

Third Sunday of Lent (Year A) 15 March 2020

The Water of Life. Jesus is the savior of the world. In today's Gospel he offers the water of life to a Samaritan woman who, in turn, becomes the first missionary of Jesus. She hurries to tell the people of her town about him. We, who have received the life of God in baptism, are also called to be missionaries by inviting others to come and see Jesus.

Responsorial Psalm:

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Gospel Acclamation:

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

Lord, you are truly the Saviour of the world;

give me living water, that I may never thirst again.

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

Sacraments 2020

Confirmation- Saturday 30 May at 11am and 2.00pm.

Parent Information Evening: Monday 6th April @ 7pm at the Aikenhead Centre, St Ambrose Primary School, Stuart Street, Concord 7pm.

Candidates NOT required to attend.

First Reconciliation- Saturday 8, 15 and 22 August at 2pm

First Holy Communion- Sunday 1, 8 and 15 November at 11am

Registration Forms and further details can be found in the Celebration of Sacraments 2020 pamphlet in the Church foyer. Note: The Sacramental Coordinator is on leave from 14th March till 6th April. All emails and registration forms will be checked after 6th April. For urgent enquiries, please contact admin@stambrose.org.au

Easter choir practice Wednesdays at 7pm. The choir will be singing at Easter Saturday night vigil. Looking forward to seeing all current and new members next week. Amy



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Fr Chaminda Wanigasena, Assistant Priest
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Sunday Masses: Sat Vigil 5pm

Sunday 9.30am & 5pm

Weekday Masses: 9am Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri (or Fri 9.15am school Masses)

Tuesday evening 7.30pm

Reconciliation: Sat 3.30 – 4.30pm

Adoration: Mon & Fri 6-9pm, Tues 5.45pm – 7.15pm,

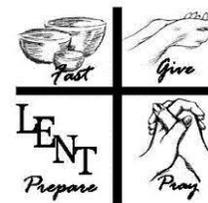
Sat 3.30 - 4.30pm, Italian Cenacle: Mon 9.30am

Holy Hour & Cenacle: Wed after 9am Mass, Fri 9.30am

Baptisms: 2nd & 4th Sundays of the month at 11am by appointment.

Weddings: by appointment. Contact Parish Office.

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Jesus, tired out from the trip, sat down by the well. It was about noon. While his disciples had gone off to buy provisions, a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her: "Give me a drink." Astonished, the Samaritan woman said to him. "You're a Jew. How can you ask me, a Samaritan, and a woman at that, for a drink?" Jesus replied: "Ah, if only you recognised God's gift, and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him instead, and he would have given you living water."

John 4, 5-42

Today's gospel story of the encounter at a village well between Jesus and a Samaritan woman is one that has been repeated in a multitude of different ways in every known culture. It resonates in the mind and heart of every decent person who has even an ounce of compassion, tolerance and open-heartedness. We have all experienced people who are

obsessed with passing on to the younger generation the bitterness of family feuds or fanning the flame of prejudice that divides communities and even keeps different racial and religious groups apart.

A chance meeting between Jesus and an unnamed Samaritan woman immediately brings to the surface the suspicion and distrust with which their two cultures had indoctrinated them. They begin to spar with one another and trade insults from the moment when they are within earshot. However, Jesus' refusal to engage in a slanging match leads them to find the common ground of dialogue, which leads to a sea change in the woman's life and stuns the petty-minded disciples who can't comprehend what they have witnessed.

From another perspective, we can view this story as an allegory or an extended metaphor of the great thirst in us for satisfaction and fulfilment that can be slaked only by the one who loved us into existence. While Augustine articulated that when he said: "You have made us for yourself, Oh Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you", John, in today's gospel revels in the symbol and image of water to impress on us God's longing for us to respond to the invitation to come and be refreshed and have our thirst for God fully satisfied.

But, back to the readings. The symbol and imagery of water run through all three of today's readings like a stream weaving its way through the countryside. In the first reading we see Moses, at God's direction and to save his reputation, striking the rock, a little doubtfully, with his staff: "Strike the rock, and water will flow from it for the people to drink" (Exodus 17, 6). Then, in the second reading from *Romans*, Paul proclaims that "the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5, 5). Finally, the gospel is flooded with images of water. Jacob's well is where Jesus and the woman meet; the exchange between them is dripping with references to water: "The water that I will give will become a spring that will provide life-giving water and give eternal life" (John 4, 14).

Despite the verbal jousting between Jesus and the woman about the relative merits of the Jewish and Samaritan religions, the woman, in sharp contrast to the disciples, grasps Jesus' message, forgets the physical thirst that brought her to the well, and heads off to the town to tell whoever will listen to her that she has met the long-awaited Messiah.

In all of this there are some messages for us. First of all, Jesus makes it clear that there is nothing to be gained from nit-picking arguments over religion. Secondly, his disclosure of the woman's history and his refusal to condemn her demonstrate that the God he proclaims regards our personal history and past failures as irrelevant, once we open ourselves to God's love. Jesus promises us a Spirit who will convince us that we are valued and loved unconditionally by the God who loved us into life, and who doesn't stop loving us. Thirdly, being plunged into a relationship with God

does not mean that we will be free from uncertainty and floundering when it comes to dealing with people of different mindsets, attitudes and religious persuasions.

When genuine love and compassion are at work there are no barriers that cannot be overcome, be they personal prejudice, race, religion, grief, sickness or physical disability. Whatever the struggles the confront us, whatever obstacles in life we encounter, we eventually come to realise that deep within us is a thirst for the only one who will ever satisfy us, a thirst for God. This gospel story begins with a chance meeting between two people who are looking for water to slake their physical thirst. It ends with a revelation by Jesus to the woman that the only thing that will satisfy her deep-down thirst is God's love for her. Underlying all the talk and imagery of water and thirst is the revelation of God's great thirst for each of us, and that Jesus is the conduit of God's love for us and our world. Let's not forget that Jesus, too, knew thirst. In this gospel story he is thirsting for water. At the very end of his life, as he hung on the Cross, he cried out "I thirst" - that was a thirst for water and a thirst for God's love, voiced by him at the lowest point of his life on earth.

In a reflection of a week or two ago, I made mention of *Compassionate Friends*. *The Society of Compassionate Friends* came into being in a moment of inspiration when Simon Stephens, the Anglican priest and chaplain to Warwickshire Hospital (UK) brought together two sets of parents who were grieving the tragic death of a child. He witnessed in action the extraordinary support they were to one another as they reached out in compassion and comfort. They responded to one another's immediate thirst, and, in the very act of reaching out to one another, they became instruments and conduits of God's love. Today's readings are a reminder to us all that we, too, are invited to imitate Jesus, to respond to those around us who in one way or another are thirsting for God's love and compassion.

But, if we take nothing else from today's gospel story, at least let's hold on to the picture of a Jew and a Samaritan engaging in conversation at a well; a woman actually talking with a man about substantial and deeply personal issues; two people brought up to hate one another sharing a cup of water; two unlikely people engaging in a way that scandalised a band of petty-minded disciples. Is there not a message here for all of us who belong to a world in which competition, rivalry, factions and wars are endemic? Are we not being invited to risk being instruments of scandal, as we try to reach out to those around us who are thirsting for justice, peace and reconciliation? They are the Rohingya people and refugees from a civil war in Syria, herded into refugee camps and left to languish there, forgotten by a world devoid of compassion. They are our sisters and brothers.



**Please remember in your prayers the following
for whom Masses will be offered.**

Recently Deceased: Paul Wright, Brian Clark, Salvatore Tornatato, Kathleen Greene
Ireland

Anniversaries: Delores Borg, Sarina Vartuli, Loretta & Alexander Steuerwald, Filomena &
Giuseppe Agostino, Ted & Laura Merlino, Jo MacCarthy, John Ferranda

Others: Fr Kevin McGovern, Patrick & Margaret Egan, Veronica & Anne Gough, Mario
Iannacito, Angelo Iannacito, Mabel & Kevin Rice, Peter Waters, Helen
Timpanaro, Paul Broderick, Harry O'Hara, Eugene & Aileen Morris, Harriet David, Michael
Culligan, Angelina Camuglia, Dr Leonado Dimaculangan, Jennifer Bast, Doug Kemp,
Carmel Cullinan, Francesca Vizzari, Anthony Zovaro, Eric Pewal, Chris Elliott, Paola Pilosio,
John Ferranda, Olivero Vendramin, Thomas Murickananickal & Kochappan, Joseph, Anna
Nguyen, Gordon Bridges, John Baptist Nguyen, Giuseppe Rubbo, Teofilo Zamora, Paul,
Filomena Agostino, Marie Madeleine Danev, Nicola Betro, Margaret Sharpe, Tamam
Koloji, Helen Timpanaro, Mario Gemin, John Ryan, John Kennedy, Antoinette Constable,
Ludivina Green, Agata Rodi, John Baptista Zammit, Catherine and John Manning, Joe and
Mary Mangion, Rema Flannery, Margaret Jean Sharpe, John Pomroy, Mary & Ernest
Vanzella, Gaetano Patamia, Mehzen Mawad, Francisco Abas, Isidore Lopez Maza, Ruby
Madera, Boyd Germy, Caoile Families, Iannacito, Funaro & Di Iorio Families, Guiseppe &
Maria Idiotta, Whiteford Family, Culligan Family, Cootes Family, Zammit Family, DeBono
Family, Moses Family, Nancy's Family, Dahdah Family, Wheeler & Higgins Families,
Morson Family, Abraham, George & Cherote Families, Kennedy and McGovern Families,
John White, June Bates, Dorothy Vantwest, Thelma & Stephen Muller & Family, Soloman
Family, Merrell, Bourke, Gielis & Shields Families, deceased members of St Vincent de
Paul Society, dearly departed souls and all souls in Purgatory.

Please pray for the sick especially:

David Bagnato, Angela, Imogen Warner, Rosaria Natalina Patamia, Felice Minutillo,
Charlie Rossini, Kelly & Ursula, Giuseppina Algozzino, Peggy Kerr, Viru, Fr Paul Boyers,
Kevin McGrath, John and Betty Gattenhof, Esther and Terry Tully, Gary and Leslie Mc
Grath, Rosa Mastro, Tanya Greenaway, Gianna, Matthew, Luisa, Zia Pina, Grace Comare,
Veronica Rutherford, Sean Peters, Elizabeth Esguerra, Juliet Walsh, Barbara Wayne, ,
Marilyn Deguara, Elijah, Adrian Vanzella, Matthew Chan, John Rodrigues, Belinda Nicholls,
Nan Peters, Carmela Smigliani, Shinta Widzaza, Alan Borg, Rosa Maria Santos, Bhupinder
Tamber, Rebecca Sinclair, Marina Arasaratnam, Teresa Domalewski, Adel Abraham, Anne
Vassily, Gloria Clark, Kim Long, Bob & Marion Merrell, Terry Murphy, Stacey Spencer,
Joanne Ford, David, Celia and Gomes Family, Warwick Cook, Louise, James Anthony
Manassa, June Corcoran, Rosina Morson, Celina Shaw, Laurence O'Connell, Sam Carroll,
Dr Bede Muller, Robert Carey, Carmen Zammit, Mario Bianco, Rochelle Rodrigues, Kevin
Desouza, Pat Toohey, Charmaine Yu, Anne Collins, Anna Vitezniak, Adrian Walker, Lauren
Wedd, Sara Benjamin & Family, Peter Weinfefoe, Ivy Ross, Dr Siri Kannangara, Maria Rosa
de Angelis, Frank Zappia, Cecily Culligan

Special Intention: Maria, Milagros Gonzalez



Congratulations to Andre Rodrigues who we recently
welcomed into our faith community through the
Sacrament of Baptism. Please keep Andre and family
in your prayers.

From the Australian Bishops Conference

- * Individuals should consider their own health, including any potential to infect others with a contagious disease, before attending a public liturgical celebration.
- Holy Water should be temporarily removed from stoups at the doors of churches to reduce the possibility of transmission of the virus. Holy Water should continue to be available for people to take home.
- Parishes and other settings where liturgies are celebrated should make alcohol-based gels or rubs (or like products) available near entrances. Similar provisions should be considered for settings used for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- When exchanging the Sign of Peace, individuals should avoid shaking hands but say "Peace be with you" and offer a smile, wave, nod or bow.
- All Ministers of Holy Communion should take particular care to wash their hands before and after distributing. Appropriate means should be made available.
- Parishes should cease distributing Holy Communion from the Chalice until further notice. The faithful should be reminded that Christ is fully present under either species.
- The coronavirus is easily spread through saliva. In celebrations of the Ordinary Form of the Latin Rite, it is therefore recommended that the Body of Christ only be administered in the hand because of the high risk of transmission if people continue to receive on the tongue. Ministers should seek to avoid contact with the communicant's hands.
- The faithful who are too unwell to attend Sunday Mass – whether due to coronavirus or some other condition – or are at particular risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus can honour their Sunday obligation by participating in a time of prayer within the home, reading the Scriptures or watching Mass on television or online (<http://bit.ly/MassOnDemand>).



Third Sunday of Lent
15 March 2020



Barry grew up in a tough environment. With the support of a program from Caritas Australia's partner, Red Dust Healing, Barry has overcome many of life's challenges. He is now an inspirational father to his four girls and a leader in his community.

Please donate to Project Compassion 2020 and help vulnerable people like Barry, so that they are empowered to assist members of their communities in Australia.

Let's Go Further, Together. You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, by visiting www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion or phoning 1800 024 413.

A message from the Archdiocese of Sydney

Abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with a crime 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 safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org or call (02) 9390 5810 or 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



CHILDREN'S
Liturgy of the Word

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD:
This is our Parish Community's way of deepening the value of the WORD OF GOD in the hearts and minds of the children of our Parish.

This ministry is offered to all primary school children and we need the older children as part of the group, as the younger ones look to the leadership of the older children who are able to read THE WORD to the little ones.

We would value and welcome THE OLDER CHILDREN coming forward to assist with the Children's Liturgy of the Word..... please.....

What's On

Sun 15 Mar	3.30pm – 4.30pm Lenten Group
Wed 18 Mar	7.00pm Easter Choir Practice
Fri 20 March	7.30pm Stations of the Cross

Our Catechists!



'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring "Good News"'

In our St Ambrose Parish we have 9 catechists teaching 210 Catholic children in our 3 local public schools - Concord West, North Strathfield and Victoria Avenue Public Schools. Each class is 30 minutes long and you can volunteer as a teacher or a helper in the classes. We are however more in need of teachers.

Classes are held as follows:

Strathfield North Public School – Wednesday mornings

Concord West Public School – Tuesday mornings

Victoria Avenue Public School – Tuesdays 11.45 to 12.15pm

You will receive training, lesson manuals, books and all necessary resources and support from the Archdiocese plus great friendship and support from other catechists.

So why be a catechist?

1. Share JESUS with others.
2. Contribute to your parish and community.
3. Have the opportunity to deepen your personal faith.
4. Meet new friends who will support you.
5. Great opportunity to work your mind and attend workshops and quality training courses

Please email sacraments@stambrose.org.au
or call the Parish Office 97431023

