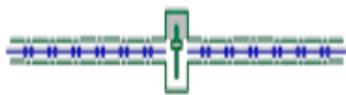


St Catherine Labouré Gymea Parish

The Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year C

29/30 January 2022



"Pray, hope and don't worry. Worry is useless...Prayer is the best weapon we have; it is the key to God's heart."
St Padre Pio



Dear Parishioners, To those of you who have been away in January for a well-earned rest, welcome back! It was lovely during the past week to touch base with several families who took the opportunity to "escape" Sydney after years of Covid-confinement. The teachers and students at our wonderful parish school are no doubt rearing to go (we hope) with classes recommencing this week. I'm much looking forward to being able to spend time getting to know the teachers and parents a bit better during the year ahead. If you, yourselves, have children at the school, please consider it your own personal mission to help evangelise many of the families who, for whatever reason, are distant from the practice of their faith. The best way to evangelise is through friendship...

One thing I am convinced of (and have been repeating) is that, despite the obvious difficulties, God is presenting us and this parish with new opportunities to develop our apostolic mission and spiritual growth. Pope John Paul II famously spoke of his belief in a "new springtime" for the Church and history reminds us that such "springtimes" often emerge when we least expect it. Over Christmas, I published a list of new pastoral ventures that will be introduced over the coming year including monthly talks from guest speakers, philosophy and theology classes, a monthly men's breakfast, a mothers' prayer group, coffee mornings, wine and cheese evenings, a women's retreat, and the inaugural "Labouré Lecture and Parish Dinner". Much of the inspiration for these ventures have come from parishioners. Nevertheless, in order to get a deeper insight into 'where people are at', 'what parishioners want', and 'what direction to focus on', I am intending to launch a parish census/survey to garner feedback. This will be launched in the lead up to the Lenten season in collaboration with a new Pastoral Council. More details to come!

Please make a point of praying daily for the evangelisation of Gymea! God bless you! Fr Greg

In your charity, please pray for our recently deceased;

Peter Wild, Trevor Gittoes, John Gough, Joseph 'Joe' Hansel, Judith King, Carmel Farnham, Baby Atticus, Leoni Bashall, Mary Fitzgerald, Geoffrey Jones, Elaine Matthews, Kevin Fennell, Kevin Cannon, Frank Humphries.

We remember those whose Anniversaries we commemorate at this time:

Ivan Bosnjak, Bernadina Carlino, Nancy Casey, Mary Cassidy, Ken Connolly, Roy & Mary Esplin, Imelda Guariano, Bill Godfrey, Anna & Joe Natoli, Brian Parker, Arthur Ray, Tom Richards, Harry & Vonnie Schutes, John Vincent Sidgreaves, Silvano Venier, Wilhelm 'Willy' Von Herzog, Deceased Members of the Friendship Club, The Holy Souls.

We pray for all the sick of our Parish Community and their carers. Especially:

Catherine Bassiuoni, Gerry Banister, Jean Bell, Pamela Buckley, Patricia Butler, Hugh Casey, Elaine Coughlan, Patricia Cutcliffe, Alice Elliott, Dorothy Fraser-Bell, Jeff Greenaway, Patricia Gordon, Maree Hinton, Gloria Klein, Laurence McDonnell, Doug Maybon, Evie Morgan, Anthony Morris, Julia Quach, Marie Rayner, Tony Ryan, Evelyn Spiteri, Yin Kwan Tsang, Lindy Webb, Marie & Norm Whittaker, Gary Wood.

CATECHIST SUNDAY: I was really excited by the response from parishioners to the call for new catechists last week. Thank you very much to all those who stepped forward. This Sunday is nominated by the Archdiocese as “Catechist Sunday”. It is an opportunity to pray for the wonderful heroes and heroines who so generously bring Jesus Christ and the Catholic faith to children in our State Schools. But it is also an opportunity for each of us to consider what we, ourselves, are doing to bring Jesus Christ and the Catholic faith to others. If we are unable to think of anything too significant, then perhaps becoming a catechist might be one possible way to respond to our baptismal mission to “go out to all the world and tell the good news”. Please pray about this. Do not be afraid! You will be given every assistance and the commitment is only 30 minutes of teaching time per week. Please contact Karen Varga or myself (Fr Greg) if you are even remotely interested in becoming a catechist or a helper. Thank you!

MEN’S BREAKFAST & FAITH FORMATION: I am delighted to announce the commencement of what I hope will be the first of many new initiatives in our parish for 2022 – a monthly men’s breakfast with formation in the Scriptures and Tradition of the Church. The inaugural gathering will take place on Saturday February 19th following the 9.15am Mass. More details to come in the following weeks. Mark your calendars now!

NEW CENACLE PRAYER GROUP: I am also delighted to announce the establishment of a new Cenacle prayer group. At the first meeting last Tuesday, there were nine new members and one or two people joined via Zoom. My thanks to Sue De’Costa for taking the initiative to start this. The Cenacle will continue to meet every Tuesday morning following after the rosary, which commences immediately after the 9.15am Mass. It is a wonderful chance to pray some special prayers with others; asking, in particular, for Our Lady’s powerful intercession. A praying parish is a thriving parish!

LENTEN GROUP(S): Every year, the Archdiocese publishes a Lenten Companion. In some parishes, the practice is for groups to gather each week during Lent for prayer and discussion using the Companion. If you would like to host a group here at the parish or at your home, please get in touch. The discussion can be very informal. I will order as many copies as necessary.

PARISH CENSUS: To facilitate feedback, encourage greater involvement, and to increase connectivity a census form will be distributed to parishioners in the lead up to the Lenten Season. Any thoughts/suggestions/feedback in preparation for this would be welcome.

NEW SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM: Please be advised that, in collaboration with a number of parishioners, I am composing a new “parish-based” sacramental program. A new aspect to this program will be to bring students from both our parish school of St Cath’s and the State Schools in our area together. The program will also offer formation for the parents, many of whom have had little chance for formal catechesis. It is my hope that this might be a better way to help families reconnect to the faith/parish and to understand why it’s truly the greatest gift to be Catholic. Persuasion is always stronger and more enduring than force or coercion. Further details will be provided to parishioners over the coming weeks and I would welcome your feedback.

TRAINING OF NEW ACOLYTES: I am delighted that a number of individuals have indicated a desire to serve as future acolytes at Mass. I would like to host a training session for new Acolytes NEXT Saturday, 5 February from 10:30 am – 11:30 am.

If you have expressed interest in the past, please let the Parish Office know if you are still interested in getting involved.

TRAINING OF NEW READERS: I am delighted that a number of individuals have indicated a desire to serve as future readers at Mass. I would like to host a training session for new readers THIS Sunday, 30 January from 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm. It’s not too late to get involved!

KEEPING CONNECTED: It is undoubtable and understandable that many people will be a little anxious about leaving their homes with the surge in Covid-19 infections. If you notice that someone has been away from Mass, perhaps you might think of dropping a parish bulletin through their letter box or sending a message to let them know you remembered them at Mass. Each and every one of us has a role to play in spreading the faith in Gynea and beyond. If you have any ideas on this score, I would be delighted to hear them!

ALTAR SERVERS: Another encouraging sign is that approximately ten children have (with their parents' permission) already expressed a desire to serve at Sunday Masses. I am sure this number will increase once the opportunity is promoted through our school. I would like to invite all of our parish children/young adults (with their parents permission) who have already received their First Holy Communion to consider becoming altar servers at our Sunday Masses. Training, of course, will be provided and I would be very appreciative if some of the parents would be involved. My hope would be that this might also assist in founding a new youth group/means for faith formation for our younger children. I anticipate training to take place in mid-to-late February. It would be wonderful to have a team of servers for all our Holy Week/Easter Liturgies.

BONNIE VIEW DEVELOPMENT: It is not too late to have your say. Please put your feedback forms in the box at the back of the Church or email the parish office at your convenience.

REFUGEES FROM AFGHANISTAN: I have had further communication with the local council about supporting refugees from Afghanistan. Besides offering our community car to help transport them to English classes across Sydney, I have also offered to support them with low-cost housing/appliances/furniture. If you think you might have something useful to pass on, please can you send a photo of the item to the parish office email and we will then forward it on to our contact at the Council. Thank you!

NEW ROSTERS: Rosters for Altar Society and the Cleaning Teams are available on the website, for collection from the Sacristy, or they can contact Grahame to email them a copy. Thank you for your service to our parish.

FUNERAL FOR PETER WILD: Will take place here at St Cath's on Tuesday 8th February at 11:30am.

FROM THE CATECHISM: [1776](#) "Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment. . . . For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God. . . . His conscience is man's most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths."

CORPORAL AND SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY: I would like to ask the members of the committee to meet on Thursday, 17 February to begin plan for activities in 2022.

CONFESSIONS: In addition to the listed times, confessions are available before and after every Weekday Mass (including Saturdays). Feel free to approach me at any time. I usually sit to the right of the altar during Adoration. I am delighted by the good number of people who come to this wonderful sacrament in our parish.

CENACLE PRAYER GROUP: Meets every Tuesday after the rosary that immediately follows the 9.15am Mass.

FRIENDSHIP CLUB: Is a marvellous asset to our Parish. The Club provides a fun and faith-filled forum for senior members of our parish/local community to form new (and sustain old) friendships. New members are always welcome!

Email: friendshipclub@stcaths.org.au

LEGION OF MARY: Meets every Thursday morning at 10 am (in the Parish conference room) .

Email: legionofmarygymea@stcaths.org.au

MEDJUGORE PRAYER GROUP: Did you know we have a wonderful group of faith-filled parishioners who gather each Thursday evening at 6pm in our church to say the rosary and some special prayers? Why not join them? Everyone is welcome! The next prayer meeting will take place on the Thursday, 20 January. **Email:** medjugorjprayegroup@stcaths.org.au

FACEBOOK PAGE: Remember to like our Facebook Page! I am very grateful to one of our younger parishioners who is running this now.

<https://m.facebook.com/St-Catherine-Labour%C3%A9-Parish-Gymea-108678858244000/> You can also find recordings of homilies and talks on our YouTube Page: *Just search for "Gymea Catholic Church" on You tube*

COVID REGULATIONS: Please be advised that masks are still mandated indoors (including Churches) but there are currently no density limits at Masses. I would ask that we be conscious of the need to make everyone feel safe, especially the elderly and the vulnerable. Please remember to "sign in" as per usual. **Fines apply if we breach these health orders.**

