

SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

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4 Winifred Street

ST ALBANS VICTORIA 3021

26th June 2020

PARISH UPDATE 14

Greetings everyone!

Together again for Eucharist!!! That was the good news for those who have been able to gather in our churches this week – such a special experience after three months of lockdown.

The disappointing news is that we aren't permitted to increase the number of Parishioners allowed at each Mass beyond 20 – we were looking forward to going twice that and more. That means that many Parishioners will not get their turn to come to Mass for quite some time.

The booking system – it is *essential* to book in advance online or by phone: details are attached with this letter – worked well enough in the first week.

The system will be improved

- if you list each person by name individually when you make a booking.
- if you've been able to be present for Mass, leave it for four before you try to book again – this will allow other Parishioners to have that special experience of being present in Eucharist in our churches.

Another of the disappointments as this week ends is the disruption to the 'school holidays' that are commencing. Once again plans have had to be cancelled for some people. Those who were going to stay home anyway have finished their 'learning from home' just a couple of weeks ago, and here comes another extended time of being at home – another unusual part of this lockdown experience. And it's not always easy! I have been encouraging our Principals, teachers and other staff to make sure they deliberately build some real relaxation into this two week break away from School/College. During the last (Easter) break they were working flat-out preparing for the transition to teaching/learning from home. And this term has been longer (11 weeks) than other terms in the year. Parents, and students, who found the 'at home' experience demanding and stressful: you, too – make sure there is some real 'down time' over the next two weeks.

Parish life has continued with some usual features in these unusual times. Great appreciation to all who have been able to maintain their Thanksgiving contributions – by card, through envelopes delivered / placed in the letterbox at Sacred Heart. (Details for how to contribute are with this letter.)

Our sacristans and 'reopening advisory group' have put in hours and energy to have us ready for the new schedule of Masses: Saturday 5pm and 7pm, Sunday 8am and 10am at both our churches; Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday at 7.30am at Sacred Heart and 6pm at Emmaus – you must book for all of these.

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During each week we have handed people over to eternal life with funeral Mass for them. Another dimension to the sadness is that a small number – now fifty – is permitted to gather for that very important stage of life: handing a loved one into God's promise of eternity life, sharing in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. At the start of the funeral Mass we take three of the symbols that are part of the Baptism ceremony when the journey into eternity life formally was proclaimed: we bless with the Water, we place the Stole, and we light the Easter candle - the journey now completed in the Kingdom of Heaven!

Our Baptism Team is having conversations about re-starting Baptisms in a new arrangement. Ring or email the Parish Office for an update when if you are considering plans for a Baptism.

With troubling times hitting some people around us very hard, I repeat the contact details for the Vinnies Winter Appeal. Instead of contributing to a Special Collection at Mass this year, the best way to support the Vinnies is by:

- donating online at vinnies.org.au - and here is the link that takes people straight to the Winter Appeal website - <https://bit.ly/2AFtZt1>
- calling with your credit card details **13 18 12**.

There have been many disturbing parts of life showing up over the past few weeks. That led me to the article I'm including with this letter, *Embracing life's givens*, from local Sister of the Good Samaritan, Patty Fawkner. She refers to a line that is in this Sunday's Gospel Reading – 'whoever does not take up your cross and follow me, is not worthy of me': very demanding, isn't it! There's the saying that 'Christian life is comforting and uncomfortable': comforting in giving us the knowledge of the presence of God with us and for us always; uncomfortable in calling us to live out our Christian faith always!

Blessings for hope! For peace of mind! For good company over the next week!

Maurie Cooney
Parish Priest