

St Thomas More's Parish

*St Thomas More's Catholic Parish, a welcoming people of faith,
lives out God's Mission, embracing love, justice and peace.*

*We acknowledge the Giabal and Jarowair people, the Traditional Owners
who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years.
We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship
of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country
and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.*

71 A Ramsay Street Toowoomba Qld 4350 Ph: 4635 9555 Fax: 4635 5742

Parish Leader: a/h phone: 0407 804 461. Email: parishleader@stthomasmores.org.au

Parish Email: parishoffice@stthomasmores.org.au Parish Council Email: parishcouncil@stthomasmores.org.au

Parish Website: www.stthomasmores.org.au Parish Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/stmparishtwmba/>

Fourth Sunday of Lent, Year C: 30 - 31 March, 2019

Readings: Joshua 5:9-12; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Unfailing forgiveness and arms open to welcome back wayward sons and daughters is a key motif in today's gospel story. There is no room in the hearts of Jesus' critics for such forgiveness: upright law-abiding people should exclude "sinners" from their company. In a first-century Jewish context, it was easy enough to be a sinner. Whole groups of people, depending on their occupation, fell into that category simply because they failed to observe one or more of the 618 prescriptions of the law. Jesus' response to critics is the story of a parent whose adult children lose their way. One son finds his way back to the centre of family life and the support of the wider community while the other more law-abiding son seems to place himself outside the family circle, holding on to the resentment he feels at his sibling's return.

We need to attend to the gaps in the story: there may be daughters as well as sons in the family; there is surely another parent, a mother who shares the heartache of her husband when their younger son requests his share of the estate. To make such a request in this context is tantamount to wishing his parents dead. The older brother is not disadvantaged: he is assured of a two-thirds share according to the law as well as the ongoing love and support of his family, as his father makes clear.

The contrast between the young man's acquisitive nature and his parents' capacity to relinquish substantial property in the interests of relationship is striking. No motive is offered for the son's readiness to break all his ties and get as far away as he can. In the distant country, he squanders both his inheritance and his identity. A "severe famine" becomes the catalyst for his change of direction. Famine in any age means devastation of the earth that can lead to displacement, to broken relationships and even to global conflicts. In turning back, the young man shows no real interest in a restored relationship with his family or ancestral lands. Rather, he devises a plan that will put food in his belly. He composes a speech about having sinned against his father and against God and about being prepared to share the status of the servants. Thanks to the expansive heart of an extraordinarily compassionate parent, he does not have to deliver the speech he has prepared. Famine becomes feast. So it is with our merciful God. We abandon, even betray. We waste the bounty of Earth. Our motives for returning to the sources of love and community are very mixed, and yet our merciful God is ever ready, with our cooperation, to turn famine into feast. For that to happen in our times, we must turn away from our acquisitive, wasteful ways and respond as one to the pain of our planetary home.

(Reflection by Sister of Mercy, Sr Veronica Lawson RSM, Theologian and Biblical Scholar)

Parish Leader:Michael Bermingham
Priest Director:..... Michael O'Brien
Pastoral Council: Terry Carter
Finance Committee:Tim Davis
Secretary:Donna Pugh
Secretary:Jenny Bartkus
School Principal:.....Michael Cash
APRE: Lee ann Weekes
School Board.....Karen Tobin
Parish Safeguards Contacts:
Maree Keating – 0435 173 882
Sarah Holcombe – 0408 193 636

Parish Diary: 1 – 7 April 2019

Monday: 7.00am.....Men's Group
9.00am.....Mass
7.00pm.....PPC Meeting
7.00pm.....St V de P

Tuesday: 9.30am.....Faith Education
5.30pm.....Mass
7.00pm.....Lenten Groups
7.00pm..Revenue Committee

Tue to Sat 7.00am..... Mass at St Pat's

Wednesday 9.00am...2nd Rite of Penance
10.00am.....Open Door
5.30pm.....Lenten Group
7.00pm.....2nd Rite of Penance

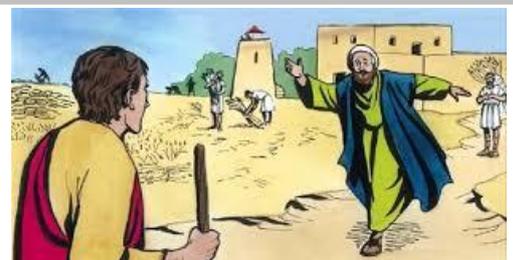
Thursday 10.00am.....Lenten Group

Friday 9.00am.....Mass
9.00am...Parish Playgroup
9.30am.....Lenten Group

Fifth Sunday of Lent – Year C

Mass: 6.00pm Saturday
8.30am Sunday

Readings: Isaiah 43:16-21
Philippians 3:8-14
John 8:1-11



March/April 2019

- 1 April – Men's Group Guided tour of Stanthorpe Winery
- 1 April – Parish Pastoral Council Meeting
- 3 April 9.00am & 7.00pm – Communal Rite of Penance
- 12 April 9.00am – Anointing Mass

HAPPENINGS IN OUR PARISH

Lenten Program 2019:

The Lenten Program Groups for this year are continuing. The Book for the program is "Trust" and is still available from the Parish Office. If you are not a member of a Lenten Group and wish to join a group, please contact Michael for details. The cost for the book is \$8.00. Group times are as follows:

Tuesday: 7.00pm at 25 Piggott Drive – Jacinta Twidale commencing Tuesday 5 March.

Tuesday: 7.00pm at 13 Maple Street – Jim and Fay Stein commencing Tuesday 5 March.

Wednesday: 5.30pm in the Church – Michael Bermingham – commencing Wednesday 6 March.

Thursday: 10.30am – Parish Office Meeting Room – Emmaus Group commencing Thursday 7 March.

Friday: 9.30am – Parish Meeting Room – Madonna Wills – commencing Friday 8 March.

Pope Francis' Lenten Message:

Copies of Pope Francis' Lenten Message are now available. They can be found near the Noticeboard in the Church Foyer.

Ministry Group Meetings:

Over the next few weekends, Michael would like to meet with Readers, Eucharistic Ministers, Welcomers and Ministers of Communion to the Sick. It is an opportunity to reflect on and discuss the important role that you all play in the life of the parish community. Meetings will happen after Mass on Saturday nights and Sunday morning and will aim to go no longer than 15 to 20 minutes. All involved in these ministries are asked to attend. Proposed schedule is as follows:

Ministers of Communion to the Sick

Saturday and Sunday, 6 and 7 April

Eucharistic Ministers:

Saturday and Sunday, 13 and 14 April.

Communal Rite of Penance:

Wednesday 3 April at 9.00am and 7.00pm. This is an opportunity to bring ourselves and our world to celebrate the forgiveness we need for ways we have failed to live our Baptismal Promises. This year the focus is on the abundant mercy of God for all.

Anointing Mass:

Will be held at St Thomas More's on Friday 12 April at 9.00am. All welcome. Please think about anyone you may be able to assist with transport so that as many as possible may experience the blessings of this healing mass. Afterwards there will be a chance to meet up over a cup of tea provided by the Care and Concern Group.

Holy Week:

- Holy Thursday – Mass of the Lord's Supper – 6 pm
- Good Friday – Stations of the Cross – 10 am
- Good Friday – Celebration of the Lord's Passion – 3 pm
- Holy Saturday – Easter Vigil – 6 pm
- Easter Sunday – Mass – 8.30 am

Confirmation and First Communion:

The Sacrament of Confirmation will be held at St Thomas More's on Tuesday 28 May 2019 at 7.00pm. First Communion will be celebrated at both Masses on the weekend of 20 and 21 July 2019. Children need to have received the Sacrament of Penance before joining the sacramental program for Confirmation and First Communion. Full details can be found on the parish website via this link: http://stthomasmores.org.au/?page_id=54 Also, if anyone would like to join the sacramental team for this program, your support would be warmly welcomed. Any queries, please contact Michael on 0407 804 461 or by email: parishleader@stthomasmores.org.au.

Music Practice for Holy Week:

Next Music practice for Holy Week will be on Wednesday 10 April at 7pm in the Church. All singers welcome.

Musicians wanted:

With a small band of dedicated musicians to draw on for our weekend Masses and special events such as Anointing Masses, 2nd Rites of Penance and Funerals, we are always looking for new people to join the roster, so that the workload can be shared. If you are interested or would like to discuss further, please talk to Michael, our Parish Leader.

Containers for Change:

If you happen to be taking containers to be recycled at one of the Containers for Change sites around town and you are wondering what to do with the proceeds, we now have a number which you can put into the machine and the funds will come to the Parish account. The number is: C10147818.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Maronite Rite Mass:

Fr Fadi Salame from Brisbane will celebrate Mass in the Maronite Rite at St Anthony's Church, Memory Street Harristown on Sunday 7th April at 11.00am. A special invitation is extended to any families from Iraq or Syria to attend. Other parishioners are welcome to attend this Mass. A light finger food lunch will be held in Parish Community Centre after Mass. Please bring a plate of food to share for lunch. Please contact Gabrielle Saide on 4632 4778 (a.h.) if you require transport.

Sacramental Gifts:

Gifts for children receiving the Sacraments are often hard to find. South Street Newsagency now has a new range of beautiful gifts available. It is a range of gifts for Baptism, Confirmation and Communion and other religious gifts for all occasions. It includes statues, crosses and candles.

Open Invitation to the Diocese:

His Excellency Most Reverend Adolfo Tito Yllana, the Apostolic Nuncio, will be saying Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral 31/3/19, 9:00am.

Chrism Mass – Open invitation to the Diocese:

Bishop Robert McGuckin warmly invites all parishioners within the Toowoomba Diocese to the Chrism Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral 15/4/19, 5:30pm.

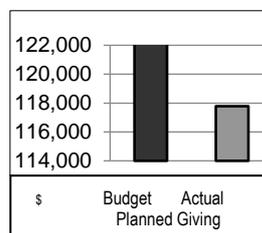
Missionary Sisters – Repertory Fundraiser:

The Missionary Sisters of St Peter Claver are hosting a fundraiser at the Repertory Theatre on TUESDAY MAY 14. The play is entitled "Crossing Delancey" Arrive at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start. A delicious supper is included. TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW. They can be purchased by contacting The Sisters on 46321818 or Helen on 0416055976. All proceeds go to charity. This is a story of a modern young woman, Izzy and her matchmaking grandmother, Bubbie. This delightful play takes a look at the clash between traditional Jewish - American immigrant culture and the modern aspirations of the next generation.

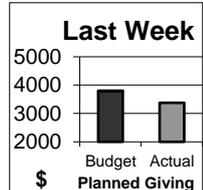
PLEASE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS:

Those who are ill: Bryan Flemming, Terry Tyers, Ned Sparksman, , Pauline Dixon, Allan Wills, Damian Wyvill, Sara Mehari, Scott Murphy, Michelle Halpin, Christine Prescott, Toni Fitzgibbon, Camille Taylor, Patrick McNamee, Janice Lockhart, Dodie McGrane, Christine Andrews, Rita Sullivan, Maria Hunter-Robinson, Val Sharpe, Paul Turner, Hedy Marshall, Mary Buttin, Fr Brian Sparksman, James Babineau, Mort Edmiston, Arleen Hansen, Fred Berge, Peter Webster, Ros Morton.

Anniversaries: Patricia Grams, Rev Fr. Patrick Brady



PLANNED GIVING



Modern society doesn't have a crisis of faith; it has a crisis of love

In looking at contemporary Western culture, an observer might be inclined to announce a severe crisis of faith. This reality could cause great distress in the heart of any believer who sees their loved ones, neighbours, and culture quickly abandon a transcendental worldview.

But, let's slow the pace and ask sincerely: Is the observation correct? Is there a crisis of faith? If there is such a crisis, what does it mean for the West?

In spite of concern about its existence or exercise, we see that faith is actually a very dominant and influential part of people's lives. They have faith in their abilities and potential, their finances and employment. They have faith in their use of power and in their many resources. Faith seems overwhelmingly present and assertive.

The real question, seems to be what or who people and society believe in?

While doctrine is approached with suspicion, it appears that there is no real radical crisis of faith. The real problem is that many people no longer have faith in God, Jesus Christ, and the Gospel that inspired and sustained Western culture. Truth be told, the Westerner has set her/his standards too low and has set her/his heart on less transcendent realities.

Why has this happened? The answer to that question reveals a different crisis. Perhaps the West is actually struggling with a foundational crisis of love.

Pope Francis rightly observes, "God's tenderness leads us to understand that love is the meaning of life." Without faith in God, we are hard pressed to experience tenderness, selflessly give it, and seek to assert it as a cultural expectation. Pope Francis also teaches, "In [God] and only in God, is there love without reservations and second thoughts, absolute and unmitigated giving, and the tenacity of full acceptance." Without having God's love as the basis of our own sense of love and inspiration for our own exercise of love, love itself can become loveless since it loses its compass and impetus. In such a vacuum, a person becomes isolated and existentially disoriented. Love becomes redefined and becomes a misplaced word for egotism, narcissism, and control. No longer a call to selfless service and community, "love" becomes a bottomless pit of self-absorption and tyranny.

As Pope Francis also teaches: "Human beings need to be loved unconditionally and those who do not receive this acceptance carry a certain incompleteness within themselves, often without knowing it. The human heart seeks to fill this void with surrogates, accepting compromises and mediocrity that have only a vague flavour of love."

The crisis, which is a word that simply means crossroads, is whether we'll rely on ourselves and focus on our own wants, or whether we will love beyond ourselves and receive the love of others. The crisis is whether or not we will have enough true love to order, mature, and guide our faith. At the root of our cultural crisis, therefore, is the pressing question: Will we acknowledge and accept God's love? The substantial answer to this question begins with whether we will place our pride and self-faith to the side and begin to see God's providence in our lives and cooperate with God's grace.

Simply put, the answer begins with whether we will work to love God back. Will we reciprocate the love that God offers to us? This reciprocity of love between us and God is the whole heart and soul of life in the here and now. It gives shape and structure to our lives and the love we are called to have for others.

Faith by itself is dead and, when left to itself, it will only feed on our self-interests and fallen desires. Faith motivated by love, however, will want fulfillment and realize its need for a relationship with God. It will seek to know God so that it can more deeply love God. Faith aided by love will always search and seek the illumination of divine revelation and sacred doctrine. It will foster within the person an even deeper love and stronger hope in God.

Faith and love call forth acts of selflessness and service to others. It develops unimagined creativity within us. We are surprised to discover (or rediscover) parts of ourselves and we boldly make the journey to know who we are and who we are called to be.

St. Paul teaches us that the most important of all virtues is love, because it's the only one that lasts beyond death. Love, therefore, is faith's companion and the end which orders the means. It gives our lives a goal and a standard.

The crisis in the West, therefore, is about love. It is a crisis over whether we will accept God's love here and now and then labour to love God back, and - in that effort - love others generously and graciously accept their love for us.

Gathering: Hosea

G Norbet

Come back to me with all your heart.
Don't let fear keep us apart.
Trees do bend, though straight and tall,
So must we to others call.

**Long have I waited for your coming home to me
And living deeply our new life.**

The wilderness will lead you
To your heart where I will speak.
Integrity and justice with tenderness,
You shall know.

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Penitential Rite:

M Mangan

Lord, you reconcile us in the love of your Son.
So we sing to you:

Lord, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy on us.

Christ, you come to meet us with tenderness and love.
So we sing to you:

Christ, Christ have mercy, Christ have mercy on us.

Lord, you're with us always, so we can share your life.
So we sing to you:

Lord, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy on us.

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Psalm: O taste and see the Goodness

C Smith

Response: O Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

I will bless the Lord at all times,
His praise always on my lips;
In the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad.

Glorify the Lord with me.
Together let us praise his name.
I sought the Lord and he answered me;
From all my terrors he set me free.

Look towards him and be radiant;
Let your faces not be abashed.
When the poor cry out, the Lord hears them,
And rescues them from all their distress.

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Verse before the Gospel:

All praise, all glory, all blessing, to our most high God
You alone deserve honour and praise, Holy loving God.

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The Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ,
his only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the
right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen

Prayers of the Faithful:

All embracing God, hear us.

Acclamation:

Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and
Resurrection you have set us free.

Communion: Table of Plenty

D Schutte

**Come to the feast of heaven and earth!
Come to the table of plenty!
God will provide for all that we need,
Here at the table of plenty.**

O, come and sit at my table,
Where saints and sinners are friends.
I wait to welcome the lost and lonely,
To share the cup of my love.

O, come and eat without money;
Come to drink without price.
My feast of gladness will feed your spirit,
With faith and fullness of life.

My bread will ever sustain you,
Through days of sorrow and woe.
My wine will flow like a sea of gladness,
To flood the depths of your soul.

Your fields will flower in fullness;
Your homes will flourish in peace.
For I, the giver of home and harvest,
Will send my rain on the soil.

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Thanksgiving: The Prodigal Son

Father, I have sinned. Help me find my way
Remember not my sin, just let me hear you say.

**I forgive you, I love you. You are mine, take my hand
Go in peace, sin no more, beloved one.**

Father I have closed my heart to those in need
Thought only of myself, a victim of my greed.

Father I have loved. if love's the word to use.
I've played so many games. They've left me so confused.

Father I've returned, I'm home with you to stay.
Standing by your door, knowing that you'll say....

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Recessional: Return to God

M Haugen

**Return to God with all your heart,
The source of grace and mercy.
Come seek the tender faithfulness of God.**

Now the time of grace has come, the day of salvation;
Come, learn now the way of our God.

I will take your heart of stone and place a heart within you,
a heart of compassion and love.

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