

The Catholic Parish of Sacred Heart & St Columba

Our Parish is a Christian community which welcomes all to walk together in a spirit of compassion, justice and hope.

PARISH NEWSLETTER 22 / 23 MARCH 2025 THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



St Columba Church

cnr Glenhuntly & Normandy Rds
Elwood 3184

Sacred Heart Church

83 Grey Street, St Kilda West 3182

St Columba Primary School

24 Glenhuntly Road Elwood 3184
9531 6560;
www.stcolumbasprimary.org

Sacred Heart Mission

87 Grey Street, St Kilda West 3182
9537 1166;
www.sacredheartmission.org

PARISH HOUSE

2 Normandy Road, Elwood 3184
03 9531 6120; shsc@shscparish.org.au
www.shscparish.org.au

Parish Priest: Fr John Petrus
john@shscparish.org.au

Pastoral Ministry Leader: Christine Mitchell
christine@shscparish.org.au

Office Manager: Jane Hearnese
jane@shscparish.org.au

SHM Pastoral Care Worker

St Columba Principal / REC:

Daniella Maddalena
dmaddalena@scelwood.catholic.edu.au

Deputy Principal: Bern Bradley
bernb@scelwood.catholic.edu.au

Parish Safeguarding Committee:

Fr John Petrus, Christine Mitchell,
Daniella Maddalena, Jane Hearnese

Parish Visiting Team: Lay Pastoral Care Group; Legion of Mary Groups
Call or email the Parish Office.

St Vincent de Paul President: Dominic Tesoriero
domtess1@gmail.com

Elwood and St Kilda Legion of Mary
Please contact the parish office.

Gospel Reflection by Fr Greg McPhee, MM [an extract]

[Source: Lenten Reflection Guide, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns]

There are two terrible tragedies: the Romans kill Galileans at a religious festival on the Temple grounds, and then a tower wall collapses crushing 18 people to death in Siloam. Miles away from Jerusalem, however, the crowd with Jesus feels safe from such disasters. Nevertheless, Jesus warns the people of the arduous death awaiting them, if they die without God. Many of them have excluded the poor, been blind to the suffering of others, and are lost in a self-centred quest for illusory happiness devoid of inner peace. Real peace flows from the unconditional love of Christ for the poor, marginalised and sinners. Despite our rationalisations to the contrary, we are all sinners in need of Christ's peace.

Our faith in Jesus calls us to a new way of being. A new mindset, a transformed way of thinking, speaking and acting toward others. By quieting the anxious thoughts of our inner voice, we move beyond ourselves to more meaningful connections with humanity and creation. We can move past socio-psychological barriers to encounter the fringe, the others living among us, like the homeless, abandoned single mothers, impoverished families, immigrants and unwanted elderly. Christians make the love of God radiate outward to the forgotten, neglected and unloved in our communities. Like the burning sign of God's presence to Moses in the desert, the compassion of Christ changes lives. Not only by upholding the dignity of others, but for us who intentionally reach out to those in need....

In the gospel reading, Jesus tells the parable of a barren fig tree. The fig tree represents the Jerusalem Temple destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. On a larger scale, this parable symbolizes the spiritual barrenness of our fallen humanity. Like our overwhelmingly anxious lives, this tree no longer bears fruit. Jesus, the gardener, however, asks God, the owner of the orchard, for additional time to cultivate life-giving figs from the parched tree. Jesus will provide essential nutrients to the tree's

roots. The living water of Christ revives the tree of life. This parable calls us to reflect on our lives. We have the chance to change this Lent. Even if Christ feels distant and our spiritual lives appear dry. We might ask where is God in the daily struggles of our lives? We can look to Christ, who calls us to a mature purpose driven life. The Spirit of Christ offers fullness of life and the ultimate grace to die with dignity. Redemption from our old self transforms us. By faith, we gradually walk the path to salvation. Fidelity to God and neighbour, with compassion for the struggling poor, reveals Christ in the world.

Jesus rescues us from the spiritual void of our post-human age. Although churches are fading into diocesan mergers, the spirit of renewal in Christ is undying. Spiritual peace prevails over insatiable desires, preventing the spiral into compulsive sins. When our true self is reborn in Christ, the will of God becomes our will, fortifies our innate goodness. By faith, Christ overcomes self-destructive behaviours and habits. Humility acknowledges the transformative power of the Spirit. Egotistical hubris, however, disregards history, natural law and commonsense belief in something greater than ourselves. The proud propose a theory of everything that leaves no room for the spirituality that completes human existence. Moreover, the inherent limitations of human cognition and perception prevent us from encompassing all things, including God.

Lent is our time to grow spiritually. The grace of God is calling us. The Spirit of Christ is reaching out to us. Receive God's love by healing others spiritually, emotionally and with basic needs. Accompany the poor, as Jesus did. Through Christ we help tend to the tree of life.

WARM WELCOME

Welcome to all who celebrate the Eucharist with us today, to the church communities across our parish and a special welcome to all who happen to be visiting our Parish.

A special welcome to **Rosie, Louie, Beatriz and Olivia** who are baptised this weekend St Columba. We pray blessings for them as they grow in love and the faith of their family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Today we stand in footsteps millennia old. May we acknowledge the Elders, families and forebears of the Kulin Nations, who are the traditional custodians of our parish land, whose cultures and customs have nurtured, and continue to nurture, this land since men and women awoke from the great dream.

We acknowledge their continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

Our Parish supports the recommendations of the Royal Commission and all endeavours to bring healing to and justice for the victims of abuse. Our Parish Leadership & Development Team and Safeguarding Committee work proactively to ensure the safety of all children, young people and vulnerable adults in our community.

There are a range of important and interesting resources on the Church noticeboards and on our website supporting and highlighting Safeguarding. Please feel free to contact a member of the Safeguarding Committee if you have any concerns or ideas.

NEXT STAGE IN THE SYNOD ON SYNODALITY

For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission

Pope Francis has approved the next phase of the Synod of Bishops on synodality (walking together as a church into the future), launching a three-year implementation process that will culminate in an ecclesial assembly at the Vatican in October 2028. The synod's new phase will focus on applying its conclusions at all levels of the Church, with dioceses, bishops' conferences and religious communities working to integrate synodality into daily Church life before the meeting at the Vatican in 2028. The final document, emphasised synodality as essential to the Church's mission and called for greater lay participation, mandatory pastoral councils and continued study on women in ministry and seminary formation. Over the next three years, dioceses, bishops' conferences and religious communities will work to integrate synodal principles into Church life with the guidance of a Vatican-issued document scheduled to be published in May. Evaluation assemblies at diocesan, national and continental levels from 2027 to early 2028 will assess progress before a final ecclesial assembly at the Vatican in October 2028, where Church leaders will reflect on the synodal journey and discern future steps. Anyone wishing to read the Final Document, go to: www.synod.va and download the English version.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Based on a Four-fold Benedictine Blessing

May God bless me with a restless discomfort about easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships, so that I may seek truth boldly and love deep within my heart.

May God bless me with holy anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that I may tirelessly work for justice, freedom, and peace among all people.

May God bless me with the gift of tears to shed with those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, or the loss of all that they cherish, so that I may reach out my hand to comfort them and transform their pain into joy.

May God bless me with enough foolishness to believe that I really CAN make a difference in this world, so that I am able, with God's grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.

And the blessing of God the Supreme Majesty and our Creator, Jesus Christ the Incarnate Word who is our brother and Saviour, and the Holy Spirit, our Advocate and Guide, be with me and remain with me, this day and forevermore. Amen.

[Sister Ruth Marlene Fox, OSB]

EASTER SERVICES 2025

Details of our Easter services from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday are available on flyers at the back of church and on our website. <https://www.shscparish.org.au/>

The Good Friday, Ecumenical service at 9.30 a.m., entitled, 'Gather Round the Fire: Song, Story, Lament and Love: Walking with Jesus towards the Cross' will be led by Archdeacon Rev Uncle Glen Loughrey and Uniting Church minister, Rev. Alex Sangster. We will be supporting in presence, prayer and with hospitality.

Date: Friday, 18 April from 9.30 a.m.

Venue: Bishops House (outdoors) 1 St Leonards Ave St Kilda. All are welcome.

SIGN UP FOR EASTER SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

You will also find a sign-up sheet calling for volunteers to assist in our Easter Services. These will be out for the next three weeks - **if you wish to support any of the services, please list your details** and Christine, our Pastoral Ministry leader will get back to you in a few weeks' time.

CELEBRITY ORGAN RECITAL AT ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL

Johann Vexo, formerly Organist, Notre-Dame Cathedral, Paris returns to St Patrick's Cathedral for another dazzling program. Vexo studied at the Paris Conservatoire and has recorded several CDs on historical French organs - especially one on the Grand Organ of Notre-Dame, Paris. Vexo is joined on this concert tour of Australia by accomplished musician and early music specialist Damien Rivière.

Details: Friday 4 April, 6.00pm at St Patrick's Cathedral

Cost: Adults: \$35, concession: \$25, Children aged 15 years and under are admitted free. Tickets at the door or <https://www.trybooking.com/BRYBS>

LENT: PROJECT COMPASSION



This Lent, we are called to *Unite Against Poverty* through Caritas Australia's Project Compassion. Your generous support this Lenten Season will enable Caritas Australia to provide life-changing support to vulnerable communities in need.

You can support Project Compassion 2025 through the donation boxes, envelopes or by scanning the QR code.

Or online at: caritas.org.au/project-compassion

Or by calling: 1800 024 413

In today's Gospel, we hear the parable of the fig tree. The impatient person wants to cut it down. A wiser person is prepared to work with nature by putting manure on the tree and looking after it. This is a story of growth. God is creative. God is patient with us. God gives us another chance. He journeys with us on our pilgrimage of Hope.

This week, Caritas Australia's Project Compassion brings us the story of Lam from rural Vietnam. Lam has a disability that has made his upbringing difficult. Sometimes people look at those with disability a little like a fig tree. They judge and dismiss them. Through the I-SHINE program, supported by Caritas, Lam was able to pursue his dreams, studying an IT Technician training course that not only equipped him with professional skills but also rekindled his social connections and confidence. Lam's dedication and training has paid off. Today, he is a successful graphic designer, serving clients locally and internationally, earning a stable income. Lam's hope saw him becoming, doing and changing into the fullness of life.

If you haven't committed to almsgiving as part of your Lenten, please consider taking a Project Compassion box/envelope from the back of church for regular contributions during Lent.

Caritas thanks all who *Unite with them Against Poverty*.

TAIZE LENTEN PRAYER

Taizé Melbourne and St Benedict's Burwood invite you to a special evening of Taizé Lenten prayer, led by Br Merric. Br Merric is the first Australian brother of the Taizé community, an ecumenical Christian monastic community in France. This is his second visit to Australia since becoming a Taizé brother. Singing practice will take place from 6.30pm for those who would like to arrive early and learn the musical parts. All are welcome to stay and share a meal nearby. For more info, follow the new [Taizé Melbourne WhatsApp channel](#)

Event details: Friday, 28 March from 7.00pm-9.00pm.

Venue: St Benedict's, 283 Warrigal Road, Burwood.

HARMONY DAY AT ST COLUMBA PRIMARY SCHOOL

The children enjoyed a special day on Friday with a mass for the Grade 3-6s and then an afternoon of fun activities with St Columba Kids. Please see our website for more information. <https://www.shscparish.org.au/news>



VOLUNTEER(S) NEEDED

The beautiful garden in front of the Parish House is looking scorched and sad. We are looking for a volunteer or two to take responsibility for regular watering of the garden. If this interests you, please contact Jane in our Parish Office: jane@shscparish.org.au or tel.: 9531 6120.

UPCOMING DATES TO NOTE:

- **Communal Reconciliation: Monday 7 April, 7.00pm St Columba Church.**
- **1st Rite of Reconciliation: Saturday 12 April, 9.30am St Columba Church and 11.00am Sacred Heart Church.**

PATRICK ORATION BY MOST REV PETER A COMENSOLI

The sixth Patrick Oration was delivered by Most Rev Peter A Comensoli, on the feast of St Patrick. "A renewed faith"

Noting an increase in engagement with the Church, Archbishop Comensoli pointed to signs of renewal and hope, particularly in the growing number of catechumens and candidates preparing to enter the Church. He stated, 'At the Rite of Election this year... 215 catechumens (those coming to the Christian faith) and 133 candidates (those completing their Christian initiation) gathered with their sponsors and catechists for the liturgy of welcome into God's family. That's the largest number welcomed in 25 years'. Archbishop Comensoli drew attention to the image of the sunflower, calling on the faithful to turn towards the light of Christ: 'Our purpose is to turn towards the sun (Son), whose gaze brings light to our faces.' He emphasised the Church's role in guiding people towards renewal, encouraging those present to take up the task of nurturing faith and sharing the hope they have received... The Gospel, the sacraments, our Christian love are the rivers of beauty and light that offer hope and a profound invitation to a new way of living, in a world often marked by disharmony and rupture.'

He closed with a reminder that the Church's mission is lived out in daily acts of faith, service and love. 'By walking this path with courage and conviction, we begin to reclaim the beauty of faith in God and restore a culture rooted in love, truth and justice, offering a powerful antidote to the loneliness and despair of the modern world, and lighting the way towards hope and transformation.'

Copies of the Archbishop's presentation are available at the back of the Church.

SACRED CHORAL CONCERT

St Peter's Church, Toorak will be debuting a new Choral piece called 'The Primacy of St Peter: Part One' composed by their ARIA award winning Music Director, Conrad Helfrich. Entry by donation but registration is essential. You can do this via: <https://www.trybooking.com/DABRV>

Details: Thursday, 10 April at 7:30 p.m. at St Peter's Church, 583 Toorak Road, Toorak. For further information, contact Delisa on: E: delisa.gonsalves@cam.org.au

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Exodus 3: 1-8, 13-15

Responsorial Psalm:

The Lord is kind and merciful.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 10: 1-6, 10-12

Gospel Acclamation:

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

Repent, says the Lord;
the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

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

Gospel: Luke 13: 1-9

OUR LITURGICAL CALENDAR

MONDAY 24 March - SUNDAY 30 March 2025

MONDAY 11.00am Mass at Sacred Heart Community
101 Grey Street, St Kilda

THURSDAY 11.00am MASS at Sacred Heart Church

FRIDAY 9.00am MASS at Parish House Elwood

SATURDAY 6.00pm MASS at St Columba Church

SUNDAY 9.00am MASS at St Columba Church
11.00am MASS at Sacred Heart Church
(this mass is also live streamed)
Gospel: John 9: 1-41

COLLECTIONS: Last two weekends

| Church Account Collection | | Presbytery Account Collection | |
|---------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Envelopes | \$87.00 | Total | \$357.30 |
| Loose cash | \$598.15 | | |
| Total | \$685.15 | | |
| Average for 11 weeks | \$352.95 | Average for 11 weeks | \$196.78 |

PARISH SERVICE AND SUPPORT PROGRAM

You can contribute to the Service and Support Program in a number of ways. Options include; direct debit, credit card, collections at mass, via Tithe.ly - click this link - [tithe.ly https://tithe.ly/give?c=911524](https://tithe.ly/give?c=911524) or download the tithe.ly app and via our Tap n Go machines at mass.

To find out more about our Service and Support program you can visit our website <https://www.shscparish.org.au/support-us> or contact Jane at the office.

Just a reminder that our First Collection at mass supports the running of the parish, such as pastoral support & various ministries and administration costs - phones, utilities etc. Our Second Collection supports Fr John and covers his stipend and living expenses."

In addition to the second collection, the parish transfers \$4500 to the Presbytery account each quarter to cover the percentage of direct debit donations earmarked to support Fr John.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

"Prayer is what keeps the faith, without it, faith wavers"

Pope Francis

All Recently Deceased: Teresa Pescatore (Horan) 18.3, Steve Walters

1st Anniversaries: Adelina Ranieri, Eugene Munday, Michael Keleher, Ian MacKenzie.

17th Anniversary: Tom Rehill 28.3.2008

30th Anniversary: Sheila Madden

Anniversaries: Christy Leahy , Lorraine Donavan, Rosario Marino, Mavis Heywood 5.3, David James Chieng, Patricia Herkess 11.3, Matilda Foster, John Pratt, Fr Ernie Smith 28.3.18, David Griffin, Thomas Szabo, David Carter, David Rickard, Caterina Pino, Michael Grigorio, John Huggett, Graziella Pesenti, James Rodrigues, Ines Picone, Wally Haire, Michael Hayward, Concettina Schiano Moriello 13.3.2019, Maurice Thomas, John Lawler, Mary Tudor, Peter Brady, Yehia Ragheb, Brian Scanlan ,Tom Schepsi, Max Hunter, Ben Tripp 16.3.14, Tony Tripp 8.3, John Muldoon, Donald Everard, Dudley Gomez, Patricia Moore, Bozo Martinov, Jean Curtis 8.3, Roza Pawloska 9.3, Arnold Krumins 11.3, Peter Wilson, David Nightingale, Tom Connelly, Jack Edwards 29.3, Kevin Mooney 19.3.04, Joseph D'Agata, Tom Rehill, John O'Shaughnessy, Patricia McHale 4.3.01, Whippy Peters 13.3.11, Ladislav Mikus 25.3.11, Matthew Beyer 15.3.08, Giuseppina Mazzella 18.3.10, Peter O Connor 5.3.51, Maria Terzita Pittari 15.3.10, Patrick Reade 13.3.10, Andrew Crook 21.3.10, Andrea 7 Raffaele Fraccalanza, Octavia Santini 8.3.98, Muriel Bowes 25.3.02, Nunziata Panettieri, Maria Tesoriero, Max Korber, Caterina Cutelle, Pat Mooney, Maria Alfonse 18.3, Denise Jacoby 18.3

Birthday Anniversary: Gino Nardella 21.3

Sick: Lol Patten (UK), Jackie Pyster, Ramon Lopez, Colin Meanwell, Luke Dennis, Eddie, Alison Barry-Jones (Qld), Chail and her husband Callum, Patrick McCaffrey, Sue McLennan, Fr Terry Kean, Peter Nicholson, Mark Weinberg, Sophia, Ned Connors, Jean Copley, Rose Fonti, Alexander, Felipe and Anne, Pat Ficcaro, Lyn Crossly, Nichole Garnaut, Bernadette Cassar, Arja & Martin Kari, Tony Cogo, Jillian Harrison.

ROSTERS FOR NEXT WEEKEND

29 / 30 March: Four Sunday of Lent

St Columba Welcomes

6pm Mass:

M: Volunteer needed

C / L: Volunteers needed

Set up: Volunteer needed

9am Mass:

M: Leonie Hinton

C / L: Volunteers needed

Set up: Trevor, Marcelle, Pristille, Priscila

Hospitality Roster: Volunteers needed

Sacred Heart Welcomes

11am Mass:

M: Anne Dexter

C / L: Margaret Barry , Nora Redmond

Set up: Legion of Mary

Prayer of the Faithful: Liturgy team