

THE FEEM WEEKLY

(FEEM = Faith Enrichment & Evangelising Ministry)



Vol 01 Issue 34, 30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR C
Weekend 22nd/23rd OCTOBER 2022

VISION STATEMENT Christ's Love in Action

MISSION STATEMENT

Meeting Christ as All in all through: Our relationship with others in creation,
Seeking God in the stillness, Embracing the Good News of the Gospel,
Accepting the challenges of the Cross, The power of the Holy Spirit,
And the intercession of the Holy Spirit

The Centenary Gold committee would like to thank all who have volunteered involvement in the coming celebrations. The event nomination sheets are available for review and completion for those who may still be considering how to get involved. Please, rest assured that all hands are appreciated, no matter how little you may be able to offer. You will find the sheets in the meeting room off the church entry, to your right. The next committee meeting is 26th October, and we look forward to seeing your names! Thank you in anticipation

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THANKS FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR FIRST AND SECOND COLLECTIONS AND PARISH BUILDING FUND



They help us to pay our bills, our Insurance, meet our Archdiocesan financial levy for seminaries, and they also go towards the maintenance of our Parish structures. As we say, each person their taste: we are giving a little thought to the needs of those parishioners or visitors who might prefer donating through bank transfers, to cash donations in situ. **For this choice, please find below:**

FIRST COLLECTION:

BSB: 086 006:

A/C NO: 551882724

A/C NAME: The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth Our Lady of Fatima Parish PALMYRA PRESBYTERY ACCOUNT

SECOND COLLECTION

BSB: 086 006

A/C NO: 670197711

A/C NAME: The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth Our Lady of Fatima Parish PALMYRA PARISH ACCOUNT

PALMYRA PARISH BUILDING FUND:

BSB: 086 006

A/C NO: 867962448

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth Our Lady of Fatima Parish PALMYRA PARISH ACCOUNT

EUTHANASIA

The Australian Family Association has just published data from Canadian Euthanasia. The figures are disturbing:

2016	-	1018
2017	-	2838
2018	-	4480
2019	-	5661
2020	-	7603
2021	-	10,06

It appears that once euthanasia is legalised then the number of deaths inevitably increases as euthanasia becomes more "normal" and "acceptable".



Victoria was the first Australian state to legalise euthanasia (VAD - Voluntary Assisted Dying) in 2017, followed by Western Australia. The other four states are due to introduce VAD laws later this year and in 2023.

The chairman of the Victorian review board has reported that "the number of people seeking to access voluntary assisted dying continues to increase". The numbers in Victoria increased by about a third from 2020/2021 to 2021/2022.

Jesus was strongly pro-life. He had some pretty sharp words for those who take life away: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full". (John 10:10)

Of course only God has the right to judge people who seek euthanasia and those who assist them. Some may have reached such a stage of desperation that they can see no other escape from their suffering.

One troubling statistic in the Canadian report is that "At least 1740 people died by euthanasia (2021) for loneliness and isolation." This comment should alert us all that both the national and local community needs to ensure that people in pain deserve the best of palliative care and that the lonely and isolated are well looked after.

Dick Finucane

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COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL

HUMILITY

Humility is knowing one's place and keeping it: The biblical scholar, William Barclay, has a record of the saying of Rabbi Ben Jochai, a famous Rabbi of second century CE (Common Era): On one occasion, Rabbi ben Jochai said: "If there are only two righteous men in the world, I and my son are these two; if there is only one, I am he."

Humility is never to blame God when I fail: It is rather to know that my place in life is to work hard to succeed.

"Humility is to keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you. (Ruyard Kipling—hereafter, RK)

"Humility is to trust yourself when all men [and women] doubt you, but make allowance for their doubting too." - RK

Humility is to wait and not be tired by waiting." - RK.

It is to be hated, [but] not give way to hating." - RK

"It is to dream and not make dreams your master." RK

"It is to meet with Triumph and disaster, And treat those two imposters just the same."- RK

MASS TIMES

Saturday: @ 9.00am & 6.30pm (Vigil).

Sunday: @ 7.30am, 9.45am & 6.30pm.

Monday & Thursday: @ 9.00am

Reconciliation: Available on request or 5.45pm Saturdays

EVERYBODY'S STORY: FROM FRANCE

The Paradoxes of St. Bernadette Soubirous



France has a long tradition of strong-minded female saints who have experienced visions. Joan of Arc's example was followed by, among many others, Margaret Mary Alacoque (the Sacred Heart) and Catherine Labouré (the Miraculous Medal), both well educated nuns. They were followed by the unlikely figure of Bernadette Soubirous. St Bernadette today has no specific national significance for French Catholics. As for Catholics everywhere, her fame in France is based on the pilgrimage to Lourdes, a small market town lying in the foothills of the Pyrenees. But there was a moment, 160 years ago, when her visions did play a significant role in national political life.

The story of Bernadette Soubirous is one of exclusion, suffering and paradox. No one who knew the 14-year-old girl before her extraordinary experience would have seen a potential saint. Bernadette was not raised in a devout family. She grew up in extreme poverty, in a remote mountain settlement, in a period of intermittent cholera and famine. She was semi-literate and spoke Occitan, the disdained language of the local people, rather than French. For her parish priest, Fr Dominique Peyramale, the Soubirous family were, at the time of the visions, in disgrace. He had publicly humiliated two of her unmarried aunts by expelling them from the Children of Mary when they had become pregnant. And the gendarmes had arrested her father, who had been accused of theft. When François Soubirous failed to pay the rent, the family were evicted and had to be lodged



in a disused lock-up that had been abandoned by the police because it was so unhealthy. In an enclosed community, like Lourdes in the 1850s, dominated by an exclusive bourgeoisie of *notables* (tradesmen and minor public officials) and where everyone minded everyone else's business, the Soubirous family were regarded as more or less a bad lot. Bernadette was at the bottom of the heap.

On that bitter morning, on 11 February 1858, Bernadette's mother told her to make herself useful by spending the day outside "gathering firewood": in other words, picking up sticks. Bernadette was dressed in rags. She had no shoes; she had asthma and incipient TB.

After she had called on Fr Peramale to report the first vision-the apparition of "a beautiful lady" in a dank grotto by the river he sent her packing. On her way home, a woman slapped her face in the street, accusing her of "playing the fool". Later, once the shrine and the pilgrimage had been established, Bernadette's growing fame became a distraction and she was packed off to a convent in Burgundy, hundreds of miles away. Her departure from Lourdes was welcomed by the civil and religious authorities because the crowds attracted by her story had become a threat to public order.

Over the centuries, in the valleys of the Pyrenees, a long tradition of Marian shrines associated with visions and miraculous springs had developed. In 1858 there were at least 10 other villages with similar cults. So there was no immediate reason why a new vision on the riverbank at Lourdes should have attracted national attention. But Fr Peyramale, who had originally rejected her story, changed his mind when Bernadette reported that "the Lady", on being asked to identify herself, had replied, in the local dialect, "*Qué soi' era Immaculado Conceptioni*" (I am the Immaculate Conception)-words that the child had never heard before and did not understand. It was this that persuaded Fr Peyramale, and later the Bishop of Tarbes, Mgr Laurence, to accept Bernadette's story.

The question of the Immaculate Conception of Mary-the belief that the Virgin Mary was free of original sin from the moment of her conception-had been hotly contested by theologians for several hundred years. Duns Scotus had defended the doctrine in the thirteenth century against the arguments of Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas Aquinas. In 1849, intending to bring an end to the controversy, Pius IX asked bishops across the world for their view on whether or not the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception should be defined as dogma. Most were in favour; among those strongly opposed was the Archbishop of Paris, Marie-Dominique Auguste Sibour, who declared that there was "no authority for the doctrine in either the Scriptures or tradition". In the Days of the Second Empire, Sibour was a highly influential figure. The Emperor Napoleon III had nominated him to the senate in 1852, and the archbishop was to preside over the marriage of the emperor one year later. But despite the opposition of Sibour and many other influential theologians, Pius IX issued the bull *Ineffabilis Deus* in 1854, proclaiming that belief in the Immaculate Conception was "a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful". He intended enthusiasm for the new doctrine to drive a religious revival. Overcoming his scepticism, Sibour travelled to Rome to attend the promulgation of the decree, and shortly afterwards published it in his own diocese. His "betrayal" was bitterly resented by some of his fellow opponents of the teaching. The depth of feeling was illustrated on 3 January 1857, when Archbishop

Sibour was stabbed to death in the church of St Étienne-du-Mont in central Paris by a priest called Jean-Louis Verger, a fierce critic of the newly defined doctrine. Verger was found guilty of murder in a one-day trial and guillotined on 30 January 1857. One year later Bernadette claimed that the Lady appearing in her visions had identified herself as "the Immaculate Conception".

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church and the papacy were involved in a bitter struggle with anti-clericalism. In this struggle, *Ineffabilis Deus* was seen as one of the pivotal events. From outside the Church, it was regarded an exercise in papal power, a prelude to the declaration of the doctrine of papal infallibility by the First Vatican Council in 1868. That council was adjourned in 1870 on the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, and never reconvened. When France was defeated, Napoleon III was overthrown and an anti-clerical republic was installed. In Germany, the victorious chancellor Otto von Bismarck launched his *Kulturkampf*, intending to abolish Catholic influence in education and gain control of ecclesiastical appointments. In France liberals and rationalists were determined to drive the Church out of public life. Schools were closed and religious orders were disbanded or driven into exile.

In this struggle, the pilgrimage to Lourdes began to play a prominent role. The railway had reached the town in 1866; the bishop had removed control of the Grotto from the parish and installed the Fathers of Garaison, an order of revivalist preachers, with instructions to develop suitable premises for the pilgrims to worship. As a result, the pilgrimage rapidly grew in popularity and quickly became a battlefield in France's religious wars. Leading rationalists and anti-clericals such as Émile Zola and Anatole France singled out the shrine for their hostile attention. Zola who described the devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes as "a new religion", wrote a novel discrediting reports of miracles, in which he distorted the facts surrounding real-life cures. But their scepticism had little practical effect. The pilgrimage to Lourdes did inspire a religious revival. Bernadette's vision, an exceptional example of a direct spiritual experience free of clerical mediation, was the driving force. Reports of inexplicable cures became more frequent. By 1892, pilgrims were arriving from 19 countries and the French national pilgrimage numbered 30,000 people.

QUITE UNAWARE of the political battles provoked by her visions, Bernadette, now known as Sr Marie-Bernarde, spent the rest of her life in Nevers at the mother house of the Sisters of Charity, an order she knew because it ran the Catholic primary school in Lourdes. It was the only religious order prepared to accept a novice in such a poor state of health. Bernadette showed no interest in the stories of miracles, or in the shrine, or in the statues that sprang up everywhere in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes. She remained focussed on her experience of the 18 visions, despite the scepticism of her novice mistress. She once said that she feared nothing, except "bad Catholics". She died in the Nevers, slowly of tuberculosis. She had been bedridden for three years before her death in 1879. In the spring of 2015, the municipal council of Lourdes lobbied for her remains to be returned to the town, a move successfully opposed by the city of Nevers.

Living, as we do, in the age of the "celebrity" and the online "influencer", we can enjoy the fact that an obscure and humble child, someone who always insisted on her personal unimportance, should have had such a lasting and dramatic influence not just on her own times, but on the faith of millions during the 160 years that have followed.



Patrick Marnham

Reporter & Screenwriter

Author of *War in the Shadows: Resistance, Deception, and Betrayal in Occupied France*

JOURNEY WITH THE POPE

"The Christian faith always asks us to walk alongside others, never to be solitary wayfarers. Faith always urges us to move beyond ourselves and towards God and our brothers and sisters, never to remain enclosed within ourselves. Faith invites us to acknowledge constantly that we are in need of healing and forgiveness, and to share in the frailty of those who are near to us, without feeling ourselves superior." 16th October



"May the Church be overcome with joy. If she should fail to rejoice, she would deny her very self, for she would forget the love that begot her. Yet how many of us are unable to live the faith with joy, without grumbling and criticizing? A Church in love with Jesus has no time for quarrels, gossip and disputes. May God free us from being critical and intolerant, harsh and angry!... For those who love, as the Apostle Paul teaches, do everything without murmuring (cf. Phil 2:14). Lord, teach us your own lofty gaze; teach us to look at the Church as you see her. And when we are critical and disgruntled, let us remember that to be Church means to bear witness to the beauty of your love, to live our lives as a response to your question: Do you love me? And not to act as if we were at a funeral wake." 20th October

Bernard Landro