



Sunday 19th February 2023

Parish Priest: Fr. Steven Rigo **Assistant Priest:** Fr. Martin Tanti

Parish Pastoral Associates: Sandy Starbuck & 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: 5.45pm-6.15pm before evening Mass

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**
princi-

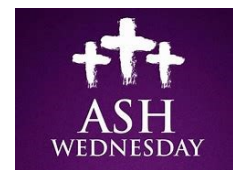
THE CELEBRATION OF MASS IN OUR PARISHES

ASH WEDNESDAY MASSES 22nd February

9.15am: Sacred Heart & St Mary's (School Masses)

12.00pm: St Thomas (School Mass)

7.00pm: St Mary's & St Thomas



Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, always pondering spiritual things, we may carry out in both word and deed that which is pleasing to you.

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A, 19 February 2023.

<https://www.australiancatholics.com.au/reflection-7th-ot-year-a>

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.

HELPING A FAMILY WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY

Many of our Partnered Parish Communities would know that Stonehouse Bakery in Hurstbridge (across from Lettuce Inn) – has the ABSOLUTE best cinnamon donuts in Australia!

Throughout the COVID 19 crisis this family owned business, continued their hospitality to the community for each person who came in for a coffee and free donut. You were always met with a friendly voice of welcome and knew for certain that behind the mask their smile matched yours. Always ready for a chat and a laugh, Seray Ayhan, her mother, Aleve, with the men of the family doing the baking, along with Lilly and all the girls serving – we formed a strong connection of friendship and for many of us, a bond as strong as family. We celebrated with them when we heard the brother, Taylen would be married during their annual trip back home to Turkey this past January. They call Adana, Turkiyre home – home to their family who just a short time ago gathered in celebrating a wedding –who now are ‘in tents or under rubble’. Both earthquakes struck the homes of their families and friends and they have no where to go. Seray has taken it upon herself to form a GoFundMe initiative – “Help Families after Earthquakes in Turkey (7.7)”. She is aiming to raise \$8000.00 to go towards the families who now are left with nothing. Please go to this link: <https://gofund.me/1382c9e0> to make your donation. If you have any problems with the link – type in “GoFundMe” in your web browser, then do a search using the search icon you will see on the homepage – type in the name of the fund – it will come up and to make certain it is the correct one – Seray Ayhan’s name will be there.

*Continue to support the family in visiting the bakery as often as you can! Please pray for all people of Turkiyre and Syria that the people of the world will see the people there, homeless, traumatised, injured and separated from loved ones, not knowing who has survived, trying to cope with the magnitude of devastation – and open their hearts to the generosity of Spirit to share with however they can to aid in recovery of body, mind and spirit of the people there.

Sandy Starbuck

Pastoral Associate St Mary’s Parish

THE AYHAN FAMILY OF THE STONEHOUSE BAKERY IN HURSTBRIDGE, want to express their heartfelt gratitude for the outpouring of support shown to them from our Partnered Parish communities. People have not only answered the plea for help registering with the GoFundMe drive but have come into the bakery speaking personally with the family members. Seray has been deeply moved by the generosity of strangers and knows for certain that *‘not just my family but the many families of both Turkiye and Syria, have not been forgotten, and my family wants you to know – it will make a great difference to how the family journeys through the days ahead.’* May the grace of our Lord shower your lives with his grace.”



LENTEN PROGRAM - You are invited to join the Scripture Study Group for meditation & scripture reflection led by Dr Susie Hii commencing on 1st March over zoom each Wednesday at 7.30pm for 5 weeks. All are welcome.

Please call Jo: 0411 045 572 or Michelle: 0432316777 for more details.

CARITAS APPEAL FOR THE SYRIA & TURKIYE EARTHQUAKE:

You can help communities affected by the Syria and Turkey Earthquake.

Our partner Caritas Syria and other Caritas agencies on the ground are coordinating with local authorities and other organisations to see how they can best assist.

Your generous support can help provide emergency relief to help families recover and rebuild from disaster.

<https://www.caritas.org.au/news/latest-news/caritas-agencies-respond-to-catastrophic-turkey-and-syria-earthquake/>

A JOURNEY TO FREEDOM: Join us for a 4 week free zoom, Bible study with daily reflections. For those who seek Liberation... to be freed from “Egypt”, then purified in the “Desert”, and invited into the “Promised Land”. Thursdays, 8.00pm-9.30pm. Commencing on the 23rd February, 2nd, 9th and 23rd March.

Book before the 22nd February at <https://www.trybooking.com/CFNKH>. In order to receive the course booklet by email.

A FREE course from The Way Prayer Group, Greensborough North. For further information contact: Emilia, Phone: 0418 120 902 or E-mail: emilia.sacchetta@bigpond.com

LENT 2023 WITH THE CATHOLIC GUY BRUCE DOWNES: Lent is a time when we can grow closer to God and prepare our hearts for the true meaning of Easter. Be inspired. Be refreshed. Be renewed! For 40 days you will receive a short, practical and inspiring video in your inbox every morning to help you make this Lenten journey more powerful and prayerful. This program is Free and you can sign up here: <https://BruceDownes.org/Lent23> Go to BruceDownes.org for more information.



PROJECT COMPASSION 2023

REFLECTION WEEKEND OF 18th-19th FEBRUARY

Yes is a wonderful word but it can be misused. People who live in fear often feel compelled to say yes because they are too frightened to say anything else. Even people who take on too much might find themselves getting tangled up because they feel they have to say yes to everything. Saying no might actually be a more genuine form of yes. Perhaps you need to say no to the expectations of others in order to truly say yes to life and to God. Scripture is full of people whose yes to God was confusing to others. Today's readings ask us to think about the word yes. In the reading from the Book of Leviticus, we are asked to say yes to our neighbour. The reading from the letter to the Corinthians says that the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. Our faith means saying yes to a very different approach to life. Finally, in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells us to forget about revenge, to stop our dog-eat-dog mentality, and to say yes to forgiveness and generosity. Indeed, we have to say yes to our enemies. These are great readings to take with us into Lent, which starts this week with Ash Wednesday. Lent is the time of year during which we journey with Jesus towards the great yes he said with his whole being when he died on the cross. Jesus was prepared to say yes to his father, yes to life even if it meant death. Lent is a time when we support the work of Caritas Australia in a special way through Project Compassion. Caritas Australia helps to empower some of our most marginal sisters and brothers; it embraces some demanding situations because it says yes to our neighbours. The theme for Project Compassion is For All Future Generations. This year, that theme asks us to think about the great yes that Mary said when the angel told her that she was to become the mother of Jesus. She freely accepted a unique place in the history of the human family. The great prayer she shared with her cousin Elizabeth, says 'all generations will call me blessed.' Her 'yes' is For All Future Generations. Hopefully, ours can be the same.

PRAYER

*God of all generations,
We thank you for those who have gone before us,
especially those who have cared for your earth and
who inspire us to help respect your creation and contribute to its healing.
We thank you for those with whom we share our lives today,
especially those who work for justice and peace.
May we welcome the opportunity that Lent brings to walk more closely with you,
especially through fasting, almsgiving and prayer.
We thank you for the challenge of the future.
May the cross of Jesus remind us that only love finds the way forward.
As we work with big hearts,
may we join with Mary in her hope that from now on all generations will experience
the great things you will do through us.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.*



Project Compassion Sunday 18 & 19 February



Please take home a Project Compassion box or a set of donation envelopes to support Caritas Australia this Lenten season and help support vulnerable people around the world, now and **For All Future Generations**. With your support, Caritas Australia has been able to support vulnerable communities around the world to tackle poverty, food security, education, water and sanitation and disaster risk reduction to build a better future for all.



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 caritas.org.au/project-compassion, or by calling 1800 024 413.

Copies of Information for Parishioners regarding Lent 2023 are available in our Churches and on our noticeboards.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST MARY'S

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

PARISH OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 9am-5pm, Thursdays and Fridays 10am-4pm. Please send any bulletin contributions to greensborough@cam.org.au by 2pm Wednesday to ensure inclusion in the weekend combined bulletin. Thank you



SUNDAY CATECHIST CLASSES for primary school children attending Government Schools are now commencing at 9.00am in St Mary's School. Classes are for children from Grades 3 to 6, include the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation, and are held during each term. All enquiries - Geraldine - 0438 148 896

READING WITH PARISHIONERS PROGRAM Do you have a weekday morning free? St Mary's School is looking for parishioners who are able to spare 1-2 hours on a weekly basis to listen to children read in the junior school. All volunteers will need a Working with Children's Check. Training will be provided at the beginning of the 2023 school year for parishioners who would like to be a part of the program. If you're interested please contact Bec Mellerick on 0402064081 or via email rmellerick@smgreensborough.catholic.edu.au

CHILDREN'S LITURGY AT 10.00 MASS. We would love to be able to offer Children's Liturgy at 10.00 Masses once again. To do this we will need at least 4 volunteers to run a session 1 a fortnight or 8 to run it weekly.

Training will be provided and you will be well supported. If you think this is something that might appeal to you, Please contact **Geraldine on 0438 148 896**. Child Safety protocols require a current Working with Children & Police check.

PROJECT COMPASSION Begins on Ash Wednesday. Boxes for your donations will be available.

Each week at Mass a story will be shown to demonstrate the powerful impact each one of us can have for Future Generations. Together, we can create lasting change for people living in some of the most vulnerable and low-income regions in the world. **PICK UP A BOX TODAY.**

Social Justice Group St Mary's Parish



PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR ST.PATRICKS DAY CELEBRATION ON WEDNESDAY 15TH MARCH AT 10.30AM

in the gathering space. Entry \$10.00 per person. Bookings weekend of 11th/12th March after Masses. Enquiries Maureen 9435 5906 Lucy 9435 6990. All welcome



SILENCE IN LITURGY God addresses us through the scriptures. But silence is what helps us discover the meaning and power of these words, letting them 'sink in' and be absorbed into our minds and hearts. In addition to the short periods of silence observed by the Reader after the first and second readings, we will again have a period of silent reflection following the Homily. **The first collection** will be taken up after this period of reflection.

THE PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY: The prayer shawl ministry meets in the Gathering Space 10am - 12pm on Mondays. Enquires: Maureen Leahy—0407 687 517; Anne Fleming— 0409 234 326 .

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT: First Friday of month, after 9.15am Mass to 3pm. Spend whatever time you can.

All Welcome.

Applications are invited from suitably qualified and experienced people for the positions of:

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

- Human Resource Partner
- Retail Shop Assistant – St Patricks Cathedral Shop
- Wellbeing Manager

Parish Positions

- Parish Bookkeeper – St Andrew's Parish, Werribee
- Pastoral Worker – St Andrew's Parish, Werribee
- Parish Secretary – St Dominic's Parish, Melton
- Parish Administrative Coordinator - St Patrick's and St Kevin's Parishes, Murrumbeena
- Parish Secretary – Parishes of Frankston

Other Positions

- Secretary/Finance Administrator – Brunswick Moreland Catholic Community
- Pastoral Care and Hospitality Lead – Brunswick Moreland Catholic Community
- Stewardship Coordinator – Brunswick Moreland Catholic Community
- Evangelisation Coordinator – Brunswick Moreland Catholic Community
- Cook – Oblate Community

Further details of the above positions can be found on the Archdiocese website <https://melbournecatholic.org/job-vacancies>

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



BAPTISMS: we pray for Anthony and Mia who will be welcomed into the Sacred Heart community in February.

LENTEN PRAYER AND REFLECTION SESSIONS will be held at Sacred Heart on Tuesday evenings at 7.00pm beginning on Tuesday 21st February 2023. This evening group will especially support our catechumen in his preparation for the sacraments at Easter. Please register with the office. diamondcreek@cam.org.au

PLAQUE FOR FR TAO: We are accepting donations from the community towards a plaque in the Garden of Reflection at Diamond Creek. Please place envelopes in the Parish Pastoral Council Suggestion Box at the back of the church. Thank you.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE - FRIDAY, MARCH 3rd, 2023 at 10:30 am at SACRED HEART CHURCH, DIAMOND CREEK. The World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. The theme for 2023 is I HAVE HEARD ABOUT YOUR FAITH based on Ephesians 1:15-19 and has been prepared by the Christian Women of Taiwan. Our guest speaker will be Sarah Puls, a Good Samaritan Sister. We will be joined by parishioners from St John's Anglican Church and the Uniting Church. It would be wonderful to see as many people as possible from our partnered parishes plus any family members or friends joining us on this day. There will be a collection to help the immigrant brides of Taiwan via the inter-church organisation. Help will be needed to set up the Morning Tea at the back of the church and serve the tea and coffee.

Could everyone coming please bring a plate to share with our visitors? With thanks, Marg Farrell 0402 656 994

CHURCH CLEANING ROSTER: We are trying to get enough helpers together to begin a new cleaning roster here at Sacred Heart.

Please contact Marg Farrell or Wendy McEvoy if you are available margfarrell1951@gmail.com 0402 656 994

wmcevoy@hotmail.com 0438 154 759

SENIOR MOMENTS: Wednesday 1st March lunch 12pm at Diamond Creek Hotel.

Wednesday 15th March lunch & scrabble 12pm in Parish Office.

ROSTERS

Sunday 26th February: Sacred Heart 9am

Reader: A. Pieper

Commentator: B. Greaves

Eucharistic Ministers: C. Garzia, C. Ledda

Saturday 4th March: St Peter's 7.15pm

Reader: E. Gittins

Commentator: Aminda

Eucharistic Ministers: P. Leonard, Dharshanie

THERE WILL BE A LEAVING COLLECTION FOR THE CARITAS EARTHQUAKE APPEAL AFTER MASSES THIS WEEKEND

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL meeting 9th February: Pat Guatta opened the meeting with a **Prayer for Parish Groups**.

Agenda items included: Members completing the **Safeguarding Essentials Online** Training Module.

Ecumenical World Day of Prayer: Sacred Heart to host Diamond Creek Uniting and St John's Anglican churches Friday 3rd March at 10.30am. Guest speaker Good Samaritan Sister Sarah Puls.

Sacred Heart School Foundation Year Connections Evening Tuesday 21st March. Alison has preparations well underway. We will need babysitters on the night.

Sr Margaret asked **how do we evangelise?** and will circulate Pope Francis's recent articles.

Children's Liturgy to be 2nd and 4th Sunday of month.

We proposed a suggested date for a first meeting of a **Combined Umbrella Parish Pastoral Council**.

Plaque for Fr Tao to be placed in Sacred Heart *Garden of Reflection*.

Recent **Thanksgiving Renewal** Campaign was promising.

Thank you to Maureen Walsh and Judy Hoyne who have stepped down from PPC. **Photo board** of members in Church to be updated.

Parish Pastoral Council: Email: ppcdiamondcreek@gmail.com

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

Katie Pittle, Catherine Leonard, Peter Mejak, Joan Moran, Bridie Burke, Mary Rafferty, Thomas Keenan, Mervyn Bourke, Jacob Draper, Kath Rickard.

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

Nese Roberts, Leanne Lynch, Judy Vincent, Mary Crothers.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST THOMAS



BAPTISMS: Please pray for Henry, Andreas, Teddi, and Sonny who are being baptised later this month.

Rosters for Weekend 25th & 26th February 2023

Saturday 6.00pm

Reader: K. Salm

Commentator: T. Holland

Eucharistic Ministers: J. Bohan, T. Holland, M. McKenzie

Set Up: K. Salm

Sunday 10.30am

Reader: F. Landy

Commentator: B. Iacobacci

Eucharistic Ministers: B. Riordan, M. Tipping, A. Kerr

Set Up: C. O'Brien

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL: Next Meeting, Wednesday 15th March, 7.00pm. Email: stthomasppc@gmail.com

BUILDING BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP.....Come and join us **EVERYONE** welcome mark your calendars for the **4th**

Thursday of the month at 1.30pm at PHOENIX 285 Diamond Creek Road Plenty at 1.30pm.

February's get together is on **Thursday 23rd at 1.30pm**. Could you let me know if you intend coming on or

before 20th February so I can book a table.

Email me stewmarg@bigpond.net.au or text on 0408370685 **Marg**



GREENSBOROUGH INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL: The Greensborough Inter-Church Council exists to encourage people from the community with a wide range of Christian beliefs to come together to provide support to each other and the community in general. They work together on various events throughout the year, particularly leading up to Easter and Christmas, and raise funds to support members of our community in need. St Thomas has not been represented on this Council for the last two years, however it is important that we stay involved in this important ministry.

Enquiries can be made to the St Thomas Parish office.

THERE WILL BE A LEAVING COLLECTION FOR THE CARITAS EARTHQUAKE APPEAL AFTER MASSES THIS WEEKEND

St Thomas prayers are asked for the following Parishioners:

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

Miran Kasalo, John Iacobucci, Andelko Korculanin, Estelle Smooker, Tina Butera

We pray for those who have died including *Marlene Borg & Ronnie Cachia (sister & brother in law of Joe De Carlo) and all those whose Anniversaries occur in the month of February that they may enter Joyfully into God's Kingdom:*

Fr Peter Fulton, Mary Crothers, Francesca Serrao, Reginald Chircop,, Sanico de Carlo, Brian Kenny, Nick Buttifant, Giuseppe Piccolo, Eddie Scully, Leslie Lowe, Kevin Phin, Rosemary Schneider, Alfonso Nguyen, Maria Nguyen, Vito Zuccula

ARCHDIOCESE AND COMMUNITY NEWS

A MESSAGE FROM AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED AUSTRALIA: HELP SYRIA. *Aid to the Church in Need* (ACN) has launched an emergency appeal for the people in northern Syria desperate for help following the devastating earthquakes. ACN is begging for funds to support their long-time local project partners on the ground in Syria. To read more about what ACN is doing and to make an offering please visit: www.aidtochurch.org/syriaearthquake

CHANGE THEIR LIVES ... AND YOURS. Communities in Africa, Asia or the Pacific are seeking Australians from a variety of professions and trades to share their skills with those who have less opportunity to develop their talents.

Explore 35 positions by scanning the QR code below. On our website you can also see news including stories from those currently supported in Timor-Leste, Samoa, American Samoa and Thailand. Please enquire further about potential assignments for you or someone you know: **RING: 02 9560 5333 or 0422 472 567.** WEB: www.palms.org.au

PLEASE JOIN CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE TO CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION at the Sung Celebration of Evening Prayer Guest Speaker Dr Graeme Blackman AO *Chancellor of University of Divinity* Date: Sunday 5th March 2023 at 3.30pm Location: St Patrick's Cathedral, East Melbourne Enq: sarah.styring@ctc.edu.au or Ph 9412 3333.



BISHOP ROBERT RABBAT'S

SYRIAN EARTHQUAKE APPEAL



PLEASE DONATE NOW

The recent Syrian earthquake has hit people who were already displaced in a region that has been devastated by more than a decade of civil war. Yet again, we are seeing people fleeing and desperate for shelter in freezing winter conditions. We want to help provide that light in the deepest darkness, to get through this devastating disaster.

MCF DGR ACCOUNT

Ref: Syrian Appeal

BSB: 062784

Account: 100011493

All donations are Tax Deductible.

For a receipt please email

mcf@melkite.org.au

or contact on (02) 9750 5514

Melkite
iCare

 **Melkite**
Charitable Foundation

First Reading Lv 19:1-2. 17-18

You must love your neighbour, as yourself.

The Lord spoke to Moses; he said: ‘Speak to the whole community of the sons of Israel and say to them: “Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy.

“You must not bear hatred for your brother in your heart. You must openly tell him, your neighbour, of his offence; this way you will not take a sin upon yourself. You must not exact vengeance, nor must you bear a grudge against the children of your people. You must love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord.”’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 102:1-4. 8. 10. 12-13. R. v.8

(R.) The Lord is kind and merciful.

1. My soul, give thanks to the Lord, all my being, bless his holy name. My soul, give thanks to the Lord and never forget all his blessings. (R.)
2. It is he who forgives all your guilt, who heals every one of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with love and compassion. (R.)
3. The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy. He does not treat us according to our sins nor repay us according to our faults. (R.)
4. As far as the east is from the west so far does he remove our sins. As a father has compassion on his sons, the Lord has pity on those who fear him. (R.)

Second Reading 1 Cor 3:16-23

All things are yours, but you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.

Didn't you realise that you were God's temple and that the Spirit of God was living among you? If anybody should destroy the temple of God, God will destroy him, because the temple of God is sacred; and you are that temple.

Make no mistake about it: if any one of you thinks of himself as wise, in the ordinary sense of the word, then he must learn to be a fool before he really can be wise. Why? Because the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. As scripture says: The

Lord knows wise men's thoughts: he knows how useless they are, or again: God is not convinced by the arguments of the wise. So there is nothing to boast about in anything human: Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life and death, the present and the future, are all your servants; but you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.

Gospel Acclamation 1 Jn 2:5

Alleluia, alleluia!

Whoever keeps the word of Christ, grows perfect in the love of God.

Alleluia!

Gospel Mt 5:38-48

Love your enemies.

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘You have learnt how it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say this to you: offer the wicked man no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; if a man takes you to law and would have your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone orders you to go one mile, go two miles with him. Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

‘You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest men alike. For if you love those who love you, what right have you to claim any credit? Even the tax collectors do as much, do they not? And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do as much, do they not? You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.’



Reflection by Greg Sunter

The first part of today's gospel passage is perhaps one of the most misunderstood of Jesus' teachings. The notion of turning the other cheek usually brings up notions of non-violence, submission, or even sometimes a victim mentality. It seems an odd teaching to tell someone who is being hit to simply stand there and present the other cheek to also be hit. It's odd because we generally fail to understand the cultural context that is the setting for this teaching.

In the first century, a master would discipline a slave or servant by striking them with the back of his hand. Assuming the master is right handed, a back-handed strike would be delivered to the right cheek of the person he faced. If the servant were to then present his left cheek to the master, it becomes impossible for the master to strike with the back of his hand and forces him into using an open-hand slap or a closed-fist punch to the left cheek. Not much of an improvement, you might think. However, servants were disciplined with the back of the hand and only equals fought in such a way that would deliver blows to the left side.

What Jesus is saying to those who are oppressed is to offer no resistance but at the same time stand up for yourself and make your oppressor recognise you and treat you as an equal, not an inferior. It is extremely dangerous advice! Its aim is to shame the oppressor.

The other two examples, surrendering your cloak when sued for your tunic and walking two miles when required to walk one are also examples of seeking to shame the one who would use their power and strength against you. That's not being a submissive wimp; that's staring the bully in the eye!

The psalm responses are from the English Translation of the **Lectionary for the Mass** ©1981 International Committee on English in the Liturgy Inc. (ICEL). All rights reserved. The psalm texts, from **The Psalms, A New Translation**, ©1963 by The Grail, England and used by permission of the publishers. The scriptural quotations are taken from the **Jerusalem Bible**, published and copyright 1966, 1967 and 1968 by Darton Longman and Todd Ltd and Doubleday & Co Inc, and used by permission of the publishers. © 2017 Creative Ministry Resources Pty Ltd All use must be in accordance with your user licensing agreement.