

**CATHOLIC PARISH OF HEALESVILLE, INCORPORATING HEALESVILLE (ST BRIGID'S),  
YARRA GLEN (ST ALOYSIUS) & MARYSVILLE (OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS)**



*Address: 15 High Street, Healesville, Victoria, 3777  
Postal Address: PO Box 73, Healesville, Victoria, 3777*

*Phone: 5962 4026*

*Email Address: [Healesville@cam.org.au](mailto:Healesville@cam.org.au)*

*Website: <http://www.stbrigidshalesville.cam.org.au>*

*Link to weekly Masses: <https://bit.ly/StBsHville>*

*Administrator: Fr. Francis Denton*

*Pastor Emeritus: Fr John Dupuche*

*Pastoral Worker: Mrs. Debbie Edwards*

*Secretary: Mrs. Debbie Edwards (Administration)*

*Mob: 0448 664 731*

*Secretary: Mrs Sharon Jacob (Finance)*

*0448 658 418*

**TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (Year A) 6<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

**LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**First Reading: Ezekiel 33:7-9**

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

The word of the Lord was addressed to me as follows, 'Son of man, I have appointed you as sentry to the House of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth, warn them in my name. If I say to a wicked man: Wicked wretch, you are to die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked man to renounce his ways, then he shall die for his sin, but I will hold you responsible for his death. If, however, you do warn a wicked man to renounce his ways and repent, and he does not repent, then he shall die for his sin, but you yourself will have saved your life.'

**The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.**

**Responsorial Psalm: Ps 94:1-2, 6-9**

**R. O that today you would listen to his voice!  
Harden not your hearts.**

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;  
hail the rock who saves us.  
Let us come before him, giving thanks,  
with songs let us hail the Lord. R.

Come in; let us bow and bend low;  
let us kneel before the God who made us  
for he is our God and we  
the people who belong to his pasture,  
the flock that is led by his hand. R.

O that today you would listen to his voice!  
'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,  
as on that day at Massah in the desert  
when your fathers put me to the test;  
when they tried me, though they saw my work.' R.

**R. O that today you would listen to his voice!  
Harden not your hearts.**

**Second Reading: Romans 13:8-10**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Avoid getting into debt, except the debt of mutual love. If you love your fellow men you have carried out your obligations. All the commandments: You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and so on, are summed up in this single command: You must love your neighbour as yourself. Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour; that is why it is the answer to every one of the commandments.

**The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation:**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
God was in Christ, to reconcile the world to himself;  
and the Good News of reconciliation he has entrusted to us.  
Alleluia!

**Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20**

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain any charge. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community; and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a pagan or a tax collector.

'I tell you solemnly, whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.

'I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them.'

**The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## FROM FR FRANCIS DENTON

### **Introduction to Prayer: Part 3 – Self-Knowledge and Humility**

*“Who are you, Lord my God, and who am I?”* (St Francis of Assisi)

I recently stumbled across the film *Florence Foster Jenkins* (2016) featuring the ever-brilliant Meryl Streep. It tells the story of the New York heiress, Florence Foster Jenkins, who rose to social prominence as a patron of the local music scene. With the encouragement of the sycophantic (and rather unscrupulous) assistant director of the Metropolitan Opera, Florence is catapulted forward in her dreams of becoming a professional opera singer. Unfortunately, Florence’s passion for singing is not matched by her ability. Her attempts to sing turn wildly comical, though the joke is apparent to everyone save poor Florence. The mounting drama of the film turns on the fact that the more Florence’s delusions of operatic grandeur are entertained, the harder it becomes to protect her from humiliating herself before the whole world. By the end, the story has the feel of a parable about the folly of self-deception.

In ancient Greece, the Temple of Apollo at Delphi had inscribed at the entrance of the temple the words, “Know Thyself”. The idea was that before you entered the temple to pray to ‘the gods’ it was necessary to firstly know yourself, that is, to see yourself as you truly are, neither better nor worse. Most of us don’t entertain self-delusions to quite the same degree as Florence Foster Jenkins, however we can all develop blind-spots or distortions of reality in our self-knowledge. The civil law upholds the principle of *nemo iudex in sua causa* (“no-one can judge his own cause”) because the fact is our ability to make objective, impartial judgements is undermined by self-interest. Most of us are quite expert at magnifying our qualities and diminishing our flaws. Nowhere is this more evident today than on social media platforms like Facebook. People have become masterful ‘curators’ of their own lives, selectively posting photos of themselves that make their lives appear at least ten times more glamorous than they actually are, while air-brushing away all the ugly aspects of their lives. Sometimes one is left wondering: are you trying to convince the world or yourself that this is who you are?

What, you might ask, does all this have to do with prayer? In fact, I think this question of self-knowledge is foundational to the work of prayer. In the first part of this series I reflected on the fundamentally *relational* nature of Christian prayer. Prayer is our ‘coming to know God’ in Jesus Christ. Yet, as with all relationships it is in the act of coming to know ‘the other’ that we often arrive at new and unexpected insights into ourselves. Authentic Christian prayer will always draw us into a deeper knowledge of ourselves, and that can be a rather terrifying process once the façade starts to crumble. When we engage with our peers we adopt all manner of stratagems to make others think well of us. By contrast when we place ourselves before our omniscient (‘all-knowing’) God the mask falls off, and we’re disarmed of all our defences and pretences. We can trick others; we can even deceive ourselves, but there is no fooling God. God is Truth (cf. John 14:6) and the ground of all reality. He sees us with 20/20 vision, warts and all. When we enter into that loving encounter with God called prayer, it is very likely that he will want to show us parts of ourselves that we would rather not see. This he does not because he desires to condemn us, but because in revealing our flaws they might be corrected and our character perfected in charity. There is one vital ingredient required to begin this process: the virtue of humility.

In a letter written to a friend who was seeking advice on how to advance in the spiritual life St Augustine counselled: *“I wish you to submit with complete devotion, and to construct no other*

*way for yourself of grasping and holding the truth than the way constructed by Him who, as God, saw how faltering were our steps. This way is first humility, second humility, and third humility, and however often you should ask me I would say the same!*" Elsewhere St Augustine wrote, "Humility is the foundation of all the other virtues hence, in the soul in which this virtue does not exist there cannot be any other virtue except in mere appearance."

Humility truly is the foundation of the Christian life because it is the virtue that Jesus himself models for us in 'self-emptying' (*kenosis*) of the incarnation. St Paul writes in Philippians: "Have this mind [of humility] among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." (Phil 2:5-8). One simply cannot understand Christianity without understand the mystery of God's humility manifested in the Incarnation of Christ. This was what so enthralled St Francis of Assisi in his life-long devotion to humility. In his last will and testament St Francis wrote to his brothers these stirring words: "*O humble sublimity! O sublime humility! that the Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humbles Himself that for our salvation He hides Himself under a morsel of bread. Consider, brothers, the humility of God and pour out your hearts before Him, and be ye humbled that ye may be exalted by Him!*" St Francis of Assisi who better than anyone grasped the central paradox of Christianity, soared to the dizzying heights of sanctity by his relentless self-abasement. St Peter writes: "Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." (1Peter 5:5-6)

In our age of proud self-exaltation and self-assertion we can so easily find ourselves swept along by the currents of egoism: our need to win arguments; to tear down our competitors; to have to last word. If we take this attitude to prayer the result will be rather fruitless. To make the point Jesus tells the parable of the prayer of the Pharisee and the tax-collector (Luke 18:9-14). The Pharisee, for all his many words, merely honours himself. In his pride he entertains delusions of sanctity. The tax-collector precisely because he possesses sufficient humility to *know himself* to be a sinner offers God the acceptable prayer: "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God" (Luke 18:13-14).

Humility is the only basis from which authentic prayer can arise. Contrary to popular opinion true humility does not mean cultivating a pathological self-hatred, for this too is a distortion of the truth. *True* humility means coming to know ourselves as God knows us, neither exaggerating nor diminishing either our faults or our virtues. Humility enables us to see the goodness of God in spite of our flaws, opening wide the door of gratitude. For this reason, humility is the mother of joy, as surely as pride is the father of discontentment. A much-neglected practice in the spiritual life is a regular (ideally daily) examination of conscience. St Ignatius of Loyola supposedly considered the 'examen' the most important of all the spiritual exercises. One final cautionary word: given the naval-gazing tendency of our age we should remember that self-knowledge is not the primary focus of prayer (which is obviously growing in the love of God). Note well: 'Adoration of God' does not consist in staring at a mirror!!! Yet, I would maintain that self-knowledge is the necessary precondition for authentic prayer, grounding us in reality, lest our prayer becomes an empty routine, a performance or worse, an act of self-deception. Humility prepares the human heart to encounter the God who first

humbled himself: “For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” (Luke 18:14)

### **WEEKLY MASSES ARE AVAILABLE ON OUR ST BRIGID’S YOU TUBE CHANNEL**

A reminder that Fr Francis’ Sunday Masses are recorded each weekend and are available on St Brigid’s You Tube Channel each Sunday morning. Fr Francis records Masses from St Brigid’s, St Patrick’s and St Aloysius churches. The link is accessible through St Brigid’s Healesville’s website, or by searching St Brigid’s Healesville on You Tube, or using the link: [\*\*https://bit.ly/StBsHville\*\*](https://bit.ly/StBsHville)

### **KEEPING US CONNECTED**

Please email the office if you would like to participate in:

- **The Parish Grapevine** which advises of deaths, funerals or other parish news.
- **A regular Bible Study/Faith Reflection Group led by Fr Francis** via video chat on a phone, ipad or computer.

### **HAPPY FATHERS DAY!!**

Wishing all dads a happy celebration!



### **SOME THOUGHTS FROM DEBBIE**

Congratulations dads!! As we enjoy Father’s Day this year, from a distance, we ask God to pour out abundant blessings on all of our dads, and on those other special people who act as dads do. We ask him to shower those who have been given the gift of fatherhood with the inspiration and the strength to be the best ‘me’ they can be for their families. We also ask God to reward those dads who may have already completed their journeys home to him for the love they shared with their families in life, remembered by those who miss them this weekend. A family meal over zoom has become the new norm for many tech savvy families. For our less technological friends, treasuring memories and perhaps sorting through happy photos could allow us to celebrate a little more quietly and reflectively. Whichever way it goes, whatever our relationship with our dads and our children, we are real people living in a real world, and the ideal is sometimes just out of our reach.

Living up to the important vocation of being a parent is a huge ask, well done to all the dads (and mums) taking on the challenge of each new day as a parent, especially in this time of home schooling. I recently listened to some words of wisdom in honour of the Feast of St Monica, celebrated throughout the Church on 27<sup>th</sup> August. St Monica prayed for her son Augustine throughout his lifetime, no doubt beginning her prayers as soon as she knew she was to be his mother. Prayer was, in fact, the only course of action open to St Monica, as nothing else that she said or did changed Augustine’s choices. His great mission in life seemed to be getting in to worse and worse trouble, and each passing day brought bigger and better things for Monica to worry about. Like many parents, she grieved that Augustine’s behaviour rejected everything she had tried to teach him throughout his early years. Mums and dads, grandparents and great-grandparents the world over know all about working hard to have their kids avoid mistakes in life. Yet children must choose their own path as they mature, equipped by the lessons passed on to them through family life in their early years. Like St Monica, frustrated at watching her child jump from one crocodile pit to the next, prayer is our most enduring means of caring for those we love, given that children do need to grow up and take responsibility for their own choices, generally moving from the direct care of their parents in the process.

St Monica is a much-admired Saint of the Church, she simply loved God with all of her heart, despite the immense challenges that she faced in living out her vocation as Augustine’s mum. She prayed for

him with perseverance and faith, and eventually Augustine's life turned around, and he went on to become St Augustine, one of the greatest Saints in the Church's history. St Augustine's Feast Day is the day after his mum's, the 28<sup>th</sup> August! St Monica prayed for a miracle, and God heard her persistent prayers, rewarding her confidence in a way that she could never have considered could be possible. She could not see that her prayers for her son had been heard and granted, but she faithfully trusted in God, and following her death, St Augustine turned his whole life around. Through his mother's prayers, St Augustine not only reached heaven himself, but has been instrumental in bringing countless numbers of others to God along with him.

I constantly reassure parents and grandparents that God hears each and every prayer we form in our hearts. We pray for our children and grand-children, and not one prayer ever goes unheard. Today we pray for all parents in our turn, and for the considerable responsibilities they bear. We pray especially for all dads, especially our own, no matter where they may be. Well worth a cake with lots of icing!

### THANKSGIVING TOTAL FOR AUGUST

St Brigid's: \$115 Thank you!!

### TIME FOR A GIGGLE!

#### **Examples of how *not* to word notices in a Church bulletin:**

- Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
- Please place your donation in the envelope provided, along with the deceased person you want remembered.
- At the evening service tonight the sermon will be 'what is hell?' Come early and listen to the choir practice.

### GUARDIAN ANGELS OF KENYA

Please remember Fr Jason and his community in your prayers. Covid has hit them hard and daily life continues to bring great pastoral and financial challenges. For more information contact Paula or Sally.

### PLEASE PRAY: **FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY**

Albert Slawinski, Maureen Fogarty, Bob Barclay

### FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK

Babies Emmett, Noah Glen Christie, Tedi and Santi; Roman, Blake Smith, Trish Leahy, John Snell, Abby Sharp, Peter Munro, Megan, Bernie Jansen, Andrew Sharp, John, Glenn, Lyn Francis, Dorothy Barber, Fiona, Annie Preuss, Michelle Ryan, Damian, John, Alison, Heather, Julie Bates, Garry Dettman, Bradley Jordan, Jeanette Henkel, Richard Galbraith, Debbie Huby, Geoff Lucas, Sandra Donkin, Dorothy Fraser, Glen, Fred Bullas, Fred Coullas, Evie Gleeson, Indy Dawes, Rade Krstic, Megan Williams, Michael Wood, Bill Howie, Jennie, Michael, Margo & Stephen Youngberry, Marie Hammond, John Mulholland, Rhiannon Days, Val Savitt, Ron Garland, Jaz Nueber, James Cooney, Robert, Mary & Gerard Bariola, Tilly Van der Zee, Lydia, Joyce Slattery, Lawrie Field, Annie, Bob Ireland, Val & Michael Christie, Ted & Peter Bowling, Natasha, Mia, James, Richard Adams, Mitchell & Wynn Wilson, Carina Warton, Anne Bateman.

### FOR THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES ARE IN SEPTEMBER

Patricia Carey (02.09.13), Michael Scowen (03.09.05), Bernard Jansen (05.09.04), Frieddy Laszozewski (10.09.82), Moyra Donchi (10.09.15), Bruce Jarvis (14.09.11), Dorothy Amarant (19.09.08), Michael O'Dwyer (20.09.97), Les Humphries (20.09.13), Greta Dame (28.09.96), Betty Ireland (28.09.97), Henriette Sallay (29.09.13), Justin Perry, Sr Mary Fran Coburn (2008), Peter Barnett, Laurie Fromholtz, John Duffy, Clare Lyons, Ashley Warton