



CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AND ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS

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Doing "all that righteousness demands"



In the story of Jesus' infancy (Matthew 1-2), God made his plans known to us. Jesus had been born to Mary and is cared for by Joseph. However, after the incident of being lost in the Temple, when he had told his anxious parents, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Lk 2:49) the gospels are silent about the next eighteen years of his life. Only with his Baptism in the Jordan does Jesus actively enter the story. Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John the Baptist.

the Baptist.

John, however, was unhappy that Jesus should submit himself to this and suggested that Jesus should be baptising him. Now that Jesus is in the story, isn't it fitting that John should stand aside since he saw himself as only a forerunner? No, because there is a larger plan of God behind Jesus' story. Jesus' ministry must be lived out within Israel. He and John must therefore "do all that righteousness demands". God's plan is that Jesus perfect all that was best in Israel. He will of course be killed for such a lifestyle but his death and resurrection will open a new era in God's saving presence to the whole world.

Once both Jesus and John the Baptist have shown that they are prepared to accept God's plan, then God makes it known that he is present in the man Jesus. In the ancient world, where God was understood as above the heavens and the drama of human life was played out 'below', the tearing open of the heavens indicated that heaven and earth were about to meet. "This is my Son, the Beloved, my favour rests on him." God's "favour" comes from Jesus' acceptance of God's plan. How easy it would have been to accept John's recognition and to take over the dominant role! But Jesus didn't because he followed the plan of God. Jesus had already pleased God in his first public appearance and he would go on pleasing God throughout his life.

As we move from the joyful celebration of the Christmas season to the Ordinary Sundays of the year, we reflect on what this meeting between Jesus and John the Baptist means to us. We reflect on this key moment in Jesus' life first of all in the significance of our own baptism. At baptism, all who are baptised hear from God a message that is both blessing and invitation to live as children of God: you are my beloved son/daughter; my favour rests on you. What if every morning, we remembered this blessing and invitation from God to live as he intends us to live? Think of the effect it would have on our lives, our 'ordinary' activities each day, as we begin to look at our lives as being blessed by God with a mission that is unique to each one of us.

We are, through our baptism, invited to share in the life and mission of Jesus himself. As we look at our lives in this context, the words of our First Reading from Isaiah, apply to our lives as well: "I, the Lord, have called you to serve the cause of right; I have taken you by the hand and formed you".

This blessing, and the invitation that comes with it, is something we have neither deserved nor earned. "God has no favourites", as Peter said to the Roman centurion Cornelius. It is how God looks upon us in Christ. We are about to face the problems and the blessings, the joys and the pain, our lives in all their complexity in the year ahead. We too will find "favour" with God if we, like Jesus, do our best to ask God what he might want of us. We too are asked "to do all that righteousness demands".

Adapted from **This is the Gospel of the Lord Year A** Francis J Moloney SDB p82-83 St Paul's Publications Homebush 1993

Deacon Louis

A message from the Archdiocese of Sydney

Child sexual abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with crimes are the police. If you, or anyone you know, have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office at (02) 9390 5810 or safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org. You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and guidance. The Archdiocese has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.

Morning Tea - Third Sunday of each month

This Sunday, 15th January is our Morning Tea Sunday after the 10:00am Mass at the front of the Church (outside).

Please join and bring a plate to share.



Feast/Solemnity/Memorial/Saint of the Week (16 - 21 January 2023)

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| Tue | 17/1 | St Anthony, abbot |
| Fri | 20/1 | St Fabian, pope, martyr St Sebastian, martyr |
| Sat | 21/1 | St Agnes, virgin, martyr |

St Fabian came to Rome after Pope Anteros died in 236. A layperson and he may have come for the same reason many still come to Rome today during a papal election: concern for the future of the faith, curiosity about the new pope, a desire to grieve for the pope who had passed. Seeing all the important people gathered to make this momentous decision must have been overwhelming. Which one would be the new pope? Someone known for power? Someone known for eloquence? Someone known for courage?



Suddenly during the discussion, a dove, "settled on [Fabian's] head as clear imitation of the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove upon the Savior." There must have been something of the Holy Spirit working because everyone suddenly proclaimed Fabian as "worthy" to be pope and this stranger was elected.

To us the dove signifies peace, and this dove was prophetic. Starting close to Fabian's election, the suffering and persecuted Church began a time of peace. The emperor, Philip, was friendly to Christians and not only was the persecution stopped but Christians experienced acceptance.

With the ascension of Emperor Decius, the Roman government's tolerant policy toward Christianity temporarily ended. Fabian was one of the earliest victims of Decius, dying as a martyr on 20 January 250, at the beginning of the Decian persecution, though probably in prison, rather than by execution.

PARISH WEEKEND MASS ROSTER

21 - 22 January 2023

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| Readers: | 5:30pm | R Lazarus P Allport |
| | 8:00am | P Tan N Dudley |
| | 10:00am | P Marshall J Duru |
| Acolytes: | 5:30pm | Ricardo & Morea |
| | 8:00am | Andre |
| | 10:00am | Tony |

Purpose Retreat 2023

Inviting all young adults and youth leaders (18-35) to come along to a new archdiocesan retreat centered on the theme KNOW, LOVE, SERVE.

Dates: 22-25 January

Location: Benedict XVI Retreat Centre

Speakers include: Bishop Richard Umbers, Fr. Ben Saliba, Kristin Barlow, Sr Kathryn Kingsley MGL, Kevin and Helen Wagner, Fr Chris de Sousa and Fr Dan McCaughan.

The retreat will offer fellowship, social time, free time, food, sacraments, prayer, and more, all at the beautiful Benedict XVI Retreat Centre near Richmond.

Places are limited so register today for an incredible experience <https://www.trybooking.com/CDXCV>

For more information

contact info@sydneycatholicyouth.org

Parishes are encouraged to share [this flyer](#) (please see the bulletin board) to promote the retreat.

'Made for More' events by Theology of the Body Institute

The Sydney Centre for Evangelisation is proud to host Dr Christopher West and his team for their Australian tour of 'Made for More' events in Sydney and Melbourne. Please join us on Friday, 20 January at St Mary's Cathedral College Hall or on Saturday, 21 January at All Saints Liverpool Parish Hall. 'Made for More' weaves dynamic presentations with live music, media and sacred art bringing an evening of beauty and reflection on the meaning of life, love, and human destiny. An event not to be missed! **For tickets and more information, visit www.sydneycatholic.org/TOB**

2 practising Catholic students from Albury are seeking accommodation in Sydney for the 2023 academic year.

Contact seanplee@bigpond.com M 0499 001 653

HOLY SPIRIT PILGRIMAGE TO HOLY LAND AND/OR ITALY (28th August - 19th September, 2023): Caesarea Maritime, Haifa; Mt Carmel; Nazareth Village; Basilica of Annunciation; Masada, Mount of Beatitudes, Tabgha, Mensa Christi, Capernaum, Sea Of Galilee, River Jordan(Yardenit); Cana of Galilee, Local Winery, Mt Tabor, Mt of Temptation, Caesarea Philippi; Mt Olives, Pater Noster, Chapel of Ascension, Garden of Gethsemane, Blessed Virgin Mary's Tomb, Mount Zion, Bethany & Bethphage; Old City, Wailing Wall, Pool of Bethesda, Antonia Fortress, Via Dolorosa, Mount Calvary, Cenacle, St Peter in Gallicantu; Basilica of Nativity, Shepherds' Field, Ein Karem; Turin, Milan, Verona, Padua, Venice, Florence, Assisi, Loretto, Lanciano, Manoppelo, Rome.

CONTACT-US-ASAP for details:

FrEmmanuelty(SpiritualDirector): fremmanuelty@gmail.com; holyspiritp@gmail.com; 0417999553, 0893413079; Coordinators: Dax: 0420643949; and Didith: 0473246029.

Parish Office

Maria - Mondays
Cecilia - Wed-Friday
9.30am - 2:30pm

Parish & Hall enquiries

9558 3257

Mass Times

Sat: 5:30pm (Vigil)

Sun: 8am & 10am

Mon to Fri: 9:00am

Sat: 9:30am

Family Mass with Children's Liturgy

3rd Sunday of the Month 10am Mass

Morning Tea Sunday

3rd Sunday of the Month

after 10:00am Mass

Filipino Mass

1st Sun 11:30am

Sacraments

Confession

Sat 8:30-9:20am, 4:45pm

or any time by

appointment

Baptism

Every 2nd and 4th

Sunday of the month.

Marriage

At least 6 months notice

required

Anointing of the Sick

Any time on call

Devotions

Holy Hour & Rosary

Sunday - Friday

before morning mass

Rosary & Benediction

Sat 8:30-9:30am

Novena to Our Lady of

Perpetual Help

Wednesday 7pm

