



St Michael's Parish

Incorporating the Churches of Holy Family Bell Park, Ss Peter & Paul's Geelong West & Holy Spirit Manifold Hts.

PARISH PRIEST:**Fr. Minh Tran****OFFICE:**

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Phone: 5278 1343 Email: bellpark@cam.org.au**OFFICE HOURS:**

Mon -Fri 9am-1.30pm

PARISH SECRETARY:

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Web Page Address:www.stmichaelsbellpark.org.au**Facebook Address:****RECENT DEATHS:**

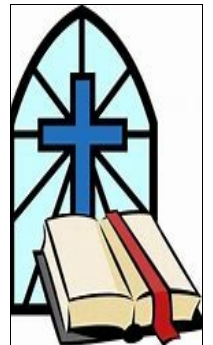
John Cooper

ANNIVERSARIES:

Maurice Glynn, Walter Booth

SICK:

Veronica Werzek, Josica Markov, Giuseppa Forestieri, Julita Aquino, Fr Philip Godsell, Theresa Vickers, Sr Carmel O'Dwyer

**ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION:****My Jesus,****I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.****I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.****Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You.****Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.****CHILD PROTECTION SUNDAY 2020**

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Child Protection Week and the theme 'Putting Children First' underscores the need to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children in all aspects of our community and family life. St Michael's Parish is committed to the care, wellbeing and protection of children, young persons and vulnerable people. May our message be that child protection and the dignity of every person is the responsibility of every adult. St Michael's Parish remains dedicated and committed to 'Putting Children First' and we commend the 'behind the scenes hard work, diligence and effort by our Child Safeguarding Working Committee.

St Michael's News:

- **FACE MASKS AVAILABLE:** We have a generous supply of material face masks available at the parish office. Please feel free to come and collect a mask.
- **COVID-19 UPDATE:** Unfortunately, due to the reintroduction of **stage 3 restrictions**, all religious gatherings, including private prayer in the parish are **cancelled** until further notice.
- **PARISH OFFICE HOURS:** The parish office is opened daily from 9am- 1.30pm
- **LIVESTREAMING OF MASS:** This Sunday at 10am. Also available on Channel 10 at 6am and 11am on Channel 31 & 44. Mass is also available on You Tube daily, from St Simon's Parish, Rowville.

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

(Year A - Sept 13, 2020)
Sirach 27:30 -28:7
Rom 14:7-9

CHILD PROTECTION SUNDAY PRAYER

Gracious God, you love and care for all of your children, especially the smallest and most vulnerable. We entrust to you the lives of children and adults at risk, whose trust and innocence have been destroyed.

Help us to hear their cries of pain and to take responsibility for those whose lives have been broken. Help us to recognise the hurt felt by those wounded by abuse, and the failure to be heard.

We pray that with the help of your grace, communities and families will find understanding and support, so that now and in the future their wounds may be healed and they may find lasting peace.

Let your grace and love fall gently now upon our children, giving them the inner strength, peace and resilience to seek out assistance when required.

We ask this prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.

Amen.

Reflection by Richard Leonard

Charged with the rape and murder of a young woman, it only took the jury twenty minutes to return a guilty verdict for the three men in the dock. The courtroom erupted in cheers as the verdict was read out.

As the men were being led out of the courtroom the mother of two of them ran toward the dock yelling, 'I think what you've done is despicable, but I want you to know that I love you.'

Outside the courthouse, the media were expecting the parents of the victim to advocate capital punishment for the criminals. Instead, they said they wanted to forgive the perpetrators of this vicious crime. Everyone listened in disbelief.

No one at that courthouse was running away from the heinous nature of the crimes, nor from the punishment the men deserved, but the parents involved chose to focus on either love or forgiveness.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us we should forgive each other seventy-seven times. Numbers are not randomly used in the Bible. 1, 3, 7, 12 and 40 all have specific meanings. To number something as seven is to describe it as being perfect. When we hear Jesus use this phrase we recall the story in the Book of Genesis of the seven days of creation where, on the seventh day, God looks at the result of his creative love and sees that it is very good. Jesus, using some shorthand, says that not only is forgiveness good, but that it is a creative act that gives life to the world and gives glory to those who exercise it.

In the 5th Century St Augustine said that forgiveness was like a mother who has two wonderful daughters named justice and compassion. In using such a metaphor Augustine knew that forgiveness was not a once-off event, it was a process that involved other virtues as well. Jesus teaches a similar lesson in today's Gospel, where he uses the image of the King settling his debts. Because the King is just, compassionate and forgiving, he rightly expects that, in turn, his steward will be so as well.

It's easy to be forgiving in the big picture. We can preach strongly about war, peace and reconciliation. It's quite another to forgive those closest to us. Sometimes the hardest place to be compassionate and just is our own home. If we are not speaking to a husband, wife, child, parent, sibling or friend then today's Gospel has a strong challenge right where we live.

Part of the problem is that we could have accepted the film *Love Story*'s motto, 'Love means never having to say you're sorry'. This idea is many things, but it's not Christian. For followers of Jesus the exact opposite is true. We seek opportunities to forgive and ask for forgiveness.

Jesus doesn't tell us that forgiveness is easy, just necessary. To forgive someone in our family, our workplace, our circle of friends or in our Church is not to pretend that a sinful situation did not occur, but to face it head on and demand justice with compassion.

For when we stand before God with the weakness and sinfulness of our own life, God will not settle old scores, take revenge and exact retribution. Rather God will be perfectly just and completely compassionate. When we choose forgiveness over revenge, and love over hate we begin to glimpse God's creative goodness coming to perfection in us, because forgiveness is a participation in the very heart of God.