



ONE MISSION, TWO CHURCHES



Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C - 7th September 2025

Parish Priest

Fr Alex Chow

Parish Secretary

Sonya O'Farrell
Wednesdays,
Thursdays & Fridays
10am – 2pm

SUNDAY MASS

Saturday Vigil: 5pm (SL)

Sunday: 8:30am (SL),
10:30am (ST),
5pm (ST, Vietnamese)

WEEKDAY MASSES

Tues. 6:30pm (SL)

Wed. 9.15am (ST*)

1st Wed Mass of Anointing
@10am

Thurs. 9.15am (ST)

Fri. 9.15am(SL*)/6.30pm (ST)

Sat. 9.15am (SL*)

*Rosary after Mass

RECONCILIATION

SL: Tues 5:30 - 6:10pm

Sat 9:45 - 10:15am

Sat 4:30 - 4:50pm

ST: Fri 5:30 - 6:10pm

EXPOSITION OF THE

BLESSED SACRAMENT & EVENING PRAYER

SL: Tues 5:30 - 6:30pm

ST: Fri 5:30 - 6:30pm

HOSPITALITY AFTER MASS AT ST. LUKE'S

Second weekend of each
month - bring a plate to
share (optional)

YAM GROUP - 1st & 3rd Wed.
each month at 7pm
at St Luke's Presbytery

Wisdom 9:13-18, Ps 89:3-17, Philemon 12-17

Gospel Reflection on (Luke 14:25-33)

Meditation: Why does the Lord Jesus say we must 'hate' our families and even ourselves (Luke 14:26)? In Biblical times the expression 'to hate' often meant to 'prefer less'. Jesus used strong language to make clear that nothing should take precedence or first place over God. God our heavenly Father created us in his image and likeness to be his beloved sons and daughters. He has put us first in his love and concern for our well-being and happiness. Our love for him is a response to his exceeding love and kindness towards us. True love is costly because it holds nothing back from the beloved - it is ready to give all and sacrifice all for the beloved. God the Father gave us his only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who freely offered up his life for us on the cross as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. His sacrificial death brought us pardon and healing, new life in the Spirit and peace with God.

The cost of following Jesus as his disciples: Jesus willingly embraced the cross, not only out of obedience to his Father's will, but out of a merciful love for each one of us in order to set us free from slavery to sin, Satan, and everything that would keep us from his love, truth, and goodness. Jesus knew that the cross was the Father's way for him to achieve victory over sin and death - and glory for our sake as well. He counted the cost and said 'yes' to his Father's will. If we want to share in his glory and victory, then we, too, must 'count the cost' and say 'yes' to his call to "take up our cross and follow him" as our Lord and Savior.

What is the 'way of the cross' for you and me? It means that when my will crosses with God's will, then his will must be done. The way of the cross involves sacrifice, the sacrifice of laying down my life each and every day for Jesus' sake. What makes such sacrifice possible and "sweet" for us is the love of God poured out for us in the blood of Christ who cleanses us and makes us a new creation in him. Paul the Apostle tells us that "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). We can never outmatch God in his merciful love and kindness towards us. He always gives us more than we can expect or imagine. Do you allow the Holy Spirit to fill your heart and transform your life with the overflowing love and mercy of God?

The great exchange: If you prize something of great value and want to possess it, it's natural to ask what it will cost you before you make a commitment to invest in it. Jesus was utterly honest and spared no words to tell his disciples that it would cost them dearly to be his disciples - it would cost them their whole lives and all they possessed in exchange for the new life and treasure of God's kingdom. The Lord Jesus leaves no room for compromise or concession. We either give our lives over to him entirely or we keep them for ourselves. Paul the Apostle reminds us, "We are not our own. We were bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:19b,20). We were once slaves to sin and a kingdom of darkness and oppression, but we have now been purchased with the precious blood of Jesus Christ who has ransomed us from a life of darkness and destruction so we could enter his kingdom of light and truth. Christ has set us free to choose whom we will serve in this present life as well as in the age to come - God's kingdom of light, truth, and goodness or Satan's kingdom of darkness, lies, and deception. There are no neutral parties - we are either for God's kingdom or against it.



John Paul II carrying the cross as Simon of Cyrene, Outside the Basilica of Our Lady of Consolation, Pasierbiec

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Parish Office tel: 03 9412 8499; Presbytery tel: 03 9877 2292

St Luke the Evangelist, 46 Orchard Grove, Blackburn South

Email: foresthill@cam.org.au | Web: sttimothys.org.au / Email: blackburnsouth@cam.org.au | Web: blackburnsouth.org.au

Next Week's Daily Readings 8 Sept - 14 Sept

MONDAY, Sept 8 Micah 5:1-4
Ps 12:6-7 Mt 1:1-16, 18-23
The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

TUESDAY, Sept 9 Col 2:6-15
Ps 144:1-2, 8-11 Lk 6:12-19

WEDNESDAY, Sept 10 Col 3:1-11
Ps 144:2-3, 10-13 Lk 6:20-26

THURSDAY, Sept 11 Col 3:12-17
Ps 150:1-6 Lk 6:27-38

FRIDAY, Sept 12 1 Tim 1:1-2,12-14
Ps 15:1-2, 5, 7-8 Lk 6:39-42

SATURDAY, Sept 13 1 Tim 1:15-17
Ps 112:1-7 Lk 6:43-49
St John Chrysostom, bishop, doctor

SUNDAY, Sept 14 Num 21:4-9
Ps 77:1-2, 34-38 Phil 2:6-11
Jn 3:13-17

THE EXALTATION of the HOLY CROSS

*(Taken from
ORDO 2025, Liturgy Brisbane, ACBC 2024)*

The Jubilee Prayer



Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

SOME USEFUL CATHOLIC RESOURCES:

- PRAY AS YOU GO** (<https://pray-as-you-go.org/daily-meditation>)
- HALLOW** (<https://hallow.com>):#1 prayer Catholic App
- UNIVERSALIS** website and App. (<https://universalis.com/index.htm>)

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

Saturday 5pm SL
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST
5pm ST

6 and 7 Sept.

Melina Barcellona
Steve Kilroe-Smith
Jane D'Souza
Gia Nghi, Hieu Nguyen & Hoa Doan

13 and 14 Sept.

Liliana Restrepo
May McKeown
Molly Hemsley
Mai Le, Tuyet Nguyen & Thuy Vu

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

Saturday 5pm SL
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST
5pm ST

Edna Lee
Margaret Gearon
Laura Cigana
Hung Dinh

Lucy Ferris
Melina Barcellona
Eleanor Mendes
Hoang Nguyen

SLIDE OPERATORS

Saturday 5pm SL
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST
5pm ST

Choir
Megan McLean
Manny Gonzalez
Toan Tran

Choir
Paul Tierney
Lee Min Yee
Toan Tran

SL WELCOMERS 6/7 AUG

5pm John Ryan
8.30am Janette Clark
10.30am Volunteer

SL CHURCH CLEANING

13th Sept - Megan's team
Megan McLean, Janette Clark,
Maureen Davis & Ellen Donoghue

SL CHURCH FLOWERS

6th Sept: Ellen Donoghue
13th Sept: Edna Lee

ST CHURCH FLOWERS

Flowers: Parishioners

SL WELCOMERS 13/14 SEPT

5:00pm Libby Theodore
8.30am Margaret Gearon
10.30am Volunteer

ST CHURCH CLEANING

13th Sept @ 8am
Toan Tran, Dao Dinh,
Hieu Nguyen & Dieu Nguyen

ST COUNTERS

This week Team 3:
Peter Deayton & Kelvin Chen
Next week Team 4:
Mary Choy & Eileen Chang

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

All who are sick, especially Tony Lobo, Kevin Ryan, Agatha Wink, Ronda Smith, Chris Leach, Dora Leung, Hazel Grealy, Josephine Alexander, Grace Dimattina, Margaret Hogg, Bernadine O'Meara, Kit Bing Fan, Kathryn Holmes, Stewart Davis, Mark, Margaret Hayes, Charmaine Bancroft, Marilene Japour, Paciencia Cabral and all those parishioners unable to be among us this weekend.

All who have died, especially Maria Radinja who died recently and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time especially Beverley McLean, Emmanuel Raj, Ralph Fernandes, Rose Howe, Catherine Bradley, Dirk Senn, Luigi Cigana, Vicki Gallacher, Marianne Murray, Anna Stangierska, Catherine Johnson, Vera Carmody, Cecilia Contreras & Maria Abadilla.
May they rest in peace.

POPE LEO'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR SEPTEMBER:

For our relationship with all of creation. Let us pray that, inspired by St. Francis, we might experience our interdependence with all creatures who are loved by God and worthy of love and respect.

THANKSGIVING MASS & HOSPITALITY: On Saturday 13th Sept., we invite all candidates who have received sacraments of Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation this year to a Thanksgiving Mass at St Luke's at 5pm. Please bring a plate to share after Mass as it's also our hospitality weekend.

PARISH PRIEST INSTALLATION - SAVE THE DATE: Fr Alex will be officially installed as Parish Priest of St Luke's and St Timothy's by Bishop Thinh Nguyen D.D. at the **5pm Mass on Saturday 18th October**. There will be a potluck (bring a plate to share) dinner and celebrations in the parish hall after the Mass. Please save the date.

ST LUKE'S SCHOOL ENROLMENTS OPEN: Enrolments for all year levels in 2026 are open NOW! Please contact the school on 9877 4023 or visit the new website <https://www.slblackburnsth.catholic.edu.au/>

FATHER'S DAY: Wishing all the Dads and Grandads a very happy Father's Day!

Resources

MELBOURNE CATHOLIC: Meeting people where they are

MAJELLAN MEDIA: Father's Day

60th ANNIVERSARY

of the ST VINCENT de PAUL CONFERENCE at ST. LUKE'S

On Sunday 14th September, we will celebrate this significant anniversary at the 8.30am Mass at St Luke's. All are welcome to attend and give thanks for the work of all of the conference members over the past 60 years. Please bring along a plate to share for a morning tea in the parish hall after Mass.

STEWARDSHIP CORNER:

The First collection is for the priest and retired priests.

The Second collection is for parish expenses.

ST: Last week's Presbytery Stewardship Total Collection: \$459.30

Last week's Church Stewardship Total Collection: \$289.75

Vietnamese Donation: \$174.40

SL: Last week's Presbytery Stewardship Total Collection: \$507.80

Last week's Church Stewardship Total Collection: \$480.35

Parish Groups & Contacts

Volunteers and Rosters

ST: Corrie Quimbo

SL: Margaret Gearon

Baptism Preparation

SL: Mary Italiano

Vietnamese Community

Hoang Nguyen

Andy Tran

Vietnamese Youth

Theresa Nguyen

Parish Collection Preparers

ST: Barry Silvester &

Michael Kawalewski

Stewardship Counters

SL: Dale Dixon

Steve Kilroe-Smith

Parishes Safeguarding Committee

Theresa Nguyen, Mary Italiano,

Darren McLean

Janette Clark

Parish history

SL: Margaret Gearon

Parish Accountant

Bernard Negline

SL: Hall Hire

Sonya O'Farrell @ the

Parish Office – 9877 2292

Church Sacristan

ST: Margaret King & Hoang Nguyen

SL: Greg Grant

Church Housekeeping

ST: Margaret King

Church Cleaning & Flowers

SL: Megan McLean

Church Linen

SL: Beryl Chelliah

Parish Garden Maintenance

ST: Des Connors, Leo Watson,

Anico Yee & Vietnamese Community

SL: Darren McLean

Parish Choirs

ST: Miguel Ilagan & Theresa Nguyen

SL: Lina & Maria Mafi

St Vincent de Paul Conference

For Assistance: 1800 305 330

(Monday to Friday 10am-3pm)

Parish Contacts:

ST: John McCoy

SL: Tony Lobo &

Steve Kilroe-Smith

Entrance Antiphon: You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right; treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

Response to the Psalm: In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Let your face shine on your servant, and teach me your laws. Alleluia!

Eucharistic Acclamation: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

Communion Antiphon: Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God; my soul is thirsting for God, the living God.



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC YOUTH FESTIVAL

Year 9 – 25 years plus leaders

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Save with CDF Community Fund – it's in everyone's best interest. When you open a savings or term investment account with CDF Community Fund, you not only get a great return on your savings, but you will also help build new parishes for growing communities, classrooms for students, hospitals for the sick, aged care homes for the elderly, and social service facilities for the poor and vulnerable. With competitive interest rates across a range of accounts, including 4.55% p.a.* on a 6-month Term Investment, it's a way to save while doing good. Open an account today – it's in everyone's best interest. Visit www.catholicdevelopmentfund.org.au/communityfund, scan the QR code, or speak to us on 1800 134 135. *Interest rates subject to change. View current rates on the CDF website.

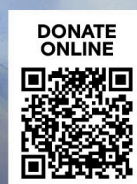
The LukeTim YAM (18-35 Yrs) is an outreach program of St Luke the Evangelist, Blackburn South and St Timothy's, Forest Hill.



WHEN: Wed. 17th Sept @ 7pm
WHERE: St Luke's Presbytery, 46 Orchard Grove, Blackburn South
TOPIC: The Bible
What is it? Can we trust it?
How can it change your life?
An evening of nibbles, praise & worship, talk, sharing & games to deepen our relationship with Christ in a fun, safe and inclusive environment. Further enquiries to Jerisy or Sarah at luktimyam@gmail.com

Your generous gift supports ministries across the Archdiocese – bringing the Good News to life not only in word, but in action.

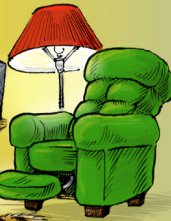
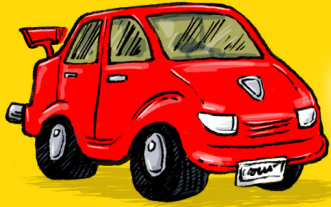
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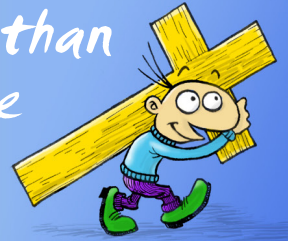
THE ARCHBISHOP'S CAMPAIGN 2025



melbournecatholic.org/archbishopscampaign

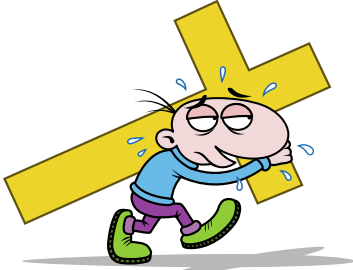


Love God more than
your own life



23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

Jesus tells us that choosing his way is not always easy.
When might it be hard to do what Jesus asks us?



What are some good choices
you can make this week?
Tick the good choices and
cross the bad ones.



The Love Maze

Find the path to God



HELP AROUND THE HOUSE
WITHOUT BEING ASKED TO

DON'T WORRY ABOUT
SAYING MY EVENING
PRAYERS

CONTRIBUTE TO THE
OFFERTORY PLATE

MAKE FRIENDS WITH
SOMEONE NEW

MAKE FUN OF THE
TEACHERS

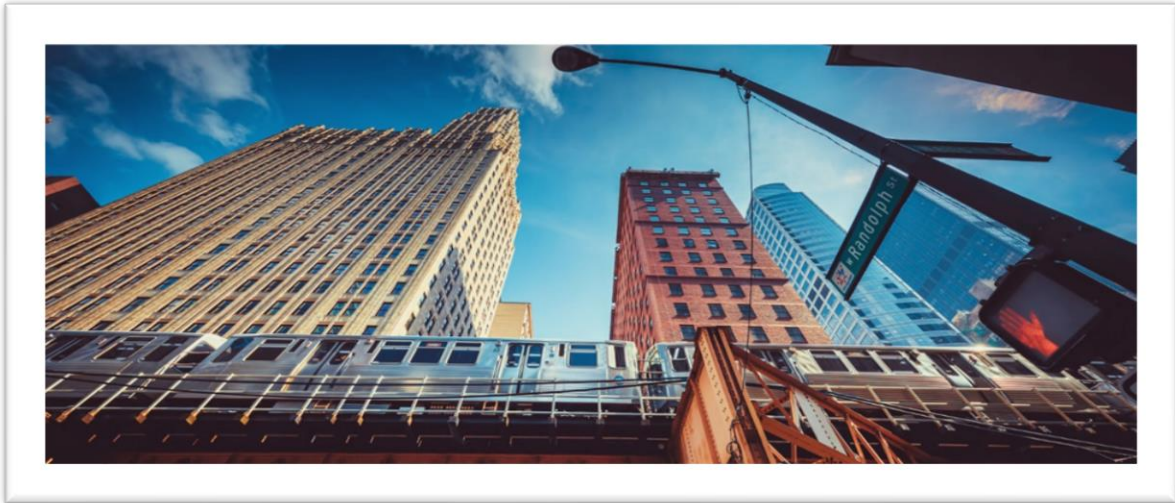
OWN UP TO MAKING
A BAD DECISION

TURN OFF THE T.V.
AND READ A BOOK

STOP DOING YOUR
HOMEWORK AND GO
OUTSIDE TO PLAY

DO SOMETHING NICE
FOR YOUR PARENTS

23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – 7 SEPTEMBER 2025



COLLECT

O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption,
look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters,
that those who believe in Christ
may receive true freedom
and an everlasting inheritance.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

And if we answer the call to discipleship, where will it lead us? What decisions and partings will it demand? To answer this question, we shall have to go to Jesus, for only he knows the answer. Only Jesus Christ, who bids us follow him, knows the journey's end. But we do know that it will be a road of boundless mercy. Discipleship means joy.

This quotation is from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's 1937 book, *The Cost of Discipleship*. He was a German Lutheran pastor who, while still in his 30s, was executed for his heroic resistance to the Nazi regime during the Second World War. *Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me, says Jesus, cannot be my disciple. We see what terrible decisions and partings the way of the cross demanded of Bonhoeffer. Where will it lead us? Do we have the courage to be a disciple?*

A reading from the book of Wisdom 9:13–18

What man can know the intentions of God?
Who can divine the will of the Lord?
The reasonings of mortals are unsure
and our intentions unstable;
for a perishable body presses down the soul,
and this tent of clay weighs down the teeming mind.
It is hard enough for us to work out what is on earth,
laborious to know what lies within our reach;
who, then, can discover what is in the heavens?
As for your intention, who could have learnt it,
had you not granted Wisdom
and sent your holy spirit from above?
Thus have the paths of those on earth been straightened
and men been taught what pleases you,
and saved, by Wisdom.

First Reading

In light of the cost of discipleship set out in today's gospel, this reading explains that the human mind cannot grasp God's plan for us. But it is a plan of mercy and forgiveness. As Isaiah wrote: *God's ways are not our ways; as the heavens are high above earth, so are my ways above your ways, my thoughts above your thoughts*, says the Lord (Is 55:8-9).

The 'tent of clay' is a strong poetic image. It speaks of human limitation. Given the difficulty of understanding our own world, what hope do we have of understanding God's will and the ways of heaven? All we can do is stand before God, trusting in divine wisdom and the guidance of the Spirit. This provides a good context for the challenge we are about to hear in the gospel.

In the first line, 'what man' could be read as 'who'; at the end 'men' can become 'people'.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 89:3–6, 12–14, 17

R. In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.

You turn men back in to dust
and say: 'Go back, sons of men.'
To your eyes a thousand years
are like yesterday, come and gone,
no more than a watch in the night. **R.**

You sweep men away like a dream,
like grass which springs up in the morning.
In the morning it springs up and flowers:
by evening it withers and fades. **R.**

Make us know the shortness of our life
that we may gain wisdom of heart.
Lord, relent! Is your anger for ever?
Show pity to your servants. **R.**

In the morning, fill us with your love;
we shall exult and rejoice all our days.
Let the favour of the Lord be upon us:
give success to the work of our hands. **R.**

Responsorial Psalm

The responsorial psalm for today was used five weeks ago on the 18th Sunday. Psalm 89/90 points out that human life is transient and that we rely on God to be our refuge and strength.

Vivid images are used to describe our life on earth; it is like yesterday, or a dream, or flowers that last just for a day. This realisation stands in contrast to God who is eternal – a thousand years is nothing to God. God's love and favour are our source of ultimate joy and exaltation. The psalm builds on the contrast between the divine and human that we saw in the first reading.

The reader/cantor will need to be careful of the extra line in the first stanza. For the word 'men', the cantor/reader should substitute either 'people' or 'us' (following stanzas 3 and 4). 'Sons of men' might be rendered 'children of Adam'.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Philemon

9–10, 12–17

This is Paul writing, an old man now and, what is more, still a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for a child of mine, whose father I became while wearing these chains: I mean Onesimus. I am sending him back to you, and with him – I could say – a part of my own self. I should have liked to keep him with me; he could have been a substitute for you, to help me while I am in the chains that the Good News has brought me. However, I did not want to do anything without your consent; it would have been forcing your act of kindness, which should be spontaneous. I know you have been deprived of Onesimus for a time, but it was only so that you could have him back for ever, not as a slave any more, but something much better than a slave, a dear brother; especially dear to me, but how much more to you, as a blood-brother as well as a brother in the Lord. So if all that we have in common means anything to you, welcome him as you would me.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

14:25–33

Great crowds accompanied Jesus on his way and he turned and spoke to them. 'If any man comes to me without hating his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes, and his own life too, he cannot be my disciple. Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

'And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it?

Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, the onlookers would all start making fun of him and saying, "Here is a man who started to build and was unable to finish." Or again, what king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who advanced against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace. So in the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions.'

Second Reading

This is a short and very personal letter of Paul. He writes to Philemon about the runaway slave, Onesimus (make sure of the pronunciation: *O-nés-i-mus*, – four syllables with the emphasis on the second). Paul had already written to the Galatians that, for those baptised into Christ, there was no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female – all are one in Christ (Gal 3:28). That is the background to this passage.

Paul is sending Onesimus back to Philemon not as a slave but as a brother in Christ and urges Philemon to accept him as such.

It is, of course, disappointing to the modern mind that the Scriptures do not seem to specifically reject the institution of slavery as such. We need to understand that it was a structural element of society until 19th century (the British Parliament abolished slavery in 1833). Even so, human beings are still enslaved or trafficked in many parts of the world. The message of our oneness in Christ remains a challenge.

Gospel

Today Jesus presents us with the cost of discipleship. It is tough. Disciples takes up their cross and follow him. For some, like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the cost is very high, but he assured us, it is *a road of boundless mercy* and leads to joy. Where will it lead us?

"Hating" is a very strong word; it is an example of Hebrew hyperbole. It means that a disciple must give preference to Christ and the gospel, even over family attachments.

Two parables follow which emphasise the need for reflection before action. Those who wish to be followers of Christ need to weigh up the cost and make a decision in favour of discipleship.

Finally, we get a strong saying about giving up all our possessions. It says "in the same way", but it is not clear at first how it follows on from the two stories. The two stories suggest that one needs to be able to see something through to its conclusion. So too the disciple of Jesus must not recoil from any of the demands of discipleship, even if it comes to giving up all our possessions.

These are indeed challenging teachings from Jesus! Do we have the courage to embrace what he is saying? Is our trust in God strong enough to take us forward on the path of the cross?

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Solemn Blessing (Ordinary Time V)

May almighty God always keep every adversity far from us
and in his kindness pour out upon us the gifts of his blessing.
Amen.

May God keep our hearts attentive to his words,
that they may be filled with everlasting gladness.
Amen.

And so, may we always understand what is good and right,
and be found ever hastening along
in the path of God's commands,
made coheirs with the citizens of heaven.
Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
come down on us and remain with us for ever.
Amen.

(Adapted from the Solemn Blessing for Ordinary Time V, Roman Missal p. 716)



ST. LUKES SCHOOL
BLACKBURN SOUTH



St Luke the Evangelist Blackburn South

We are Taking Enrolments for All Year Levels

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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST PAUL

TO GREECE & TURKEY (WITH ROME OPTION)



20TH APRIL –
3RD MAY 2026

LED BY
FR ALEX CHOW

14
DAYS

PACKAGE PRICE: AUD\$ 8,490*
per person (twin share)

OPTIONAL SINGLE
ROOM SUPPLEMENT:

AUD\$ 1,150

FULLY
ESCORTED

*Conditions apply. Subject to change.
Price estimated based on group
size of 20 pilgrims. Actual pricing
will be known in late May 2025.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



'Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres'. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

'Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love'

(Ephesians 4:2)

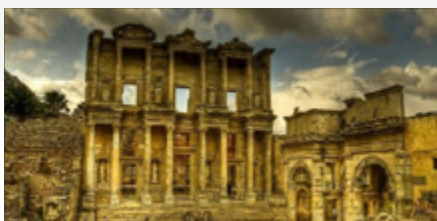
Such passionate, life giving, encouraging and hopeful words written by St Paul the Apostle. Come and join us for an extraordinary pilgrimage of Greece and Turkey and (optional Rome extension) as we follow the footsteps of St Paul and experience the contexts in which these passionate letters were written. It will be an opportunity of spiritual renewal, deepen our relationship with God as we reflect and experience the incredible journey of Paul, Apostle of the Gentiles.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

REGISTER FOR AN INFORMATION SESSION at 7pm ON THURSDAY, 5th JUNE

* Enjoy full travel briefing * Meet your fellow Pilgrims * Have your questions answered

CONTACT FR ALEX OR OLIVE TREE TRAVEL TO REGISTER & GET THE DETAILS



NEXT STEPS

1. Register your interest and obtain a booking form from Fr Alex or Olive Tree Travel or by [CLICKING HERE.](#)
2. To secure your place, a deposit of \$500 per person is payable by 16th June 2025 (unless sold out prior)
3. Final balances will be due by late February 2026.



Ph. 1300 550 830 or 03 8488 9696
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DAY 1 MONDAY 20TH APRIL

DEPART AUSTRALIA

Depart Melbourne this evening on your Emirates flight to Dubai. On arrival, transfer to your connecting flight to Athens.

DAY 2 TUESDAY 21ST APRIL

ARRIVE ATHENS

Arrive in Athens today. Athens is the thriving capital of Greece but more importantly, we have entered into the world of the New Testament where St Paul and his companions established the first Christian communities throughout his four missionary journeys. On arrival in **Athens** we will be met and transferred to our centrally located hotel for the remainder of the day at leisure. Athens overnight (D)

DAY 3 WEDNESDAY 22ND APRIL

ATHENS - CORINTH – ATHENS

Journey out to **Ancient Corinth** where the Apostle Paul lived for almost two years, teaching the people the Word of God and converting many. We visit the ancient ruins and see the site where he preached the Gospel from the **Rostrum**. Also visit the Peirene fountain, and the 6th century BC **Temple of Apollo** before an outdoor Mass in this stunning pilgrimage setting. Finally we come to **Cenchreae**, the ancient port from where Paul said farewell to the believers and departed for Ephesus (Acts 18:18). Return to Athens in the late afternoon for dinner and overnight. (BD)

DAY 4 THURSDAY 23RD APRIL

ATHENS

When St Paul first came to Athens it was predominantly a city that worshipped pagan gods. St Paul was taken before the city council at the Areopagus Hill, a rough outcrop of limestone rock from which he preached the Gospel message to the Athenian philosophers (Acts 17:16-21). We begin our day with a tour of **Christian Athens** including the **Acropolis**, the **Areopagus** where St Paul delivered his famous sermon about the identity of "the Unknown God" (Acts 17:15-34) and the **Parthenon**. Continue for a visit the **Ancient Agora** and a bus tour to see the highlights of the city including the Kallimarmaro Stadium, dating back to 330 B.C. and restored for the first modern Olympic Games held here in 1896. Visit to the New Acropolis museum. Enjoy dinner and overnight in Athens. (BD)

DAY 5 FRIDAY 24TH APRIL

ATHENS – METEORA – KALAMBAKA

Depart this morning and travel north to the small town of **Kalambaka** built at the foot of the majestic grey rocks of **Meteora**. Marvel at this unique phenomenon of nature – 24 perpendicular rocks where 600 years ago Byzantine monks chose to worship God and build their Monastic community of Meteora. We visit two of the Byzantine Meteora monasteries. Among striking scenery and perched on top of huge rocks, the ageless monasteries of Meteora seem to be suspended in mid-air. The monasteries contain beautiful Byzantine art and offer an insight to the mystic world of the monks still residing there. Mass this evening, will be held in a private room at the hotel before dinner and overnight in Kalambaka (BD)

DAY 6 SATURDAY 25TH APRIL

KALAMBAKA – VERGINA – VERIA – THESSALONIKI

Depart this morning to **Vergina**, the first capital of the Macedonian Kingdom. Here we visit the "Vergina findings", treasures of Ancient Macedonia and the tomb of King Philip II of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great. A few minutes away is Veria, located on the ruins of **Ancient Beroea**, is one of Apostle Paul's stops. Here we see the Byzantine mosaic in the monument commemorating his preaching. Continue our drive to Thessaloniki. Dinner & overnight in Thessaloniki. (BD)

DAY 7 SUNDAY 26TH APRIL

THESSALONIKI

Today is for Thessaloniki exploration. Welcome to Greece's second city, founded in 315 BC, and where St Paul preached during the winters of 49-50AD and wrote the two epistles to the ancient Thessalonians. See the ramparts of the city, the triumphal Arch of Galerius and the Roman Agora where St Paul once preached. We shall visit St Demetrios' Church with its valuable mosaics and frescoes and will drive up to the upper town, which offers a marvellous view of the city. We will also have the chance to celebrate Mass at the Catholic Church. Dinner & overnight in Thessaloniki. (BD)

DAY 8 MONDAY 27TH APRIL

PHILIPPI – KAVALA – THESSALONIKI

Arise and journey along the ancient route of the Apostle Paul to nearby Philippi, named after Philip II, father of Alexander the Great. It was here that St Paul won his first European convert, a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira (Acts 16:12-40). Visit the Baptistery of Lydia for a beautiful outdoor Mass on the River Zygaktis, and renew

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our Baptismal vows. Visit the market place (where St Paul and St Silas were brought before the rulers) and the cistern which tradition identifies as the place where St Paul was imprisoned. We will also see the famous Acropolis, Basilica and the theatre. It was here that he established the first Christian Church in Europe. Visit the Octagonal church, an early Christian monument thought to be built on the site where St. Paul had established a house of prayer. Finally, we drive to the port in Kavala (Neapolis in New Testament times), where Paul landed with Timothy, Silas, and Luke. Return to your hotel in Thessaloniki for dinner and overnight. (BD)

DAY 9 TUESDAY 28TH APRIL **THESSALONIKI – IZMIR (SMYRNA) - KUSADASI** This

morning, we depart Thessaloniki Airport for our flight to Izmir (via Istanbul or Athens). Upon arrival we will be met by our Turkish guide and commence our touring programme by visiting the Ruins of Ancient Smyrna, one of the 7 Churches. After the Agora visit we will drive to the coastal city of Kusadasi. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. (D)

DAY 10 WEDNESDAY 29TH APRIL **EPHESUS PILGRIMAGE**

Today we visit the famous city of Ephesus. Ephesus, as we will see, is in a very good state of preservation and the overall existing view of this ancient city will make it evident that she was a wealthy, cultural, and commercial centre in the 1st century. Paul's preaching in the area resulted with the uproar of the Guild of Silversmiths and the evangelisation of the whole province of Asia. Highlights include the ancient temple to the Roman Emperor, the 'slope' houses, the Library of Celsus, the Temple of Hadrian, the Fountain of Trajan, the brothel, and the large theatre in which the riot of Acts 19 took place. Not far from the theatre, we visit the Church of St Mary, where it is said that Mary spent the later years of her life. Celebrate Mass. Finally you will visit the restored remains of the 6th century Basilica of St John at Celcuk where a small church was originally built over the tomb of St John the Evangelist. Return to your hotel in Kusadasi for dinner and overnight (BD)

DAY 11 THURSDAY 30TH APRIL **KUSADASI - ISTANBUL** After

breakfast at the hotel, we will depart for Izmir Airport to catch our flight at 10:00AM. On arrival, we will be met and transferred to old city to visit Basilica Cistern, the largest of several hundred ancient cisterns that lie beneath the city. We'll also get to see one of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. This afternoon visit the Byzantine Hippodrome, the Blue Mosque and nearby Hagia Sophia (meaning 'Holy Wisdom'). Built in 548 AD, Hagia Sophia was the greatest Church in Christendom until 1453 when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Empire. Onwards then to the Grand Bazaar, with over 4000 exotic tiny shops. Return to your hotel for dinner and overnight (BD)

DAY 12 FRIDAY 01ST MAY **ISTANBUL**

Commence the day with a special morning cruise along the Bosphorus River, where you will sail past the Ottoman Palaces, Byzantine fortresses, Beylerbeyi Palace and Suleiman's Mosque. An opportunity to celebrate Mass at a Catholic Church. Enjoy a brief visit to Topkapi Palace. After the visit, transfer to our hotel for dinner and overnight (BD)

DAY 13 SATURDAY 02ND MAY **ISTANBUL - AUSTRALIA**

End your pilgrimage with a transfer to Istanbul Airport for your departure flight to Dubai. Transfer to your connecting flight back to Melbourne. (B)

DAY 14 SUNDAY 03RD MAY **ARRIVE AUSTRALIA**

Arrive back to Melbourne this evening with wonderful memories from your pilgrimage!

**

Itinerary subject to change **

Interested in continuing the Footsteps of St Paul and visiting other amazing sites in Rome?

Instead of flying straight home from Istanbul, we will hold a limited number of seats out of Rome, allowing pilgrims to enjoy an independently arranged Rome Pilgrimage in the Eternal city and surroundings as organized with/by Fr Alex Chow.

Fr Alex has lived in Rome as a seminarian for 4 years. Fr. Alex has offered to assist pilgrims in finding

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modest but clean and comfortable accommodation. The Roman stay will consist of the following (depending on time availability):

1. Sites of St Paul: Basilica of St Paul Outside the Wall, Tre Fontana (where St Paul was imprisoned and executed), via Ostiense (where St Peter and St Paul met in Rome)
2. 3 major Pontifical Basilica: Basilica of St Peter, Basilica of Mary Major, Basilica of John Lateran
3. Churches of Saints of the Roman Canon: St Cosmos and Damian, St Clement, St Agnes in Agony, St Cecilia, St Bartholomew
4. Beautiful Rome: Colosseum, Rome Forum, Pantheon, Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain, Piazza di Popolo, etc...
5. Churches of the Passion of Jesus Christ: Church of the Holy Steps, Basilica of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, Basilica di Santa Prassede (Column of the Flagellation)
6. Elegant Churches: San Luigi dei Francesi (Caravaggio - calling of Matthew), Basilica of Saint Mary of Minerva (the tomb of St Catherine of Siena), Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria (Bernini's dramatic carving "The Ecstasy of Teresa."), Chiesa del Gesu.

****Olive Tree Travel will arrange your flight from Istanbul – Rome****

PRICE INCLUSIONS:

- Emirates Flight from Melbourne to Athens via Dubai and then return Istanbul to Melbourne via Dubai
- One way flight from Thessaloniki to Izmir
- One way flight from Izmir to Istanbul
- 11 nights in total: 7 nights in Greece and 4 nights in Turkey in hotel accommodation in twin share rooms.
- Breakfast and Dinner daily. Breakfasts and Dinners at hotels unless otherwise specified.
- All tips, gratuities and portorage (where available)
- Whisperer headsets
- All guiding and entrance fees as per the itinerary.
- Air-conditioned coach

NOT INCLUDED:

- Drinks with meals
- Travel insurance
- Incidentals, laundry
- Lunches
- Turkey Visa – currently US\$66 and obtained privately before departure

HOTELS (OR SIMILAR):

• Hotel Luwian	Athens	3 nights
• Hotel Amalia	Kalambaka	1 night
• Hotel Imperial Plus	Thessaloniki	3 nights
• Korumar Hotel	Kusadasi	2 nights
• Port Bosphorous Hotel	Istanbul	2 nights

NEXT STEPS

1. Register your interest and obtain a booking form from Fr Alex or Olive Tree Travel or by [CLICKING HERE.](#)
2. To secure your place, a deposit of \$500 per person is payable by 16th June 2025 (unless sold out prior)
3. Final balances will be due by late February 2026.

WHO TO CONTACT:

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 South and St Timothy Forest Hill
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By
Olivia
Dawson