

Thought for the week
6th Sunday in Ordinary Time
14th February, 2021

Lord Jesus Christ,
our Divine Physician,
we ask you to guard and protect us
and all people from the
coronavirus and all serious illness.

For all who have died from it ,
have mercy;

For all who are ill now,
bring healing;

For all searching for a remedy,
enlighten them;

For medical caregivers, helping the sick,
strengthen and shield them;

For all working to contain the spread,
grant them success;

For those afraid,
grant peace of mind.

By your grace,
may you turn the evil of disease
into moments of consolation and hope.

We abandon ourselves into your
infinite mercy.
Amen.

Three years ago, when we last heard these readings, we might have thought that they referred to us only tangentially – after all, although leprosy still occurs in some countries, it is treatable by a free drug. This time round, the readings quite took my breath away, for they are so relevant to the here and now of the situation which affects every one of us directly. They raise questions of how we treat others as we go about our daily lives, and how we regard those who are infected with Covid-19, whether through a positive test, hospitalisation or long Covid.

I can't help feeling, as Lent looms on Wednesday, that we have been living an involuntary Lent for the last eleven months – what more can we do? We have already given up so much of what is dear to us, we have prayed hard, and given of our financial and time resources insofar as we can.

I often turn to the Venerable Mary Ward (1585–1645) for inspiration. God called her to found an order of religious sisters that was free from enclosure and from the control of the local bishop. She believed that “*women in time to come will do much*” – and yet her hopes and dreams were destroyed by the Church she loved and sought to serve, and she was imprisoned by the Inquisition. After her release she returned to Rome in the hope that the Pope might reconsider her cause, only to find herself again confined, this time not being allowed to leave Rome without the express permission of the Inquisition.

So she lived as an outcast in Rome, her movements confined. I think I'll take her advice this Lent, and try to hold fast to her maxim that “*holiness consists in doing ordinary things well*”. That may mean making even more of an effort to be in touch with the sick, the lonely, the refugee, the prisoner, the widow, the orphan. Holiness is also about the “*freedom to refer all to God*”, or, in the words of St Ignatius of Loyola, “*finding God in all things*” – even, or especially, in the seemingly disastrous times in which we live. In the words of a recent tweet, “*For Mary Ward, joy, a disposition of hope, trust, inner peace and cheerfulness, is not just reserved for the easy times in our lives but, also courageously thrives in adversity.*”

Lent is a time of grace, an opportunity to do something extra for a person in need and for the greater glory of God.



Prayers Please

Maddy Sharman has asked for our prayers.

Vera Bird has asked for our prayers for her Great, Great Grandson Harry

Please pray for Cecilia Fung, the mother of Fr Jojo. She has had a stroke.

Please pray for Timothy Kehoe, who is very ill.

Prayers please for Antonita's nephew Peppin who remains in hospital due to the coronavirus.

Please pray for Caroline Mikhail (daughter – in - law of Jane and Ramsay Mikhail) who suffered a stroke.

Please pray for Peter Halter's sister Jean who has macular degeneration and for Jean's great grandson Rogan who is 8 and has leukemia. Rogan continues to need our prayers.

Please pray for Ted Cotter (brother of Philomena) who has cancer and is undergoing chemotherapy.

Please pray for children under stress.

Please pray for the residents and staff at the two nursing homes in our parish, Abbeycrest and St Luke's.

Please pray for all victims of the Coronavirus.



Please also remember in your prayers those whose anniversaries occur at this time including;

Willem Anschutz, Delia Davies, Joan Leach, Harold Price, Bep Anschutz, John Dowd, Richard Savage, Avito Benedict Da Silva, Eileen Arkell, Bridie Bonner, Peter Davies, Eileen Enright, Jimmy Thompson.