What is the liturgy?

The word liturgy is often used by Catholics as synonymous with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. While all of liturgy culminates in the Mass, the Mass is not the whole of liturgy. The word liturgy can signify a variety of other services as well.

Liturgy at its root means an obligation or a duty. For Catholics the liturgy is much more than an obligation or a duty. The Church has participated in the Liturgy since her inception but it was not until the 18th century that liturgy received the meaning it has today. The two most important contemporary documents on the liturgy are Vatican II's *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and Pope Pius XII's encyclical *Mediator Dei*. Understanding what these two documents teach regarding the liturgy gives a very good insight into what exactly liturgy is. This short summary will briefly explain liturgy through these two great works.

Pope Pius XII's encyclical *Mediator Dei* was given on November 20th 1947. At the heart of the encyclical it defines the liturgy by saying, "the liturgy is nothing more or less than the exercise of this priestly function of Christ."[1]The liturgy is an efficacious sign of a supernatural reality. The liturgy is not efficacious because of the great work of man but because of the presence of Christ and the actions of the Holy Spirit. The Christian people participate in this work under the direction of the ministerial priesthood that was instituted by Christ. Man does not *do* liturgy, rather he *participates in* the liturgy through the invitation of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit under the direction of the ministerial priesthood. *Mediator Dei* teaches that in the liturgy one participates in the work of Christ.

Mediator Dei highlights the relationship in the liturgy between God and man. In the liturgy there is an upwards trend of man calling out to God called the anabatic and a downward trend of God to man called the katabatic. The katabatic is the reality of God sending down his graces of redemption upon the members of His Church in the liturgy. The anabatic or upward trend is man offering up to God his adoration and petition through the priest who acts as the mediator between God and man.

The Second Vatican Council strove to build on the truths of *Mediator Dei* to come to a deeper understanding of liturgy. The fruit of this desire is the document *Sacrosanctum Concillium*, promulgated on December 4th 1963 by Pope Paul VI. The fathers of the Council attempted to avoid a scholarly definition of liturgy and rather relied on the words of the Bible and the Church Fathers. The document defines the liturgy by claiming, "the liturgy is considered as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. In the liturgy, by means of signs perceptible to the senses, human sanctification is signified and brought about in ways proper to each of these signs: in the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the mystical body of Jesus Christ, that is by the Head and his members."[2]

Through this definition, the document declared four essential aspects of liturgy. First, the liturgy is not the work of man but rather is an exercise of Christ's priestly office. Secondly, the liturgy is performed through the uses of signs that can be embraced through the senses. Thirdly, through these signs human sanctification is not only signified but is also brought about. Lastly, the document teaches that while liturgy is the exercise of Christ's priestly office it is the work of the whole Mystical Body of Christ: both Christ the Head and all the members. In other words, in the liturgy the people of God participate in the priestly office of Christ according to their state in life.

These two great modern documents on the liturgy Pope Pius XII's *Mediator Dei* and Vatican II's document *Sacrosanctum Concilium* give a great insight into what the liturgy is. Through a more scholarly presentation in *Mediator Dei* and a more contemplative presentation in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* it is clear that the liturgy is not a spectator event. All Christians are invited to full participation in the liturgy, to participate in the priestly office of Christ, whereby God sends down his redemptive grace and He receives our prayers of adoration and petition.

The Alpha Marriage Course is a practical, seven-session series designed to help couples strengthen and invest in their relationship, offering couples practical tools to build deeper connection, navigate challenges, and nurture a thriving, lifelong partnership.

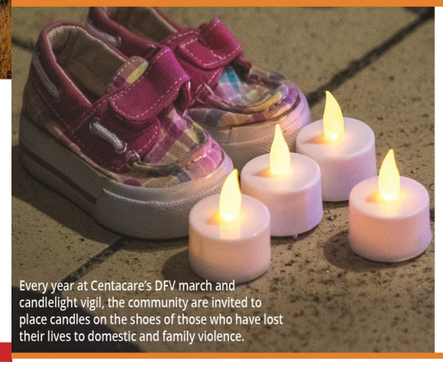
Every Thursday night online, 7:30 - 9:30 pm, for 7 weeks

STARTING THURSDAY 7 MAY 2026

Archdiocesan MINISTRIES

Scan the QR code for more info or visit **tinyurl.com/amc7nights** to register before 5 May 2026

Together we can prevent domestic and family violence



Every year at Centacare's DFV march and candlelight vigil, the community are invited to place candles on the shoes of those who have lost their lives to domestic and family violence.

The Archdiocese and its agencies reaffirm a united commitment to standing with victim-survivors calling out injustice, and working together as a community of faith to prevent domestic and family violence.

Find more information, tips to support and ways to donate.

Archdiocesan MINISTRIES · centacare · LITURGY BRISBANE · The Archdiocese of Brisbane

OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH

Acacia Ridge | Algester
Calamvale | Parkinson
| Larapinta | Pallara

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Seivland Poh
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PO Box 12 Acacia Ridge QLD 4110
Website
www.fatimaacaciaridge.org.au

MASS TIMES

Tue: 5:30pm—Holy Mass
6:00pm Eucharist Adoration
Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat 9 am
Saturday 4.30pm (Vigil)
Sunday 9am & 5pm

CONFESSIONS

Tues: 6:00pm to 6:30pm (or by appointment)

BAPTISMS

3rd Sunday of the month 10.15am

PIETY STALL

1st Sunday each month

SCHOOLS

Our Lady of Fatima School
www.ourladyoffatima.qld.edu.au
07 3275 1152
pacaciaridge@bne.catholic.edu.au
St Stephens School Algester
www.ststephens.qld.edu.au
07 3711 4911
palgester@bne.catholic.edu.au

Please check out our Parish Webpage and Facebook Page for regular updates.

LIKE US ON facebook

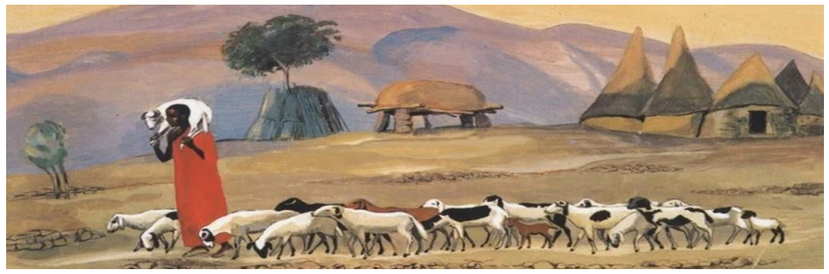
FATIMA NEWS

4th SUNDAY OF EASTER—26 April 2026

Greetings to all,

Today is the fourth Sunday of Easter. It is sometimes called "Good Shepherd Sunday." That is because in all three cycles of the Liturgical Year, the Gospel presents us with an image of Jesus as our good shepherd. But what does a shepherd do? Today's gospel answers this question succinctly. It tells us that a shepherd leads the sheep in and leads them out. Both of these actions are required, if we are to have a healthy relationship with Christ.

At night the shepherd leads the sheep in, in through the gate, into the sheepfold. He leads them in because the night is dangerous, the time when wolves prowl about for food. So leading the sheep in is to protect them, to offer them comfort and security. We need to trust that Christ is present to offer us protection and comfort in the dangerous times of our lives. When we have to face family turmoil, physical sickness, or financial hardship, we need wisdom and courage. Then it is important to understand that we are not wandering around in the dark alone. Christ has gathered us in, to experience the security of his presence. He is watching us and guarding us through the night.



But our relationship with Christ is not just about security and comfort. The shepherd also leads the sheep out: out of the sheepfold into the world, out to do his work. Christ asks us to serve others. He calls us to be the best mothers and fathers, sons and daughters that we can be. He leads us out to build his kingdom, to attack injustice, to oppose oppression, and to help those who are in need.

Christ, our good shepherd, both leads us in and leads us out. He comforts us and challenges us. He gives us security, and he calls us to serve. These two dynamics are essential parts of being a disciple. They are also interrelated, because one suffers, if the other is absent. If we begin to think that our relationship with Christ is merely about our security and comfort, it can easily become selfish. We can begin to focus more and more on ourselves, on our wants, fears, and needs. When this tendency begins to take hold, then we must allow our shepherd to lead us out, out of preoccupation with ourselves, out into service of others. But on the other hand, if we begin to think that our relationship with Christ is merely about doing his work, we can easily become exhausted. We give and give to our family, to our friends, to our community until there is nothing left. When this begins to happen, we must allow our shepherd to lead us in, into the security of his presence, into the comfort of his love. We must take time to withdraw, to pray, to be thankful for what we have received so that we can find the energy to serve again.

Christ, our shepherd, both leads us in and leads us out. We should let him. We should go in, embrace his presence, and drink in his love. Then, we can go out and be his presence in the world.

Have a Blessed Week, Dang

To receive the Parish eNewsletter, please email to acaciaridge@bne.catholic.net.au

IN GRACE FRIENDS

Join us for a Morning Tea on Thursday, 7 May, 9:30am at Parish Office/Presbytery. Bring a plate of food to share and a friend.

Catechism Class

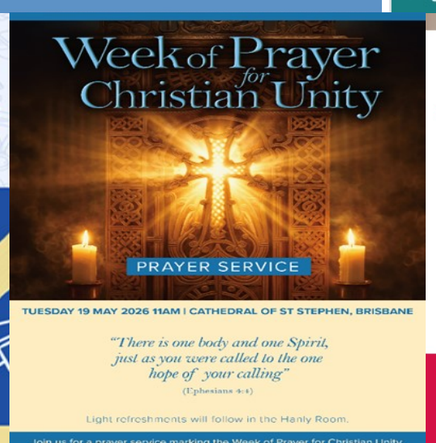
Dear parents, An ongoing catechism class every Sunday during school Term for 30 minutes after the 9 am Mass at Our Lady of Fatima parish in Acacia Ridge. For more information, please contact Sr. Hanna MC. Ph: (07) 3252 4441 if interested.

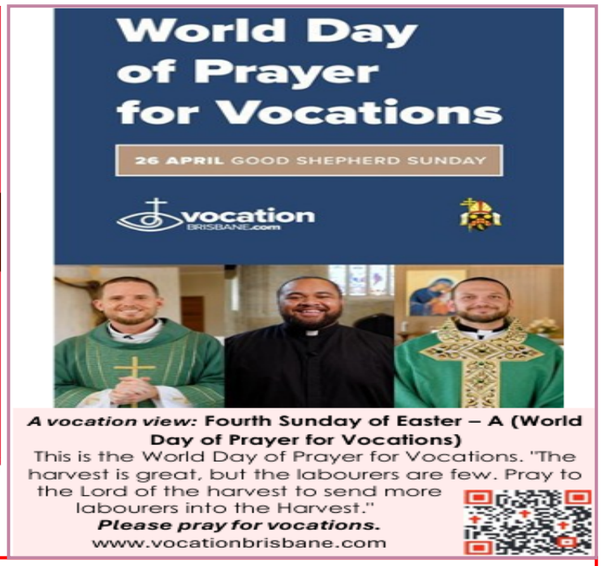
Have you signed up? Why Flocknote?

Parishioners and visitors are invited to scan the QR code to sign up and register with the parish. If you have any questions, please reach out to our parish office : acaciaridge@bne.catholic.net.au

Safeguarding News

The Safeguarding Commitment for the Archdiocese of Brisbane and Our Lady of Fatima Parish is: Zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and strives to safeguard all who interact with its ministries & services. Special priority is given to the safety & wellbeing of children & adults at risk. In an emergency, please call the Police 000 or information can be provided to STOPline anonymously. Phone: 1300 304 550 Email: AOB@stopline.com.au Online: www.bnecatholic.stoplinereport.com https:// brisbane-catholic.org.au/safeguarding/safeguard/





The Jewish Roots of the Eucharist

To understand how the elements and pattern of the Mass we celebrate today came about, it is helpful to remember that Jesus and his first disciples were all Jews. Unlike their fellow Jews, however, they believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah.

After Pentecost, the Jewish Christians continued to go to the temple to pray. If they were outside of Jerusalem, they would go to the synagogue on the Sabbath and then on Sunday they would gather for a meal, in obedience to Jesus' words to them at the Last Supper "Do this in memory of me".

Because they kept claiming that Jesus was the Messiah, the Jewish Christians were eventually banned from the synagogue, so they started meeting on the Sabbath for their own synagogue service. Like their fellow Jews, they would read from the Jewish Scriptures, hear a sermon, say prayers and sing psalms. But they added to this stories about Jesus, which became the Gospels, and letters from Christian leaders like Paul, what we call the Epistles.

After a while, the need for holding two gatherings on different days was questioned and so they were combined into one which took place on the first day of the week, the day of Christ's resurrection. The pattern of worship the early Jewish Christians followed is the same as that of the Eucharist today - an adapted synagogue service consisting of prayers, readings from scripture, preaching and singing followed by a meal modelled on the last Passover celebrated by Jesus.

Elizabeth Harrington

Saint of the Week: St Catherine of Siena: Virgin and Doctor of the Church

Saint Catherine of Siena is celebrated as one of the most remarkable women in Christian history. Born in Siena, Italy, in 1347, Catherine Benincasa devoted her life to God from an early age and went on to become a mystic, peacemaker, and influential figure in the Church. She is honoured as a virgin and was declared a Doctor of the Church for her theological writings and spiritual leadership.

Growing up in a large family, Catherine displayed extraordinary faith as a child, committing herself to prayer and service. By the age of seven, she reportedly experienced her first vision of Christ, setting the tone for a life marked by intense spiritual experiences. Despite facing opposition from her family, she resisted marriage and entered the Third Order of Saint Dominic, embracing a life of austerity, charity, and contemplation.

Catherine's influence extended well beyond her native Siena. She became known for her wisdom and compassion, counselling popes, cardinals, and political leaders throughout Italy. During a time of great turmoil in the Church, Catherine worked tirelessly to bring about peace, even travelling to Avignon to persuade Pope Gregory XI to return the papacy to Rome.

Her letters and the "Dialogue," a spiritual treatise dictated to her followers, display deep insight and fervent love for God. Catherine's legacy as a spiritual guide continues to inspire people around the world, and she remains a patron saint of Europe and Italy.

Saint Catherine of Siena died on 29 April 1380 at the age of 33, leaving a legacy of faith, courage, and service. Her feast day is celebrated on 29 April each year, a reminder of her enduring example of holiness and her profound impact on the Catholic Church.