



St Peter's Parish, Surry Hills

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Calendar 5th Sunday of Easter - Year A

Wed 13 May Our Lady of Fatima

Thur 14 May Saint Matthias

LIVE STREAMING MASSES



- + AROUND THE ARCHDIOCESE
- 🕒 MASS ON DEMAND
- 🙏 PRAYER RESOURCES
- 📺 HOW TO LIVE STREAM MASS

Livestreaming of Parish Masses - The Archdiocese of Sydney is regularly updating its website and social media platforms with the latest information during the Covid-19 crisis. We refer you in particular to the life streamed masses at which Archbishop Fisher, O.P. is presiding, and to his homilies, pastoral letters by clicking on the link <https://www.sydneycatholic.org/live-masses/>. The crisis is also affording the people and clergy alike an opportunity to get to know better our chief pastor and his mind on various issues and topics.

Our Lady of Fatima



The apparitions received between May 13 and October 13, 1917, by the three Portuguese children,

Francisco and Jacinta Marto and their cousin Lucia dos Santos, Mary asked the children to pray the rosary for world peace, for the end of World War 1, for sinners and for the conversion of Russia. The simple Fatima message is to pray the rosary.

An article published on 2 May 2020 in The Catholic Weekly on ***Thirty-One ways to love Our Lady more throughout the month of May*** - <https://www.catholicweekly.com.au/thirty-one-ways-to-love-our-lady-more-throughout-the-month-of-may/>

St Peter's/ Vinnies/ The Gift of Bread and Campaign Monitors food distribution – This week a generous donor, Campaign Monitors donated freshly cooked warm meals for our lunch time clients. It was a nice change for our clients from the usual sandwiches from the previous weeks. My thanks to all those who have volunteered their time and continue to, in making the on-going lunch time meals feasible. For those who would like to help out, please drop me (Angela) a note to the parish email your preferred day with your name and contact number. *“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”* Matt 25:35



Persons seriously ill or in danger of death: For any persons seriously ill or in danger of death please contact the parish for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum. There is also a fulltime Catholic chaplain at St. Vincent's Hospital, should somebody be admitted to St. Vincent's.

Rest in Peace request envelopes should be placed on the collection plate with the usual offering of \$10.00. **We pray for** Frederick, Edward & Margaret M Hailwood, Margaret D Hailwood (21/9), Joyce Hailwood & Marge Heaney, Joan McEvoy, Fr William Dominic Creede, CSsR and Robert May.

Parishioner Email addresses – The present crisis has prompted us to update our parishioners email list. We would be most grateful to receive the email addresses of any parishioner who has not been receiving electronically the parish bulletin. Please encourage anyone you know in the parish who is not receiving this bulletin to send their e-mail address to st61538@bigpond.net.au

Financial support of St. Peter's Parish - Parishioners regularly comment that because they no longer carry cash, they are not able to put money on the collection plate. Cashless financial support of the parish is now very easy via the parish website. The very top line on the website contains a yellow box which says **"SUPPORT US"**.

SUPPORT US

By clicking on this yellow coloured box at the right end of the website's headline, and following the prompts, one may donate and immediately receive an electronic or hard copy receipt. Of course, your parish still has ongoing costs and bills to pay during this time when the Sunday Mass collections are not happening.

Another new way of donating electronically is to scan the following QR Code with your mobile and then follow the prompts.



Fr. John's reflection for this week

Please find below the full text of Fr. Brendan Byrne's commentary on this Sunday's readings, an edited version of which appears alongside this Sunday's Mass readings which are attached via the link at the very end of this article.

My own reflection for this week begins following Fr Byrne's remarks.

Lectionary readings for the Sixth Sunday of Easter:

First reading: Acts 6: 1-7

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 32

Second reading: 1 Peter 2: 4-9

Gospel: John 14:1-12

Again, a rich scriptural offering for this Sunday. It is not easy to find a discernible theme running across the readings, save the general sense that the focus is moving away from the resurrection of Jesus to the time of his final return to the Father when the disciples will be without his physical presence.

Taken from the long discourse given by Jesus at the Last Supper, the Gospel, John 14:1-10, reflects upon this time and the understanding it will require from the disciples, that is, from the Church. In fact, there are two 'departures' of Jesus in view. The actual setting of the supper on the night before Jesus is to die makes it natural to understand the 'going away' of which he speaks as a reference to this imminent departure in death; his 'return', then, would refer to his reappearance, on the third day, as risen Lord. While at one level this is true, the discourse really addresses the more permanent 'going away' of Jesus when he finally returns to the Father following his appearances to the disciples as risen Lord. His 'return' would then be his return at the end of time, a thought otherwise rare in the Fourth Gospel.

TIME OF CHURCH

On this second level, what Jesus is really addressing in the discourse is not the period between Good Friday and Easter Sunday but the 'time of Church' that will follow – and will in fact extend indefinitely. This will be a time when the disciples will not have the reassurance of his physical presence and will feel that loss keenly ('Do not let your hearts be troubled. ...') What Jesus wants to insist on here, however, is that it will be a 'graced' time, in fact a 'better' time. His departure to the Father will not mean loss but enrichment.

This gives the clue to understanding rightly Jesus' statement about there being 'many rooms' in his Father's house and about his going there to prepare a place for the disciples. In a way that has long provided comfort for many people, the statement, at face value, conveys the impression of heaven as a kind of vast motel to which Jesus is going in order to prepare 'rooms' for the faithful after they die. This does not, however, do full justice to the way the Johannine gospel confronts the problem of death and, in particular, to the richness which the gospel draws out of the motif of divine 'remaining'/'dwelling'.

John's Gospel presents the entire work of Jesus Christ as nothing less than a fulfilment of a divine project to bring about mutual 'at-homeness' between God and human beings. As heralded in the Prologue, the Word, whose proper dwelling is in eternity 'with God' (1:1-2), has 'become flesh' (1:14).

DWELLING PLACE

In the human person of Jesus Christ, God has made a dwelling-place – literally, 'has pitched his tent' – among us. The disciples 'have seen his glory' in the sense that the words and actions of Jesus, notably his 'signs' (miracles), have rendered ordinary human life transparent to God's presence and to the gift of 'eternal life' which, through Jesus, God wishes to impart. To 'have eternal life' in this sense is nothing less than to have a share in God's own life, to become 'children of God' (1:12; 11:52), inhabitants of God's 'house' forever. As Jesus explains to Martha, grieving at the death of her brother Lazarus, this is the true response and remedy to human mortality: 'I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even though they die, will live; and whoever lives believing in me, will never die' (John 11:25-26).

What Jesus is attempting to explain to the puzzled disciples in today's Gospel is that this gift of eternal life, and the divine 'at-homeness' that goes with it, can only come about through his 'going away' for a time. His suffering and death are necessary to defeat the grip of sin and death upon the human race and open up the way to life.

AT HOME WITH GOD

The many 'rooms' or 'dwelling places' which he is going away to prepare are in fact the separate instances of God's 'indwelling' in the heart of each and every believer. As he will say later, 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them' (14:23). The disciples, as Philip so plaintively points out, cannot 'see' the Father. But, Jesus explains, he himself is 'the Way' to the revelation of the Father (the 'Truth'), in which is contained the gift of '(eternal) life' ('the Life'). In relating to him (Jesus), they are becoming 'at home' with God and God with them.

The First Reading, Acts 6:1-7, shows the early Church, under the guidance of the Spirit, developing structures of ministry in response to needs that arise as it grows and expands.

The Second Reading, 1 Peter, 2:4-9, applies to the members of the Church a magnificent set of titles drawn from the patrimony of Israel. Heading the list is the image of the Church as a 'holy building', a precious new dwelling-place for the living God.

I didn't think I could add very much this week to Fr. Byrne's commentary on this beautiful part of St. John's account of the so called "Last Supper Discourse". However, this Sunday's second reading from the First Letter of St. Peter also warrants our serious consideration. If Jesus' remarks in the gospel are

addressed to the eleven disciples who are about to become the apostles, the priests and pillars (together with Paul and Barnabus) on which the Church will be built, 1 Peter addresses the whole Church as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, people set apart to sing the praises of God ...” (1 Pet 2:9)

As the Catholic Church, founded by Jesus Christ the Son of Mary and the Son of God, we are a priestly people. We are not a priestly people simply because we have ordained bishops and priests. We are “a royal priesthood” because without Jesus Christ **and his Church** there is no salvation for any of us, whether we are members of the Church or not. Just as we receive the Church’s Sacraments for our salvation, we in turn become the sacrament of salvation for the whole human family. This is an awesome calling.

As the above quote says, we are “a people set apart to sing the praises of God.” Presently, the Corona virus seems to be frustrating this primary part of our vocation as God’s new chosen people. We are not assembling* to sing God’s praises at the Eucharist which Jesus is about to institute a little further on in this same Last Supper discourse. However, we are still able to sing the praises of God in a formal public way when we pray any hour of the Prayer of the Church (aka The Divine Office), even when we are praying alone. The Office is always one of the three essential elements of the Church’s Liturgy, her formal divine worship, together with the Mass and the Sacraments. Electronic device “Apps”, as in, for example, “Universalis”, make the Prayer of the Church easily accessible to almost everyone today.

Moreover, Holy Mother Church has always been a Church of prayer and good works. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus was concerned for the whole human person (“Why every hair on your head has been numbered” [Luke 12:7]). He fed the five thousand when they were hungry and performed many miracles of healing from disease and physical disability. He was also especially concerned for the hungry, the imprisoned etc, as was the early Church (cf Matt. 25). This also is how we, as a “royal priesthood”, sing the praises of God. From the beginning of the Church, the apostles did likewise. Holy Church has continued to show that she is a mother by caring for whole person in so many ways, often being the first to do so in any given society. As one modest sign of this care for the whole person (*cura personalis*), the Church at Surry Hills, which is Saint Peter’s Parish, is currently serving some fifty people a day from midday to 12.30pm, Monday to Friday, via parishioners setting up a stall on the footpath in Marlborough Street beside the “Mission House”. We are not only serving these people, but also getting to know them. They are very grateful to the Church for the modest lunch packs which they receive. Praise the Lord! (The actual lunch packs are delivered daily by the Central Sydney Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.)

It seems that in terms of the reopening of church buildings, the first stage will see churches reopened for private visits. St. Peter’s will promptly take full advantage of this as soon as we are able, with supervised sessions during each day when the church building will be open.

The Church is the Body of Christ, the People of God, “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, people set apart to sing the praises of God ...” (1 Pet 2:9) called to announce the Good News to the ends of the earth (cf Matt. 28). Moreover, Jesus himself reassured us: “I am with you (the Church) all days until the end of the world.” Therefore, it is impossible to close the Church. Historically, any attempts to close the Church have only ever seen Her ultimately strengthened.

Some great feast days are on the horizon of our liturgical calendar:

Our Lady of Fatima (Wednesday 13 May)

The Ascension of the Lord (Sunday 24 May)

Our Lady Help of Christians, Patroness of Australia (Monday 25 May)

Pentecost Sunday (Sunday 31 May)

Mary, Mother of the Church (Monday 1 June)

The Marian feasts particularly remind us to do something to enhance our devotion to the Blessed Virgin during her month of May, a devotion which is essential to any genuinely Catholic spirituality. One way in which we are doing this as a parish community is by rejuvenating and enhancing our whole shrine precinct dedicated to Our Lady Help of Christians. Please forward by return email any suggestions you may have for this project.

With Masses, prayers and best regards,

(Fr.) John Macdonald
Parish Administrator