are about 90 women involved in the discussions, some of whom will have voting rights.

Francis has recently appointed quite a few new cardinals and has favoured other continents in the world over the European countries which have had a very good go over past centuries. **It is estimated that he has now appointed about 80% of all cardinals.** Hopefully this will mean that all of them (certainly the majority) will vote for the next Pope who, we hope, will continue the

reforming work that Francis has done since his appointment in 2013.

**Don't forget to put Oct. 29 (Q&A) on the fridge, starting at 7.30pm sharp.**

**October 12, 13**

**STOP PRESS** Response to the Q&A event with Bishop Tim, Fr. Nigel and Sr. Ursula on Tuesday October 29 showed that this event will be well attended. Hence it will not take place in the Daley Centre but in the St. Williams church where more room is available.

October is the month dedicated to the Rosary. The origins of this prayer start with St. Dominic around the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The Battle of Lepanto when the Christian armies defeated the Ottoman Empire 1571 led to Pope Pius V instituting the feast of Our Lady of Victory to commemorate this outcome, which he attributed to the Blessed Virgin Mary. In 1573 the name was changed to Our Lady of the Rosary and finally in 1913 Pope Pius X fixed the date as October 7.

Over so many centuries the Rosary has been a popular prayer. Older parishioners remember when we had three sets of 5 mysteries – Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious. Pope John Paul II (now a Saint) felt that there were some other major moments in Jesus' life which should be incorporated in the Rosary, to enable people to think about these particular events and how they could influence their Christian lives. These new ones are called the Luminous Mysteries or the Mysteries of Light.

For those who may not have come across these new mysteries to date, here they are.

- 1) The Baptism in the Jordan
- 2) The Wedding Feast of Cana
- 3) The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God
- 4) The Transfiguration
- 5) The Institution of the Eucharist

The Rosary was an especially popular prayer because it is so simple to say and that is why in the Middle Ages, when most parishioners were uneducated, it was often the one prayer people attending Mass turned to. After all, the Mass was in Latin which none of them understood and the priest had his back to the people. Since the priest was seen to be doing it all they turned to various devotions during Mass, one of which was the Rosary.

**October 5, 6**

Many thanks to all those who either assisted in the process or who submitted questions to the Q&A to be held on Tuesday October 29 in the Daley Centre at Grovely, starting sharp at 7.30pm. There were lots of questions, but if your question does not make it on the night we will attempt to answer it at some stage later on. **Put the date on the fridge.**

By now, many of you are aware of the daily email from “Catholic Outlook” based in the Diocese of Parramatta in Sydney, run by Bishop Vincent Long, one of Australia’s most forward-looking Bishops. Each day there are 3 or 4 articles, a number specifically about local issues but also great articles by noted writers, often overseas, some of which we reproduce here. **Go on to “Catholic Outlook” and subscribe free.**

We include info from some of these in the Faith Matters newsletter and at times, the full article on our website. **There is no concern about copyright as Faith Matters has the permission to do so from Parramatta, providing we acknowledge the article comes from “Catholic Outlook” and lists the author.**

On 28/9/24 “Catholic Outlook” carried an article called “**5 things to watch for in the coming October Synod**”. This synod is the current one happening in Rome (its second set of meetings) from Oct. 4 – 29, not our own Archdiocesan one which has recently also had its first set of meetings. Anyone wishing to get some knowledge about the Synod in Rome and how it might affect us should read this document.

Actually, another excellent article has just come out (2/10/24) with more detail about this particular Synod. The title is “**Will the Synod be a yawn? Only for Headline Writers**”. Another good read. **Go to Faith Matters website’s home page and click on “topical articles” for both these articles.**

**September 28, 29**

**This weekend is the last opportunity to put a question in the box for the Q&A event in the Daley Centre at Grovelly on Oct. 29 at 7.30 pm.**

You might remember, when Faith Matters was holding events prior to Covid, there was a gold coin donation at the door to cover expenses. **There is no gold coin donation for this Q&A event. What is the general process used in Synods?**

When people gather to discuss their opinion on a particular topic, there can sometimes be a pretty rowdy environment if some people disagree strongly about any opinion which differs from theirs. The same thing tends to happen when a synodal approach is followed on some aspect of Christianity/Catholicity. However, if after hearing each other’s opinion, some time is taken for reflection in silence on just what the disagreements are, and then another round of discussion occurs, the results can be quite striking.

This is how the synodal process actually works. There is a major difference between just hearing what a person says about something and actually trying very hard to really listen to what they are saying. After **listening carefully** to what people are saying in the first round of talking and then reflecting, in silence, on how that opinion might differ from ours, the second round of talking can lead to a closer move to consensus.

This is how we use a synodal approach on matters of religion, or anything else for that matter. This process is akin to what the Vatican is using in its “Synod on Synodality” meetings. It would be similar to the process being used in the current Synod 24 event currently being held in our Archdiocese.

The Vatican Synod (on the actual topic of Synodality) is meant to iron out the essence of this

approach, to name the problems/advantages with it and to try to get some agreement on how this process will be accepted as a method of effecting change as the global Church moves further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**The process depends on people really listening to what others are saying, rather than just superficially hearing what their view is. This process certainly has challenges for all of us and that is why the role of the Holy Spirit is so critical.**

**September 21, 22**

**Clearing up some confusion about the coming Q&A. Some of the best questions are simple practical ones.**

“Limbo”- what has changed?

How come we have 2 creeds – Apostles and Nicene?

How could Jesus have descended into Hell in the Apostles Creed?

What is an informed conscience? How do I get it?

What happened to genuflecting in the church?

**A question does not have to be long or full of “churchy” or theology language. It can be so simple, such as those below. Maybe something we believe or say in prayers but why? You never asked it because you might have been thought uneducated in these matters. Times have changed. Ask the question.**

This is the fourth week you have had a chance to ask a question and put it in the box. **The Boxes will continue for next week as well.** The Q&A on Oct. 29 will be so informative – why not put your burning question in. There’s probably someone else who is thinking the same thing. Your question could clarify something for someone else too.

Remember – many of us, particularly if we grew up in earlier times when the Church was quite different from what it is today, would remember situations which we might wonder about today. What is the current thinking of the Church on such matters?

Pope Francis has spent his Papacy using a broom to sweep out the dust and the sometimes unnecessary thinking which places burdens on ordinary people, in an effort to bring the Church closer to the approach of Jesus when he was here.

**September 14, 15**

**This is Week 3 for questions to be put in the boxes for the Q&A on Oct. 29 in the Daley Centre.**

**The questions could be anything you wish to ask on the Mass, Sacraments, Scripture (Old and New Testaments), church rules, the commandments, morality, change in the church, synodality as a process and a host of other areas.**

Remember this process is anonymous and this chance does not come along all that often.

**Currently there is a synod occurring in the Brisbane Archdiocese (Synod24) with the first of 2 sets of meetings already held.**

Perhaps you do not know much about this. If you go to <https://aobsynod2024.com> you will find a wealth of information about our local Synod. In particular there is a series of questions where you can discover what this Synod here in Brisbane is all about.

Only about 150 people are involved and each Deanery has 2 parishioners attending. The first meeting was held over 2 days (Sept. 6 & 7) while the second will be held on Oct. 11 & 12.

Do you remember our Australian Plenary Council not too long ago? Actually, it started about 2018 and took longer to complete because it was interrupted somewhat by Covid. This Synod follows on from our Council in the sense that **its focus is to discuss, debate and ultimately vote on a series of actions that will provide the pathway for our Archdiocese to begin implementing the decrees of the Australian Fifth Plenary Council.**

**The Chair for Synod24 is Bishop Tim Norris** who was in the parish recently to gain an idea of how we are going as a parish. His findings were complimentary and he was impressed.

**Copies of The Madonna Magazine are in the Faith Matters lending library in the Grovely church.** Why not borrow one and get an idea of how this magazine presents many short stories which are more of a spiritual nature. Take one home and flick through it. To subscribe to it costs \$60+ a year – one approach would be to borrow some from the library instead of subscribing. An edition comes out 4 times a year at the start of each season. It may speak to you. Have a look and see.

**September 7, 8**

**Week 2 Q&A on religious questions for October 29, 7.30pm Daley Centre, Grovely.**

If you forgot to put in a question this week make week 3 a big one. Think about your questions this week and put them in the box next week.

**The news is carrying the progress of Pope Francis' current visit to 4 parts of Asia - including Timor Leste.** We see images of him in a wheel chair or with his walking stick and we know his age (87) and his health issues, yet here he is on the longest journey of his Pontificate (32,000 kms). What a Pope. What a man.

There are always critics of him and his goals for the Church, but his response as to his motivation for the trip has been...."It is an act of humility before the Lord who calls us – an act of humility and obedience to the mission".

Francis' view is that Asia has two thirds of the world's population and the majority are poor. As the Vatican Foreign Minister said..."This trip incarnates Pope Francis' constant call for Catholics to go out to the peripheries". This theme was one of his first statements about what the Mission is all about – both for him and for each one of us.

**During Francis' Pontificate we have witnessed the rising prominence of the term "Synodality.** Indeed, it was in his mind almost from the start of his Papacy. Today we are about to have the

second meeting in Rome of what is called “**A Synod on Synodality**”.

These meetings are actually a process to reach some sort of a consensus on what such an approach could be, so as to assist the global church ( and local churches ) to move forward in a world where change is a constant feature of human life. This Synod is about this goal only – it is not about making changes in other ways.

**What is agreed to in this Synod will hopefully lead to change in other areas, as all of us ( clergy and laity ) come to understand and practice what is called “a synodal approach”. More about this later on.**

**August 31, September 1**

**Questions and Answers (Q&A) boxes are in all churches from now, and for about the next 4 or 5 weeks.**

- **Mitchelton** 1 in the entrance area
- **Samford** 1 near the front entrance
- **Grovely** 2 just inside the 2 entrances

Questions are to be anonymous – boxes will be emptied quite soon after the last weekend Mass at each centre.

You may have more than one question you would like to ask – this opportunity has happened once a year in this parish before Covid. Faith Matters is re-introducing it as a service to our parish community.

**Tip to make it easier** Each box will have biros and paper for your use at each Mass but why put up with this hassle – **why not write it out before you come and just slip it in the box as you go in.** Perhaps you have friends who, for one reason or another, do not attend Mass – see if they would like to ask a question.

Put the date of the Q&A on your fridge. **Tuesday October 29 7.30pm Daley Centre, Grovely. Last week the Social Justice statement for this year was announced.** The Catholic Outlook site in the Parramatta Diocese, Sydney, has a short precis of the content of this document. **Time poor? If you wish to have a general idea about it, check it out on the Faith Matters website under “Topical Articles” on the home page.**

Faith Matters contacted the communications people in the Parramatta Diocese re copyright. They are happy for us to put relevant articles on our website provided we acknowledge the source. From time to time we will do this and we thank Catholic Outlook for this concession.

**August 24, 25**

**Next year is a special year because it is a Jubilee year – once every 25 years. To gain an idea of what it is all about go to [2025: The Jubilee of Hope – Catholic Outlook](#) . In this way you will be able to prepare yourself for all the blessings that such a year can bring to you. The Jubilee period will begin in Advent this year and will go till the feast of the Epiphany in 2026.**

Some other areas where you might like to ask a question for the Q&A on October 29 are as follows:

Scripture – both Old and New Testament - so many aspects here on which you might like clarification. Perhaps the time of Christ and the culture of that time.

Morality, practices within the Church, Pope Francis and his approach as leader of the global church.

The term “synodality” – what it means for us as a church going forward. Our own Plenary Council.

We could keep going with this list but you will know so many other aspects of the Christian life about which you would like some more information. Over to you.

From next weekend, boxes will be placed in all 3 churches. The box will be near the entrance to the Mitchelton and Samford churches. Grovely has 2 main entrances and there will be a box at each entrance. The questions are to be anonymous so as to achieve maximum privacy.

Remember, the easiest way to do this is to have your question written out before you come to church and just pop it in the box. The boxes will be in the churches during the 4 weekends of September – Sunday September 1, 8, 15, 22.

Someone said this; forget who. “When you get the chance to sit it out or dance, I hope you dance.” Not a bad motto for living the Christian life.

## **August 17, 18**

**Here is a suggestion which might make the writing of questions for the Q&A on Oct. 29 and depositing them in the boxes for all 3 churches, a little easier.**

The boxes will be put out on the weekends of Sept 1, 8, 15, and 22. Having the question written out beforehand and being able to just deposit it in the box as you go into Mass will be better than trying to write one at the end of Mass. One area you might like to pose a question is about the Liturgy – the Mass and the Sacraments. Are there questions you have been thinking about in recent years regarding liturgy, and had no chance to ask them? This is your chance.

Next week we will suggest other areas about which you might have a question.

**Last week we mentioned the Year of Jubilee.** On May 25 this year, Pope Francis proclaimed 2025 as the next Year of Jubilee. On August 10, Catholic Outlook had an article by Giancarlo Pani S.J. on just what the Jubilee Year is all about. It is a bit long but most informative, especially in the area of “**indulgences**” and how the Church looks at this matter nowadays.

**Go to the Faith Matters website, click on “Topical Articles” for the article “2025: Jubilee of Hope.”** Better still go to [2025: The Jubilee of Hope – Catholic Outlook](#) . Catholic Outlook is published by the Diocese of Parramatta, the only Diocese in Australia to hold its own Synod under the leadership of Bishop Vincent Long. He is one of the most forward-looking Bishops in Australia, as our Australian Catholic Church seeks to follow the Spirit’s direction through the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Want to subscribe to Catholic Outlook? Go to [catholicoutlook.org](http://catholicoutlook.org)** Some articles will be topical for that Archdiocese but many will be thought provoking and most informative. No harm in having a look to see if it is for you.

## **August 10, 11**

**2025 has been proclaimed by Pope Francis as a Year of Jubilee** - also called a “Holy Year”. Such years occur every 25 years – parishioners in about their mid-thirties and older might remember the last one in 2000? The concept (though in a different format in earlier historical times) actually goes back to the time of Moses (The Book of Leviticus 25: 10-14). Check it out. A Vatican document defines it as – “A year of forgiveness of sins and also the punishment due to sin. It is a year of reconciliation between adversaries, of conversion and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and consequently of solidarity, hope, justice, commitment to serve God with joy and in peace with our brothers and sisters.”

In earlier times it was also a time when debts were erased. Wouldn't many of us like that to be the case now.

The phrase in the second paragraph, “and also the punishment due to sin”, leads to the concept of indulgences. The term springs from the time of Martin Luther and probably many younger parishioners are not aware of what this term meant in the earlier years of older parishioners. These days we do not hear much about indulgences. However they do get quite a mention in years of Jubilee.

The Church has reformed the meaning and practice of indulgences in recent times. The following gives some idea of this reform.

“**Modern Times:** In the 20th century, the Church further reformed the practice of indulgences, abolishing the quantification of indulgences in terms of days or years. [Today, indulgences are still part of Catholic practice, focusing on spiritual acts like prayer, pilgrimages, and charitable works.](#)”

There will be many statements by the Vatican and our Bishops in the coming months on the Year of Jubilee.

## **July 27, 29**

**Date claimer** Faith Matters will conduct a **Q&A evening on Tuesday Oct. 29 in the Daley Centre**. The 3 panel members will be **Bishop Tim Norris, Fr. Nigel and Sr. Ursula O'Rourke**. Put it on the fridge. Details down the track.

If you went to our website after last Sunday to find **Fr. Frank Brennan's homily under “Topical Articles”** you would have noticed that the source of this content came from “**Catholic Outlook**”, the site used by Bishop Vincent Long in his Sydney Diocese of Parramatta. While some of the content on this site has to do with that Diocese there are often articles which are good reading for parishioners seeking more understanding of their mission in the Church. Sign up for the “Catholic Outlook” daily email to see if it is for you.

Recent newsletters have mentioned **SYNOD24: Introducing the Synodality Speaker Series**. The one closest to the parish is **August 1, 6.30 to 7.30pm, Our Lady of the Angels primary school, 30 Warraba Ave., Wavell Heights**. Food and drink from 5.30pm. What is this word “synodality” all about.

We are almost in August – **a couple of big feast days coming up in that month**. **St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop** August 8 Many of her actions and sayings are just so inspirational. What a woman.

**The Assumption of Mary August 15** A decision made by this young woman led to God living

on this earth and bringing us the **Good News of God's Kingdom.**

“To hurry through life, running frantically from one thing to another, is to leave the soul behind.”  
Sr. Joan Chittister O.S.B.

### **July 13, 14**

Many of us struggle at times with how to pray and how to develop a relationship with God. There are so many ways to pray and we can become somewhat confused as to which path to take. Since this topic often features in the booklets of Br. John Venard (Marist Brother) I thought I would share some of his thoughts about it.

In an article called “A Relationship with God” he writes the following.

“Prayer is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end, the end being a relationship with God. We don't say a rosary for the sake of saying a rosary; we don't go to Mass to have the recording angel give us a tick; we don't help somebody just to feel good. No, we do these things to get closer to God and this is the simple test we apply to our prayer life. ‘Is it bringing me closer to God?’

“If the answer is **yes** we are on the right track. If the answer is **no** we need to re-evaluate.”

Most of us probably start off by saying lots of prayers and using lots of words. However, as time passes and a relationship with God starts to happen, people may begin to realise that words are really not needed. They still say certain prayers but most of the time they just try to be conscious of the fact that God is present within them, within people and within creation. God then gets a chance to talk to us as well.

I am reminded of the time the parish priest of Ars in France (St. John Vianney) noticed a person sitting for long periods at the back of the church. He asked the person what he was doing and the answer was “I look at Him and He looks at me”. Words are not always necessary. Prayer based on a relationship probably has less asking for something but rather thanks for the many ways God is loving us and looking after us.

All the books of John Venard are available for borrowing after weekend Masses from the Grovely church shop. Parishioners from Mitchelton and Samford are encouraged to ring the parish office to borrow any books from the Faith Matters lending library. Books will be delivered to you via the Mass port which goes to both churches for the weekend Masses.

### **July 6, 7**

The books by Br. John Venard, Marist Brother, (reproductions of his articles for the newsletter of the school where he was principal and afterwards for the Catholic Leader) are filled with the simplicity of relating to GOD. John's 7 small books, with the theme of “The Battlers' God”, are in the Faith Matters lending library in the shop in the Grovely church. Check them out.

In an article called “Living with God in the ‘ever present’”, he states what God said to Moses when he asked God what His name was. God said “I AM WHO AM. You shall say to the Israelites, I AM has sent me”. (EX. 3:14). Br. John recalls how confused he was by this statement until after some time he realised that **God is the God of the ever present and our destiny is to live this way in both this world and the next.**

**To reinforce this truth he quotes Helen Mallicoat from her poem “I AM”.**

I was regretting the past and fearing the future.  
Suddenly my Lord was speaking”: “My name is I AM”.  
He paused. I waited. He continued.  
“When you live in the past with its mistakes and regrets,  
it is hard. I am not there. My name is not I WAS.  
When you live in the future with its problems and fears,  
it is hard. I am not there. My name is not I WILL BE.  
When you live in this moment,  
it is not hard. I am here. My name is I AM”.

**June 29, 30**

Last week we spoke about what was one of the best ways by which Christians prayed to Mary for many centuries – Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Their perception of Mary and her role in their lives at that time varied quite a bit. Devotions, such as the rosary, were so important in the daily life of Christians in those years, however theological errors had arisen with respect to Mary’s role in the Church.

In an article in this year’s autumn edition of the Jesuit magazine, “Madonna”, Dr. Angela McCarthy wrote – “Mary has no power of her own but she can intercede for us with her own prayers”. This statement is correct but this was not the way Christians in Mediaeval times and for quite some time after that, saw her role.

Even in the mid twentieth century the use of the term ”Co-Redemptrix” was often used in referring to Mary and her role in the Church. Vatican 2 spoke of Mary in a more realistic way and sought to reduce some of the exaggerations that had crept in about her role in the salvation story. Forms of Art, especially in the Renaissance period, portrayed her in unrealistic ways.

Vatican 2 brought some of this misrepresentation back to the truth of who Mary actually is and what her true role is in the life of the Church. Mary today is the first disciple, the one who keeps us all together as we follow her Son. She is also the one who kept Jesus’ initial followers together when life was acutely tough for the early Church. We pray to Mary to ask her to intercede for us with her Son.

Mary’s prayer in the Scriptures, “The Magnificat”, is a truly great prayer (Luke:1, 46-55). Its sentiments, so profoundly felt by Mary in her relationship with God, is a model for how we too can relate to God as well. It is one of the most beautiful prayers in the Bible with its themes of praise, humility, joy, fear, faith, mercy, strength, promise, and blessing. All these things supported Mary’s relationship with God.

**June 22, 23**

**On June 27 we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Older parishioners may remember this feast as Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. It is an icon of the Eastern Church and is thought to have originated in the fifteenth century. A devotion associated with this feast is to pray to Our Lady under this title for a particular intention for nine days prior to the feast day - a Novena. Over centuries, numerous people have received help in a serious situation from performing this devotion. Many people today pray to Mary under this title seeking her intercession with Jesus, her son.**

Mary is looking at us while pointing to the child Jesus, who is frightened by the instruments of crucifixion. The child turns and clings to his mother with such haste that the sandal comes off his foot. On the left is St. Michael Archangel with the lance and sponge of the crucifixion while on the right is St. Gabriel Archangel with the 3 bar cross and nails. Maybe this devotion to Mary might appeal to you.

Module 4 of the Catholic Formation Series the theme is "A People on Mission".

You may be aware that Grovelly is a hub for the Archdiocesan Catholic Formation series which is being rolled out across the Archdiocese. Module 3 has one last presentation in the Daley Centre this month and the Module 4 course will start around late July. This is just an early message that module 4 is about to start. More information will come soon.

**June 15, 16**

**Dr. John A. Dick is an historical theologian in the United States. Among his other areas of writing, he is an expert in tracing the changes in various aspects of Catholic Church activity and beliefs over the centuries. If you wish to see his credentials google John A Dick. He is getting on in years now but he writes an article each month which is very readable and interesting, often challenging.**

As a professor of religion and values he was at the Catholic University of Leuven educating young people for quite some time and he finds great stimulus for his work from the challenging questions they toss at him about religion and the Catholic Church. Since about 2013 he has written an article each month on a whole variety of topics, many on the Catholic Church and others (spirituality and American values) which can be a catalyst for reflection and prayer. Be mindful of the fact that students would be learning things in science and other subjects at school and university that are contradictory to some aspects of Church teachings.

Each catholic has a propensity for change – some are not really on for change and would prefer things to be much the same as they have always been. Nothing wrong with that. Others are always wanting change. Others though, try to steer a path between the two positions mentioned above. Be that as it may, we have to realise that Pope Francis has some formidable critics of his approaches, especially in the United States and in parts of Europe. It was the same with the changes made in Vatican 2.

Reading and reflecting on the writings of John Dick may not be your thing. That is fine. Faith Matters tries to give parishioners a range of views as they grow in their faith.

If you wish to get an idea of some of his writings google “another voice – Dr John A Dick – historical theologian”. You will find a few of his articles as you scroll down. Among them are some where he gives an historical perspective of how the sacraments of Penance, Matrimony and Holy Orders developed across the centuries. Worth a read.

Below that you will find the readily accessible archive of all his monthly articles since 2013.

## June 1, 2

Today's feast, "The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ", was originally mainly known as "Corpus Christi" ( Latin for "The Body of Christ" ), because in those days, say in the early 1960s, the Mass was said in Latin and that language was more generally known to the laity, the priest said Mass with his back to the congregation, one put out one's tongue for the Host to be placed on it by the priest and one was not allowed to have food or water from midnight the night before receiving Holy Communion. Significant change has taken place in this regard.

Change can occur almost overnight (say, in a revolution) or it can be gradual, even at a snail's pace, the best example of which is change within the Catholic Church. For us in the Church in the sixties, Vatican 2 was the catalyst. Even from that time change has been in fits and starts and not without strong opposition from some quarters.

Occasionally it is instructive for us to reflect on where we have come from and to consider the path we took from then to now. Let us take the Corpus Christi procession from then to now.

In the early sixties the feast was celebrated in the Brisbane showgrounds. All students in Catholic primary and secondary schools were expected to attend in school uniform. Thousands of students were assembled in a space out the back, the waiting time was horrendous, teachers were with their classes, and when all was ready they all marched in to completely fill the main area. It was a massive public display of Catholic schools and catholicity in Brisbane. Benediction for the enormous numbers of clergy, parents and students ended the function.

Society has changed enormously since then, as has the approach we have all taken as to how we go about our mission these days. However there is still a desire to celebrate this incredible mystery in some way. There have been a variety of venues for the procession over the years but the venue these days is along Brisbane CBD streets. Numbers had been declining quite a bit over time but the procession today is expected to be about 5000.

Today's procession at 2pm moves from St. Stephens Cathedral through various city streets and finishes back at the cathedral with Benediction. Prayers, including the Rosary are said during the procession. The cultures and colours of the various groups taking part will be on display. Above all, the devotion of the assembly to this mystery will be outstanding.

## May 18, 19

**Some time ago we referred to the third person of the Trinity as the Holy Ghost but today we seem to use Holy Spirit most of the time. Fr. Richard Rohr, (a Franciscan contemplative and well known writer) created a litany of the Holy Spirit from his own prayer life. Many people would remember when we recited litanies in the old days. Fr. Rohr's litany is one of a number that exist.**

This litany has about 63 phrases that can be applied to the Holy Spirit. I guess a number of these are a phrase which could be repeated over and over, much like a mantra, where people, verbally or mentally, repeat the phrase in prayer. Below are some of the phrases in this litany to the Holy Spirit which may help you in your relationship with the third Person of the Trinity.

Hidden love of God.....sacred peace maker.....truth speaker.....great bridge builder.....winds of change.....filled emptiness.....holy healing.....pure gift of God.....reminder of the Father.....homing

device.....compassionate observer.....God compass.

We are all aware of the huge move at all levels of the Church to effect meaningful change via the synodal process. It seeks to have all members of the church involved in listening intently to each other and striving to reach agreement between so many different viewpoints, often held so uncompromisingly. The phrase “great bridge builder” has to be one of the best of the 63 descriptors of the Holy Spirit in fr Rohr’s litany.

On 9/6/19, Terry Lees, a member of the Mt. Isa catholic community who regularly writes an article in the Catholic Leader made this comment in an article called “Indwelling Spirit”.

“Everyone experiences the Holy Spirit differently. The Holy Spirit creates change in us. Our life becomes different, because our relationship with God changes. We enter into a new relationship with God, experiencing God’s ever new presence. We also experience the Holy Spirit working in us.”

“Come Holy Spirit”.

**May 11, 12**

**Last week we spoke about Fr. Richard Leonard’s book “The Law of Love”, 4 copies of which are now in the Faith Matters lending library in the SVDP shop at Grovely church. Apparently, Fr. Richard now has another book out which is about to be launched. It is called “Why God? Stories to inspire Faith” and is his thirteenth book. His reputation as a religious / spiritual writer and as a speaker is well known around the world.**

Recently Garrett Publishing conducted a one hour interview online with the writer where he spoke about his motivation for writing this book. People from quite a few other countries joined the webcast. The book is made up of 52 short stories (one for each week of the year) which are designed to inspire faith in the reader or a number of readers who might gather for discussion about the book. Fr. Richard is noted for his simple, engaging and at times, humorous story telling. The stories range from joyful to sad and all the emotions in between – the type of events which are to be found in our everyday lives.

Faith Matters will purchase 4 copies of this book but there could be a wait before we take delivery of it in the library. We will keep you informed. Online its cost will be about \$40 if you wish to buy one for yourself.

Liturgically, we are starting a period where we participate in a number of significant religious feast days.

Today (May 12) - The Ascension of Jesus back to His Father.

Sunday (May 19) Pentecost.

Sunday (May 26) The Most Holy Trinity.

Sunday (June 2) The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)

Sunday (June 9) 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Feast days of Mary in May – a month dedicated to her.

May 13 Our Lady of Fatima May 20 Mary, Mother of the Church May 24 Our Lady Help of Christians May 31 Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

## **April 27, 28**

**Until last year, copies of the Catholic Leader** were available at the church for parishioners to buy. Since then, a parishioner wishing to read it could have it delivered or arrange to get it online. Since a significant number of parishioners do not access the paper regularly, we will talk about an article which appeared in the Leader recently. **It had to do with a Synod (Synod 24) which will occur in the Archdiocese later this year.**

**Let's put this into context.** Between 2018 and 2021 we had a Plenary Council in Australia and we are awaiting information as to how it will affect us in the Catholic Church in Australia. Also, currently in Rome, we have a Global Synod on the topic of synodality itself. One set of meetings was held in October last year and the second set will be held in October this year.

**Synod 24 will be about what we in the Archdiocese, after discussion, agree to do to implement the decrees coming from our Australian Plenary Council. The first session will be held on Sept. 6, 7 this year at the Xavier Centre at the Holy Spirit seminary, Banyo. The second session will be held on October 11, 12 at the same venue.**

**Bishop Tim Norton (Auxiliary Bishop of Brisbane) will be the Synod Chair.** There is nothing specific for us to do as parishioners. The 150 Synod members will come from bishops, clergy, religious, theologians, canonists and members of the lay people representing parishes, archdiocesan agencies, organisations and communities. Each Deanery will elect 2 parishioners as their representatives.

**The Synod 24 executive officer made this statement:** “We want to make sure people are aware that we're not changing Church teaching. The Synod is about coming up with actions so that the Church in Brisbane can start living the things that came out of the Plenary Council. It's about how we are going to move forward together as a Church that is a co-responsible Church on mission.”

Our role will be that of a praying community..... that the Synod will be guided by the Holy Spirit and that it will follow all the best features of a synodal approach.

## **April 21, 22**

Last week we mentioned we would list some of the areas announced by the Vatican, after the first set of meetings on “Synod on Synodality” in Rome last October. Special teams will research these areas and present positions on them, which will then form the agenda for the second group of meeting in October this year.

The report from the Vatican on the first set of meetings has been placed on our website under the tag “Topical Articles” on our home page. The report is very long but you could pick a section you

are interested in and read what the Vatican is saying about it.

This report on the Synod, with background and discussion around all of the main areas, can be found on the Faith Matters website at [www.faith-matters-gsm.com.au](http://www.faith-matters-gsm.com.au) . Go to “topical articles” on the home page of the **site** – the report is at the top of the list of articles. You may be interested in some other ones there as well.

**Below are some of the areas the Synod identified, to be researched before the meetings later this year.**

- People in poverty – protagonists of the Church’s journey.
- Women in the life and mission of the Church.
- Towards a listening and accompanying Church.
- Structures for participation.
- The Church does not **have a mission** but the Church **is mission**.
- On the road towards Christian unity.

Via this Synod in Rome, Pope Francis hopes to convince the global Catholic Church that the synodal process is the way of the future, if the Church is to be a continuing force for good in a world where constant change is the norm.

Only with a synodal process of honest and sustained close listening between all the people of the church ( Church hierarchy, clerics and us) will there ever be a truly renewed church fit for the purpose Jesus designed.

Pope Francis is the driver of synodality across the global church. Pray that his health and mobility improve. We need him to keep pushing this barrow.

**April 13, 14**

What has happened in Church reform over the last 6 years or so?

**The Australian Catholic Plenary Council** Large numbers of people, including you, made submissions to the Council. The findings were sent to Rome for decisions to be made. No decisions have been communicated to our church yet - more than 15 months later. We wait in patience.

**The global Church gathering in Rome on the topic “Synod on Synodality”.** The first sessions were held in October last year and the second set of sessions will be in October this year. From the first set of meetings a list was made of matters to be researched more deeply and positions developed on each one by the meetings in October this year. A group of people (mainly from the attendees at the first set of meetings) is doing the research and debate on each of the listed points. You would remember that Faith Matters had Fr. Ormond Rush (an expert in this area) talk to us last year about what the term “Synodality” actually means. He is snowed under, preparing for the next meetings in Rome this October. Hopefully we can get him in the first half of 2025.

The results of our Plenary Council were taken to Rome for the meetings on synodality. Hence, apart from an Archdiocesan gathering later this year, there is no other work for us, as parishioners, to do before October this year. Some great consultation work is currently being done with groups of people in more marginalised situations. These people were rarely consulted, if at all, in the discussions leading up to our own Plenary Council. **God loves every single human being – Jesus taught us that.**

**Next week we will look at some of the themes which will be studied closely over the coming months by a select team assigned to each one – a process which will form the agenda for the October 2024 meetings.**

### **April 6, 7**

On Easter Sunday, before the Gospel, a passage was read called “Easter Sequence”. It is an expression of many of the truths that underlie the Resurrection of Jesus, the Christ. Mary, (referred to in the sequence below) is Mary of Magdala, the first person and a woman, to arrive at the tomb on the Sunday. She waited for Peter who was the first person to enter.

A [Sequence](#) is a poetic chant or hymn in honour of a particular feast day. It is placed prior to the Alleluia verse of the Gospel, is believed to date back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century and was included in the Roman Missal issued by the Council of Trent in the 16th century. Sequences are not limited to Easter. The current Roman Missal also includes a Sequence for both [Pentecost](#) and Corpus Christi.

**The Easter Sequence appears below.**

**Christians, to the Paschal victim, offer your thankful praises!  
A Lamb the sheep redeems: Christ, who only is sinless,  
reconciles sinners to the Father.  
Death and life have contended in that combat stupendous:  
The Prince of life, who died, reigns immortal.  
Speak, Mary, declaring what you saw, wayfaring.  
"The tomb of Christ, who is living, the glory of Jesus' resurrection;  
"Bright angels attesting, The shroud and napkin resting.  
"Yes, Christ my hope is arisen; To Galilee he goes before you."  
Christ indeed from death is risen, our new life obtaining.  
Have mercy, victor King, ever reigning! Amen. Alleluia!**

### **March 30, 31**

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the keystone of the Christian faith. Without a belief in this event there is no point in any of us doing what we do in life, either religiously or spiritually. Of ourselves, we cannot come to this belief. The fact that we do believe is a sheer gift from a compassionate and loving God. That’s right – total gift.

Why would we speak and pray as we do at the funeral of a loved one or anyone for that matter. There is no point if we do not believe in an afterlife. An afterlife is confirmed only by the revelations of Jesus, who to prove what he said and did was true, meant that he had to rise from the dead, thereby conquering death and proving that he was actually the Son of God.

So, yes, the Lord is risen. Hence, there is true meaning in our lives on this earth and we know there is a place for us with the risen Lord after we depart this life if we but follow in his footsteps.

Alleluia – Thanks be to God.

Happy and blessed Easter to everyone from the Faith Matters team – Pat, Rosaleen, Aileen and John.

## March 23, 24

Last week an anonymous person (possibly a cardinal and probably in Rome) wrote an article criticising Pope Francis for the direction he has been taking the Church since the beginning of his Papacy. This article was reproduced on the “Catholic Outlook” website (Parramatta Diocese, Sydney) and as it had the right to do so from the author, we gave you the Parramatta website to read it if you were interested.

This week a “contributor to that website” wrote an article defending the Pope and negating the author’s arguments. This writer was Michael Sean Winters and the article was in the National Catholic Reporter in the U.S. The Parramatta Diocese website carries many articles by people who are designated as a contributor. Such a person could be a noted writer from the Diocese or anywhere else, as in this case involving Michael Winters.

To read the article go to “michael sean winters”, click on “Michael Sean Winters National Catholic Reporter”, scroll down the list of articles to “Attack on Pope puts old wine into old whineskins”. Pope Francis is a breath of fresh air – sorely required by a Church which needed to alter its manner of operating long before he began his Papacy.

**The Holy Week** To use a racing expression, we are now “rounding the bend and coming into the straight” **with the goal at the end being the Resurrection of Jesus next Sunday.** We are coming to the end of Lent and are ready to share in the beautiful liturgies of Holy Week. Each of us has tried to obtain a closer relationship with God across the weeks of Lent. Some of us have been very successful at doing this, some of us less so. No matter our success or otherwise, Palm Sunday is the start of a week in which we can all journey together towards the incredible event of Jesus’ resurrection.

## March 17, 18

Parishioners may be aware of the Diocese of Parramatta in Sydney which has a forward looking Bishop – **Bishop Vincent Long.** The Diocese has a daily email (“**Catholic Outlook**”), that anybody can subscribe to for free, which contains a variety of articles from writers both within the Diocese, and writers across Australia and overseas.

Recently there was an article called “**The Demos 11 Affair**”. Pope Francis has been on about change in the global Catholic Church which leads to a more pastoral approach and where church leaders are prepared to listen more attentively to the parishioners in the pews. This approach was meant to be one of the outcomes of Vatican 2 (1962-1965) but it was delayed, actively opposed etc by certain people in the higher echelons of the Catholic hierarchy.

Pope Francis has faced stiff opposition from such people for most of his time as Pope. The article mentioned above highlights the nature of this opposition over the time of his Papacy, but particularly at the present time. “Catholic Outlook” obtained permission to print this article from the source overseas. Hence we can only point potential readers to the article in “Catholic Outlook”. Put “The Demos 11 Affair on Catholic Outlook website” into your browser.

People who wish to read the article can do so. Other parishioners may not be interested and that is fine also. It is important that parishioners do know that the approach of Pope Francis during his Papacy is not accepted by some cardinals and other clerics, especially in Europe and the U.S. This situation is very sad.

When, some time in the future, Francis goes home to his loving God, there will be an “enclave” – a gathering of all Cardinals eligible to vote, which will elect the new Pope. The future of the Church

will be determined by which of these 2 groups, (those favouring Francis' approach or those opposed), holds the majority vote. One would assume that at the times Francis creates other Cardinals during his Papacy, he would be mindful of those bishops who favour his approach.

### **March 9, 10**

Today, the fourth Sunday of Lent, otherwise known as Laetare Sunday, is roughly half way through Lent. Laetare is a Latin word meaning "rejoice", because, after all, we are well on the way to Easter and deserve a small break from the prayer, fasting and almsgiving of the Lenten period. The Church asks us to rejoice today and then get back to the Lenten practices tomorrow.

Today is a day to rejoice so here is a joke. Many of you would be aware of Br. John Venard (Marist teacher and principal) who for many years wrote books about "The Battlers' God". More on his excellent writings another day, many of which are in the Faith Matters' lending library in the St. Williams church. Before we start the joke I need to ask if you do or don't believe in Guardian Angels. Well.....?

"A woman on her way to work was in an angry mood, trying to sort out where her marriage had gone wrong. A voice called out "stop". As she stopped an out of control truck skidded around the corner and smashed into a tree in front of her. "That was close" she said. As she hurried on, the same voice cried "halt". As she halted, a slab of concrete fell off a building and crashed down in front of her. "Almost a second disaster" she exclaimed, amazed at her luck, so she asked the voice "just who are you?"

"I am your Guardian Angel" was the reply "and my job is to protect you from harm and disaster. Do you have any questions?"

The woman answered, "I certainly do. Where were you on my wedding day?"

### **March 4, 5**

The month of March contains a number of important religious feast days, particularly this 2024 year. Here is a snapshot of what to expect.

Three of these feast days occur in March every year. The feast of the Annunciation is on March 25, the starting point for Mary to become the Mother of God. The other member of the Holy Family, St. Joseph, has his feast day on March 19. We know a little bit about Joseph up until when Jesus was about 12. We also know that this carpenter must have been a tower of strength in the eyes of Mary and the young Jesus, considering what he did to protect and nurture the family, especially in those early years.

St. Patrick's day occurs on March 17. The day is well known to all of us and is celebrated in many countries of the world, particularly those which had a significant influx of Irish people in their early years. Australia is one such country. Some research on this saint is well worth doing if you don't know much about him. His influence in Ireland and then in those countries where the Irish migrated to in difficult times, is quite profound.

Actually this month in 2024 is even more significant for our ongoing faith journey, as all the Easter ceremonies occur towards the end of the month. Holy Thursday is 28/3, Good Friday 29/3, Holy Saturday 30/3 and Easter Sunday 31/3. The period of 3 days from Holy Thursday to Holy Saturday is referred to as "The Triduum".

So there we have it. An action packed month.

## **February 23, 24**

You might remember in the item last week we spoke about how each of the first 2 Sundays of Lent usually have the same theme each year. Last week it was the temptation of Jesus in the desert (first Sunday of Lent) and this week it is the Transfiguration of Jesus – second Sunday of Lent.

Last week, Mark wrote very little about Jesus' temptations and it was left to Matthew and Luke to give us some more detail. This week all three evangelists report on the Transfiguration of Jesus in quite some detail. (Mark 9: 2-10, Luke 9: 28-36, Matthew 17: 1-9) This could suggest that all three evangelists regarded the Transfiguration as a significant event in Jesus' mission and worthy of being given more emphasis.

Remember though, that Jesus revealed himself in this manner to just three of his apostles Peter, James and John who were his closest friends. We can only imagine what this manifestation of Jesus in glory and light would have been like for the three of them. Obviously this would have been only a sample of the reality of what the sight of God will be for each of us after we leave this life.

This is a time for us to recall the fact that our baptism made us a son/daughter of God. Could it be a fact that one effect of being baptised as an infant, at a time when we had no idea of the significance of what was actually happening to us, opened us up to the danger that we might become somewhat casual about this tremendous reality in our lives as we grew in years. Some people have observed that adults who have been received into the church via baptism have more understanding of what baptism really is, and perhaps live the Christian life more profoundly. Just a thought.

So, as we move into the second week of Lent, maybe some of our prayer could be that God will give us a deeper realization that we have been chosen, through our baptism, to be heirs of His Kingdom, and that if we persevere in following Jesus we will eventually see God face to face. When we do, it will be far, far more fantastic than it was for the three apostles. In the meantime, we just keep following Jesus, and when we fail, which will happen, we just ask for the grace to get up and keep on going.

## **February 3, 4**

Fr. Richard Rohr's book, "The Divine Dance", (co- author is Mike Morrell) is among the best of Fr. Rohr's books. This is a book about the Trinity, which according to Fr. Rohr is one of our key beliefs, yet it has not really been on the radar of Christianity for about 17 centuries since it was established by the Cappadocian monks in the fourth century. It took about three centuries of reflection on the Gospels after Jesus' resurrection, for these monks and the Church to develop this idea of God as Trinity. Rohr contends that for a long time after this, the concept of Trinity was not really to the fore and had little impact on the life of a Christian. The book, after a slow read and plenty of reflection and prayer, will completely change the way you think about God and the Godhead's expression in Trinity. Note the content of this book is challenging.

Fr. Rohr comments early in the book about how the Trinity operates. "What is going on in God is a flow, a radical relatedness, a perfect communion between 3, a circle dance of love. And God is not just a dancer - God is the dance itself. Now hold on to this. This is not some new, trendy theology from America, this is about as traditional as you can get." The book explains why.

Much emphasis is placed on an icon, created by Andrei Rublev in the 15 th century called "The

Trinity". This sacred work of art depicts 3 persons at a table. The third person at the table is pointing to a vacant spot just below the 3 persons – Rohr sees this as an invitation to each one of us to join in. Join in what? – the Divine Dance.

Some copies are in the Faith Matters lending library in the St. Vincent de Paul shop in the Grovely church.

Lent approaches The start of Lent, Feb 14, is not far away. All 3 churches have copies of the Lenten Booklet, "A Resurrected Life". Cost is \$6, the same as last year. The beauty of this book is that its Scripture reading each day and the reflection on that reading allows you to spend a little time meditating on the theme of the day before you get on with your life– just the thing for busy people. Another advantage is that the booklet can be useful throughout the year, not just during Lent.

Some families or school staff have been using the booklet in small groups. As individuals or in groups, this booklet is a great way to go through Lent and so prepare for Easter, the greatest day of the Church year.

### **January 26, 27**

Ash Wednesday coming soon – Feb. 14. On sale at all 3 churches next weekend are copies of the Lenten booklet for \$6. The booklet was very popular last year. This year its title is "A Resurrected Life". Find it in the following places - Grovely – St. Vincent de Paul shop just inside the entrance. Mitchelton – Mary Murphy just inside the entrance. Samford – James Baxter. The booklet will provide you with plenty of reflection and prayer during the period.

This statement on the Archdiocesan website is informative about the booklet. "Written for busy individuals but easily adapted for groups, each day includes a scripture reading and a reflection upon it, some questions to aid prayer and discussion." Note that small groups may find the booklet useful as well. Actually, a family or a small group of parents, meeting occasionally over the Lent period, may find this discussion process very beneficial.

A bit of interest shown in the item last week about the Madonna magazine. Some people may have purchased it but others are interested in the fact that there are a number of past magazines in the Faith Matters library which are available for borrowing. In this way it is possible for you to check it out at the Faith Matters lending library? home to see if it is something you might like to purchase from Melbourne ( Ph. 03 9421 9666 ) or borrow other past copies from the Faith Matters lending library in the St. Vincent de Paul shop in the Grovely church. Got some at home you are finished with? Why not donate them to the FM lending library? Please leave them at the Grovely office. Many thanks.

Are you struggling at the moment with a lot of sickness / other tragedy, or are you grieving over the passing of a loved one? It may be of interest for you to know that some copies of the book, "Where the Hell is God?", written by Fr. Richard Leonard (S.J.), are in the Faith Matters lending library right now. He is an excellent author who has certainly had his share of tragedy in his family and who has an interesting view on such events when they occur in our lives. It is so difficult to understand why it is happening to us and wondering whether God has abandoned us in our time of need. Jesus also wondered if He had been abandoned by God as He died on the cross. This book may assist you.

### **January 20, 21**

The Madonna magazine, published in Victoria by Jesuit Publications is currently celebrating 126

years of operation. Its main theme is spirituality in daily life. There is a difference between religion and spirituality, with the latter being broader in its definition and referring more specifically to matters regarding the soul within each of us. The editor of the publication is Fr. Chris Gleeson S.J. and a must read in each edition is his editorial. He writes it under the banner of “Soul Matters from the Editor” and it is always worth a read. Each edition has a theme “Prayer and Scripture” is the theme for the current summer edition.

In these times of financial stress for many people, subscriptions to magazines like this tend to decrease. Madonna is published four times a year, corresponding to each of the 4 seasons and the cost is about \$60 or so. You may wish to follow this up by ringing 03 9421 9666 or emailing [subs@madonnamagazine.com.au](mailto:subs@madonnamagazine.com.au). If you would like to get an idea of the contents of this magazine there are a number of back copies in the Faith Matters library in the St Vincent de Paul shop at the Grovely church. Why not come in and borrow one just to see what the magazine is all about. If the contents are something you are looking for, the shop is open at the end of all Masses on weekends for you to borrow a copy.

Each addition contains a number of short articles by various people about spirituality themes. It also has the references for the Mass of each day over the 3 months, followed by some thoughts on the readings. There are many ways people use to pray on a regular basis and you have the opportunity to see if this magazine appeals to you.

Towards the back of the magazine there are a couple of reviews of recently published books by religious writers. The current summer edition (the months of Dec. 2023 to Feb. 2024) contains a book review of a recent book by Fr. Richard Leonard (a Jesuit priest). The title of the book is “The Law of Love”.

Fr. Richard is an excellent writer and many parishioners would remember when Faith Matters had him here to speak some time ago about his outstanding book called “Where the Hell is God”. If you have experienced traumatic events in your life and you feel God is not helping you get through it, you should read this book. It will give you another perspective about such terrible events in our lives.