

PARISH AND SHRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

48-50 Princes Highway (PO Box 14) Unanderra NSW 2526

www.unanderraparish.org.au



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EASTER SUNDAY – YEARA – SUNDAY 12 APRIL 2020

Easter Message from Fr Duane

I think it's safe to say that this is the strangest Easter we have celebrated in our lifetimes. "Aub", a beloved parishioner for many decades who has been attending Mass at both West Wollongong and Unanderra, who has graciously allowed me to quote him from a recent phone call, said of his generation – "we got through World War 2, but this is worse – at least then we knew who the enemy was, now we don't really know or understand the enemy." But then he went on – "we got through the war as better people for it. And I hope that we, and especially the younger generation today, will get through all this as better people because of it".

These were powerful words for me to hear, and hopefully for all of you. Times of difficulty do have a unique power to make us better, stronger, wiser and more loving people. I have found this in my own life – the most difficult seasons of life have been the times that I've grown the most as a person, in ways I didn't realize I needed to grow – especially spiritually. These times can help us to slow down and reflect on what matters most in life; they can lead us into a deeper connection with one another; and they can lead us into a deeper connection with God, as we realize more deeply that which we can so easily forget in the good times - how much we need Him.

It has been wonderful for me to hear from a number of young families that they are noticing many blessings out of the current crisis. As the hustle and bustle of modern life has been taken away, they have found quality time to spend with each other like never before. We can find more time to deepen our relationships with God, with each other, and even with ourselves, as we stop and reflect on our own hearts, on our own priorities, on the trajectories our own lives are taking.

And yet we will not automatically become better people because of times of struggle. If we choose we could also turn away from God, and from others, during difficult times; we could become bitter, resentful, and seek only to look after ourselves even at the expense of others. It is up to each one of us how we respond.

This Easter, as we gratefully remember and celebrate our God who willingly suffered for us and who kept loving all people even from the cross, let's remember that he has entered into darker times than these and conquered them with his light. And let's remember that this is how our God always works! Right now, throughout the world, and throughout the Church he is bringing good out of evil, light out of darkness, in countless ways. May we be open to the Spirit of the risen Christ during these times. Though we don't fully understand God's plans and purposes in all of this, we do know that the risen Christ is with us, that he is bringing good out of all of this, and that he is constantly working within our own minds and hearts seeking to make us better people because of these times.

THANK YOU to so many people who have stepped up in so many ways to keep building up our Parish communities. The generosity of so many people has been bringing about many blessings for our Parishes even while we grieve the loss of gathering physically for Sunday Mass. Thank you for your generous response to our new Corona ministries; for those who helped get the Facebook pages and groups going and participating in that new way of connecting with each other and inviting others to join; to our secretaries Sue and Magda for their extra admin work with the bulletins and the expanding email list; for the generosity of those who have made live streaming possible starting this Easter Sunday – including our seminarian Sinh Le, who is back with me at West Wollongong since the seminary has closed due to lockdown measures and has been a wonderful help in many ways already. And thank you all for your everyday kindness in your messages and phone calls to each other, to your neighbours, and even to your priest! In all of these ways and more we have seen the Spirit of the Risen Lord at work, shining his light into the darkness!

Fr Duane Fernandez - Parish Priest

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Recently Deceased

Bernie MORRIS

Anniversaries

Mary GRECKO Fr Leo STEVENS Mary CLIFFORD

Uncle Vivian MOLONEY Ronald William BALL

CURRENT PARISH OFFICE DAYS/HOURS

The Parish Office staff are currently working limited days/hours — please call 4271 1068 or email unanderra@dow.org.au only (please do not visit). Magda is working on Mondays and Thursdays, and Sue is working from home on Fridays only.

— KEEPING THE LORD'S DAY HOLY —

OUR SUNDAY MASS WILL BE LIVE STREAMED STARTING EASTER!

Join Fr Duane and Seminarian Sinh Le for Sunday Mass live streamed from St Therese Church at the St Therese Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/St-Therese-West-Wollongong-Parish-110018837306434/> and note we will also link to it at the Immaculate Conception Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Immaculate-Conception-Unanderra-Parish-102440924742769/> For those without Facebook, you can still view it through this link <https://www.sttherese.com.au/icat>

This Mass will be streamed on **EASTER SUNDAY 12 APRIL at 9AM.**

Subsequently, since most other streamed Masses take place on a Sunday morning, Fr Duane and Sinh will be streaming their **Masses at 5pm - EVERY SUNDAY STARTING 19 APRIL.**

This is the perfect time to be reminded of the power of Sundays—this day on which Jesus rose from the dead, the most important event in human history, is the day that Christians have gathered together for prayer, Scripture and the Eucharist, since the time of the Apostles. This is the day that the Lord has made sacred, a day of rest and reflection, a day of gratitude, a day of communion with God and with one another. The Sacrament of the Eucharist is the greatest sign and source of this communion, and while we grieve the loss of this opportunity, the Church has always taught that when attending Mass is not physically possible, we can be assured of the renewed and deepened presence of Christ in our hearts by making an act of Spiritual Communion. There are many prayers of spiritual communion, but this seems the most popular:

Prayer of "Spiritual Communion", given to us by St Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787):

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.

HOLY WEEK MASSES AND SERVICES

With Bishop Brian at www.facebook.com/WollongongCatholic or www.dow.org.au

Good Friday 10 April:

- Stations of the Cross: 10am
- The Passion of the Lord: 3pm

Easter Vigil Mass 11 April: 7pm

With Fr Duane and Sinh Le (see links above):

Easter Sunday Mass 12 April: 9am

PASTORAL NEEDS

For any pastoral needs,

please contact

Fr Duane on

0414 626 357

or duane.fernandez@dow.org.au

SPIRITUAL RESOURCES

For daily Masses, parishioners throughout the Diocese are encouraged to access other home worship resources at:

<https://www.dow.org.au/covid-19/daily-online-masses-and-spiritual-resources/>

For those without internet:

- Mass for You At Home is available across the Ten Network on Sundays at 6am
- Channel 7 will televise the Good Friday service and Easter Sunday Mass at 10.30am with Archbishop Anthony Fisher at St Mary's Cathedral



STAYING CONNECTED WITH GOD AND EACH OTHER

- Encourage others to join our emailing list by contacting unanderra@dow.org.au and ask to be added to the list.
- Join our new Facebook pages: "Immaculate Conception Unanderra Parish" and "St Therese West Wollongong Parish" - tell others too!



A MESSAGE FROM ST VINNIES

Due to the latest restrictions imposed by the Government, Unanderra Conference have now ceased all service calls.

The Coniston Welfare Centre will be available for phone calls between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday (4228 9355)

The welfare centre will ask that if the person only requires food support, that they can go to the centre for a hot meal, frozen takeaway meal or small quantity of non-perishable food for overnight.

Clothing and material assistance will be limited to emergency items only and through the welfare centre.

Unfortunately, assistance for electricity and phone accounts is not available at this time due to the necessity for face-to-face interviews.



PLANNED GIVING

Some have asked how they can continue to donate to the Parish, in the absence of collections at Mass. Wollongong Diocese has provided the following link to facilitate any contributions that people still wish to make, in the absence of collections at Mass, and explains where the money goes.

If you wish to contribute, please go to:

www.dow.org.au/plannedgiving/

— please also inform our Parish for accounting purposes (unanderra@dow.org.au)



The Church is the People of God



PASTORAL STATEMENT BY BISHOP BRIAN MASCORD

Updated parish directives as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) - 7 April 2020

To my Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In response to the evolving COVID-19 situation, the NSW Government has announced a number of new changes that affect our faith communities.

Funerals:

The changes allow for **10 mourners** at funerals. Prior to this change, the 10 funeral attendees included the celebrant and funeral directors. Funeral Directors and celebrants will now be *excluded* from the 10 mourner limit previously imposed. Normal physical distancing rules will still apply.

Again I ask you to join me in prayer for our diocese during this time: *God of Love, we the people of the Diocese of Wollongong turn to you with prayerful hearts and with confidence in your loving presence among us now and in every moment of our lives. We stand before you as people of hope, trusting in your care and protection. May we be comforted by your love in these anxious times.*

Yours in Christ

Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD
Bishop of Wollongong

RECONCILIATION

*** Due to the current pandemic, all churches are now closed, even for private prayer, and reconciliation has been suspended. Bishop Brian has stated in his most recent directive: *"The Sacrament of Confession will be suspended during this time of pandemic. Physical and moral impossibility excuses a person from confession, in which case reconciliation may be attained by other means, for example an act of perfect contrition. (Canon 960). An act of perfect contrition can be made by saying these or similar words: 'My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. I should love you above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin'."* ***

A VOCATION VIEW

Easter Sunday - He is Risen! Salvation has been won; the power of death is broken.

Be inspired by Christ's triumph over death that you might be a confident witness of His Resurrection. (Matthew 28:6-7)

If you want to talk about your discernment, please contact

the Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Duane Fernandez, at vocations@dow.org.au

WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL VISITS



Wollongong Private and Public Hospitals

Fr George Condookala will be available for visits to the sick. He can be contacted on **0475 815 506**.

THE JOURNEY CATHOLIC RADIO PROGRAMME - AIRS SUNDAY 12 APRIL 2020 -

Listen in this week for Easter Sunday on the Journey, when we hear from Bishop Brian Mascord with his Easter message; there's also great music; and God Spots from some of Australia's best Catholic presenters as we celebrate joyfully in isolation, the resurrection of Jesus.



Go to www.jcr.org.au or www.itunes.jcr.org.au

where you can listen any time and subscribe to weekly shows via email

THE CHOSEN

The Chosen - Great Family Viewing on the Life of Jesus

This new crowd-funded series on the life of Jesus is receiving wide acclaim around the world and is well worth a look, especially during holy week. It is a high-quality production that explores the life of Jesus through the eyes of those around Him.

Download 'The Chosen' app for various devices or watch for free on YouTube. Go to: <https://studios.vidangel.com/the-chosen>

PRAYER - 7PM EVERY EVENING

A Call to commit to Prayer during the Pandemic every evening at 7pm

The faithful across the Diocese of Wollongong are urged to join with other members of the National Council of Churches, so that all Christians pray at 7pm every night through until Easter Sunday during the Pandemic crisis.



PRAYING FOR OUR WORLD, AMIDST COVID-19:

Gracious God,

We give thanks anew for your providence and presence.

We prayerfully seek your grace, amidst COVID-19 here and overseas.

We pray for those in need of healing.

We pray for your peace with those who are anxious or grieving.

We pray you will continue to strengthen and sustain all those who are serving in response.

We pray for your Holy Spirit's discernment amidst the many choices and decisions facing our national, community and medical leaders.

We pray we each might see quickly what more we can do to help those who are vulnerable.

This prayer for our nation in the family of nations, with all that is on our hearts, we gather now and pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PROJECT COMPASSION

Thank you for supporting us this year as we demonstrate how love and compassion for our global community can transform lives.



You will be helping to empower the world's most vulnerable communities to grow stronger and share their strengths with their communities to lift themselves out of poverty.

When we Go Further Together in love and compassion, the whole world thrives.

Thank you for supporting Caritas Australia's Project Compassion 2020 Lenten appeal.

www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion

1800 024 413

SUNDAY 12 APRIL 2020 — EASTER SUNDAY (YEAR A)

First Reading — Acts 10:34, 37-43 — *We have eaten and drunk with him after his resurrection from the dead.*

Peter addressed Cornelius and his household: 'You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea; about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil. Now I, and those with me, can witness to everything he did throughout the countryside of Judaea and in Jerusalem itself: and also to the fact that they killed him by hanging him on a tree, yet three days afterwards God raised him to life and allowed him to be seen, not by the whole people but only by certain witnesses God had chosen beforehand. Now we are those witnesses – we have eaten and drunk with him after his resurrection from the dead – and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people and to tell them that God has appointed him to judge everyone, alive or dead. It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name.'

Responsorial Psalm — *This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.*

1. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his love has no end.
Let the sons of Israel say:
'His love has no end.' R.
2. The Lord's right hand has triumphed;
his right hand raised me up.
I shall not die, I shall live
and recount his deeds. R.
3. The stone which the builders rejected
has become the corner stone.
This is the work of the Lord,
a marvel in our eyes. R.



Second Reading — Colossians 3:1-4 — *Look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is.*

Since you have been brought back to true life with Christ, you must look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand. Let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things that are on the earth, because you have died, and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ is revealed – and he is your life – you too will be revealed in all your glory with him.

Gospel Acclamation — 1 Corinthians 5:7-8

Alleluia, alleluia! Christ has become our paschal sacrifice; let us feast with joy in the Lord. Alleluia!

Gospel — John 20:1-9 — *The teaching of scripture is that he must rise from the dead.*

It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb' she said 'and we don't know where they have put him.'

So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They ran together, but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first; he bent down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in. Simon Peter who was following now came up, went right into the tomb, saw the linen cloths on the ground, and also the cloth that had been over his head; this was not with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed. Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture, that he must rise from the dead.