



PARISH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION, NORTH WODEN

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28-29 March 2020, Fifth Sunday in Lent, Year A

- **WEEKDAY AND WEEKEND MASSES** are suspended until further notice due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Daily Mass and assistance with prayerful reflection can be accessed online at www.catholicvoice.org.au.
- **All churches are closed. RECONCILIATION / CONFESSION** will be offered under the portico of Holy Trinity, 5 – 5.30pm, Saturday. **BAPTISMS** only in ‘danger of death’. **WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS** are limited to five (5) and (10) respectively. **ANOINTING OF THE SICK** is according to strict protocols.
- **AGED CARE HOMES AND HOUSEBOUND:** Holy Communion is not being taken to the aged and housebound and they have been so notified.
- **SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMMES:** First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation have been cancelled until further notice.

MAY THE DECEASED REST IN PEACE AND RISE IN EASTER GLORY

Recently Deceased: Keith Mc Laughlin, Victims of Corona virus, Hilda Quinones, Gloria Tin, Joyce Ryan, Maureen Boyle, Don Furner, Richard Arnel, Rod Frazer, Mary-Anne McGrath, Patsy Edwards, Gary Pertzell, Nance Kenny, Dorothy Hennessy, Victims of the bushfires, Victims of the Corona virus, Kobe Bryant, Eric Fitzsimmons, Margaret Yvanovich, Policarpio Barawid, Nicholas De Grave, Ilario Ciacio, Yolanda Viovicente (mother of Fr Loi PP North Belconnen), Peter Macnicol.

Anniversaries of Death: John Frawley, Doris Falzon and Falzon family members, Hartung and Marlow family members, Richard Pugh, Rosario Suazo, Gary Woods, Jack Perry, George Pugh, Desmond Lilley, Sylvia Cronin, Policarpio Barawid.

MAY THE SICK BE COMFORTED BY OUR PRAYERS

Keith McLaughlin, Cecil Wagstaff, Carol Wightman, those afflicted with Corona virus, Bella Davison, Leah Yaxley, John Kololo, Frederick Schinkel, Maree Peters, Witlock family, Timothy Francis Roberts, Rosa B Nguyen, Lourdes A Bautista, David Sandground, Kathleen Stuart, Dick Barry, Luke Ward, Eric Reiher, John Vincent, David Parker, Mark Shepherd, Violet Webster, Catherine Peachey, Lucy Duncan, Rod Duncan, Edith Schumann, Kevin Cains, Stephen Evans, Dermott Cummins.

Nurturing Faith in Response to COVID-19

We live in unprecedented times, at least for us, mindful that 15,000 Australians and 50 million plus worldwide died in the ‘Spanish’ flu epidemic of 1918-1919. As in all things, God is with us. We are reminded of this in our First Reading where the prophet Ezekiel speaks of new life emerging from ‘dry bones’. Again, in our Second Reading from Romans and in these times of isolation and ‘social distancing’, we are invited to choose between a self-centredness resulting in death (that choice being identified analogously with ‘flesh’ or what is passing) or

an openness to the Spirit and new life in Christ (that choice being identified with 'spirit' or what endures). **Where and how is God calling me to respond?**

These scriptural cum theological reflections take on a particularly existential character in our Gospel from John. In leaving the safety of Galilee and returning to the outskirts of Jerusalem where the religious authorities seek his demise, Jesus is putting his own life at risk. That journey is of course symbolic of the journey he undertook in becoming one with us in leaving heaven and taking flesh, as we celebrated at Christmas, and which moves to a high point in Jerusalem as we will journey through in Holy Week-Easter. As then so now, the grieving Martha represents all who seek God's presence when not coping, *"If you had been here, . . ."* Jesus answers, ***"I am the resurrection and the life"***. He is not just about the promise of future fulfilment beyond death. ***"Faith in Jesus and living in that faith communicates a share here and now in the eternal life that is the very life of God. The whole point of Jesus' mission from the Father is to communicate life in this exalted sense to human beings (John 1:4, 12-13; 10:10b, 28)"*** *Brendan Byrne SJ*. God is with us, here and now. As to Martha, so to us the question: ***"Do you believe this?"*** Jesus restores the dead Lazarus to life but he does so not in an end in itself – Lazarus, like all of us, will die eventually - but as a sign of his power over all that restricts us, even death. This power, this good news will be fully manifest in his own death and resurrection. *"Lazarus stands in for each of us. Each of us is the friend 'whom Jesus loved', the one for whom he left his 'safe country' in order to bring from (eternal) death at the cost of his own life"* (Byrne). Poignantly, we note that as with his friend Lazarus, Jesus weeps with us in our grief. **Might our sensitivity to one another, especially to those in particular need in these times of separation, see us be a sign of 'God-with-us'.** Fr John

Prayer for These Times

Eternal God, in wisdom and love you created and sustain us.

We seek your wisdom, guidance and reassurance in these times of dislocation.

Bless the efforts of those limiting the spread of the corona virus and those searching for a vaccine.

Sustain those recovering from devastating bushfires.

Thank you for recent rains and enliven our efforts to address climate change.

In your mercy, renew your people.

In your providence, renew the face of the earth.

Mary, Help of Christians – Pray for us.

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop – Pray for us.

Prayer Circle Support: Cathy Harris, 6281 2574.

Planned Giving and Loose Collection: \$192 (mindful of the very much reduced numbers last week)

Readings for Passion / Palm Sunday: Ish 50:4-7; Phil 2:6-11; Matt 26:14 – 27:66