

Grovely, Samford, Mitchelton GSM

Faith Matters

Posted Newsletter Articles

2025

July 5, 6

Recently we noted that the Eucharist is the core of our Faith. When it is celebrated each Sunday within the framework of the Church's liturgical year we are closely in sync with the Church's celebration of liturgy.

A quick summary. The Church's liturgical year commences with the Season of Advent, usually in late November and followed by the Christmas Season. Then comes a number of Sundays until Lent. These Sundays are called Sundays in Ordinary Time. This year the first such Sunday occurred on 12/1 on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. This continued until the 8th Sunday in Ordinary Time after which the season of Lent commenced with Ash Wednesday on 3/5. In Ordinary Time the priest wears green vestments.

After 5 Sundays of Lent (purple vestments) we came to Palm Sunday and the Easter Triduum, culminating in the Resurrection, followed by another 5 Sundays after Easter. We then had the Ascension, Pentecost and the series of feast days recently celebrated. Now we are back to Sundays in Ordinary Time with today being the 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

This will now take us up to the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time. The Sunday after that is the Feast of Christ the King (23/11) which is the end of this year's Liturgical cycle. Advent starts again on the next Sunday (30/11).

The gospels read at Sunday Masses are on a roster, referred to as years A, B, C. The roster is Year A – Matthew, Year B – Mark, Year C- Luke. This year you will have noticed that the Gospels on most Sundays in Ordinary Time come from the evangelist Luke. Next year it will be Matthew and we will start a new liturgical year.

The Gospels in Ordinary Time generally tell the story of Jesus' teachings. Sometimes the Gospel may not come from the Evangelist for that year because the feast day is very special. Often, on these occasions the Gospel comes from John. **I hope this has been a useful summary for you of the Church's Liturgical Year for 2025.**

June 28, 29

By now, most people would know that we have a new Archbishop of Brisbane – Archbishop Shane Macinlay. What many people may not know is that he is a person who showed strong leadership as the vice-president of the fifth Plenary Council of Australia, especially on the last

Wednesday of the Council.

In addition, he was a delegate at the Synod on Synodality in Rome not all that long ago which involved the global church. That synod was called by the late Pope Francis who was a champion of the process all through his pontificate. Our new Archbishop was also elected by the bishops at that synod to be part of the Commission which was responsible for the writing of the final document that encapsulated the key findings of the synod.

He therefore has a deep understanding of what the synodality process is all about – active listening to the opinions of others who have a different opinion to us, especially about church matters. It is the ability to take this all on board, to discuss the differences and to come to an understanding in an amicable way, which hopefully leads to a position accepted, in the main, by all parties. Such is the goal.

The path of synodality is the way the Church wishes to follow at all levels, at a time when the world is facing a period of an accelerating rate of change. Welcome Archbishop Shane MacKinlay.

Today we also celebrate two strong Christian leaders in the early Church – Saints Peter and Paul. Both men experienced times when they certainly were not on the same page as Jesus, when the former denied Him three times and the latter persecuted His followers, but they also experienced the forgiveness, mercy and love of the risen Christ which enabled them to do the great things they did.

We too, in our daily lives, have the chance to follow Jesus in the path He wishes for us. He is always with us. Remember the last sentence of the poem “Footprints in the Sand”, when the Lord says, “The years when you have seen only one set of footprints, my child, is when I carried you”.

June 21, 22

Today, in the city at 2pm, the annual Corpus Christi procession will take place. It will wind through some of the streets of the CBD, starting and ending at St. Stephen’s Cathedral.

This public witness to the Eucharist is a time honoured tradition over many years. In an earlier time, like in the 50s and early 60s, the Exhibition Ground was filled with thousands of school children and the stands were over-flowing with Catholic parents and church dignitaries. The gathered group sang hymns, recited the Rosary and participated in Benediction, celebrated by Archbishop Rush. Something similar, but a far smaller event will take place in the city this afternoon.

In those days most Catholic secondary colleges were run by Religious Orders and the role of the laity in perpetuating and strengthening the Australian Catholic education system (one of the best in the world) was yet to emerge. **Though smaller, this procession is still a powerful witness to the centrality of the Eucharist in our Christian/Catholic life.**

One major event in the evolution of change from that time was the second Vatican Council (1962-1965), called by Pope John XXIII and held in Rome. This was a call by the Pope for the Church to look at where it stood in relation to a world which was rapidly changing and where the Church was being left behind. Relevant and effective change is never easy, especially in large institutions, and our Church is no exception. Pope Francis knew this and acted accordingly while Pope Leo needs a bit of time to assess how he will proceed.

It has been a thorny road since 1965 but significant change has happened since then. Thanks be to God.

June 14, 15

In previous items we have mentioned the school newsletter articles written by Br. John Venard (now deceased Marist brother) when he was principal at a Gladstone catholic high school. The tuck shop ladies thought they were so relevant to families that they suggested he put them in book form. After retirement he had a column in the Catholic Leader for quite some time. His articles were later collected in 7 or so small books, now not in print.

Each of these booklets is available in our lending library in the church shop at Grovely which is open after the weekend Sunday Masses. However, unfortunately, there is no copy of his first one – “Walking with a Battlers’ God”. For newcomers to the parish, the lending library just requires you (in the exercise book provided) to fill in your name, date and title of the book and try to return it in about two weeks. There are quite a few other books there from 21st century authors.

What is the difference between religion and spirituality? An article by Br. John may help. I quote...

“Do you tend to live in the fast lane, forgetting to stop and smell the flowers or listen to the birds singing or hear God calling? Some claim that they are too busy to pray, to be spiritual – others excuse themselves with ‘it’s not my cup of tea.’ A pity. To be spiritual means being conscious of God in our lives as a loving presence, not only when we are at church or saying prayers but in our normal day to day living.

“**Said the Master:** As the fish dies on land so you die in the midst of worldly business. To live fully you must be spiritual.

“**Asked the disciple:** Must I therefore leave my business and go into a monastery?

“**Master:** Certainly not. Hold on to your business but develop the spirituality that is in your heart.”

Let’s try being a bit more spiritual this week – being conscious of God in our lives as a loving presence –with practice it does work.

May 24, 25

One of the features of the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope is the acquiring of Indulgences during the Jubilee. For older parishioners (those born around the 40s, 50s, 60s) the topic of Indulgences was something that was lived out in practice as part of their membership of the Catholic Church while for some in this group, the knowledge of the history of indulgences in earlier centuries was an impediment against their use of them.

Recently, in Catholic Outlook, (Parramatta Diocese, Sydney. Bishop Vincent Long) there was an article by a Jesuit priest in Rome, writing for La Cavilta Cattolica, about the current Church view on Indulgences. It is lengthy and is on the Faith Matters’s website under “Topical Articles” on the home page. **You may have the time to check it out – “A Treasure to Recover”.**

Here is part of the definition of an Indulgence in Canon Law “An indulgence is the remission before God of temporal punishment for sins whose guilt has already been forgiven.....”. (Canon

Law 992). Note that the Sacrament of Reconciliation has already happened. An indulgence refers to the fact that although the sin is fully forgiven there remains the effect of sin upon ourselves. **A term used here is “temporal punishment”.**

Note that this term does not refer to something that God does to us but is just what happens within us after we sin. This aspect is dealt with at the beginning of the article and you can check it out if you find the concept of “temporal Punishment” a bit confusing. An example used is that of a couple where infidelity has occurred. Although forgiveness might occur there is much to do with restoring the relationship. **More than forgiveness is required.** And so it is with sin as well, as we seek to restore our relationship with God. Gaining an Indulgence is part of restoring the relationship.

We can receive an Indulgence for ourselves or for the souls in Purgatory but not for any other living person. The Church teaches that Purgatory exists for those people who have died but still had some “temporal punishment” to work off before they were purified sufficiently to “see the face of God”.

April 19, 20

When Faith matters was called Adult Faith Education, the following poem appeared in the Easter AFE item in the newsletter in 2009. This poem (source unknown) captures the wholeness of the Triduum, including the welcome given to Christ riding in to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.
Easter People

I looked at life on Palm Sunday and saw the **Prince of Peace**

riding on a donkey, acclaimed by crowds as the hoped for Messiah,
riding steadily towards Jerusalem.

I looked at life on Thursday and saw a sacrament of service, **EUCCHARIST**

The washing of feet of wounded people, the broken body of Christ.

In some ways the same reality – nourishing service of other.

I looked at life on Friday and saw **ABANDONMENT**

Into your hands O God... Can I drink this cup... I am thirsty...

Your will be done.

I looked at life on Sunday and saw the **LIGHT.**

Penetrating the darkness of fear and prejudice and hate.

And that light was the light of Christ.

Light for the world.

Easter blessings and peace from the Faith Matters team.

April 5, 6

In a book by Fr. Richard Rohr (Franciscan) called “Radical Grace – Daily Meditations” (1995) there is a short piece entitled “Earning God’s Love”. This piece was actually something

written by him earlier on, in a well-respected book called “The Great Themes of Scripture”.

He notes that the greatest act of Faith is to believe that God loves us despite our sinfulness and yet we always think we have to earn God’s love. We think we can achieve this if we obey the Commandments, be good to our neighbour and avoid temptations etc. By doing these things we will please God and in so doing we will get God’s blessing and love in return.

The fact of the matter is that everything good about us is sheer gift from God. We can merit nothing. We were in the mind of God and loved, long before we were born. We think as human beings but God’s ways are not our ways. Let us be thankful to God for our very life, for His sustaining of it, for the gifts He has bestowed on us, for the numerous times He assisted us at all stages of our life and for the fact that we have the benefit of Christianity and the Sacraments. We did not earn this – it is all gifted to us.

Fr. Rohr observes that for many of us the phrase “I must save my soul” is how we think and live. He thinks it is heresy to believe that **you** can save your soul. The very word “Jesus” means Jesus saves. The writer finishes this piece with this statement. “As long as you are busy saving your soul you are preventing God from saving it”.

If we are aware of the immensity of God’s love for us and His many gifts to us and are thankful for them every day, the rest will fall into place.

March 21, 22

In the “The Word Among us” magazine for Lent last year there was an article about the well-known parable “The Prodigal Son”. Actually there were 3 articles related to this parable – “A Restless Heart” (the lost son), “A Hardened Heart” (the other son) and “The Prodigal Father”. The writer suggested that the parable could be called “**The Prodigal Father**” since Jesus’ purpose at that time was to respond to the Scribes and Pharisees by emphasising the love and mercy of His Father. Jesus certainly makes His point in this parable.

The article makes the following statement. “He wanted them to understand the heart of His heavenly Father. He is a God who lavishes his love and mercy on us so generously that it can almost scandalise us, as this story surely did for those who first heard it.”

Some other points which the article highlights about God as a Prodigal Father.

- The father did not interfere with the free will of the son and stood back as he made such terrible decisions about his life. Free will is God’s greatest gift to us. We are even free to reject Him. What profound love.
- God never loses sight of us, no matter what. The father probably scanned the horizon each morning for a sign of his son returning. What happened then was captured in the painting “Return of the Prodigal Son” (1773) by Pompeo Girolamo Batoni (1708-1787).
- The son could not believe his father’s compassion for him and that he was so joyous at his return.

The title of this Lent 2024 magazine was “Return to Me with All Your Heart. **Perhaps this could be the goal for each of us this Lent.**

March 15, 16

Would you like a bargain? Some copies of “Start anew in Christ” are still available. The cost for these will be \$2 instead of \$5 because we are now at the start of the second week of Lent. You might remember that these books could also be used for meditation at any stage of the year. The content is excellent.

Where available? In the shop at Grovely church after each weekend Mass or by phoning the Grovely office (33553690) Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm. The early bird catches the worm.

In case you missed the Faith Matters item last week. You may be aware of the monthly magazine called “The Word among us” which comes from the United States. A number of parishioners do subscribe to this small magazine - cost is about \$60 per year. This magazine has good articles and comes out once a month.

Some parishioners donate their copies to the Faith Matters lending library after they have used them for the month and these are available at the Grovely church shop which is open after all the Sunday Masses. We are aware of the fact that parishioners who attend Mass at Mitchelton and Samford do not have immediate access to the lending library. We hope to provide some past copies of “The Word among us” at both those churches. Watch this space.

In the meantime, if you do subscribe to this magazine and wish to donate copies to the Faith Matters lending library after you have finished with them, please leave them in the church shop at Grovely after any weekend Mass or leave at the parish office at Grovely. **Note – copies are not part of the loan process. If you do take one there is no need for you to bring it back.**

Pope Francis is in the fight of his life but he looks to be holding his own. He has certainly been a change agent since he became Pope and we hope he is able to continue to do so. It was inspiring to see so many people praying for his welfare while processing around the Vatican.

March 1, 2

Ash Wednesday March 5 – this coming Wednesday.

The Lenten program will commence on Tuesday March 11 in the Daley Centre at 7.30pm. The 6 sessions will be on Tuesdays March 11, 18, 25 and April 1, 8, 15.

If you wish to be a part of it have you registered your name and contact details yet?
A sheet is at the entrance to all 3 churches.

What does the program involve?

- ! Purchase a copy of “Start Anew in Christ” (\$5) at all 3 churches or at the first session. The first half of each session will be devoted to prayer and discussion on the previous Sunday Gospel for Lent.
- !
- ! The second half will be discussion on some of the Beatitudes as found in Kevin Treston’s award winning book “Choices for Life”. His book is based on the 8 Beatitudes as found in Matthew’s Gospel (5:1-10) and not the 4 found in Luke’s Gospel (6: 20-26).

The theme of **Hope** is at the heart of the current **Jubilee of Hope** for this year. It is certainly at the front of people’s minds for Pope Francis as he bravely battles various health problems.

The summer edition of the Jesuit monthly magazine “Madonna” carries an editorial from the noted spiritual writer Fr. Chris Gleeson (S.J.) entitled “Pilgrims of Hope”. The jubilee, of course, is all

about pilgrims, either to Rome or within Australia. In a sense, we are all pilgrims from God to God – that is our life’s journey.

In his editorial, also using insights from both Pope Francis and Jonathan Sacks, he highlights the difference between a tourist and a pilgrim. **The former goes somewhere to see something new whereas the latter goes somewhere to become someone new.** Am I a tourist or a pilgrim on my life’s journey?

February 22, 23

February 15, 16

Faith Matters will be running a night time Lent program, starting at 7.30pm and finishing at 9pm, followed by a cuppa for those who can stay awhile. The dates are March 11, 18, 25 and April 1, 8, 15. Venue – Daley Centre. People will need a booklet, available at the church shop at Grovely (\$5) which is open after each weekend Mass. Alternatively, one could be purchased on the first night, particularly if you live in Mitchelton or Samford.

This will be a night of prayer and discussion on the Gospel of the preceding Sunday with the second part of the night devoted to a Beatitude from Kevin Treston’s award winning book “Choices for Life”. As was stated in last week’s Faith Matters item it could be argued that as we get older we realise that the Beatitudes, more so than the Commandments, are the “guardrails” which assist us to strive towards a more intimate relationship with God. You will receive a chapter of the book (only a few pages) to read before the next session’s discussions.

The Beatitude chosen on a given night will be discussed in the light of preparation during Lent for the Resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday.

Today, at the entrance to the 3 churches is a sheet which asks those interested in this Lent program to record their name and phone number (or email address) to enable us to give them details closer to the first session. The last session occurs during Holy Week, with Easter Sunday on April 20. It will be great if you can attend all six sessions – things come out of left field sometimes which can prevent us from attending.

Remember – if you wish to attend the program you need to purchase the \$5 book in the next few weeks if possible. Books available in Grovely church shop after weekend Masses.

February 8, 9

Kevin Treston’s latest book “Choices for Life”, which deals with the Beatitudes, has received the award **“Book of the Year” from publishers Garrett Publishing in Brisbane.** The book is certainly in demand as the first printing is sold out and a second printing is currently underway. There are 5 copies available for borrowing from the Faith Matters lending library at the church shop at Grovely. Three of the 5 are currently out on loan. Three copies have also been lent to both Mitchelton and Samford churches and these will be available for borrowing quite soon.

As mentioned in a previous newsletter, the well-known spiritual writer, Fr. Richard Rohr (OFM

Franciscan), suggests that as we grow older we tend to live by the guardrails of the Beatitudes, more than we live by the guardrails of the Commandments. The Commandments are still there of course but as we grow in love of God it is more the way we live by the Beatitudes that defines us in God's eyes.

From today we have 3.5 weeks until Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. **For Lent this year Faith Matters is re-introducing the Lenten program on a Tuesday evening at Grovely, starting at 7.30pm.** The dates for these evening sessions are March 11, 18, 25 and April 1, 8, 15. **At all Mass centres next weekend there will be a sheet for you to record your name if you wish to be part of this Lent program.**

The sessions will use the Archdiocesan booklet **"Start anew in Christ"** which can be purchased in the Grovely church shop or at the parish office for \$5 – the same price for a number of years. **Please note – the \$5 booklet has something in it as well for each day of Lent.**

Each Tuesday session presents the Gospel reading for the previous Sunday and discussion occurs around the Gospel theme. In addition, participants will be given, on each night, a copy of a chapter of Kevin Treston's recent book "Choices for Life" and this will also be discussed at the following session.

February 1, 2

Last week we wrote about what "Indulgences" were, in general. This week we give information about the rules to gain a Plenary Indulgence during the Jubilee of Hope this year. Remember, an indulgence is gained only after the Sacrament of Reconciliation has been received and hence our sins forgiven. This "indulgence" may be gained for **yourself** or **someone who has already died** and whom you think might be in Purgatory.

After sin, we have some kind of effect still on our soul which is removed either by some time in Purgatory after we die or by acts of penance and charity in this life or by gaining a Plenary Indulgence in this life. **For many people the concept of an "indulgence" may be complicated, or they are not really interested. That's ok. The information below is provided for parishioners who wish to pursue this matter during this Jubilee of Hope in 2025.**

There are many information sources on the internet. I have just picked one article, written by **Courtney Mares, a Roman correspondent for Catholic News Agency**, whose article is based on the Vatican document, recently released by Roman Church Authorities. The article is longish and refers also to people making a pilgrimage to Rome this year. If this is not you, just pick out the info that is relevant to us in Brisbane.

The Courtney Mares article is the one at the top of the articles under the tag "Topical Articles" on the Faith Matters home page.

Specifically, here are some relevant extracts from the article.

"To obtain an indulgence, the usual conditions of detachment from all sin, sacramental confession, holy Communion, and prayer for the intentions of the pope must be met."

"The jubilee year is a time when Catholics are especially encouraged to practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Examples...visiting prisoners, spending time with lonely elderly people, aiding the sick or disabled, and helping those who are in need as instances to obtain an indulgence. Practising the works of mercy, it says, is in a sense, making a pilgrimage to Christ present in them".
"Visit your local cathedral.

Catholics can also gain a Plenary Indulgence by making a pious pilgrimage to their cathedral or to another church or shrine selected by the local bishop”.

January 18, 19

In a few past Faith Matters items we have referred to “The Jubilee of Hope” which commenced on Christmas Eve 2024 and goes till the feast of the Epiphany in 2026. This Jubilee is a continuation of a long tradition in the Catholic Church and has to do quite a bit with pilgrimage to Rome and other activities available to the faithful. One of these features is the access to “Indulgences”.

This term is one that younger members of our community may not have heard much about during their time at school, if at all. For the older generation it was a thing that was very much talked about in the 50s and 60s. After Vatican 2 (1962-65) the concept of indulgences faded quite a bit but it was still very much in the Church’s thinking, although its purpose and characteristics were quite different from what it was before.

Indulgences were often abused in the centuries before Martin Luther (1483- 1536), especially during his time. He took this matter on with the Church in 1517 and the rest is history. On the Faith Matters website, under the tag “Topical Articles” on the home page, you will find a few articles dealing with the history of Indulgences and the Church’s approach to the topic these days. There are many articles on this topic – these 2 do the job quite well.

These 2 somewhat long articles are provided for those who have the time/inclination to delve into the topic

[Explainer: What are indulgences? - Catholic Review](#)[The Catholic view on indulgences and how they work today.](#)

The first article is by “Catholic Review” in Baltimore USA while the second is by Miriam Renaud (Faculty of Bioethics, Religion, and Society, Department of Religious Studies, DePaul University USA.)

Next week we will outline how Indulgences are a part of the Jubilee of Hope.

Today is the second Sunday in Ordinary Time, next week is the third, but on Feb. 2 (4th Sunday in O. T.) the feast day is a special one – The Presentation of the Lord. The readings on that day will be about this event in the infant Jesus’ life. This event is also regarded as the first of 7 major sorrows in Mary’s life.

January 11, 12

On Christmas Eve, in Rome, Pope Francis carried out an action that was the forerunner of the next year in the life of the global church community. **It had to do with the 2025 year of jubilee.**

An article is added to the Faith Matters' website, entitled "Pope Francis opens Holy Door inaugurating 2025 Jubilee". Go to "Topical Articles" on the home page and you will find the article at the top of the list. Some other sites on the internet will also give you a lot of information as to what this Jubilee year is all about.

The various organisations within the Vatican that exist to facilitate the Vatican's oversight of the Catholic Church's mission across the world, ("The Roman Curia"), have had a name change. **Each of these organisations is now called a "Dicastery"**. The Roman Curia is like a public service for the institutional western church.

One of these Dicasteries, for the very first time in the Church's history, has had a woman appointed as the head of the organisation, which means that she has authority even over Cardinals who may be part of that Dicastery. **The lady is Sr. Simona Brambilla. She is now the fifth woman to be appointed to a high-ranking role in the Vatican.**

It is a slow process but the Pope is gradually working towards bringing more women into the decision-making process at higher levels within the organisation. Change in the Church takes time - sometimes a lot of time.

Here are a few dates of important events coming soon in the Church's 2025 year:

- Ash Wednesday March 5
- Good Friday April 18
- Easter Sunday April 20
- Annunciation March 25
- St. Patrick's day March 17

The Gospel writer for this year is Luke. Most of the Gospels will be from Luke, however some will be from other evangelists. Usually the Gospel for Sundays in Ordinary Time will be from Luke.