

# Saint Mary's Newsletter: March

**Vicar:** David Smithson 027 4213200 Fridays

07 8492761 Afterhours

**Peoples Warden:** Sally-Ann Riddell 07 8243850

**Vicars Warden:** Roger Jennings 07 8243712



## SERVICES FOR MARCH

### Sunday 4<sup>th</sup>:

10am Family Communion Service

Refreshments - Karen Boyer

### Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>:

10am Family Communion Service

Refreshments - Majella Heaton

### Sunday 18<sup>th</sup>:

10am Family Communion. AGM after the service. Children's Church: Making Palm crosses.

Refreshments - Rosalie Jennings

### Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>:

10:15am Palm Sunday Joint service with the Oaks Church.

### Friday 30<sup>th</sup>:

10am Good Friday Service



**AGM:** Immediately after the service 18<sup>th</sup> March. It is always brief, and held along with a cuppa. Please see the vicar if you have not served on Vestry and wish to do so

**Palm Sunday Service:** Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> March. Please bring along Palm or Ponga fronds. There will be a procession with Lucilla the donkey to the Oaks Church.

**Good Friday 30<sup>th</sup> Mar:** 10:00AM. We mark this special Holy Day with a Stations of the Cross service. This is an emotional service where we both journey with, and encounter Jesus, in what he went through for us.

**Children's Church/Junior Youth:** Vestry have decided that Children's Church/Junior Youth will be held monthly (3<sup>rd</sup> Sun of the month) instead of fortnightly. This month (18<sup>th</sup>) making Palm Crosses!

**Youth Group (Year 9+):** Combined churches youth Meet Fridays 7pm at Oaks Church Gordonton & Wednesdays 7pm "Ignite" at Horsham Downs Church.

### SELF CONTROL

Self-control is one of the nine fruits of the Spirit listed by Paul in Galatians 5:22-23. The KJV translation uses the word *temperance* in place of “self-control” which, like self-discipline, generally refers to our ability to control or restrain ourselves from all kinds of feelings, impulses, and desires, which includes the desire for physical and material comfort. Now, even though self-control is the last of the spiritual fruits mentioned by Paul, and even though it is a term not used extensively in the Bible, self-control is clearly an indispensable attribute of the Christian life, especially as our unredeemed flesh sometimes causes us to succumb to the persistent tug of our sinful desires.

The apostle Paul calls us to “purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God” (2 Corinthians 7:1). And in his letter to the Romans, he exhorts us to “offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God,” and not to be conformed to the pattern of this world (Romans 12:1-2). Yet most Christians would agree that subordinating the constant pull of these worldly desires in order to please our Lord is not always an easy thing to do. Paul discusses his own inner conflict and struggle with sin in his letter to the Romans, “What I want to do I do not do...the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing...it is sin living in me that does it” (Romans 7:15-20).

It is clear that our seemingly insatiable human appetites and needs can easily lead to sinful excesses if not controlled. Especially in affluent societies, the lack of self-discipline is rampant, as evidenced by the number of obese people and the extensive use of stimulants, depressants and over-the-counter medications. Further, the enticements of the material world have caused many to yearn for and acquire material goods far beyond their needs and their ability to pay for them. Indeed, the nations of the world have fallen into the same trap, borrowing trillions of dollars to finance bloated budgets that result from the inability to exercise self-discipline. For Christians, without self-discipline, our appetites for comforts and pleasures can easily become our master and lead us into sin or otherwise hinder us in our spiritual walk. If the spiritual does not govern the physical, we can become easy targets for Satan due to our lack of self-control (1 Corinthians 7:5).

Paul discusses self-discipline in his letter to the Corinthian church. As the Greeks had the Olympic games and the Isthmian games, they were very familiar with the rigors of athletic training, especially if one wanted to win the “prize” or the “crown.” Paul analogizes living a disciplined Christian life to an athlete in training: “Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training” (1 Corinthians 9:25). When Paul says “I beat my body and make it my slave,” he is saying that his body is under the dominion and control of his mind, not the other way around. Paul is showing us how self-control is needed to win the race that is before us and to live the life that is “holy and pleasing to God.” For Paul, the “race” was winning souls for Christ, a goal which he states four times in verses 19-22.

It is important to understand that self-control is a work of the Holy Spirit, not a work of the individual. After all, Galatians 5:22-23 lists the fruit *of the Spirit*, not the fruit of the Christian. As we are merely the branches upon which the Vine (Christ) hangs the fruit He produces (John 15:1-8), it is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that gives Christians the power and ability to exercise self-control so that we will not be mastered by the “cravings of sinful man.” As Paul said, “God did not give us a Spirit of timidity, but a Spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7). Indeed, Christians are controlled not by the sinful nature, but by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9), who helps us in our weakness (v.26), which makes us able to say “no” to sin.

The wise King Solomon wrote many proverbs for the purpose of helping us to live a “disciplined” and prudent life (Proverbs 1:3). Certainly, we will be more victorious in our Christian walk when we exercise our Spirit-given self-control that which helps us respond in obedience to the commands of Scripture and allows us to grow in our spiritual life.

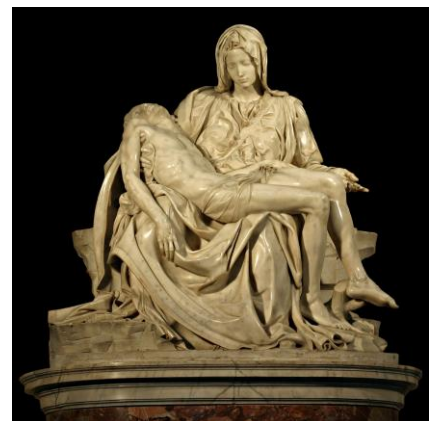
### **Parish Giving**

Please consider giving to the parish via Automatic Payment. Did you know that St Mary’s has to pay for our Vicar and all other costs of running a Parish, as well as giving a proportion to the Diocese? Please help us to be sustainable by giving via Automatic Payment. It is an easy way to give and is useful for the parish in running its budget. The Parish Bank Account is:

**02 0410 0103053 00**

### **This Month in Christian History:**

**6<sup>th</sup> March 1475:** The birth of Michelangelo Buonarroti, Italian artist extraordinaire. Michelangelo’s most famous works include the sculptures Pieta (1498) and David (1504), the architectural plans for St Peter’s cathedral in Rome, and the paintings on the 5,808-sa-foot ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (1508-12)



### **Healing & Confession:**

Should you require prayer for healing, please see the vicar. The confidential act of Reconciliation/Confession (see page 750 of the Prayer Book) is also available on Friday’s at the church 9am – 3pm