

Seaford Parish Newsletter

Thursday & Friday 1 & 2 April

Holy Family
St. Joachim's
St. Anne's

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Frankston North
Carrum Downs
Seaford

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TRIDUUM

Triduum Reflections from the Redemptorist Publications *Holy Thursday*



Human beings are sometimes heroic and at other times frail. Heroic in deeds of love and self-sacrifice; frail in different ways, often connected with pride and the abuse of power by individuals and institutions. The Gospels paint a very honest picture, not only of Jesus but of many individuals including the twelve apostles. Peter, their leader, is depicted as loving, yet denies Jesus; Judas Iscariot betrays Jesus; James and John are ambitious for power, asking for seats next to Jesus in his kingdom. Their presumption led the other apostles (who may have been equally but less openly competitive) to be annoyed. When they were travelling around with Jesus, more than once he caught them arguing among themselves about their relative importance, their status.

It seems astonishing, yet (according to Luke) even during the Last Supper, their last evening with Jesus before his death, they were disputing which of them should be reckoned the greatest. Maybe it was at this point that, without a word, Jesus got up from the table and began to wash their feet, a devastating response to their way of thinking. “I have given you an example,” Jesus said to them. “If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other’s feet.” On that evening, he gave them two commands: “love one another” and “do this as a memorial of me”.

Our parish respectfully acknowledges the Bunurong people, who are the custodians of the Boon Wurrung land on which we worship. We acknowledge and pay respect to the Elders; past, present and future.

The command to “love one another”, Jesus described as a “new commandment”. What was “new” about it? For centuries, since the days of Moses, the people of Israel had been taught to “love your neighbour as yourself”. So what was new? What was new was that Jesus spoke these words as he looked around the table. He was not speaking to the crowds, but just to his chosen ones. He was speaking to his apostles, and beyond them to his Church in the future, calling us to a new and very special communion of love.

Maundy Thursday is the night when Jesus gave the priesthood to the Church, a priesthood in which clergy are to be humble shepherds, never being “a dictator over any group that is put in your charge”, as St Peter put it. That is why priests wash the feet of the faithful this night; not an empty gesture, a mere liturgical act, but a real demonstration of how the relationship between priests and people should be. This example of service, given by Jesus, helps all of us in the Church to remember his commandment that we must love one another.

We know how seriously the first Christians took the command to love one another. In Jerusalem they went so far as to live a communal sort of life, sharing possessions and ensuring that none of their members was ever in want. Before the first century was out, this comment was made by someone outside the Church, not cynically but in amazement: “See how these Christians love one another.” Because individual Christians cared for one another, the Church as a body, as an institution, gained this reputation too. The apostles had moved a long way from their power struggles. The foot-washing by Jesus effected a real change in them. It taught them the reality of Jesus’ way of service. And so Jesus could say to them, as he says to us, “By this love you have for one another, everyone will know that you are my disciples.” Jesus’ two commands to “love one another” and to “do this as memorial of me” are linked together. For the Mass can only really be offered in the way Jesus wants it to be when a loving community offers it; a community without divisions, where love is lived; a community of the Spirit, where gifts are shared and welcomed, and people have the happy experience of being included and never left out. Such a community or parish has been healed by penitence, by the experience of washing one another’s feet in all sorts of different ways, and by caring for each other. Nourished by Christ’s body and blood, we are filled with the Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ. This is the true nature of the Church, in which we can offer the Eucharist in love and unity, and follow Jesus’ example of humble and loving service to God and to each other, following his call to wash each other’s feet in the spirit of his commandment of love.

Good Friday Reflection

Every ten years, the inhabitants of the German village of Oberammergau stage a passion play. Many who have seen it say that one of the most poignant and moving moments in the terrible drama of Calvary is the sight of Mary standing close to the cross. Could the young Mary, so eager to do God's will, have imagined that when she said, "I am the handmaid of the Lord... let what you have said be done to me," God would be calling her to such heroic sacrifice and suffering?

Think of her on this day, as she stood beside the cross. What thoughts must have been passing through her mind during those long three hours? Possibly she thought of the prophecy of Simeon as he held her baby, words she had never fully understood till now, about a sword of sorrow piercing her heart. Perhaps she remembered her son, as every mother does, when he was a child. And maybe she recalled the shock that she and Joseph had experienced when they realised they had lost the young Jesus in Jerusalem. Three days of fear and anguish, then his enigmatic words, "Did you not know I must be busy with my Father's affairs?" All those years ago, Joseph had been there to give her strength. Maybe she felt his loss now too. Then Jesus, from the cross, spoke to her: "Woman, this is your son," and, addressing John, who was standing near her, he added, "This is your mother." Some of Jesus' last thoughts on earth had been for her.

For Edward Caswall, author of beautiful hymns like "Jesu, the very thought of thee", also wrote the carol "Sleep, holy babe". The last verse reads, "O Lady blest, / sweet Virgin, hear my cry; / forgive the wrong that I have done / to thee, in causing thy dear Son / upon the cross to die."

Do we ever think of this? The Church teaches that we all share in the original sin committed by our first parents, as depicted in the book of Genesis. That human sin was the reason for the sufferings of Jesus and his death on the cross. But the words of the hymn reflect that it was the reason for his mother's suffering too. And not only hers but, down the centuries, the suffering of martyrs, and the witnesses of Jesus everywhere; those whose calling takes them to bring Christ's light to the most desolate corners of the earth; those living vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Their self-sacrifice, their suffering is part of what St Paul called "all that has still to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his body, the Church".

We might compare our lack of commitment, our sins and our failures with the faithfulness of the saints, the sacrifice of martyrs, and the suffering of so many others whose silent self-offering is unknown to anyone but themselves and God alone. In contrast, most of us would prefer to avoid suffering at any cost. Thomas à Kempis, author of the fifteenth-century devotional classic *The Imitation of Christ*, wrote:

“I think it is true that those who are most holy, suffer most, make the most sacrifices. Many love Jesus so long as they meet with no adversities; they love to praise and bless him so long as they receive consolations from him. But if they suffer, or he hides from them for a little while, they either fall into complaints or dejection. But those who love Jesus for his sake, rather than their own, bless him no less in tribulation and anguish, than in the greatest spiritual consolation.”

Earlier in the Gospels, Jesus spoke of the need for disciples to “take up their cross and follow me”. Today, as we come to venerate the cross, we might think about how we respond to that call to take up our cross. Perhaps we could think about Simon of Cyrene, the man who was pulled out of the crowd to assist Jesus in carrying the cross on the first Good Friday. An old story goes that as he walked along with Jesus, his task became lighter, and it was only when he took his eyes off Jesus in front of him and looked round at the crowd that he realised he was carrying a cross at all. Simon thought he was helping Jesus to carry the cross to Calvary, but the truth, he came to realise, was that Jesus was helping him to carry it.

Mass Times and Prayer Events

Tuesday 6.00pm Mass

Wednesday 9.30am Mass at Holy Family Hall, Frankston North

Thursday 6.00pm Mass

Friday 9.15am Mass.

Saturday 6.00pm Vigil Mass

Reconciliation 5pm followed by Rosary at 5:30pm.

Divine Mercy devotion at 5:00pm

Sunday 8.30am

Sunday 10.00am

- At present the restrictions will now allow 200 people indoors at St Anne's. This is the maximum amount and no more people are permitted.
- The easiest way to do this is to go to www.stannes.com.au Find the sentence: "All tickets are now available on Eventbrite for Masses." Click on Eventbrite.
- This is a link that will take you to the list of Masses that are available, and are accepting bookings.

The link is: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/o/st-annes-parish-30521052230>