



St George Maronite Catholic Church, Thornleigh

Our Parish

Our Lives on Earth are Our Pathway to Heaven

"But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written:
'Be holy, because I am holy.'" (1 Peter 1: 15-16)

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Year 2022, Issue #12

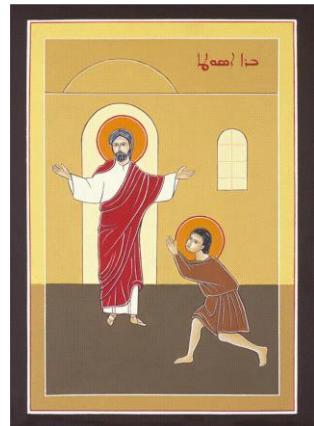
Sunday 20th March 2022

The Gospel

Luke 15: 11-32

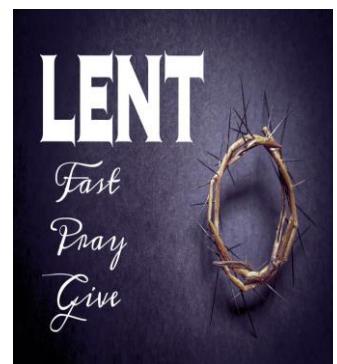
The Lord Jesus says: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.' "So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe the best one and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate. 'Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound." Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, "Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!" Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found."

Season of Lent



Next Sunday
**Sunday of the
Paralytic
Epistle**

**1 Tim 5: 24 – 6:5
Gospel
Mark 2: 1-12**



Divine Liturgy and Services

Sundays: 9:00am (Arabic), 11:00am (Arabic/English), 6:00pm (English)

Mondays and Tuesdays: 9:00am

Wednesdays – Fridays: 6:00pm

Saturdays: 9:00am and 6:00pm

Confessions: By Appointment

Sick Visits: Contact Clergy or the Parish Office (contact details below)

Parish and Ministry Team and Contact Details

Parish Administrator: Fr Claude Rizk 0422 819 277

Deacons: Nagi Dimian 0403 750 613, Robert-Pio Al Bayeh 0414 447 883, Joseph Maatouk 0413 245 501

Parish Secretary: Debrah Habkouk 0422 275 199

Office Hours: Tuesdays – Fridays 9:00am - 5.00pm

Parish Safeguarding Officers: Margaret Simpson 0408 895 798, Jessica Georges 0426 114 696, George Takchi 0419 651 229

Parish Address: 2 Yarrara Road (Corner Wells Street), Thornleigh, NSW, 2120



Bishop's Corner: Sunday of the Prodigal Son



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Lent is an opportunity every year to go back to ourselves and to God, to rediscover His great mercy, His immense forgiveness, and His amazing love. The Parable of the Prodigal Son, which is the core of our reflection on this fourth Sunday of Lent presents to us a wonderful and meaningful story about our relationship with God. In this parable, Our Lord wanted to put into pictures a truth, deeper than any lecture, and a narrative deeper than any homily or reflection.

In this parable, the younger son first shows that he believes only in himself and material things. He wants to leave his father's house thinking he will be free to do whatever he wants. But he soon finds that material things do not last, and the pleasures which come from them are soon forgotten. The flesh has an appetite which is never satisfied. When all his money is gone and his friends have deserted him, the question was where is the hope, where is this freedom? His only hope now is in his father's goodness.

The father has compassion on his son. He had been standing at his front door, looking long and hard for a sign of the return of his son. The father who is the very source of hope for his children had himself hope that the one who had been lost, would return to him and he was waiting for that moment. In fact, although the father is the perfect apostle of hope simply by him being what he is and being in his own house, the younger son also becomes an apostle of hope by the loving act of returning in a spirit of penance.

There is another very important lesson for us in this parable, and a powerful incentive to acknowledge our sins, to go to confession, and to do penance for them. Through God's mercy, the one who has sinned but now repents, is treated as if he had never sinned, as if he never done wrong. He is fully restored to his rights and to his honours. There is an Eastern saying that for two things alone there is no limit: the stupidity of man and the mercy of God. There is some truth in that.

Our hope is that we realise in our life how blessed we are by having the opportunity to be believers in Jesus Christ and living in the father's house. We are invited to learn that leaving the father's house is a sign of death and coming back is a sign of life. And then, by our very act of returning to the father's house, we become apostles of hope for ourselves and for others.

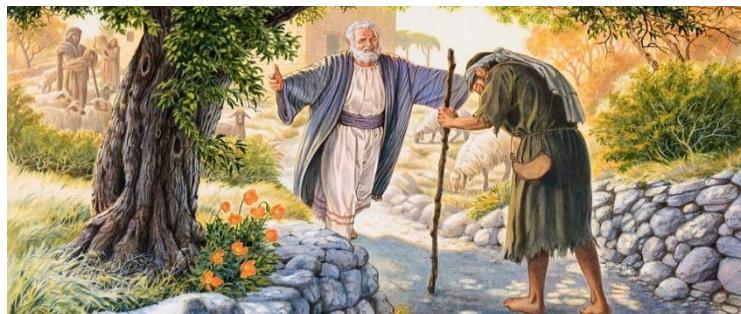
Consecration of Russia and Ukraine

The Vatican has announced that His Holiness Pope Francis will consecrate Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on Friday 25 March, Feast of the Annunciation, in St Peter's Basilica. The same act, on the same day, will be performed in Fatima by Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, papal almoner.

Our Maronite Church in Australia will participate in the consecration in our Churches raising our prayers to God our Father, so that through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, he will grant us the gift of peace.

Let us strive to be apostles of hope this week!

+ Antoine-Charbel Tarabay



The Word from Your Servant

This Sunday, as we enter the Fourth Week of Lent, we hear the well-known Gospel of the Prodigal Son. No doubt we are all familiar with this beautiful story of forgiveness. But do we see through this parable that our Lord Jesus said that the forgiving Father is God our Father? Pope Francis has said (15 September 2013) "God is joyful! And what is the joy of God? The joy of God is forgiving! The joy of a father welcoming home the son who was lost, who was as though dead and has come back to life, who has come home. each one of us is that son who has squandered his freedom on false idols, illusions of happiness, and has lost everything. God does not forget us; the Father never abandons us. He is a patient Father, always waiting for us! He respects our freedom, but he remains faithful forever. And when we come back to Him, He welcomes us like children into his house, for he never ceases, not for one instant, to wait for us with love. And his heart rejoices over every child who returns."

During this Lent, let us remember our merciful, loving, joyful Father. Let us take this opportunity to seek His mercy during this time of fasting and prayer particularly through the Sacrament of Confession. God is so gentle and all He wants is our company and our hearts. He will come out to welcome and assist us with our return if we decide to return to Him. Best of all, He will give us a share of His immense joy, just as the Father of the Prodigal Son brought out the best to welcome back his son.

When we are in communion with God, we will not behave like the older son who was unhappy about the joy of his Father. Just as God wants to forgive us for the many harms and hurts we have inflicted on Him, we must stretch our hearts to forgive those who have harmed us either intentionally or unintentionally. We are not more righteous than God and it is not for us to act like the older son, and judge others. Let us embrace God's heart in ours to share his joy of forgiveness.

It was with much joy that I witnessed the continuation and growth of **Faith Formation** in our Parish this past week. Just as we spend time learning about our friends, Faith Formation will help us to learn more about God. I can assure you that the more we learn about God our Father, the more we will love Him and His Son, our Lord Jesus. Last week we commenced with the three sessions of the Stations of the Cross. It is so uplifting to see the Church filled with our faithful Parishioners for each session. The children's prayers are like the chatter of angels, the Arabic session are our foundations and the Youth session are our hope. The Fersen children met on Saturday to receive suitable formation for their age – thank you to Ray and the teenagers who are continuing to deliver these valuable lessons to our children. On Tuesday night, Sonia Gabriel presented the first of the Faith Formation talks "A journey from anxiety to God." This was an inspirational presentation. On Wednesday night, only the bricks and mortar separated the two groups who attended the Church's premises to receive formation – the Teens continued to receive their formation in the Church Hall about the Last Seven Words of our Lord – with a focus on "today you will be with me in Paradise" and the Youth received formation from Deacon Joe in the Church about Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving. Of course, on Thursday nights we are continuing to spend time with our Lord exposed on the Tabernacle during Adoration.

Accompanying the ongoing formation, and as we continue to grow and bring more people back to God, the Pastoral Council is looking for opportunities to expand our premises to hold more community activities. We are currently exploring the possibility of constructing a small hall facility in the backyard of the property next door. Plans are in a preliminary stage including awaiting approval of his Excellency Bishop Antoine Tarabay. We are also awaiting his Excellency's selection of the new Stewardship Committee.

Please continue to pray for the growth and unity of our Parish.

Father Claude Rizk

Parish News and Upcoming Events



WE ARE HIRING ASSISTANT PARISH SECRETARY

Part Time Position

To apply or for more information, please contact Fr Claude 0422 819 277 or email info@stgeorgemcc.org.au

HOLY THURSDAY SEVEN CHURCHES PILGRIMAGE

Thursday 14th April 2022
Departing at 8:30pm (After Holy Thursday Mass)
Cost: \$15/person
For bookings, contact the Parish Office

A banner featuring a large white cross and a smaller image of Jesus on the cross.

FERN MAR GERGES

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

PALM SUNDAY 7TH - 10TH APRIL (ALL DAY) ST GEORGE FEAST 21ST - 23RD APRIL (ALL DAY)

A poster showing two large flatbreads.

Bible Study

IN YOUR HOME

Commencing in the first week of March on any evening from 7:30pm - 8:30pm.
Open your home and invite whomever you would like to attend.
The session can be given in Arabic, English or both!
Please contact Fr Claude, Deacon Naji or Michael Azzi if you would like to host a Bible Study.

ST GEORGE FERSEN

EVERY SATURDAY DURING THE SCHOOL TERM 4.00PM - 5.30PM

YEAR 1 - YEAR 6
Scan me to register your children

A QR code and icons for children and books.

CHURCH CLEAN UP DAY

A poster featuring a watering can and a wheelbarrow.

Saturday 9th April 2022
9:30am start
Anyone free is welcome to join us and help clean up our Parish.

st George Maronite Catholic Church, Thornleigh

PLAY GROUP

Ages 0-5 years old FREE
All welcome! Come join us as and build our community family.

Every Tuesdays from 9am - 12pm
Commencing Tuesday 5th April 2022
For more information, please contact Mary 0422 871 197

A colorful poster with cartoon children holding letters spelling out "PLAY GROUP".

ATTENTION PARISHIONERS

IN PREPARATION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARONITE EPARCHY (1973 - 2023)

WE ARE CALLING UPON ALL OUR PARISHIONERS WHO HAVE ANY HISTORICAL INFORMATION & IMAGES

KINDLY FORWARD TO YOUR PARISH OFFICE OR CONTACT THE MARONITE CHANCERY ON 02 8831 0000

First Holy Communion

Registration open for this year's Holy Communion program.
To register, please contact the Parish Office 02 9481 7388 info@stgeorgemcc.org.au

Registrations close Friday 25th March 2022

An image of a chalice and a host.

Lenten LUNCH

Mass @ 11am
Followed by FREE Luncheon in the Church Hall
All are welcome

Every Thursday in the Season of Lent

An illustration of a bowl of soup and bread.

MASS LIVE STREAMING

Sundays at 9:00am only

Memorial Masses

نوايا القدسات

Sunday 20 th March 2022	11am	1 Year Mass for the Late Badiha Merhi	قداس السنة المرحومة بديعة مرعي	١١ :٠٠	الاحد ٢٠٢٢ اذار
Thursday 24 th March 2022	6pm	Late George Boutros Hallal	قداس المرحوم جورج بطرس حلال	٦ :٠٠	الخميس ٢٠٢٢ اذار
Sunday 27 th March 2022	11am	Late Ayoub and Nabiha Fachkha	قداس المرحومين أيوب و نبيهة فشكها	١١ :٠٠	الاحد ٢٠٢٢ اذار

Congratulations to the Newly Baptised: Joshua Anthony Thomas Mouyat

Parish Camera



Weekly Thursday Evening Adoration

Children's Stations of the Cross (Fridays during Lent)

Parish Financial Updates

28th February – 13th March
TBA

To receive our eNewsletter
please email
info@stgeorgemcc.org.au

Parish Operations Account

\$11,341.75

Parish Loan
Balance
\$611,613.11



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Donations to support our ongoing Parish mission
can be made at the Parish Office or by internet banking or
direct debit - (Account Name: St George Maronite Church,
BSB #062-784, Account # 16948504)



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