



Parish of the Good Shepherd, Hurunui

PARISH NEWSLETTER

Amberley | Cheviot | Hawarden | Culverden | Waiau | Hanmer Springs
Parish Office: 138A Carters Road, Amberley | PO Box 143, Amberley 7441
www.catholicurunui.nz

Weekend Masses



Saturday Vigil

5pm Hanmer Springs
(Every Saturday)

7pm Culverden
(Every Saturdays)

Sunday Mass

8.30am Amberley
(Every Sunday)

11am Cheviot
(1st, 3rd, 5th Sundays Only)

10.30am Hawarden
(2nd & 4th Sunday Only)

12pm The Beatitudes,
Leithfield

Weekday Masses

Monday - Saturday
8:30am Amberley

Tuesday - Saturday
12pm The Beatitudes,
Leithfield



Reconciliation

By Appointment
or before Mass
(but not the last 5 Minutes!)



Rosary

Wednesday
1:30pm Amberley
Church Hall

St Joseph Men's Group
2nd & 4th Monday
7pm-9pm Amberley Hall

Fourth Sunday of Lent Year B

Laetare Sunday

10 March 2024

TOWARD THE LIGHT

Last week I received this text message from a friend that made me sad and made me smile all at once: "Father, my mother just passed away. Please pray for the eternal refuse of her soul." In today's Gospel (Jn. 3, 14-21), we read the most important line in the New Testament, in the whole Bible, for that matter: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life." God does not refuse anyone! God wants everyone to be saved. Why does God love us so much? We are all unworthy of God's love, and yet He continues to love us! All is grace, and grace is a mystery, tremendous and true. We can never understand or fathom this mystery. We just believe, accept and trust. Given such a privilege and blessing, all we can do is say "Thank You, Lord!" and live a life of gratitude. How consoling to know that God has opened the gates of heaven for us mortals. We have access to eternal life. We have a standing invitation to be with Him in eternity. However, our response to this standing invitation is not to just stand around, but to go toward the light. We are to make a choice, i.e., to stay in the darkness, or to live in the light. In other words, we can choose to be good or to be bad, to tell the truth or to tell a lie, to be happy or to be sad. The choice is ours. God loves us that much, that He gave us all the freedom, even the freedom to choose Him or reject Him. In this Lenten season, let us take a good look at the lives we are living. Are there dark areas in our lives that need healing? Are there relationships that need mending? Are there bad habits that need ending? As we grow older, may we walk toward the light and leave behind the darkness. The more we go toward the light, the more our hearts will be light. **Lord, in your response to your tremendous love, help me to choose light rather than darkness. Amen.**

God bless, Fr Rex

PARISH LENTEN RECOLLECTION

Speaker: Fr. Rex R. Ramos; Venue: Amberley Church

Tuesday 19th March, Feast of St Joseph. 6pm Mass & 7pm Talk.

Topic: *St Joseph the dreamer - How to mend the broken dreams?*

SUNDAY'S READINGS:

FIRST READING: 2 Chronicles 36:14-16,19-23

God's wrath and mercy are revealed in the exile
and release of his people

Psalm Response:

Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!

SECOND READING: Ephesians 2:4-10

You have been saved through grace

GOSPEL: John 3:14-21

God sent his Son so that through him
the world might be saved

HYMNS for SUNDAY MASSES

(May vary on the day)

883 Christ be our light

846 Amazing Grace

842 Hosea

743 As I kneel

LIGHT OF FAITH: by Fr. Rex

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: Why Confession?

Why do we have confession? If God knows everything, why can't we just tell him that we're sorry when we do something wrong?

Confession might be one of the most difficult parts of our faith for some. For others, Confession is something they deeply look forward to.

First of all, it's true that "God knows everything." We call that omniscience. So, yes, He knows everything you've done, and He knows whether you are sorry for that or not. But there is a big difference between God "knowing" what you did and His act of forgiveness.

For example, if you sinned against a friend with whom you were very close and then felt sorry for that, it's possible that your friend would realize, just by knowing you, that you were truly sorry. But that doesn't mean that you can just presume your friend's goodness and forgiveness. The best thing to do, in this situation, is to actually sit down and tell your friend you are sorry and to have your friend tell you that you are forgiven. This very human exchange brings about reconciliation.

So it is with God. God is all merciful and wants to forgive us all our sins. But for true reconciliation to take place, God wants you to actually say those words and then to hear the words, spoken by the priest, that you are forgiven. So Confession is not only about God forgiving us, it is also about reconciliation with God on a human level.

What's important to understand is that God offers us forgiveness in His way. He forgives us through a human being. Who is that human being? It's the Father's Son who became one of us. Jesus is the one who offers God's forgiveness, and Jesus is both fully God and human. But how does Jesus do that now that He has ascended into Heaven? Before He ascended, He gave His divine power of forgiveness to His first priests, the apostles. They, in turn, passed that power onto others, who passed it on to others, down through the ages, all the way to our present age. Priests, despite the fact that they are imperfect themselves, have the spiritual power of Jesus to actually speak His words of forgiveness to others. Therefore, when a priest says, "I absolve you" we must hear Jesus Himself, as the human face of God, saying those same words to us.

Why did God choose to use priests to dispense His forgiveness?

Honestly, we really don't have a perfect answer to that question. Sure there have been wonderful writings and reflections and teachings on this subject throughout the history of the Church. But, in the end, we will only fully understand this mystery of how God gives us His forgiveness when we are in Heaven. For now, we must simply follow what Jesus taught and receive His forgiveness in the way we know He offers it.

On a psychological level, I, as a priest, have seen so many people benefit from actually hearing those words spoken from my mouth. So many times I have seen people come into the confessional scared and ashamed, and walk out freed and at peace. So it really works. Make sure you give it a try soon!

PARISH NOTICES

STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN LENT - It is a good spiritual exercise to do the Stations of the Cross in Lent, and especially on Fridays. **Every Friday during Lent, there will be 7:30am**

Friday, 15th March
Amberley at 7pm
Culverden at 7pm

Friday, 22nd March
Amberley at 7pm
Culverden at 7pm

ST JOSEPH'S MEN'S GROUP (2nd & 4th Monday) next Monday 11 March from 7 pm - 9 pm at the Parish Hall. All men are welcome and encouraged to become better equipped to be more like St Joseph, the protector of Jesus and Mary. Contact Rob 02254676341 or Mark 0277027889.