



Mary Immaculate Parish Bulletin



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Office hours: Tuesday – Friday 9:30am – 3:30pm

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT – year A

22ND MARCH 2026

The Sacrament of Penance – Confession – Reconciliation. Part Four

Fr Leo Mifsud OMI

Resuming on from last week's article on the Sacrament of Reconciliation we saw that there are four parts to the sacrament: **Contrition, Confession, Absolution and Penance.**

Contrition: It is important that before we go to Reconciliation (Confession) that we prepare ourselves. This preparation is how we form 'contrition'. Contrition is not just 'feeling guilty' about what we have done, it also involves understanding the effects of our sins. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, (Luke 15:11-32), Jesus tells us that after he had rejected his father and turned from his family, the son "*came to his senses*". This was the beginning of contrition. Next the son then realized the consequences of his choices i.e., he was no longer entitled to be called 'son' or make claim to anything of the family.

We sometimes take for granted that God's mercy is greater than any sin. But the Prodigal reminds us that before we can take advantage of His mercy, we must first seek it. Furthermore, presuming God's mercy is not seeking forgiveness (repentance), it is an act of arrogance. Contrition (repentance) is pursuing God's mercy, albeit with confidence in his forgiveness, but on God's terms, not ours.

It is also necessary to understand, when a sin has been committed. A sin can only be committed if it's done, firstly, with full knowledge. It is not just the fact that something bad has happened as a result of one's action but also the intention for the bad result must also be present. One cannot accidentally sin. This is especially true of grave (mortal) sins. When it comes to venial (lesser) sins one should pray to see patterns of behaviour and ask God to give us the courage to check them before they lead us into mortal sin.

Rite One for Reconciliation (sometimes called, Face to Face)

Note: that in the Confessional you have the choice to either sit before the priest or kneel behind the screen. And please note that if you kneel behind the screen, ensure that the priest can easily hear you.

Confession: When approaching the Priest, the penitent begins by telling the priest how long it has been since their last confession. Usually using the formula "bless me father, I have sinned. It has been (*a week; a month; years*) since my last confession". This allows the priest to gauge how much pastoral care and sensitivity is required.

If there are grave sins, the penitent should begin with those. They should also mention the frequency of the sin/sins to indicate if they are an ongoing problem. One does not have to go into minute details but stick to the essential which may be necessary to identify the nature of the sin/sins.

The priest is not your judge in the confessional; he is your advocate. You can ask the priest to assist you if you are finding it difficult.

When confessing venial sins do not go through a list but rather, as you have done in your preparation, look for patterns of behaviour or attitudes which underpin the sins you may commit. For example: instead of listing; gossip or prejudice towards someone, etc., you may confess a 'lack of charity' or a 'lack of compassion'. Or again instead of listing 'neglect of prayers or constantly being late for Mass etc', one should seek forgiveness for a 'lack the awareness of God's presence' or 'lack of commitment to the practise of the faith'.

Mistakes to Avoid in Confession:

- **Lack of preparation** can lead to a mechanical approach rather than a faith/growth experience.
- **Just popping in for a quick confession before Mass.** This treats the sacrament like going to a drive-through. Five or ten minutes before Mass is not enough to celebrate the Sacrament. It also distracts the priest from his preparation for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The priest will always feel obliged to say yes in case you have a **grave (mortal) sin.** But from experience this is rarely the case. In which case the lack of time available hardly makes it a worthy celebration.
- **Deflecting the blame:** I committed the sin 'because someone else got me angry' or 'It wasn't my fault...'
Confession requires that you confess YOUR sins not what someone else does.
- **Confessing Others' Sins:** The sins or identity of others should not be part of YOUR confession.
- **Being Vague:** When confessing grave (mortal) sins one should not be vague. Be specific but you do not have overly detailed.

- **Over-Scrupulosity:** Not all sins have equal gravity; do not fixate over minor faults that are not clear sins. And keep in mind that we are not culpable for any sins for which we may have not done deliberately.
- **Bring up past sins:** Once sins are absolved, they are ‘completely’ (once and for all time) forgiven.
- **Treating it as Counselling:** Giving someone counsel is vastly different from conducting a counselling session. Confession is a Sacrament for confession of sins and absolution. If someone needs counselling, it would be better to see a priest outside of the confessional.

Absolution: Only an ordained priest or bishop can give absolution. The Absolution is more than a ‘prayer for forgiveness’, which anyone can pray for another person. Absolution is what marks Reconciliation as a Sacrament. When the priest prays over the penitent, “I absolve you of all your sins ...” he is speaking on behalf of God as well as on the whole Church. A fundamental change in the penitent’s relationship with God and with the Church effected. The penitent is restored to the state of a newly baptised, and in fact Reconciliation has, from antiquity been called ‘a second Baptism’.

And just as an aside, a priest is not bound to give Absolution if he knows that the penitent is not contrite nor has any intention of trying to live a life of grace. Before giving Absolution, the priest will ask the penitent to make an Act of Contrition, which is a declaration that, being aware of God’s love and forgiveness the penitent, understanding their own weakness is still resolved to persevere a life of Grace.

Penance: The priest gives the penitent a penance to perform. The penance is often a prayer but sometimes it might be a good deed of sorts. Penance is not to be seen as a ‘payment’ for the offence of sin (that is best understood a restitution which can sometimes be asked of the penitent). Penance is our outward expression of gratitude and our willingness to accept the new life we have been given.

Next week PART 5

Launch of the International Eucharistic Congress 2028

The Australian Church is setting out on the journey toward the International Eucharistic Congress, Sydney 2028 (Eucharist28), a great time of renewal and transformation centred on encountering the Eucharistic Lord. In preparation, Australian Catholics will enter a Year of Prayer - March 2026, focused on rediscovering Our Lord’s love in the Blessed Sacrament. The theme, ***This is My Body, Given for You***, calls us to deeper faith, generosity and mission. Learn more about the way ahead at eucharist28.org.

Regulations for Lent

Ash Wednesday and **Good Friday** are days of Fast and Abstaining from meat.

On **Fridays of the year AND Fridays of Lent**, the practice of penance is fulfilled by performing any one of the following:

- prayer – for example, Mass attendance; family prayer; a visit to a church or chapel; reading the Bible; making the Stations of the Cross; praying the rosary.
- self-denial – for example, not eating meat; not eating sweets or dessert; giving up entertainment to spend time with the family; limiting food and drink so as to give to the poor of one’s own country.
- helping others – for example, special attention to someone who is poor, sick, elderly, lonely or overburdened.

Footsteps of St. Eugene de Mazenod Charism Pilgrimage 2026

This pilgrimage will take us to key Oblate sites in Paris, Aix-en-Provence, Marseille, and Rome. At the General House in Rome, we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Oblate Constitutions and Rules. The pilgrimage will be spiritually led by our Provincial, Fr Andrew Chen OMI. Other Oblates will be on the pilgrimage, including Fr. Didier.

When: 21 June – 2 July 2026

Indicative Cost: \$8,300 (land only, twin share)

Registrations close **17 May 2026**. Only a few places remain.

For more information visit: <https://omi.com.au/charism-pilgrimage> OR scan QR or contact Emma Rice at erice@omi.com.au | 03 9805 8834



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27th March

Stations of the Cross

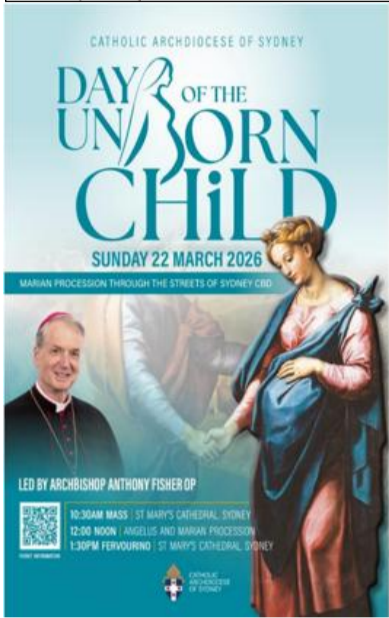


STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Friday 27th March 7.00pm
Mary Immaculate Catholic Church, Eagle Vale

Presented by: L'Estro Armonico Youth String Orchestra

A collection will be taken to support the youth orchestra



Catechist Retreat: 27th March - Rosemeadow

All Catechists and supporters of the Catechist Ministry are welcome to join us on a special day of retreat in Rosemeadow on Friday 27 March. The theme for the retreat is Gospel Conversion: Turning to the God of Jesus. Retreat facilitator, Fr Aloysius Rego OCD, will lead us into a greater understanding of the God of Jesus, as revealed to us in Scripture.

There will be times for prayer, learning and discussion. Mass is planned before lunch. Please BYO lunch. Morning Tea provided.

Donations are welcome however there is no cost for the retreat. REGISTER NOW: dow.sh/CCDRETREAT26

29th March Legion of Mary

All active and auxiliary members of legion of Mary are invited to the annual ACIE's to be held at Immaculate Conception Church, Unanderra at 2pm on Sunday, 29 March 2026.

Refreshments will be provided in the parish room afterwards.

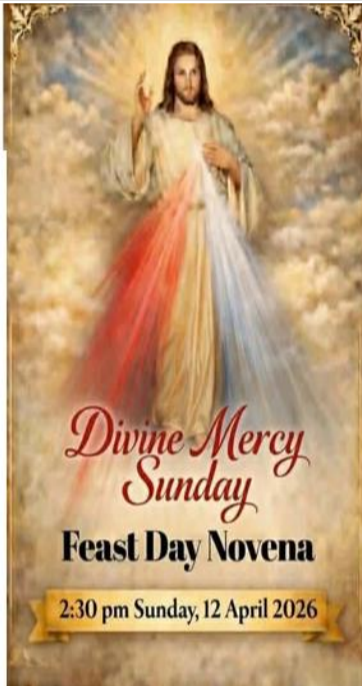
Please bring a plate. Any enquiries call Susan 0449 807 814.



Divine Mercy Week

9-Day Novena

- Day 1: Fri, 3rd Apr (Good Friday) 4:30 pm
- Day 2: Sat, 4th Apr (Holy Saturday) 10am
- Day 3: Sun, 5th Apr (Easter Sunday) 11am
- Day 4: Mon, 6th Apr 9:30 am
- Day 5: Tue, 7th Apr 9:30 am
- Day 6: Wed, 8th Apr 6:45 pm
- Day 7: Thu, 9th Apr 9:30 am
- Day 8: Fri, 10th Apr 9:30 am
- Day 9: Sat, 11th Apr 10am



13th APRIL Life in the Spirit Seminar - 9 week series

As part of Bible Study & reflection group.

Which meets Mondays at 10am at the Meeting Room.

OLMC Parish, 193 St Andrews Rd, Varroville.

For more details Nelli Rafidi 0411965526

or Parish Office 96037373

Come & Join !



Try Alpha

Alpha is a Safe Space to explore Life, purpose and the Christian Life, ask questions and share your point of view

Alpha is free and everyone is welcome. Starting with dinner at 7:00pm

Wednesday 15th April
Mary Immaculate Parish Hall
61 Emerald Drive, Eagle Vale



Got questions?
Ivanka: 0449 528 609
May: 0416 157 294



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20th & 21st APRIL - ASIST Workshop

8.30am - 4.30pm both days - Location: 36 Harbour Street Wollongong, NSW 2500

CatholicCare is an accredited provider of LivingWorks Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). It is two-day in-person workshop where you'll learn how to recognise when someone may be thinking about suicide, and how to provide a skilled intervention and develop a safety plan with the person to connect them to further support.

To book call Rita Maher on 0458 472 983 or email ritam@catholiccare.dow.org.au

18th April - Diocesan Youth Sports Festival

Young people from ages 15 to 35 are invited to come together for the very first Diocesan Youth Sports Festival- a huge day of sport, faith and community.

When: Saturday 18 April 2026

Time: 9.30am - 3.30pm

Where: Holy Spirit College, Bellambi

Cost: \$50 per team | \$10 per person

Form a team of 7+ to compete in a fast-paced round-robin tournament. The twist? Teams vote on the main sport of the day, so register early and get training! Prefer something lower intensity? A table tennis competition will run throughout the day with plenty of chances to jump in. Morning tea and a BBQ lunch are included, and the day will finish with Mass celebrated by Bishop Brian at St Columbkille's Church in Corrimal. Register here:

dow.sh/youthsportsfest

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PLEASE PRAY FOR-



THE SICK: Lisa Farnhill, George Kowalik, Adrian Banks, Christine Debski, Ana Villagonzalo, Pinky Arenas, Evelyn Arenas, Lachlan Abood, Jaetan Noyeaux, Willow Morrison, Charbel Aziz, Pauline Iacono, Margaret Roberts. Fr John Pickering,

THE DECEASED: For the repose of the souls of Julie Saliba, Victoria and Raquel Racca, Maria Nunes, John Freeman, John & Joan Jonathan, Adi & Djioe Lan, Nora Thackeray, Alan Hamilton and Sean Fahey whose anniversaries occur at this time. May they and all Holy Souls rest in the peace.

Pope Leo's monthly intention for MARCH: For disarmament and peace

Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.

MASS INTENTIONS 21 st – 28 th March. 2026	
Sat 5.30pm Sat	For the anniversary of death of Julie Saliba
SUNDAY	
8.30am	For May Ataya on her birthday
10.00am	For the death anniversary of Victoria and Raquel Racca
5.30pm	For the People of the Parish (Pro Populo)
Mon. 9.00am	For the anniversary of death of Maria Nunes
Tues. 9.00am	For the 10th anniversary of death of John Freeman
Wed. 7.30pm	For birthday thanksgiving for Emillie Racca
Thur. 9.00am	For the souls of John and Joan Jonathan and Adi & Djioe Lan
Fri. 9.00am	For the anniversary of death of Nora Thackeray
Sat. 9.30am	For the anniversaries of death of Alan Hamilton and Sean Fahey

MINISTERS FOR 28 th / 29 th MARCH 2026	
SAT 5.30PM	
Acolytes:	Robert Squires
E. Ministers:	Tina Morell
Reader:	Julian Rookes
	Veronica Roson
SUN 8.30am	
Acolytes:	Michael Arthur
E. Ministers:	Tahlia Morris
Reader:	Elvina Joby
	Bernedette Peiris
	Ogbeyelu Onyi
SUN 10.00am	
Acolytes:	Jacqui Kho
E. Ministers:	Kathy Gong
Reader:	Samantha Johnson
	Marie-Claire Gopaul
	Genoveva Loyola
SUN 5.30pm	
Acolytes:	Roy Rodriguez
E. Ministers:	Michelle Fogarty
Reader:	Alyssa Fernandez
	Seira Fernandez

Make a Lenten intention to be FIVE MINUTES early for Mass.

WEEKEND MASSES
Saturday Vigil 5:30pm
Sunday 8:30am | 10:00am | 5:30pm.

WEEKDAY MASSES
Mon & Tue: 9:00am / Wednesday: 7:30 pm
Thurs. & Fri 9:00am / Saturday: 9:30am

FILIPINO MASS – 2nd Sunday- 4:00pm.

RECONCILIATIONS:
Saturday 10:00am to 11:00am (with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament)

HOLY HOUR First Saturday of the month led by Filipino Group:

DEVOTIONAL TIMES
ROSARY: BEFORE the weekday Masses.
DIVINE MERCY Chaplet- Fridays after 9:00am Mass
 First Fridays – with Benediction
 Meetings - 4th Friday @ 6.30pm (in Madigan room)
BAPTISMS by appointment.

LENT & EASTER SCHEDULE

EVERY FRIDAY 7:00pm STATIONS OF THE CROSS

27th March - Stations with Orchestra in the Church

29th March – Palm Sunday - All weekend Masses

1st April – **SECOND RITE OF RECONCILIATION** – 7:30pm
Please note: Wednesday Mass will be moved to 9:00am

2nd April – **HOLY THURSDAY** – 7:30pm
 Mass of the Lord's Supper –Followed by Adoration in the Hall.

3rd April – **GOOD FRIDAY** –
 10:00am - STATIONS OF THE CROSS
 11:00am – SECOND RITE OF RECONCILIATION
 3:00pm – THE PASSION OF THE LORD

4th April – **HOLY SATURDAY**
 7:30pm - EASTER VIGIL - with the Blessing of the Fire

5th April – **EASTER SUNDAY**
 8:30am and 10:00am Masses – **No 5:30pm Mass**



Since October 2023, Caritas Jerusalem staff in Gaza have endured displacement, personal loss, and danger alongside the communities they serve. Despite unimaginable challenges, they remain committed to providing lifesaving support, standing in solidarity with families enduring this conflict.

