



St Paul Apostle Catholic Community

One Family

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First Sunday of LENT Year B, 17-18 February, 2024

Discovering the God of mercy and compassion

Samantha Whittaker, 49, is married with a teenage daughter. On top of entering the Catholic Church, she is also in the process of making the transition from a career as a mental health practitioner to becoming a baker.

She grew up to paint a negative and almost spiritually scarring image of God.

‘God was someone who was to be feared and obeyed,’ she explains. ‘If you said or did the wrong thing, or acted the wrong way, you were always in danger of hell. The God I knew was angry.’

However, even within this environment, Samantha recognised the ways God was reaching out to her in love.

‘As a child, I would get up early and watch Mass for You at Home, drawn by the strange sense of peace I would always feel watching the Mass—especially when the priest would hold up the host. But it was during my years at Catholic girls’ school that I really began to question my faith and beliefs and wonder if there was something more,’ she says.

A clear divergence appeared between the God she had been taught to fear and the God she was now learning about afresh in school.

‘I could not make sense of the angry and vengeful God I grew up with and the loving, compassionate Father I was beginning to learn about at school. I had questions and I was searching for answers.’

Eventually, however, as the demands of life took over, especially with school, university and becoming a mother, she let her pursuit of the truth about God fall away.

Twenty-five years later, when a close member of Samantha’s family was diagnosed with a mental illness, she found herself ‘heartbroken’ and struggling with the pain of it all. She was struggling especially with the indifference and judgment she had experienced when she sought support from her Christian community—even to the point of being blamed for the presence of mental illness in her family.

It was when a Catholic acquaintance told her, ‘Mental illness is no one’s fault. The Catholic Church believes in kindness and compassion, not judgment,’ that something clicked for her.

‘I remembered my own Catholic schooling, my years watching Mass for You at Home and the peace that I had found at the Catholic Church,’ she says. ‘I started to seriously look into Catholicism for answers. Far from being the judgmental, angry and critical God I had thought him to be, I discovered again the God of my childhood and teenage years—the God of all compassion, mercy and kindness.’

‘And instead of the mindless, shallow, legalistic faith I had been taught that Catholicism was, I discovered a beautiful, rich and deep faith built on a solid line of apostolic succession from Christ himself, and not based on an individual interpretation of Scripture. For the first time my faith in God made sense. Catholicism made sense to me, and Protestantism did not. And with that, I came back home to the Catholic Church and have not looked back.’

Samantha has loved the RCIA process. ‘[It] has been nothing short of amazing! RCIA has been my safe space to ask all my rather embarrassing and ignorant questions about my new Catholic faith. But as my leaders would say, there are no dumb questions.’ Sharing so much of their time and lives has helped the group become ‘friends and family’.

Discovering the Catholic faith has also awakened Samantha’s prayer life.

‘For me, prayer is not about obligation,’ she says. ‘It’s about taking time to connect with my “Dad” before I start each day. If I don’t take time to do this, I simply don’t feel right.’

‘Sometimes, if I have time, this could be a full rosary and a conversation with Jesus afterward. But sometimes it might simply be a breathing prayer and a Glory Be or an Our Father.’

For Samantha, the most important thing is that prayer is sincere and from the heart.

‘I don’t think prayer has to be complex or long—simply heartfelt. Our Father loves to talk to his children, and he loves to spend time with us. RCIA has helped me to understand this, that prayer is about our love relationship with the Father and not some obligation on a to-do list that we need to cross off.’

(Extracted from Melbourne Catholic magazine)

Masses

Monday
9am

Tuesday
9am Mass

Wednesday
7pm Mass

Thursday
9am Mass

Friday
9am Mass

Saturday
6pm Mass

Sunday
9am, 11am, 6pm

Please note Sunday 11am is also
ONLINE

Please click on this link to follow
<https://youtube.com/live/iiX4ZHqW6I?feature=share>

Reconciliation
Saturdays
10am—10.30am

Priests:

Fr Brendan Connell CP (PP)
Fr Luke Bulley CP

Parish Staff:

Gillian Velupillay (Bursar)
Didi Karkas (Secretary)

Passionist Community

Fr Brendan Connell CP
Fr Kevin Hennessy CP
Fr Luke Bulley CP
Dcn Tuan Paul Anh-Do CP

St Paul Apostle North

Primary School
Ph. 9700 6068
Principal
Mrs Mary Lucas

St Paul Apostle South

Primary School
Ph. 9700 3663
Principal
Mr Paul Gleeson

St John’s

Regional College
Ph. 9791 3366
Principal
Mr Tim Hogan

Readings for Next Week

Second Sunday of LENT Year B

First Reading *Genesis 22:1-2. 9-13. 15-18*

God said to Noah and to his sons with him, “As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh

Psalm

Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;

Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord,
and of your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.
According to your steadfast love remember me,
for the sake of your goodness, O Lord!

Good and upright is the Lord;

therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way

Second Reading *Romans 8:31-34*

Beloved,
Christ suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. Baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him

Gospel acclamation

Man does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God

Gospel *Mark 9:2-10*

After Jesus was baptized, the Spirit drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

Questions:

- Q. Have you ever had a really pleasant experience that you wished could keep on going?
- Q. Have you ever had the experience of not wanting to ‘go back down the mountain’?
- Q. Why are the disciples portrayed as struggling to grasp the meaning of what they have seen?

Reflection

The Transfiguration transformed the disciples’ understanding of their Master. Jesus was more than a prophet: he was God’s Son, the Beloved.

Listening to Jesus, as God commands, calls us to recognise something special in everyone

We are committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and vulnerable adults

We will hold Stations of the Cross every **FRIDAY** until the last Friday before Holy Week. Stations start at 7pm in the Church and will be lead by the Passionist Companions Group followed by a cuppa in the gathering space.

If your child is registered for First Reconciliation program this year, please remember that you & your child are required to attend the following sessions:

Our 2024 Sacrament Programs has been finalised. Only those baptised as Catholic can be registered in this program. Registration forms are available on our website or at the Parish Office.

First Family Night	Tuesday, 7th May at 7pm (Followed by 4 classes at parish schools or ASRE)
Last family night	Tuesday, 11th June at 7pm (maybe changed to 18 June)
Mass	Saturday, 22nd June (possibility of 2 sessions)

First Family night	Tuesday, 15th October at 7pm
(Followed by 4 classes at parish Schools or ASRE)	
Last Family Night	Tuesday, 19th November at 7pm
Session with Bishop	To be advised
Masses	Saturday 23 November at 2pm
	(depending on numbers, possibly also at 3.45pm)

is a program which is designed to assist our children who are baptised as Catholic, however attend NON Catholic schools. if you wish to register your child who is baptised Catholic and is at the age for receiving any of the Sacraments, they are required to attend ASRE classes.

Children who are registered into Sacrament of Reconciliation must attend ASRE classes on 27 February & 5 March in the Church from 4pm to 5pm. Parents/ guardian are required to sign them in as they arrived and sign out as you pick up.

A ministry of the Passionist community who offer a space which is an oasis of peace and quiet, away from the busy world. in the surrounds of beautiful gardens, open space and trees. Their first session is on WEDNESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY. The day begins with a cuppa at 9.30am and end at 2pm. This retreat runs at Holy Cross Retreat 207 Serpells Road Templestowe, VIC

For further information about Come Away Days contact Phone - 98466014 or email hcc@passionists.com

SPA sewing group will meet on Tuesday February 20th in the Annexe 1.30pm to 4pm. If you like to sew or would like to learn to sew please join us, meet the other ladies, have a cuppa with us and see whats happening.

SPA Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation group will hold a collection for donations to buy eggs for the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre (ASRC) on the weekend of 24-25th February.

ASRC have sent us a letter thanking us for the support we have given them. Please see their letter on the noticeboard in the side foyer.

The next gathering will be on **SUNDAY, 10 March at 7pm** in the Annexe. Leading the Good Friday Station of the Cross maybe part of the discussion on this night

www.universalis.com

May they rest in peace

Lenten Station of the Cross

Every Friday evening

at 7pm in the Church

Follow by cuppa



St Paul Apostle Parish Endeavour Hills

MINISTERS OF WORD/ COMMENTATORS 2024

	Saturday—6pm	Sunday 9am	Sunday 11am	Sunday 6pm
1st Sunday	Mary Pegram Liz Spear	Virendra Jayetileke Alvita Dias	Anne Astin Rinku Arora	Lakni Weerasekera Diane Heaton
2nd Sunday	Marg Daly Liseby Lapierre	Grace Sudjono Rosa Mitchell	Mars Sota Beth Sota	Charlene Nheu Mignonne Meerwald
3rd Sunday	Liz Flood Trevor Saldanha	Agnes Giam William Round	Diane Allegany Anne Astin	Jeremy Ferrao Reg Young
4th Sunday	Mark Rolfe Karen Rolfe	Mary Moore Jodicee Tenisio	Mary Heaton Yvonne Sherwin	Marg Keating William Roncon
5th Sunday	Marg Daly Trevor Saldanha	Alvita Dias Grace Sudjono Virendra Jayetileke	Jennifer Tanti Diane Allegany	Melissa Krajacic Charlene Nheu

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MINISTERS OF EUCHARIST 2024

	Saturday—6pm	Sunday 9am	Sunday 11am	Sunday 6pm
1st Sunday	Riona Alveyn Lionel Alveyn Lien Phan	Nila Fernando Rosa Mitchell Rohan Wickramasinghe	Vianney Clark Antoniette Gargano Florence Madeira	Anne Kankanige Peng Chee Vonny Lai
2nd Sunday	Gertrude Akom Mima Arena Carmeline Don Paul	Sig Romano Esteban Morales Aloma Pereira	Sharon Normington Jean Jansz Naomi Falo	Jenny Catania Brendan Keating Lakni Weerasekera
3rd Sunday	Celine Quinless Peter Miller Lionel Alveyn	Mary Moore Nila Fernando Rosa Mitchell	Florence Madeira Sai Dilinger Binitha Mathew	Vonny Lai Charlene Nheu Marg Keating
4th Sunday	Bernie Henstridge Lien Phan Celine Quinless	Aloma Pereira Mary Moore Rohan Wickramasinghe	Vianney Clark Stephen Herbert Lauren Rafferty	Swineetha Disanayake Dominique Maclou Neha Cherayath
5th Sunday	Riona Alveyn Carmeline Don Paul Peter Miller	Sig Romano Esteban Morales Nila Fernando	Binitha Mathew Stephen Herbert Sharon Normington	Ayomi Fernandez Peng Chee Jenny Catania