

## ST JOSEPH'S PARISH, URALLA, 24th May 2020

Parish Priest: Msgr Ted Wilkes V.G. Ph. 6778 4070,

Email: [urallaparish@armidale.catholic.org.au](mailto:urallaparish@armidale.catholic.org.au)

**MASSES THIS WEEKEND:** with ten people; Saturdays 6pm & Sundays 8am.

**During the Week:** with ten people; Monday & Wed 6pm, Tues & Thurs 7am, Fri 9.10am.

**PLEASE PRAY FOR ALL OUR SICK RELATIVES AND FRIENDS,** and especially for John Scott, Norma Bower, Owen Ryan, Peter Feitz, Gerard Carlon, Isabella Post, Maureen Morris, Fr John Carey, John & Kay Sullivan, Maureen Kratz, Elsa McRae, Tom Shortis, Anne Leask, Joe and Marie O'Brien, Gerard Sleba, and Patricia Betros and all those who have Covid-19.

**PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED,** and especially for Wilfred (Jim) Allan, Lorna Barraclough, Graeme Rumph (rec dec, Batemans Bay), Roger Steep, Paul McGrath, Janet Milroy, Kevin Bower, Rob Toomey, David Fenner, Kay Hiscox, Luke Wallace and deceased members of the Post family.

**ACT OF ENTRUSTMENT OF AUSTRALIA TO MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS:** The bishops of Australia have decided to entrust Australia at this particular time to Mary Help of Christians, Patroness of Australia, on her Feast Day as a way of renewing the consecration made to her many years ago. Each bishop will do this in their respective diocese with the attached Prayer of Entrustment. Bishop Kennedy will do this at the conclusion of the 10am livestreamed Mass.

### **PRAYER OF ENTRUSTMENT TO MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS:**

O Immaculate Mary, Help of Christians, Queen of heaven and earth, and tender mother of humanity, at this time when a pandemic threatens all your children, we entrust to you our nation, Australia, and all who live in this country.

We commit to your intercession all the members of our community, beginning with the weakest ones, from the unborn to the sick, the disabled and the elderly. We commit to you our families, our young and old, and all who are vulnerable, those who are quarantined or anxious.

We entrust to your Immaculate Heart those who have lost their livelihood or employment, our pastors and other essential service workers, and our leaders at this time. We implore your intercession especially for the protection of doctors and nurses and those who minister to the contagious sick in this crisis.

Reign over us, Mother of God, and teach us how to make the Heart of Jesus reign and triumph in us and around us, as it has reigned and triumphed in you!

**BISHOP'S SUNDAY MASS ON INTERNET:** Sunday 10am at <https://www.facebook.com/SMJCathedral/> and at <http://armidale.catholic.org.au/>. Also a message from the Bishop on the entrustment of Australia to Mary Help of Christians <https://youtu.be/T5IEtmfv78M>

**CONFESSION:** Monsignor will be in the church confessional on Saturdays from 11.30am to 12 noon.

**OPENING OF CHURCHES:** Churches are able to open outside the times in which religious services are conducted. Please contact Monsignor should you wish to pray in the church as a second person is required to be present. A record of the name and contact details of all persons entering the Church is to be kept. This is a regulatory requirement for the purposes of contacting people should an infection occur.

**COLLECTIONS:** Several parishioners have continued their giving online, thank you. First Collection; BSB 082105 A/C 001023600, Second Collection, BSB 082105 A/C 001050728 (may include initial & surname in ref field e.g. J Blow).

**LETTER FROM AUSTRALIAN BISHOPS TO THEIR PEOPLE:** Excerpts from the letter;

"Dear brothers and sisters,

Grace and peace to you in these Easter days. We write to you from a plenary meeting of the Bishops Conference which is like no other. Unable to meet face-to-face as we normally do, the bishops are meeting online for a week. We are intensely conscious of our isolation – not only from each other but also from you, the people whom we serve in the name of the Risen Lord. As we think of you, we make our own the words of St Paul: "So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the Gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us" (1 Thessalonians 2:8). "In the hope born of faith we look forward to the time when the crisis will pass and we will be able to resume fully the Church's worship and mission, even in a landscape which may be quite changed. In the meantime, we are talking with the states and the federal government about the reopening of churches and the gradual relaxation of restrictions. We will work with governments and local authorities at each stage of any resumption of Church life. We commit to keeping ourselves and each other safe by observing strictly the advice regarding numbers, distancing and hygiene when the reopening of churches is permitted."

Copies of the letter may be collected from the entrances to the church.

# A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE CATHOLIC PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA

## FROM THE BISHOPS OF AUSTRALIA

Dear brothers and sisters,

Grace and peace to you in these Easter days. We write to you from a plenary meeting of the Bishops Conference which is like no other. Unable to meet face-to-face as we normally do, the bishops are meeting online for a week. We are intensely conscious of our isolation – not only from each other but also from you, the people whom we serve in the name of the Risen Lord. As we think of you, we make our own the words of St Paul: “So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the Gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us” (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

Australia has certainly suffered because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but not as grievously as some other countries. For that we thank God and we congratulate public health authorities and governments on their prompt and prudent responses. Australians in general have also shown the solidarity and good sense, the generosity and kindness needed in such a time. In our healthcare workers particularly we have seen an exceptional spirit of self-sacrifice, and for that we are all grateful.

The Churches and other religious communities have played their part, which has meant the suspension of public worship and the closure of places of worship. This has been a real deprivation, and the bishops understand not only your anxiety about the virus and shutdown but more especially your deep desire to return to the sacraments and to resume public worship. There is a real hunger in this. It is something we all feel, and we long for the time when our hunger will be satisfied as together we return to the feast of the Lord.

Even when our doors are closed, our hearts are still open. The churches may not yet be fully open, but the heart of the Church, which is the heart of Christ, is wide open. The celebration of Mass has never ceased. Though we and our brother priests cannot yet offer Mass with the people, we are still offering Mass day by day for the people – for all of you who are “flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone” (cf Genesis 2:23). The Church which is the Body of Christ still glows with the life of Easter, “thought to be dying, yet we are alive...to be sorrowful, yet still rejoicing...to have nothing, yet possessing everything” (2 Corinthians 6:9-10).

At the heart of the community of disciples, there is always Mary the mother of Jesus (cf Acts 1:14). In this month of May, Pope Francis has urged us to look to her to intercede for us in this time of affliction; and to Mary we will entrust our homeland later this month, looking to a mother’s unfailing love. May she who is Health of the Sick and Help of Christians pray for us now, that we may see Jesus with her eyes, the eyes of Easter, and love him with her heart, which is the heart of faith: “O Mother of the Word incarnate, despise not our petitions but in your mercy hear and answer us” (Memorare).

The experience of shutdown has stirred great energy and creativity among people and pastors; this is producing unexpected gifts which we will take with us into the future. No locked door can keep the Risen Lord out; he is everywhere, even in this time of distress. “I stand at the door and knock,” he says. “If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come to you” (Revelation 3:20). We have heard his voice and opened the door to him who has come to us. That is the reason for our hope, even our rejoicing.

One important service which people of faith provide to the wider community in this time is an unceasing prayer of intercession. So we ask you all to continue praying in the power of faith for those who have died, who are sick or at risk from COVID-19, for our healthcare professionals, essential service providers and researchers, for all who are isolated and anxious, and for our civic leaders and health authorities.

In the hope born of faith we look forward to the time when the crisis will pass and we will be able to resume fully the Church’s worship and mission, even in a landscape which may be quite changed. In the meantime, we are talking with the states and the federal government about the reopening of churches and the gradual relaxation of restrictions. We will work with governments and local authorities at each stage of any resumption of Church life. We commit to keeping ourselves and each other safe by observing strictly the advice regarding numbers, distancing and hygiene when the reopening of churches is permitted.

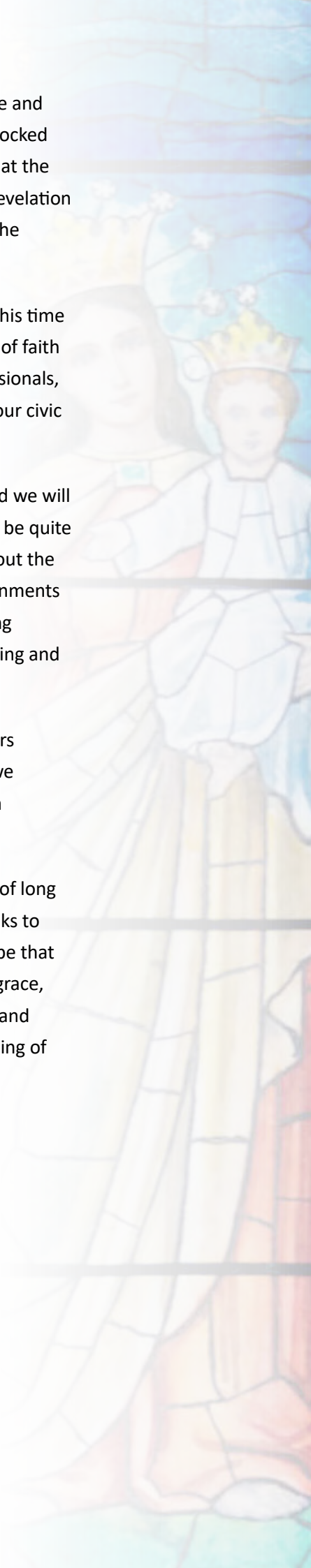
We urge people to abide by the best advice on how to keep themselves and others safe physically, emotionally and spiritually, especially the vulnerable elderly. That is why we recommend the live-streamed Masses and the many other resources offered on diocesan websites, our Catholic counselling services and the COVIDSafe App.

The season of Lent may be behind us, but this time of shutdown has been a kind of long Lent. Now, we pray, Easter is dawning as our country recovers from the pandemic and looks to build the future. There is no room for complacency but there is certainly room for the hope that Easter brings to birth, the hope that “after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen and establish you” (1 Peter 5:10-11). Looking to the God of all grace, we send to you our blessing of peace and all consolation.

From,

*The Catholic Bishops of Australia*

14 May 2020



## 'Is Jesus' body in space?' And other Ascension questions you didn't know you had

By [Mary Farrow](#)

Denver Newsroom, May 14, 2020 / 02:00 am MT ([CNA](#)).- When Jesus rose from the dead three days after the crucifixion, he appeared for 40 days thereafter to his apostles and many of his other followers in his physical, glorified body.

And that glorified body, while it was still recognizable as the man of Jesus, could do some pretty amazing stuff - like walking through walls and suddenly appearing or disappearing.

After 40 days, while together with his apostles, Jesus "was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight."

The belief of the Catholic Church, expressed in Scripture and in the Apostle's Creed, is that Jesus "ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty."

Like many mysteries of the Catholic faith, the Ascension seems to raise more questions than it answers. CNA spoke with two theologians about some of our burning Ascension-related questions.

**If Jesus' physical body ascended into heaven, does that mean heaven is a physical place? And if it is a physical place, could we theoretically fly there in, say, a spaceship?**

The short answers are: sort of, and probably not.

Dr. Michael Barber is an associate professor of Scripture and theology at the Augustine Institute in Denver, Colorado. He contributed to a book on the final judgment and is the author of "Salvation: What Every Catholic Should Know."

Barber said that in order to understand heaven and the Ascension, we have to look to scripture and understand the characteristics of Jesus' resurrected body first.

"We've got in 1 Corinthians 15, the fact that in the resurrection, Jesus isn't just resuscitated. It's not like he just comes back to life - his body is changed. As Paul says, we will all be changed in the resurrection. So there's actual change that takes place in Jesus's body," Barber told CNA.

"And you see this in the Easter narratives. The apostles are hiding in the upper room. They've locked the door, but somehow Jesus stands in their midst. How did he get into the room?" he added.

Barber said that according to St. Thomas Aquinas, what this aspect of Christ's resurrected body tells us is that "basically what happens is that heaven is outside of the universe in what Thomas would call an uncontained place."

This means that Jesus' ascended body, along with the Blessed Virgin Mary's assumed body - two bodies the Catholic Church teaches are definitely in heaven - do not need to be in "some pre-existing place out of the universe...because their bodies are not contained and not limited by space and time."

"St. John Damascene would say, and he's quoted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church... that Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father and he exists there and he's seated bodily," Barber said.

"So heaven does have a physical dimension to it. But we also don't want to think of it like we would imagine places in the material cosmos. It's not like Jesus ascends into heaven and then he's going out past the rings of Saturn and out past Andromeda. There's some sense in which he transcends space and time. How this exactly works precisely isn't fully revealed to us...so we're trying to make these things more intelligible, but it is difficult to really narrow it down," he said.

"Though we cannot say with certitude where this place is to be found or what its relation is to the whole universe, revelation does not allow us to doubt of its existence," Barber noted, referencing the writings of Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, a French Catholic theologian and Dominican friar who wrote about the Ascension and the last things.

"Put it this way: it's a mystery," Barber added.

Michael Root, a professor of systematic theology at the Catholic University of America, told CNA that what the Ascension affirms is that Jesus retains his body after the resurrection and when he is in heaven - importantly, he does not shed his humanity.

"That's a major affirmation implicit in the Ascension, is that (Jesus) remains fully human, he has a body. I presume we will see the marks of the crucifixion on his body, as St. Thomas did. But that leaves us with a question, your question: Where does the body go?" Root said.

"I think the first thing to be said is: we don't know," he added.

Root noted that in the Middle Ages, Christians thought of the universe in a very different way than Christians do today. At the time, Christians thought the world was surrounded by seven "crystalline spheres", which were the seven heavens, and contained things in the sky such as the

sun and the moon and the stars. Beyond those spheres was "empyrean heaven," where Jesus was said to dwell.

In the "Divine Comedy," Dante uses that cosmology.

God is in "in heaven beyond all the heavens, which makes one think one could travel to it. It would be very difficult - there's a lot of questions on how you could get through these crystalline spheres. But that's the way they fit it into picture (of the universe)," Root said.

Our understanding of the universe and science is now quite different, Root noted.

"I don't think we should expect that we could fly to where Jesus is with a rocketship," he said, though it might be that heaven, and therefore Jesus' body, exists in a dimension that is not accessible by humans.

"Modern science will sometimes talk about a space-time continuum. Quantum physics will talk about maybe there being other space-time continua than ours. Does his body ascend into a different dimension, other dimensions than we have?" he asked.

"But one always has to say: 'We have to think about this somehow, but we shouldn't pretend that our way of thinking about it...that we can put a whole lot of weight on it.'"

### **If Jesus' body and Mary's body can be in heaven, why must everyone else wait until the end of time to be reunited with their glorified bodies?**

Barber said the answer can be found in Romans 8:16-17: "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him."

"We are fellow heirs with Christ provided we suffer with him," Barber noted. "You can't get to Easter Sunday, apart from Good Friday. You can't have a resurrected body, you can't share in Jesus's resurrection, without also participating in his death."

This imitation of Christ, even unto death, is the "ultimate expression of faithfulness" that one can achieve, Barber said.

"Christ wants to do in his mystical body, the church, what he did in his personal body. He wants us all to be resurrected with him, but we also have to be conformed to his image, as Paul says in Romans 8:29. That involves learning obedience, it means exhibiting faithfulness by embracing our cross and picking up our cross," he said.

"Death is the ultimate expression of faithfulness. A lot of people want to imagine that Mary's assumption means that she was glorified without

her death, but John Paul II doesn't really go in that direction. John Paul II seems to indicate that no, Mary actually died," because if she hadn't been allowed to do so, "it would almost be to deprive Mary of making the ultimate gift of herself. Because of the fall (of man), death is a curse. But what Christ does is he redeems death."

Root added that we must wait for our resurrected bodies because we must wait for the transformation of all matter - which will happen at the end of time, when there will be a "new heaven and a new earth," as noted in the book of Revelation.

"Part of getting our bodies back, so to speak, will be the transformation of all matter. I mean, in some ways, I don't want my body back. I'd like a better one, one where my knees don't hurt, other such things. So our resurrection is a part of the consummation of all things," he said.

In a way, he said, that transformation has already occurred in Jesus and Mary, who are already reunited with their glorified bodies in heaven.

"But...the resurrection of all the rest of us must be a part of that transformation of all things, the transformation of matter, the glorification of all things.

**"From thence he will come again to judge the living and the dead": How is the Final Judgment different from the judgment of each person's soul at their death?**

In the Apostles Creed, the next line after Jesus' ascension into heaven is that "he will come again to judge the living and the dead." How is this different than each soul going to either heaven, hell, or purgatory at the time of that person's death?

"That's a really important question, and it's a helpful thing to reflect on," Barber said.

"You know, a lot of these aspects of Catholic teachings at first, they seem really strange and they seem almost unnecessary...It seems like there's just these different beliefs that crop up and they don't really fit together. And so it just looks like this man-made religion that doesn't really have a lot of truth to it."

But that is not the case, Barber said, and the Catechism explains these two judgments further.

"When you die, you stand before the throne of God and you need to make a given account," Barber said, a belief which can be found in Hebrews Chapter 9: "It is appointed for men to die once and after that comes the judgment."

"So we know that there's a judgment at the moment of our deaths," Barber said. "But then we also know about the general judgment of the

dead. Jesus talks about this in Matthew 25. He's going to come back and 'separate the sheep from the goats.'"

What this judgment means, Barber said, is that Jesus will fully reveal, "to its furthest consequences, the good each person has done or failed to do during his life."

"So here's the reality, during our own life we can't know (all of the consequences) of our choices, of our actions. We don't see, even in our lifetime, how the decisions we make affect future generations," he noted.

"But the Catechism of the Church explains that on the last day, part of the final judgment is making known everything that has been hidden," which Jesus talks about in Matthew 12, he said.

"Jesus says that nothing is covered up that will not be revealed. So on the last day, the things that are said in the dark will be heard in the light. What you've heard whispered in private rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops."

In other words: "There are going to be no more secrets."

What the Final Judgment does *\*not\** mean, Root said, is that a soul's personal judgment - whether they go to heaven, hell, or purgatory - can somehow be reversed. "It isn't that you can hope you'll get a better deal in the last judgment. It's not like that," he said.

The last judgment is a public event, Root added, while a soul's own judgment is a private one.

"History as a whole has a final destiny with God. God will sum history up...we will all see the glory of God, including his judgment, together. And we will see that the murderer does not triumph, that the meek will inherit the earth. And we will see that cruelty, oppression was always wrong. And it is defeated in the end. So, the stress has often been on the sort of public character of the last judgment," he said.

And, importantly, just as Jesus does not ultimately shed his body, everyone's bodies will participate either in their eternal reward or eternal punishment once the final judgment has been made, Root noted.

"Our body participated in our good and bad deeds, and so the body must in the end participate in the judgment."