



Sunday 27th March 2022

Parish Priest: Fr. Steven Rigo **Assistant Priests:** Fr. Tao Pham & Fr. Martin Tanti

Parish Pastoral Associates: Jacinta Bright & Sr. Margaret Sapsford

The Partnered Parishes of:

St. Mary's

204 Grimshaw St.,
Greensborough, 3088

Parish: 9435 1543 **Presbytery:** 7036 9329

Email: Greensborough@cam.org.au

Website: www.cam1.org.au/greensborough

Secretaries: Francesca Olofsson & Sharon Prosser

Mass Times

Tuesday to Friday: Mass 9.15am

Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.30pm

Sunday: Mass 8.00am, 10.00am & 5.00pm

Reconciliation Times

Saturday: By Appointment only please call the Parish Office

Parish School Principal

Mrs. Marisa Matthys **Ph:** 9433 4000 **or Email**
principal@smgreensborough.catholic.edu.au

Sacred Heart & St Peter's

25 Gipson Street,
Diamond Creek 3089

Parish: 9401 6361

Email: DiamondCreek@cam.org.au

Website: www.pol.org.au/diamondcreek

Secretary: Pat Guatta

Mass Times

Wednesday & Friday: Mass 9.15am

St Peter's: 1st & 3rd Saturday 7.15pm

Sunday: Mass 9.00am

Reconciliation Times

Friday: 9.45am to 10.15am

Parish School Principal

Mr. Jim O'Sullivan **Ph:** 9438 1590 **or Email**
principal@shdiamondcreek.catholic.edu.au

St. Thomas the Apostle

251 Diamond Creek Road,
Greensborough Nth 3088

Parish: 9434 7373

Email: greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au

Website: www.pol.org.au/greensboroughnorth

Secretary: Lisa Leahy

Mass Times

Tuesday & Thursday: Mass 9.15am

Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.00pm

Sunday: Mass 10.30am

Reconciliation Times

Saturday: 9.30am to 10.00am

Parish School Principal

Mr David Delaney **Ph:** 9434 4565 **or Email**
principal@stgreensboroughnth.catholic.edu.au

THE CELEBRATION OF MASS IN OUR PARISHES

Mass at Home: St Patrick's Cathedral: On Channel 31, 44 on Digital TV, for Sunday Mass at 11.00am

Mass for You at Home - Diocese of Wollongong: Sundays on Channel 10 at 6am, Foxtel Channel 173 at 10am, and online at
www.massforyou.com.au

Combined Parishes Communal Penitential Service

St Thomas Parish Wednesday 6th April, 7.30pm-9.30pm



In these final weeks of Lent we ask for the grace to see ourselves as God sees us.

Fourth Sunday in Lent Year C, 27 March 2022.

Fr Brendan Byrne SJ

<https://www.australiancatholics.com.au/article/scripture-reflection--rejoice--this-child-of-mine-was-lost--and-is-found>

Sacred Heart, St Mary's & St Thomas the Apostle are all members of the Diamond Valley Deanery.

Diamond Valley Deanery

www.diamondvalleydeanery.org.au

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

www.cam.org.au



Our Partnered Parishes respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the traditional custodians of this land and we pay respect to the Elders past and present.

PARTNERED PARISHES NEWS

PRAYING FOR PEACE & HOPE

The Parish of St Thomas invites you to join us to pray for peace at a prayer service to be held at St Thomas on

Monday 4th April at 7.00pm. (Church will be open at 6.30pm)

Come united with an open heart seeking peace for our world.

All welcome



LENT/HOLY WEEK

INDIVIDUAL RECONCILIATION

Sacred Heart: Tuesday 12th April, 7.30pm-8.30pm

St Mary's: Friday 1st April, 7.00pm-8.15pm

St Thomas: Thursday 14th April, 7.30pm-8.30pm



COMMUNAL PENITENTIAL SERVICE

Wednesday 6th April, 7.30pm (with supper following)

PASSION (PALM) SUNDAY—9th/10th APRIL (Please bring own foliage)

Sacred Heart: Sunday 10th April, 9.00am

St Mary's: Saturday 9th April, 6.30pm Sunday 10th April, 8.00am, 10.00am, 5.00pm

St Thomas: Saturday 9th April, 6.00pm Sunday 10th April 10.30am

HOLY THURSDAY-14th APRIL : **No morning Mass**

St Mary's: Mass of the Lord's Supper 7.30pm

St Thomas: Mass of the Lord's Supper, 7.30pm

Prayer before the Altar of Repose after Mass concluding with Night Prayer at 9.30pm

GOOD FRIDAY-15th APRIL :**No Morning Mass**

Stations of the Cross: St Mary's 11.00am

Sacred Heart, St Mary's and St Thomas: 3.00pm Celebration of the Lord's Passion

HOLY SATURDAY-16th APRIL: **No Morning Mass /No Individual Reconciliation**

St Mary's: 10.00am Morning Prayer

EASTER VIGIL-16TH APRIL

Sacred Heart: 7.30pm Service will start outside

St Mary's: 6.30pm Service of Light Outside

EASTER SUNDAY-17th APRIL

Sacred Heart: 9.00am

St Mary's: 8.00am, 10.00am **No 5.00pm Mass**

St Thomas: 10.30am



PARTNERED PARISHES NEWS CONTINUED

LENTEN THEME 2022 - COURAGE TO HOPE

Lent is the liturgical season for prayer, reflection and contrition for any wrongdoing we have made in our lives as we prepare for the joyous season of Easter. The theme for this year is particularly timely as the world has suffered greatly over the past two years through the pandemic, and the temptation to lose hope and fall into despair may be strong. With political turmoil at home and abroad, a climate that needs nurturing and our communities that have suffered fear, uncertainty, restrictions and profound loss and grief, we need the courage to hope more than ever and we look to our God to sustain us.

This is the time to find our courage, to turn in hope to our loving God. It is through challenges and hard times that we find the strength within and draw on our faith to persevere and look with confidence to the future. Without courage we dare not hope. Without faith and hope, life is empty. During this Lenten time of reflection and prayer, let us remember that our God is always present, to hold us, to love us, to lead us forward to the Kingdom.

“May the God of hope fill you with all the joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” **Romans 15: 13**

WEEK 4 GOSPEL REFLECTION

Today is the fourth weekend of Lent and we pause to reflect.

In the Gospel today we are faced with a profound dilemma: do we agree with the father who welcomes home, seemingly without consequence, his sinful and irresponsible younger son or do we side with the elder son who has stayed home and dutifully done everything asked of him? It is not so simple. In the parable of the prodigal son Jesus teaches us that God leaves us free to choose a course in life. If we take the path of the younger son, our lives may take us away from God. We are assured of a welcome home if we have the courage and hope to see that God’s love for us is unconditional. True repentance is met with compassion, forgiveness and restoration. We are also expected to offer the same understanding without judgement to others who have strayed from Jesus’ teachings.

Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you. Psalm 33:22

JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY AND HOPE

We have been through so much in the last couple of years as a community, as the world and personally.

Our faith tells us that transformation, beauty and newness come out of darkness, which, if we believe it, tells us that even in the darkest time God’s Spirit is active.

This is an invitation to a journey of discovery and hope, where we find that little things mean a lot and that the smallest actions have the power to change us.

Come and join us as we have the opportunity to share and listen. These gatherings will take the form of guided spiritual conversations and will take place for the next five weeks, as we approach Holy Week. Your facilitators are Terry Fanning and Jacinta Bright.

Dates: 29th March and 5th & 12th April, from 1.00pm until 2.30 pm in St Mary’s Parish House.

Please contact Jacinta at the St Mary’s Parish office on 9435 1543 or via her email Jacinta.bright@cam.org.au to book in.

MESSIAH IN THE PASSOVER PRESENTATION

As we prepare for Holy week, the St Mary’s Scripture Study group invites you to celebrate “The Messiah in the Passover.”

This presentation explores how “the Word became flesh” (John 1:14) at Passover, and deepens our understanding of Jesus’ life and ministry. It will help us gain a deeper appreciation for the intimate connection between the Old and New Testaments, the Torah and the Gospel, thus shedding a new light on the believer’s rich inheritance found in the Jewish roots of our faith.

A beautiful table will be set up in front of the congregation, displaying traditional items used in Jewish Passovers, including symbolic foods, which will be explained.

Proposed Date: Saturday 9th April, 11.00am- 1.00pm.

Venue: Gathering Space, St. Marys’ Church, Greensborough.

Cost: \$20 per person Or \$35 per couple payable on registration

Contact Jo Giudice on 0411 045572 or Michelle D’Souza on 0432 316777 to register or for further information.

Please register before 1st April.



ARCHDIOCESE AND COMMUNITY NEWS

FLOOD APPEAL-SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL: The floods in Queensland and New South Wales are having a devastating effect on the people living in these regions of Australia. For those wishing to support the long-term recovery work to be undertaken by St Vincent de Paul in Queensland and New South Wales, financial donations can be made either directly to either state through: https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Find_Help/Flood_appeal/



CARITAS AUSTRALIA– UKRAINE EMERGENCY APPEAL: The people of Ukraine are living through a crisis that will impact the country for years to come. Caritas Australia has launched an appeal to support Caritas Ukraine and other partners in the region. The appeal will support the provision of clean water, hygiene and food kits to vulnerable families, as well as safe collection centres for families on the move, emergency accommodation and support for distressed children and families. <https://www.childfund.org.au/help-children-in-ukraine/> or contact 1800 024 413.



MEDITATION AT ST PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH: Are offering Meditation on Saturday's from 10.00am-10.30am, at 1 Monckton Road, Bundoora. No cost involved. For further details contact: Ranjit 0403 654549.

MIA SORELLA IN CONCERT AT ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL: Friday 1 April, 2022 6.00pm - 7.00pm. \$25 - tickets online or at the door. Children under 15 are admitted free of charge. Online tickets and further details: <https://www.trybooking.com/BRYBS>

The concert comes highly recommended, where artists, music, Christianity, spirituality combine to make a truly memorable event. Wiradjuri Soprano Shauntai Batzke, the Italian-Australian Soprano Michelle Francis Cook, and Australian songbird, Soprano Helen Ling combine to present songs that inspire with soaring vocal lines and thrilling harmonies with an array of genres including original repertoire and unique arrangements of favourites.

www.aidtochurch.org/ukraine

ALL SAINTS ANGLICAN CHURCH: Are performing "The Crucifixion" by John Stainer. A meditation on the Sacred Passion of the Holy Redeemer on Palm Sunday 10th April at 2.30pm. Soloists will be tenor, dr Leighton H.G. Triplow and Bass James Emerson. Chorus is the All Saints Church Choir. Free admittance. Corner Grimshaw Street and Church Street.

ALPHA COURSE AT ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI PARISH: Alpha is an exciting refresher Course in the Christian faith.

The Alpha Course at St Francis will start on Thursday, 5th May, 7.00 pm - 9.30 pm, at St Francis Hall, 290 Childs Road Mill Park.

Alpha runs for ten Thursdays. Explore questions of life and faith and make new friendships at Alpha!

Everyone is invited! Come and bring a friend! Enquiries – Contact Ruth: 9407 6700. Email: Ruth.Lees@cam.org.au

'PONDERING GRIEF': Saturday 30 April 2022, 10am-3.30pm. Facilitated by qualified Counsellor/ Supervisor/ Educator Linda Espie this reflection day offers an invitation to reflect on and honour our inner life of change and transition. With creativity, space and gentle guiding support, this workshop offers a sacred place for the breadth of human experiencing and spirit to guide individual exploration. Heart of Life Centre for Spiritual & Pastoral Formation, Rear 41 Stanhope St, Malvern. Cost \$80 (Materials provided, BYO lunch). Book and pay via www.heartoflife.melbourne, or email info@heartoflife.melbourne or tel 9890 1101.

PRAYER FOR PEACE & HOPE



Sunflowers (*sunyashniki*) are especially loved in Ukraine, where golden fields of them face the sunrise in the east.

They are Ukraine's national flower, and in folk imagery represent the warmth and power of the sun, which was worshipped by pre-Christian Slavs.

In Van Gogh's time, sunflowers were mainly grown in gardens for their striking beauty. But by the 20th century they were increasingly cultivated in vast fields for their oil, which is used for cooking. Last year Ukraine was the world's largest source of sunflower oil, accounting for around a third of global production.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT SACRED HEART & ST PETER'S



Baptisms: We pray for Zoe, Noah and Leah who we welcomed into the Sacred Heart community in March.

First Eucharist: This Sunday we welcome Sacred Heart School children who are celebrating their First Eucharist: Sade, Rupert, Audrey, Stevie, Sarah, Jack and Oliver.

Individual Reconciliation: Fr Martin will be available for Individual Reconciliation at Sacred Heart 7.30pm on Tuesday 12th April.

Sacred Heart Rosters: we aim to restart our Rosters by the end of April. Please contact the Parish Office or let Pat know if you are available to join the Setting up, Counting or Church Cleaning Roster. Thank you.

Funeral Ministry: Please consider joining our Funeral Ministry Team Roster. Participants assist our Priests when meeting with families to organize funerals. They also help to set up the church, support and welcome the family on the day of the Funeral. Talk to Frank Ledda or contact the Office for more information.

Lunch invitation: Our Parish Seniors Group extends a warm invitation to join us for lunch at Bridges Restaurant Hurstbridge on Wednesday 6th April at Midday. Contact Margaret Jose 9438 1540

Wednesday 20th April 12pm Lunch and games in the Parish Centre.

Parish Pastoral Council: Reminding parishioners there is a Suggestion Box at the back of the Church, or approach a member.

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners and friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Mario Molinaro, Catherine Leonard, Peter Mejak, Joan Moran, Tony Ledda, Margaret Holland, Bridie Burke, Mary Rafferty, Thomas Keenan, Bernadette Hobbs, Mervyn Bourke, John Downey

We pray for those who have died and all those whose Anniversaries occur in the month of March that they may enter Joyfully into God's Kingdom:

Les Ginnivan, Madeleine Blake, Laurence Dunn, Patrick Coyle

Roster for Weekend 2nd & 3rd April

Saturday 2nd April St Peter's 7.15pm: Reader: R. Edmonds **Eucharistic Ministers:** H. Edmonds, E. Gittens

Sunday Sacred Heart 9.00am: Reader: C. Fernando **Eucharistic Ministers:** A. Schellens, F. Ledda

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST THOMAS



Baptisms: We pray for Cora, Alannah, Lachlan, Zac and Hayley who we welcomed into the St Thomas community this weekend.

First Eucharist: this weekend we welcome the children who will be receiving the Eucharist for the first time. Please keep them in your prayers.

Parental Supervision: With the return of families at our Masses and as our toilets are out of view, parental supervision of your children is required while using the facilities.

Parish Pastoral Council: Our first meeting of our PPC was held last Wednesday evening.

Our executive committee consists of the following:

- ◆ Chairperson Tim Holland
- ◆ Deputy Chairperson Cathy O'Brien
- ◆ Secretary Lisa Leahy
- ◆ Deputy Secretary Emilia Sacchetta

Thank you to everyone for accepting their nominations. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 20th April, 7.00pm.

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners and friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Peg Wilcox, Dawn Ellis, Miran Kasalo,

We pray for those who have died and all those whose Anniversaries occur in the month of March that they may enter Joyfully into God's Kingdom:

John McGauran, Kath Glennen, Sydney Raymond, Michael Pase, Carl Troiano, Rollo Jackson, Elizabeth Salm, Antonio Gallo, Kathleen Sheehan, Lina Bertuna, Bernadette O'Brien, Bonnie Dickson, Ian Stephens, Annette Hyland, Kellie Stuckey, Jean McMahon

Rosters for Weekend 2nd & 3rd April

Saturday 6.00pm:

Reader: J. Bohan

Commentator: K. McMahon

Eucharistic Ministers: L. Carty, D. Haesler, M. Bedford

Set Up: K. Salm

Sunday 10.30am:

Reader: B. Iacobucci

Commentator: M. Bates

Eucharistic Ministers: A. Kerr, B. Riordan, C. Riordan

Set Up: M. Bates

Counters No Counters Required

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST MARY'S

Vision Statement "To be a vibrant Christian community engaging with the world"



PLEASE NOTE NEW PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Francesca and Sharon will provide for our **secretarial needs on Tuesdays 9am-5pm and Thursdays and Fridays 10am-4pm** and Jacinta's **days will be Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9am-5pm.**

Please continue to send any bulletin contributions to Francesca and Sharon at greensborough@cam.org.au by 2pm Wednesday to ensure inclusion in the weekend combined bulletin.

FIRST EUCHARIST CANDIDATES We welcome Eucharist candidates and their families at our Masses this weekend as they receive the Sacrament of First Eucharist. Our prayers and support are with you all. May they always remember that they can turn to Jesus who is their true friend, and who will always lovingly care for them

INDIVIDUAL RECONCILIATION will be available at St Mary's **this Friday evening 1 April from 7pm to 8.15pm in the Parish Library.**

FACE MASKS Whilst not mandatory, the Chief Health Officer currently recommends masks to be worn indoors, and the Archdiocese reminds parishes that this is especially applicable to larger gatherings.

BARGAINS!! LADIES AUXILIARY Please come and browse for bargain gifts in the Gathering Space
next weekend 2/3 April after all masses.

A LENTEN COMMUNAL PENITENTIAL SERVICE for the communities of St Mary's, St Thomas, Sacred Heart and St Peter's will be held at **St Thomas' Church**, 251 Diamond Creek Rd. Greensborough, on **Wednesday 6 April at 7.30pm** followed by supper.

PALM SUNDAY 9/10 April This year we can once again commence our Palm Sunday Masses outside (weather permitting) with the blessing of branches and procession into the church. **Please bring your own branches to this service.**

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! For many years a group of volunteers have catered after funerals at St Mary's. We would like to re-organise this group. If you would like to help and need details please contact Judy Newell 9435 4506.

MOBILITY SCOOTER AND FRAME WALKER If anyone is interested in a mobility scooter (may require some maintenance) and a frame walker please contact the Parish Office on 9435 1543.

St Mary's Prayer Shawl Group Meets in the Gathering Space 10am - 12pm on Mondays. Enq: Maureen Leahy—0407 687 517; Anne Fleming— 0409 234 326 .

STATIONS OF THE CROSS will take place on Fridays in St. Mary's Church at 7.00pm.

HELP WITH TRANSPORT TO MASS: A parishioner who is unable to get to Mass would greatly appreciate if anyone would be available to take them to 10.00am Mass on Sundays. If you are able to help could you please contact the Parish Office 94351543.

ST MARY'S FUNERAL MINISTRY TEAM is urgently seeking new members capable of preparing and/or running the audio-visual presentations at funerals. Please contact the parish office for more information 9435 1543 or greensborough@cam.org.au

Thank you

CLEANER REQUIRED FOR ST MARY'S PARISH HOUSE.

Fr. Steve is looking for a reliable house cleaner for St. Mary's Parish House. If you know of anyone who may be interested and would be suitable for the role, could you please ask them if they would be available.

St Mary's requires a cleaner fortnightly for approximately 2-3 hours. Duties include vacuuming, dusting, mopping, cleaning of bathrooms, washing sheets and towels, possibly ironing.

A current Working with Children Check and also a Police check will be required.

For further information please contact the St. Mary's Parish Office on 9435 1543.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST MARY'S CONTINUED

A REMINDER FROM ST MARY'S SOCIAL JUSTICE GROUP

In the **Australian Bishops' Social Justice Statement 2021-22: *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor***, the Bishops invite the Catholic community to join them in taking up Pope Francis' invitation to a seven-year journey towards total ecological sustainability, guided by seven Laudato Si' Goals. These Goals are: *response to the cry of the earth; response to the cry of the poor; ecological economics; sustainable lifestyles; ecological spirituality; ecological education; and community engagement and participatory action.*

The Statement especially encourages Catholic families, communities and organisations to: listen to the First Nations; reflect on the theological foundations offered in *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*; and plan their next steps towards the Laudato Si' Goals.

See <https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/2021/09/24/social-justice-statement-2021-22/> for more information



PROJECT COMPASSION 2022 Fourth Sunday of Lent

Rosalie 44, is an ex-combatant who lives with her husband and seven children in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Forced to join the army when she was just 15-years-old, Rosalie experienced significant trauma and hardship during her years in the military. After she was demobilised from the army, Rosalie, like other ex-combatants, was left to fend for herself in the community.

With your generous support and through our local partners, Rosalie was able to connect with other members of her community and participate in business skills training to help her to reintegrate into society.

Please donate to Project Compassion 2022 and help women like Rosalie to succeed in the future, providing hope For All Future Generations.

Together, we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow For All Future Generations. You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes available from your Parish, by visiting lent.caritas.org.au, or by calling 1800 024 413.



Lectionary Art and Reflection by Jenny Close

In this reading from Luke we hear the parable of the loving father who welcomes back his errant son with unconditional love. This unworthy young man is given the best clothes, a ring for his finger and a feast. Is it any wonder that his brother is angry and resentful? Kingdom justice does not follow the same rules as earthly fair dealing, however.



Fourth Sunday of Lent, Year C

27 March 2022

First Reading Jos 5:9-12

The people of God went to the promised land and there kept the passover.

The Lord said to Joshua, 'Today I have taken the shame of Egypt away from you.'

The Israelites pitched their camp at Gilgal and kept the Passover there on the fourteenth day of the month, at evening in the plain of Jericho. On the morrow of the Passover they tasted the produce of that country, unleavened bread and roasted ears of corn, that same day. From that time, from their first eating of the produce of that country, the manna stopped falling. And having manna no longer, the Israelites fed from that year onwards on what the land of Canaan yielded.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 33:2-7. R. v.9

(R.) Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

1. I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad. (R.)
2. Glorify the Lord with me.
Together let us praise his name.
I sought the Lord and he answered me;
from all my terrors he set me free. (R.)
3. Look towards him and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.
This poor man called; the Lord heard him
and rescued him from all his distress. (R.)

Second Reading 2 Cor 5:17-21

God reconciled us to himself through Christ.

For anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone, and now the new one is here. It is all God's work. It was God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the work of handing on his reconciliation. In other words, God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not holding men's faults against them, and he has entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled. So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the goodness of God.

Gospel Acclamation Lk 15:18

*Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ!
I will rise and go to my Father and tell him:
Father, I have sinned against heaven and
against you.*

*Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus
Christ!*

Gospel Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

Your brother here was dead and has come to life.

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained. 'This man' they said 'welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So he spoke this parable to them:

'A man had two sons. The younger said to his father, "Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me." So the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery.

'When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants." So he left the place and went back to his father.

'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly. Then his son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found." And they began to celebrate.

'Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about. "Your brother has come" replied the servant "and your father has killed the calf we had fattened because he has got him back safe and sound." He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out to plead with him; but he answered his father, "Look, all these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. But for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property – he and his women – you kill the calf we had been fattening."

'The father said, "My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. But it is only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found."



Reflection by Dianne Bergant CSA

In the midst of Lent we are given a moment for rejoicing, Laetare Sunday. All of the readings provide us with reasons for rejoicing. The overarching theme is the prodigal goodness of God. The responsorial psalm sets the context for the reflections. The other readings show how needy people were showered with divine favour. Even in the midst of this rejoicing, we find a challenge. We must undergo a change of heart if we are to rejoice in God.

The goodness of God is strikingly portrayed in the radically new image of father. This is a God who allows us to follow our own dreams, who is partial to no one, who faithfully and patiently waits for us to return, who gently corrects our misperceptions. God longs to be reconciled with us even more than we long to be reconciled with God.

The challenges placed before us set out some of the conditions required if we are to be a new creation. We are called to a profound and total reconciliation, first with God and then with each other. Christ was identified with sin so that we might be identified with God's righteousness. Reconciliation requires that we be open to giving and receiving forgiveness. It requires that we both remember and forget. We must always remember the causes of alienation, so that we not succumb to them again. However, we must forget the resentment that we felt so that we not allow it to influence our lives.