

Blessed Sacrament Congregation Newsletter

St Francis' Church
Melbourne



St Peter Julian's Church
Sydney

March 2024

Volume 2

Will this Lent bring me closer to God's heart?

by Tony McSweeney, SSS

With several weeks of Lent already behind us, it may be time to evaluate our journey thus far. Have I been keeping the resolutions I set for myself? Or have I, perhaps, not yet got round to making any precise commitment?

For older folk the first Lenten resolution that may come to mind is probably fasting. Lent was the time to give up lollies we liked, putting the money into a box for some charitable cause. Perhaps we were taught to say special prayers as well, like the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary or the Stations of the Cross.

That was our earliest introduction to the three classical Lenten practices – fasting, prayer and almsgiving. But how are we to understand them today?

Many spiritual guides are advising that the form of fasting most urgently needed at present is not about eating at all. It is to 'fast' from unhealthy habits in the use of mobile phones and spending time on social media, time that could be better invested in relationships and so much else. Students particularly are missing deadlines for essays and going into exams under-prepared.

For some, refusing to surrender to their cravings may be a sign of repentance for past indulgences, while for others it is a way of achieving greater personal discipline and strength of will.

However valuable, the focus here is still on our self. To see a wider picture, to 'open our eyes to reality', as Pope Francis reminds us, the other two Lenten practices must come into play.

Prayer means turning our minds and hearts to God's mercy and care for us, yes, but also for all in our world, especially the needy. He invites us to listen with him to the cry of the poor and harken to his voice as he urges us, when we feel the tug of hunger or desire, to direct our gaze beyond self towards all those who at this very moment – especially in Gaza – are reeling before the horrors of bloodshed, hunger or starvation.

Contemplating their plight in prayerful dialogue with Jesus will surely awaken compassion, which, in its turn, directs us to the third Lenten practice, since true compassion is more than a feeling; it leads to action.

It is alms-giving that translates compassion into action, reaching out to alleviate the sufferings of others. In this way we live out our gratitude for all that God has given us and reveal our awareness that, as the Body of Christ, we are responsible for each other. A commitment to justice, mercy, and charity are integral components of the discipleship into which we were baptised.

Nor do the alms always have to be money. They can be given in multiple forms, like time freely and generously offered, choosing to spend time with those who are handicapped, lonely or ill. Or we may join a group dedicated to alleviating the pain of people afflicted by forms of social disadvantage and economic oppression all too prevalent in our world.

In these ways, Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving lead us into the heart of what Lent is about – a deeper conversion. They can be seen to form a unity that will bring us closer to the fulness of Easter life.

After faithfully carrying out such practices during forty days, we will surely celebrate the resurrection with a greater awareness of our Christian identity and mission, of the presence of the Spirit of the Lord in ourselves and in others, and with a heart both strengthened and softened by a more resolute bonding with Jesus in his beloved "little ones", the needy he so passionately cared for.



ST. PETER JULIAN'S CHURCH

Monday to Friday 7.30am, 12.10pm, & 5.30pm
(Public Holidays 12.10pm only)
Saturday 12.10pm, & 5.30pm (Vigil)
1st Saturday of each month
 12.10pm (Anointing Mass)
Sunday 9.30am, 12.30pm, & 3.30pm (English)
 Chinese Mass 11.00am
 Korean Mass 5.00pm
 Filipino Mass 1st Sunday of each month 1.30pm
 Indonesian Mass 1st & 3rd Saturdays of each month 3.30pm

NOVENA & BENEDICTION

Wednesday 12.45pm (St Peter Julian) after the 12.10 Mass
Friday 12.45pm (Our Lady of Perpetual Help) after the 12.10 Mass

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Monday to Friday 8.00am to 12.00pm
 12.45pm to 2.00pm
Saturday 10.30am to 12.00pm
 12.45pm to 2.00pm
Sunday 1.30pm to 3.00pm
(except on the 1st Sunday of each month)

RECONCILIATION

Thursday, Friday & Saturday 11.00am to 12.00pm

CHURCH OPENING TIMES

Monday to Friday 7.00am to 6.15pm
Saturday 10.30am to 6.45pm
Sunday 9.00am to 6.15pm

**For updates, including Holy Week timetable
 please see our website: www.stpeterjuliansydney.com
 and our Facebook page,
 or call (02) 9270 6940 (24 hour information line)**



**STATIONS OF THE CROSS
 DURING LENT
 EVERY FRIDAY 11.45**

A Lenten Retreat Day with the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia
 Women of all ages are invited to join the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia for a Lenten Retreat Day. This day will focus on renewing the foundations of the spiritual life as we strive to live the Paschal Mystery throughout the year. The retreat day will include all day Eucharistic Adoration and Confessions, talks by the Sisters, personal testimony, a Holy Hour, and discussion groups. Morning tea and lunch are included. A **\$20 fee assists** with covering retreat expenses. Women who have attended previous retreat days with the Sisters are encouraged to bring a friend to this event.

DATE: Saturday, 16 March 2024

VENUE: St Mary's Cathedral Hall

TIME: 10am to 4pm, with doors to open at 9-9:30am – morning tea and lunch included.

PRICE: A \$20 fee assists with covering retreat expenses

For more information and to register to attend, visit: <https://bit.ly/3RRAKfa>. For questions, please contact the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia at sydney@op-tn.org

ST PETER JULIAN'S BOOK STORE

New stocks of books, piety items and gifts for sacramental occasions all available. A wide selection of Easter cards, Mass Cards and Holy Cards at very reasonable prices. Come and visit us or orders can be taken by phone and posted to you. Please note a postage charge will apply.

Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm

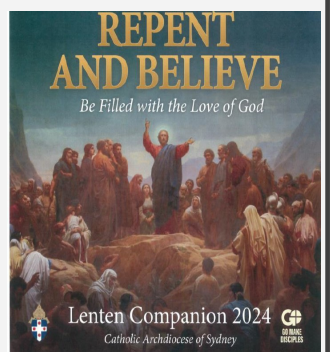
Sunday 9.00am to 5.00pm

Ph: (02) 9270 6900 E: haymarket@blessedsacrament.com.au

REPENT AND BELIEVE: BE FILLED WITH THE LOVE OF GOD

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity of inviting your family, friends, parishioners, or colleagues to pray with you this Lent! Many people—including those who do not go to Mass—would welcome an opportunity to pray with others; they just need someone to invite them.

The Lenten Companion, "REPENT AND BELIEVE: Be Filled with the Love of God", contains Gospel readings for the Sundays of Lent until Easter Sunday, and reflections by Marilyn Rodrigues, Mark Lysaght, Sister Maliya Suen, RSM, Dr Kevin Wagner, Hazel Lim, Fr Sam Lynch, and Fr Richard Sofatzis. The free booklet is available at reception or alternatively online at www.gomakedisciples.org.au



Volunteers Needed : Cana Communities

Some 225 people in Sydney sleep rough every night, and [Cana Communities](http://CanaCommunities.org.au) operates homeless shelters in Sydney, with St Francis Shelter the latest to open its doors in Redfern. Run entirely by volunteers, Cana needs volunteers for Tuesday (women's only night), Friday and Saturday shifts (6pm-9:30pm or 9:30pm-7:30am) to welcome and assist guests and prepare meals. All volunteers will receive training. The impact on guests at these shelters cannot be overestimated, considering the alternatives. Be part of a caring community passionate about helping others and making a change.

Find out more about becoming a volunteer by **emailing** carmel.shaw@cana.org.au.

Emmaus Silent Retreat Embark on the sacred journey of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, where the victorious love of God is revealed through the abiding presence of Jesus. Be renewed in spending time alone with the Lord, and watch as He slowly sets your heart ablaze. This retreat is run by the MGL Sisters and is a retreat for both men and women.
DATE: Friday 19th April - Sunday 21st April 2024
VENUE: Carmel House 345 St. Andrews Road, Varroville, 2566
 More information and registration at trybooking.com/CNSXX

Project Compassion 2024

Boxes available in foyer of the Church

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