



St Felix deValois Parish

550 Chapel Road, Bankstown, NSW 2200, Australia

Fr Van Nguyen, Parish Priest

Fr Ronnie Maree, Assistant Priest

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5th Sunday of Lent - Yr A - 29 March 2020

Dear parishioners,

God's love and blessings to you all in this very difficult time!

Whilst we are living through unprecedented events please be assured that the parish is continuing to work to serve you and help you foster your relationship with Our Lord and strengthen our community.

We will continue update information and publish resources through:

- the parish website <https://www.stfelixparish.org.au/>
- the parish bulletin: <https://www.stfelixparish.org.au/bulletins/>
- our outreach email: stfelix.outreach@gmail.com
- the parish Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/stfelixdevaloisparishbankstown/>
- the parish office: 9790 1933

Please be assured of our continued support, prayers and availability in this time.

*Our Lady, Help of Christians, of Lourdes, and of Good Health, pray for us.
Saint Felix, pray for us.*

Yours in Christ,

Fr Van Vuong Nguyen PP
Fr Ronnie Maree

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Penitential Act

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,
through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.
Amen.

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Collect

Let us pray.
By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God,
may we walk eagerly in that same charity
with which, out of love for the world,
your Son handed himself over to death.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

First Reading - Ezekiel 37:12-14

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live.

The Lord says this: I am going to open your graves; I mean to raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel. And you will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, my people. And I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live, and I shall resettle you on your own soil; and you will know that I, the Lord, have said and done this - it is the Lord who speaks.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!

O let your ear be attentive
to the voice of my pleading. **R.**

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
Lord, who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness:
for this we revere you. **R.**

My soul is waiting for the Lord,
I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord
more than watchman for daybreak.
(Let the watchman count on daybreak
and Israel on the Lord.) **R.**

Because with the Lord there is mercy
and fullness of redemption,
Israel indeed he will redeem
from all its iniquity. **R.**

Second Reading - Romans 8:8-11

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans
*If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead
is living in you, then he will give life to your own
mortal bodies.*

People who are interested only in unspiritual things can never be pleasing to God. Your interests, however, are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him. Though your body may be dead it is because of sin, but if Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;
whoever believes in me will not die for ever.

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel - John 11:1-45

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
I am the resurrection and the life.

There was a man named Lazarus who lived in the village of Bethany with the two sisters, Mary and Martha, and he was ill. - It was the same Mary, the sister of the sick man Lazarus, who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair. The sisters sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.'

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.' The disciples said, 'Rabbi, it is not long since the Jews wanted to stone you; are you going back again?' Jesus replied:

'Are there not twelve hours in the day?

A man can walk in the daytime without stumbling because he has the light of this world to see by; but if he walks at night he stumbles, because there is no light to guide him.'

He said that and then added, 'Our friend Lazarus is resting, I am going to wake him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he is able to rest he is sure to get better.' The phrase Jesus used referred to the death of Lazarus, but they thought that by 'rest' he meant 'sleep', so Jesus put it plainly, 'Lazarus is dead; and for your sake I am glad I was not there because now you will believe. But let us go to him.' Then Thomas - known as the Twin - said to the other disciples, 'Let us go too, and die with him.'

On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. Bethany is only about two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to sympathise with them over their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said:

'I am the resurrection and the life.

If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live,

and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

Do you believe this?'

'Yes, Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.'

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in a low voice, 'The Master is here and wants to see you.' Hearing this, Mary got up quickly and went to him. Jesus had not yet come into the village; he was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were in the house sympathising with Mary saw her get up so quickly and go out, they followed her, thinking that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

Mary went to Jesus, and as soon as she saw him she threw herself at his feet, saying, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' At the sight of her tears, and those of the Jews who followed her, Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept; and the Jews said, 'See how much he loved him!' But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man's death?' Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha said to him, 'Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.' Jesus replied, 'Have I not told you that if you believe you

will see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said: 'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer. I knew indeed that you always hear me, but I speak for the sake of all these who stand round me, so that they may believe it was you who sent me.'

When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.'

Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Take time to reflect on the Gospel.
You may like to move forward and read the reflections.

The Creed

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only Begotten Son of God,

born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
He came down from heaven
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin
Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius
Pilate, he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the
right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and
the dead and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of
life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and
glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic
Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins and look forward to the resurrection of the
dead and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

Prayers of the Faithful

Leader: As the time of Christ's suffering and death
draws nearer, let us ask the Father to lead us
through the dark moments of the passover of His
Son to the glory of His Resurrection.

For the holy Church, that she may be defended
from the snares of her enemies through the Spirit
of Christ, who makes his home in her, let us pray
to the Lord.

For all the peoples of this world, that they may be
gathered into the Father's kingdom through the
prayers and sacrifices of Christians in every
nation, let us pray to the Lord.

For the dying, that they may pass peacefully and
confidently through the gates of death to meet him
who is the resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.

For those who mourn, that the Christ who wept for
Lazarus his friend may console them in their grief,
let us pray to the Lord.

For the end of the coronavirus pandemic, for all
the health care professionals fighting the disease
and for all those affected by the virus, let us pray
to the Lord.

For the faithful departed, especially those who
have died from the corona virus and those
mentioned in our parish bulletin, that the Lord may
unbind them and let them go free in the kingdom
of his glory, let us pray to the Lord.

Leader: Father, hear the prayers of your Church. Bring forth to resurrection the people who trust in your promises. Through Christ our Lord.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

Due to the restrictions regarding the celebration of Mass join in saying this prayer expressing your desire to be in union with Jesus Christ and to receive Him in the Eucharist. Recite the prayer below slowly, meditating carefully on each word. Believe that Jesus will give you the grace of a real encounter with Him.

ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart. I
embrace You as if You were already there and
unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to
be separated from You. **Amen.**

Leader: Lord our God, your Son so loved the world that he gave himself up to death for our sake. Strengthen us by your grace, and give us a heart willing to live by that same love. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

5th Sunday of Lent – Year A – 29 March 2020

(A Reflection by Fr Van Nguyen)

You might have read an article printed in the Catholic Weekly a few years ago about Dr. Gloria Polo. She visited Sydney in order to talk about her near-death experience, or for us we may call it a spiritual experience. Gloria said that, one day, while she was having a walk at a University in Colombia with her husband and a nephew, suddenly they were struck by a lightning bolt. Her nephew died instantly, her husband became unconscious, and she herself was dying. When she was hit, she didn't feel anything. Then she found herself enveloped by this immense light which radiated immense love, peace and happiness. She was leaving her body and was given a spiritual awareness that so many people were enslaved by their sins. Many people were totally absorbed in TV, social media, the internet and computer games and were indifferent to the needs of their neighbor. They didn't pray, neither did they have any wish to elevate their own soul to God. Then she found herself in front of a beautiful garden full of living water and living flowers. She believed that that was heaven. She wanted to get in but was not allowed because she died in mortal sin.

Suddenly, she found herself returned to her body probably because of her husband's prayer. Paramedics were working on her. She was taken to a hospital and underwent surgery. Her situation was getting worse. She was burned inside and outside. She suffered from her lungs filled with water and kidney failures. Then she had the second cardiac arrest. Once again, she left her body. It was frightening this time because she found herself heading down toward a big mouth believed to be the entrance into hell. She prayed and suddenly Archangel Michael came and brought her to another place which she believed that it was the purgatory. She saw people living in cells. There were many levels. Those at the highest level were so beautiful. Their faces were radiating with light. Then she saw Jesus opened the Book of Life which recorded everything she had done in her life. She was aware of many things she had done and it was she who condemned herself to hell. It was because so many people in Columbia and many saints prayed for her that she was given a second chance in life. She was returned to her body. Doctors were amazed at how she could survive such a lightning and how quickly she had recovered. She went on even to have another baby.

That was an eye-opening experience for Gloria. Before that event, if people asked about her religion, she would have said she was a Catholic, but it was really in name only. She was practically an atheist. All she did was to get money and the power going with it. After the incident, she has now been trying to get closer to God. She attends Mass every day. She has written a book and travelled widely

around the world to talk to people about the experience, hoping that some may get the message and change their lives while there is still time.

I have just shared with you this amazing story because I think it is relevant to today's Gospel. Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary. Lazarus died but he could only come to visit them four days later. The sisters were so sad and so was Jesus. He cried! He then performed a miracle to raise Lazarus back to life from the dead. He did this because of his love for them. It was also for him to strengthen the disciples' faith in order to prepare them for what was going to happen to him. It did happen as he had foretold. He was crucified and died, but after three days he resurrected. It was only Jesus who could have done this. It was only Jesus who could raise up Lazarus from the dead. It was only Jesus who could bring Gloria back to life and from sin to grace. It is as Jesus said to Martha, 'I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.'

What happened to Lazarus and Gloria do not happen every day. It was for only a chosen few. Lazarus' story shows that Jesus was truly the Son of God and that God's power was working through him. Regarding Gloria's near-death experience, we do not have to believe. It is up to each one of us to judge it for ourselves. From what has been happening in her life, I think that she was given to us as a modern-day witness in order to remind and convince us that, yes, there is God, there is life after death, there is heaven, purgatory and hell, there is final judgment and there is resurrection. God loves us but God gives us freedom to choose for ourselves.

Coronavirus pandemic is a dreadful thing that has happened in our life's time. It has spread fear, sickness and deaths. It has turned the world upside down by bringing about economic and social chaos. We do not know where it will end. But what we know is that we are not in control as we thought we could have. Anything could happen to anyone at any time even to our own very existence. The stories of Lazarus and Gloria have reminded us of this. They have also reminded us of what we do not often think about and that is the world to come. It is a time for us to think more carefully about our own lives and make suitable changes in preparation for the next when we still have time. Then we could hope that Jesus will raise us up to be with him forever. Amen.

Reflection

Eternal Life

Jesus' promise of eternal life is a central element of our Catholic faith. Even though Easter is still two weeks away, our Gospel today invites us to acknowledge Jesus' power over death, evidenced in the raising of Lazarus, and to anticipate Jesus' conquering of death once and for all in his death and Resurrection. We sometimes use examples from nature to help describe this mystery of our faith. Jesus himself talked about the seed that dies when planted in the ground in order to produce new life (John 12:24). Using that image and others, we find hope and confidence in Jesus, the Resurrection and the life.

Gather your family today and read today's Gospel. Write Jesus' promise from today's Gospel ("I am the resurrection and the life.") on a large sheet of white paper. As your family talks about what Jesus means by this promise, decorate Jesus' words with symbols that will remind you of his promise of eternal life. Display this reminder of Jesus' promise in a prominent place in your home and keep it there until Easter. Pray that you will always remain confident in Jesus' promise of eternal life.

Conclude by praying together the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed.

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Mass Intentions Recently Deceased: Fr Ray Farrell, Van Tram

Anniversary: Phaolo Phan Van Tho, Micae

Deceased:

Sick: Marie Abi-Saab, Tom Quilty, Jason Timbs & Bart Hennely, Dau (Xuan); Gerard Go; Fatima Fernandes; Marian Periera; Catherine & Lourdes Raspanti; baby Alan Dien Quan Nguyen; Monina Rodriguez Pineda; Tenshi Asriel Magdaleno Arcenas; Rose Nuner; Maria Carta; Teresita Martinez; Maria Kovatsun; Frannie; Madelyn Nicole; Jun Ibarra; Abida Gill; Vo Van Kiet; Maria Bui Thi Don; Josette Ackad; Nivea Wani; Diana Emilie Perez; Billy; ; Ginette Sharok

LIVE STREAMING OF HOLY MASS

In order to assist you fulfil your Sunday obligation we are pleased to say that we have made arrangements for Mass to be live-streamed from St Felix each Sunday at 10am. The video of Mass will remain online throughout the whole of Sunday and during the week.

Please follow this link to watch the Mass: <https://m.facebook.com/stfelixdevaloisparishbankstown/>

To assist you in praying during the live stream some generous parishioners have developed a Sunday Missal so that you are able to respond to the prayers and sing along to the hymns. Please email stfelix.outreach@gmail.com for a copy.

Mass continues to be streamed live in many different places over the internet. Saint Mary's Cathedral livestreams Mass everyday: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZxfrykD8iSWExFBdM7fpRg>

LECTIO DIVINA

The Archdiocese is also producing daily prayer material including daily Lectio Divina meditations which can be found at this link: <https://www.sydneycatholic.org/coronavirus-updates/prayer-resources-for-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>.

RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN

For those with young children, the CathFamily organisation have generously made all their resources for children free in this time our churches are closed. Feel free to have a look at some of their resources that can help children to pray and continue to learn about their faith by clicking this link: <https://cathfamily.org/cathkids-faith-unlimited/>.

STAYING IN TOUCH

We encourage to also stay in touch through:

- Our parish website: <https://www.stfelixparish.org.au/>
- Our parish Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/stfelixdevaloisparishbankstown/>
- Our parish YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCx3FmzgwRQ9OjM0g5fjOPg>
- Sending your contact details to stfelix.outreach@gmail.com

CONNECTING THROUGH PHONE

We are looking to set up a team of people who regularly call and keep in contact with the more isolated in our community. This is a vital service of love our parish community can provide in these usual times. If you are struggling during this time of isolation or know of somebody who is feel free to contact us through this email address or the parish office (9790 1933) and we will see that they are regularly called. If you wish to be part of this apostolate reply to this email and we will contact you during the week.

CONFESSIONS

We remind you in this Season of Lent of the continuing importance of examination of conscience and making an act of contrition. As according to Archbishop Fisher's instructions, the sacrament of Penance will still be available in the Archdiocese whilst following the government regulations and as such we will respond to individual requests for the Sacrament of Penance. Please contact the parish and we will provide details.

FR RAY FARRELL

It is with great sadness that we advise that the parish priest of St John of God Auburn, Fr Raymond Farrell, died early on 27 March. Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP will lead a small Mass of Christian Burial for Fr Ray in line with the coronavirus pandemic public health restrictions, with a public memorial Mass to be arranged at a future date.

Fr Ray was ordained to the priesthood at St Felix De Valois Parish, Bankstown on 13 September 1996. Please keep Fr Ray, his sister, friends and parishioners in your prayers. May he rest in peace with the Lord.



A message from the Archdiocese of Sydney

Child sexual abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with a crime are the police. If you – or anyone you know – have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office at (02) 9390 5810 or safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org.

You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and guidance. The Archdiocese has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.

Catechist & Friendship Group: Bev Lamaro 0409 710 703; **Choir:** Alison De Sousa 0421 660 187;
Youth: Aurora Doueihy 0428 755 022; **Pastoral Council:** Patrick Abou-rizk 0416 035 993;
St Vincent de Paul: Diago Rodrigues 9791 5209 ; **Bankstown Josephite Associates:** Robyn Molloy 9707 1292;
Children’s Liturgy: Marie El-Chaar 9709 3451; **Cemetery Committee:** Maureen Vincent 9790 4217;
Sacramental co-ordinator: Gloria Booby 0413 294 224; **Safeguarding Officer:** Anthony Chadrawy 9790 1933;
Polish Priests: 8783 0533; **De La Salle Brothers:** 9708 2692;
St. Felix Primary School: 9796 7875 Frances Bonanno - Principal;
LaSalle Catholic College: 9793 5600 Mr Michael Egan - Principal;
Archdiocesan Website: www.sydney.catholic.org.au

PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM REQUEST FORM

Would you like to become a credit card contributor to the Parish?

Especially now with the Church forced to close, we have no weekly envelopes to keep us going. We are asking Parishioners to make their donations via credit card in order for the Parish to function. please send an e-mail with the following details to Marie at admin@stfelixparish.org.au

Name..... Telephone No.:

Address:.....

Email :

Current Envelope Number:..... OR

I would like to commence Planned Giving payments via credit card.