

SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

ABN 56 751 544 850

Telephone: 9366 2146 Fax: 9366 9876

Email: stalbans@cam.org.au

Website <http://pol.org.au/stalbanssydenham>

4 Winifred Street

ST ALBANS VICTORIA 3021

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PARISH UPDATE 7

Continuing Easter greetings to everyone!

Yes, we're still in the Easter Season: it seems so long ago, doesn't it, when we had to share all the great Holy Week-Easter liturgies and their symbols via a screen?

Even though it seems a long time, we are nowhere getting used to it – it's just not what it should be!

One of the great markers for family life that we will keep is this weekend's Mothers' Day. Celebrating it differently from other years, it's still so important to take the opportunity to look around our family and be thankful for who we are and for those who love us, guide us, model for us, shape us, encourage us in our hopes, put so much into being mother for us.

Amongst various prayers and reflections, I noticed these:

*I said a Mother's Day prayer for you
to thank the Lord above
for blessing me with a lifetime
of your tender-hearted love.
I thanked God for the caring
you've shown me through the years,
for the closeness we've enjoyed
in time of laughter and of tears.
And so, I thank you from the heart
for all you've done for me
and I bless the Lord for giving me
the best mother there could be!*

*There is but one and only one,
Whose love will fail you never.
One who lives from sun to sun,
With constant fond endeavour.*

*There is but one and only one
On earth there is no other.
In heaven a noble work was done
When God gave us a Mother.*

I meet with the Principals of our Colleges and with the Principals of our Parish Primary Schools each week by ZOOM. In a prayer we used, one of them had the phrase 'this time of unknowing'. That's the unsettling element, I think: not having the stages clearly marked out. So important therefore, they tell us, to make our own routines so that we have some markers to shape our days and weeks. Important, too to recognise that each day is a real day even though different.

There's the tradition of reflecting on each day as it draws towards its end. Sometimes called 'examination of conscience', this practice has sometimes attracted negative overtones. It's supposed to have a strongly positive shape: where did I see signs of God's presence today? And, yes, where did I block the presence of God from working today? And how will I live tomorrow?

Another version suggests that we ask ourselves: Today, what was the best thing ... I saw? ... I ate? ... I did for myself? ... I did for someone else? ... I received? ... I found funny? Reflecting like that can lead readily into a prayer of Thanksgiving even in these awkward times – for God and God's blessings are with us still!

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A local sign of hope around the Parish during the week was the re-locating of the containers that hold the equipment used for our annual Parish Fair. Sacred Heart School is redesigning its layout, requiring that those containers be moved. They are now in a more secure place, which will be more accessible for the setting up and dismantling of the Fair. I like that attitude – don't give up on anything: look to this year's Parish Fair!

This weekend's Gospel reading for Mass is also chosen for many funerals: *In my Father's house there are many rooms; I am going to prepare a place for you so that where I am you may be too* – many know this text well.

It is so reassuring, isn't it! We are different from one another, with our own quirks of character and in the various situations of our lives that we live in and that shape us. Whatever that is for each of us, for every one of us there is space and a place in the eternal life of the Kingdom of God!

This promise does not mean that death comes easily or gently in any circumstance though, does it? As the Season of Easter continues, this Word asks us to make room for that hope of eternal life. It asks us to give ourselves into the promise of God, and to entrust those who have died into that promise of 'space and place in eternal life'.

We hold Jesus as the pattern of our lives, don't we? Very often we concentrate on what that means for the values we live by, the things we do, the attitudes we hold. It also applies to the tough reality of death: as Jesus lived and died and was raised into New Life, so shall we be raised, too, into New Life through our death – Jesus is the pattern for our lives.

Easter Season calls us to grow in this trust and hope, and to see the inevitability of death in the context of God and God's promises.

Keep at it, this business of life! and entrust yourself, and those you grieve for, to the promise of God for New Life!

And another prayer on Mothers' Day. Blessings to all our families!

Maurie Cooney
(Parish Priest)

Another Mothers' Day Prayer

Loving God, we pray:

for new mothers, coming to terms with new responsibility;

for expectant mothers, wondering and waiting;

for those mothers who are tired, stressed or depressed;

for those who struggle to balance the tasks of work and family;

for those who are unable to feed their children due to poverty;

for those whose children have physical, mental or emotional disabilities;

for those who raise children on their own;

for those who have lost a child;

for those who care for the children of others;

for those whose children have left home;

and for those whose desire to be a mother has not been fulfilled.

Bless all mothers with the love of good partners and thankful children.

Bless all mothers, that their love may be deep and tender,

and that they may lead their children to know and do what is good,

Bless all mothers that they, too, enjoy the goodness of life which they give to others.

Amen.

Attachments: Statement from Archbishop Comensoli; notices.