

## BELOVED CHURCH MEMBERS

30th Sunday in Ordinary time ~ 25 October 2020

### CHURCH 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

#### WELCOME & THANK YOU TO FR BERNIE

This weekend we welcome back Fr Bernie Costigan, beloved parish priest of our parish community for 21 years, before retiring in mid-2011.

Fr Bernie concelebrates at all Masses this weekend on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the blessing of our current church of St Joseph's. Thank you, Fr Bernie, for your inspiration and humility.

Parish speakers for the celebration are:

- Corry at Saturday 6pm Mass
- Jim at Sunday 7.30am Mass
- and Mark at Sunday 9.30am Mass

#### PREP YEAR AT ST. JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

On Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October, the actual anniversary day, Prep Year from St Joseph's School were invited to learn and pray.

Each of the four Prep classes in turn came inside the church. A candle was lit for their class and families, and we prayed together a prayer to Jesus.

The children learnt about the church design and the ways and occasions of prayer in the church.

They learnt about the baptismal font for children and the font for adults.

They remembered when they were sung and welcomed into the church by the older children early in the year.

They listened as *The Table of the Eucharist* and *The Table of the Word* were highlighted.

They also learnt about the meaning of recent gifts to the church, including

- the cross in the Sanctuary
- the painting of the girl from South Sudan
- the fossilized rock from Blackall and
- the Last Supper Icon from Murhaf Obeid

## ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH DESIGN – A EXPLANATION

The design of the church building helps us to gather together to praise God.  
The design helps us to gather as a community of faith.  
The sanctuary shape reminds us of a boat, on a journey together.  
The exterior western cross reminds us that we are to follow Jesus into the world.  
The sail tower above the roof reminds us of the Spirit moving us.  
The western church windows allow us to see some of God's wonderful creation,  
with the mountain range, sky and clouds, trees and life.  
We give praise to God.

## LOVE

In life we can be tempted to miss the wonder of God's love.  
We can be tempted to try to limit and control God.  
Whereas God really invites us into the depth of loving in its many dimensions.  
The wonder. The intimacy. The freedom. Within the loving of God.  
Entering into the love of God. Gifted by God.

In today's Gospel, our faith and the meaning of our lives  
centre on the love of God and the love of neighbour.

## GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 22:34-40

We hear the question to Jesus and his reply.

*"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"*

*He said to him,*

***"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
and with all your soul, and with all your mind."***

***This is the greatest and first commandment.***

***And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."***

***On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."***

We ponder the incredible depth of loving with all our heart, soul and mind.

"As St Bernard reminded us, *"amore est in via",  
love is always on the way, love is always journeying."*

[Pope Francis 27th May 2016]

## ROMANS 8:38-39

St Paul reminds us that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

*'For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels,  
nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,  
nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,  
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.'*

## BELOVED

At last weekend's Masses at the *sign of peace*,  
we were invited to turn to each other  
and call each other *'beloved'*.

Let us explore together why we would call each other *'beloved'*.

Called by Jesus to love,  
the leaders of some early Christian communities  
in Asia and Europe during the New Testament period,  
spoke of the beloved.

Even though cultures varied in the Middle East, Turkey, Greece and Italy,  
the Christian communities in those cultures  
used the word *'beloved'* of each other.

They knew that the Father called Jesus *'My Son, the 'Beloved'*.  
They knew that in the Old Testament sacred writing of the Song of Songs,  
*'beloved'* had a special meaning.

Over the week ahead we are invited to reflect  
on these quotes below from the New Testament Letters.  
We read slowly some of the ways they called each other *'beloved'*.

What an incredible difference it makes to a Christian community,  
when the genuine love of God and neighbour  
is the very centre of their lives,  
and they recognize each other as *'beloved'* of God.

#### EXAMPLES OF BEING CALLED 'BELOVED' IN THE NEW TESTAMENT LETTERS

##### **Romans 1.7:**

*'To all God's beloved in Rome'*

Romans 16.5:

*'Greet also the church in their house.*

*Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ.'*

Romans 16.8:

*'Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.'*

Romans 16.9:

*'Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys.'*

Romans 16.12:

*'Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord.'*

##### **1 Corinthians 4.17:**

*'For this reason I sent you Timothy,  
who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord'*

1 Corinthians 15.58:

*'Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable,  
always excelling in the work of the Lord'*

##### **2 Corinthians 7.1:**

*'we have these promises, beloved'*

2 Corinthians 12.19:

*'Everything we do, beloved, is for the sake of building you up.'*

**Ephesians 1.6:**

*to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.*

**Ephesians 5.1:**

*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children,*

**Philippians 1.12:**

*I want you to know, beloved, that what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel'*

**Philippians 4.1:**

*Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.*

**Philippians 4.8:**

*Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.'*

**Colossians 1.7:**

*'This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow-servant.'*

**Colossians 3.12:**

*'As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.'*

**Colossians 4.7:**

*'Tychicus will tell you all the news about me; he is a beloved brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow-servant in the Lord.'*

**Colossians 4.9:**

*'he is coming with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.'*

**Colossians 4.14:**

*'Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you.'*

**1 Thessalonians 1.4:**

*'For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you'*

**1 Thessalonians 4.10:**

*'and indeed you do love all the brothers and sisters throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, beloved, to do so more and more'*

**1 Thessalonians 5.25:**

*'Beloved, pray for us.'*

**2 Thessalonians 2.13:**

*'But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord'*

**1 Timothy 6.2:**

*'those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved. ' Teach and urge these duties.*

**2 Timothy 1.2:**

*'To Timothy, my beloved child:  
Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.'*

**Philemon 1.16:**

*'no longer as a slave but as more than a slave, a beloved brother'*

**James 1.16:**

*'Do not be deceived, my beloved. '*

**James 1.19:**

*'You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen,  
slow to speak, slow to anger;'*

**1 Peter 4.12:**

*'Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal  
that is taking place among you to test you,  
as though something strange were happening to you.'*

**2 Peter 3.1:**

*'This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you;'*

**2 Peter 3.8:**

*'But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day  
is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day.'*

**2 Peter 3.14:**

*'Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things,  
strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish;'*

**2 Peter 3.15:**

*'So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom '*

**1 John 3.2:**

*'Beloved, we are God's children now;  
what we will be has not yet been revealed.  
What we do know is this: when he is revealed,  
we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.'*

**1 John 4.7:**

*'Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God;  
everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.'*

**1 John 4.11:**

*'Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.'*

**3 John 1.1:**

*The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.*

**3 John 1.2:**

*'Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health,  
just as it is well with your soul.'*

3 John 1.5:

*'Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the friends, even though they are strangers to you;'*

3 John 1.11:

*'Beloved, do not imitate what is evil but imitate what is good.'*

**Jude 1.1:**

*'Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are called, who are beloved in God the Father and kept safe for Jesus Christ'*

#### MESSAGE OF HISTORY & VISION

Thank you to Corry, Jim and Mark for sharing the history and vision this weekend.

We thank God today for the inspiration and work by Fr Bernie and parish members and architects involved over twenty years ago, in designing St Joseph's Church as an open, inviting and missionary church, praising God for creation and the love that energizes us as *'beloved'*.

What an incredible difference it makes to Christian communities, when a genuine love of God and neighbour is the very centre of their lives, and they recognise each other as *'beloved'* of God.

Let us pray.

Fr Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/102520.cfm>

