

SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

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ST ALBANS VICTORIA 3021

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PARISH UPDATE 11

May the blessings of GOD be with you!

Our Church celebrates the Feast of Trinity this weekend, the feast of GOD, whom we name 'Father, Son, Spirit'. We customarily commence and finish our prayer 'in the name of the Father, Son, Spirit'. One of the earliest prayers we teach our children is the Sign of the Cross "in the name of the Father, Son, Spirit". Throughout our celebration of Mass we name the Trinity many times.

There's the story that the great teacher in the Church, St Augustine (354-430) was walking along the beach one day and he saw ahead a boy who had dug a hole in the sand and was running to the water to fill up his bucket and rushing back and pouring the water into his hole. When he got to the boy Augustine asked him what he was doing. "I'm going to empty the ocean into my hole here," the boy said. "And what are you doing while you're walking along?" the boy asked Augustine. "I'm trying to work out GOD," he replied. And the boy said, "I bet I get finished first!"

The point of our using the word GOD is to acknowledge that 'there's more to life than meets the eye', that there is the Being who is more than and greater than we are and than all else is. With Trinity, however, we recognise that this GOD has become part of our lives – in Jesus, and remains part of our lives – in the Holy Spirit: and still is GOD. If Augustine (or anyone else) could work all that out, God would become another of our categories that we can manage – and that wouldn't be GOD anymore.

Rather, as St Catherine of Siena wrote: *Eternal God, eternal Trinity, You are a mystery as deep as the sea; the more I search, the more I find, and the more I find the more I search for you. For I can never be satisfied; what I receive will ever leave me desiring more. When you fill my soul I have an even greater hunger*

And yet we do speak about GOD, and do that with some confidence for GOD is part of our experience and has revealed GODSELF to us – particularly in Jesus, inspiring our awareness of God in our lives with the Holy Spirit. Blessings on Trinity Sunday!

During the week some members of our RCIA team participated – by ZOOM – in a meeting with the Archdiocesan leaders of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. That's the way adults who want to become part of the Catholic Church are guided in that direction in a process that begins in August each year and reaches its goal at Easter the following year. Our Parish's three 'enquirers' were presented to the Archbishop on the First Sunday of Lent at the beginning of March: he accepted them, and blessed them for the remaining of their preparation for the Sacraments of

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Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist which we were to call them to in our Easter ceremonies (12th April). Alas, the virus intervened and brought a stop to that. From last week's meeting, plans are under way to complete those Sacraments for our RCIA people during one of our 'streaming Masses' now that we are permitted to have a small increase in numbers present.

There was also the first meeting this week of a new group: I'm calling that our 'Reopening Advisory Group'. When we are permitted to have more people in our churches for Masses and Baptisms, we want to be fully prepared for that. We have been given instructions about the many parts to that: equipment and people to clean before and after each gathering, recording names and contact numbers, marking out the churches to ensure proper separation, The biggest issue will be that the numbers permitted will increase in stages. How that will be! For example, sometime in the future we will be allowed to have 100 present at each of our Masses. Given that we usually have 350+ at each Saturday night/Sunday Mass, how will we arrange for some of our people to join a Mass without upsetting the others we can't include because of the restrictions on numbers? Our 'Reopening Advisory Group' will grapple with this along with the practical issues - if you have a helpful suggestion, email that to the Parish and I will present that to the group.

While we're waiting to gather in our churches again, remember that GOD is part of our lives in all places, and that we can pray in all places. We read in the Gospels that Jesus went to synagogue with the community. And there are various instances of his going to 'a lonely place' by himself to pray. It may be difficult to find a quiet place when we're living more closely at home with one another these days. Don't give up on praying, however, waiting until we gather in our churches again. As a youngster I was taught from the catechism question 'When should we pray?' that 'We should pray every morning and every night and frequently during the day!'

Our 'usual' prayers may come in handy for this. And perhaps reading something we're not familiar with and reflecting over it in a spirit of Father-Son-Spirit's being part of our lives. Some articles that may be of assistance come with this letter, all taken from the current edition of 'The Far East', a magazine put out by the Columban Fathers (of whom Fr Tom Cleary is a member - who has assisted with our Parish Masses and First Reconciliations over many years): *Where is God in all this?; Spirit Matters; A Healthy Distance.*

As all our children and young people return to School/College this coming week, let's renew our prayer for our families, and for the staffs of our Schools and Colleges.

May grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all!

Maurie Cooney
Parish Priest