

SISTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
17.5.20



this week: Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; 1 Pt 3:15-18;
Jn 14:15-21

next week: Acts 1:1-11; Eph 1:17-23;
Mt 28:16-20

There are two strong images in today's gospel: the law and love. In a few verses Jesus keeps moving between the two ideas because he knows how closely related they are. This can seem curious to modern ears because we have been duped into thinking that the law is the enemy of love, and that only freedom and joy are love's fruits. But think for a moment of people or projects we love, ones to which we are committed. We don't need a rulebook to call us to the most generous and sacrificial behaviour in their regard. We respond 'above and beyond the call of duty' not because of the law, but because of love. Jesus teaches us today that obedience to his commandments is a sub-set of our loving relationship with him. © Richard Leonard SJ

**MAY IS THE MONTH OF
MARY**



LIVESTREAM MASSES

Many parishes in the Diocese are now offering livestreamed Masses. These include daily Mass and Sunday Mass. You can see which parishes offer online Mass on our Diocesan website (<https://www.parracatholic.org/covid19/#online>).

Sunday Mass will be also be streamed live on YouTube (<https://www.yuotube.com/user/parramattadiocese>) and Facebook (<https://facebook.com/st-patricks-cathedral-parramatta-1590485624520954/>) from St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta.

Sacred Heart Parish

Sacred Heart Church ~ Blackheath
Saint Paul's Church ~ Mount Victoria
Saint Joseph's Church ~ Megalong Valley

**As a community bonded together through faith,
we are called to share our experience of God with those we meet each day,
in particular, those in our local community.**

*We acknowledge the Darug and Gundungurra people, the traditional custodians of this land
and pay our respects to the elders past and present.*

**There are no masses being celebrated here at this time. Live streaming of
Masses, prayer resources etc can be found on parracatholic.org. They can also
be found on our Parish website**

Parish Mobile: 0428 878 810

E-mail: blackheath@parracatholic.org

Fr Bob: 0417 355 479 emergencies only

Parish Office: 02 4787 8540

Office hours Wed 12.00pm - 3.00pm

Thu 9.00am - 12.00noon

Fri 9.00am - 12.00noon

Sacred Heart Church: 167 Wentworth Street, Blackheath.

St Paul's Church: 65 Great Western Highway, Mount Victoria.

St Joseph's Church: 1270 Megalong Road, Megalong Valley.

Parish Pastoral Council: If you would like an issue discussed, please submit it in writing to either Brian Bright (Chair) (bbright45@bigpond.com) or David Buckley (Deputy Chair) (dbuckley45@bigpond.com).

Sacred Heart Care Group (*helping parishioners in times of need*) Monica Bright 0420 937 690

BULLETIN ITEMS: Please contact the Parish Office on Wednesday or Thursday during office hours on 4787 8540 or email blackheath@parracatholic.org

Website: <https://sacredheartblackheath.org.au/>

www.facebook.com/Sacred-Heart-Parish-Community-Blackheath-NSW-Australia-153850768029631/

SAINTS OF THE DAY

(18 May - 23 May)

| | | |
|--------|---------------------------|------------------|
| 18 May | St John I | pope, martyr |
| 19 May | St. Dunstan | bishop, reformer |
| 20 May | St Bernadine of Siena | priest |
| 21 May | St Christopher Magallanes | priest, martyr |
| 22 May | St Rita of Cascia | religious |
| 23 May | St. Julia | African martyr |

FR JOLLY'S REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

The whole scientific and medical world is making these days all the efforts to invent a vaccine for Covid-19.

Robert Cheese Brough is the fellow who invented Vaseline, a Petroleum Jelly refined from rod wax, the ooze that forms on shafts of oil rigs. He believed so much in its power to heal wounds, that he became his own guinea pig. He burned himself with acid and flame! He cut and scratched himself so often and so deeply that he bore the scars of his tests for the rest of his life. But he proved his product worked. People had only to look at his wounds, now healed, to see the value of his work and belief. We too say that we are believers. But how true is our belief? Faith is more than just having an idea but a deep conviction and commitment. If so, how deeply are we committed to the Good News?

There is nothing more dangerous than to study faith, analyse faith, make noble declaration of faith but never actually accept it or live it. Juan Arias in his book, *The God I don't believe in*, gives a summary of those aspects of God that such people declare, and he does not believe. He says "No I shall never believe it – The God who catches man and woman by surprise in a sin of weakness, The God who condemns material things, The God who loves pain, The God who flashes a red light against human joy, The God who makes himself feared, The God who does not allow people to talk familiarly to Him, The God who always demands 100% in an examination, The God who can be fully explained by a philosophy or Theology, The God whom only the mature, the wise, or the comfortably placed can understand, The God who says, "You shall pay for that!", The God who says and feels nothing about the agonizing problems of humanity, The God who does not go out to meet the person, who has abandoned him, The God who has never wept for humans, The God who is not present where people love each other, The God in whom I cannot hope! No, I shall never believe in such a God ...".

All, those who have experienced the God of the Bible will agree with those statements fully. In fact, those statements resonate the absence of a true God experience. "No one has ever seen God" (Jn1:18). "God as God is incomprehensible" says Karl Rahner. Our experience of God is our immersion in the incomprehensibility of God! We experience God by all the good qualities in the incomprehensible divine.

For example, we experience his infinite goodness, his peaceful, forgiving, and compassionate love. WE experience God as always more, smaller than a cell and greater than the whole Cosmos.

"When the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them" (Acts 8:14). Their believing was their personal, interior acceptance of the truth of what Philip preached. Their Baptism was their personal, public, sacramental expression of their believing. Their personal immersion in the incomprehensibility of God! It is their trust in God. Many of us were Baptised as infants; have we ever seriously and maturely considered the Christian Message and accepted and committed ourselves to be immersed into the incomprehensibility of God? If we have, our faith will have by now become obedience, because faith is always obedience. One who obeys God believes him: one who believes God obeys him. In order to obey God, we first need the conversion of our hearts to the new life in Christ. "Venerating him in the heart" (1Peter 3:15). This is so because the seat of faith is not in the brain but in the heart. Once our hearts are converted to Christ, we are ready to obey the commandments for the love of him.

That is what he meant when he said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). If we obey Christ's commandments, then, and then only, he will send us his Holy Spirit. "If you obey the commandments, I give you. I will ask the Father who will give you another Helper" (John 14:15-16). Don't we need the Holy

Spirit? Yes, we do need the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who will help us to be immersed into the incomprehensibility of God yet know the beauty of his love and be compassionate to the needy and be generous. It is through the Holy Spirit, our capacities are activated and developed fully, and we can reach a peak in personal growth, become Christ like and enrich the lives of people around us, even in times of social distancing and lock-ups. May the Holy Spirit empower us and fill us with all the gifts so that we can be immersed into the incomprehensibility and mystery of God but experience him every second of our lives. May each of us be filled the Holy Spirit, so that we become the tangible, comprehensible experiences, and expressions of the incomprehensible God to our brothers and sisters. In that way they too can love God and follow his commandments.

DEANERY PASTORAL COUNCIL VACANCY ~ Brian Bright, Chair of our Parish Pastoral Council, recently stepped down from his position as a parish representative on the Mountains Deanery Pastoral Council. Brian's contribution was most valued. In his new role as Chair of our own Pastoral Council and with all the pending changes in our Parish, Brian sees the need to focus more on our local parish council matters.

Each parish in the Deanery can have 2 representatives on the Deanery Council. Michelle Davis has served as our other representative since the inception of the Council in 2017.

Expressions of interest are sought from the wider parish to take Brian's place on the Deanery Pastoral Council. If you are interested in nominating, please contact David Buckley – 47875105, 0400208707 or dbuckley45@bigpond.com.

ENDORSEMENT OF 'BLACKHEATH DREAMING' ~ Despite the Corona-virus stopping many processes in our lives, the Parish Transition Working Group has continued the process of consultation and discernment – listening to the hopes and concerns of you, the parish - to assess our ongoing pastoral needs and to investigate models of parish leadership into the future.

An Interim Report has been prepared for Bishop Vincent and this was endorsed at a special video conference meeting of your Parish Pastoral Council on Wednesday 13 May. Once the report has been submitted to Bishop Vincent, copy will be made available to all parishioners.

On behalf of all parishioners, your Pastoral Council has expressed congratulations and sincere thanks to the members of the Transition Working Group - Julie Hodgkinson, Frances Huckstepp, Peter Gale, Paul Harris, Adrian Carroll, John Barclay (part of process) and Richard McMahon (Chair) for their commitment, diligence and sheer hard work in completing this comprehensive report.

For **LAUDATO SI' WEEK, 16-24 MAY**, Catholics are uniting in solidarity for a more just and sustainable future. Join the World Day of Prayer by saying the Laudato Si prayer at 12 noon on Sunday May 24. (Please see the insert in this weeks bulletin

Caritas Australia would like to THANK YOU for supporting Project Compassion 2020. If you still have your Project Compassion box or set of envelopes at home, please contact Cate Mitchell cathleenm2014@gmail.com or 0435861006 and collection can be arranged.

Rest in Peace!
23rd Frank Mackrell



PLEASE PRAY for the sick and their carers: John & Marion Crowley, Shielagh Kirkham, Maria Slater, Marie Johnson, Pat Frazer, Tatiana Schultz, Trennah Portelli, Ray Wood, Elizabeth Farrar's daughter Emma and Fr Mick Callaghan – former PP of Glenbrook Parish and former Dean of the Blue Mountains