

SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

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ST ALBANS VICTORIA 3021

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PARISH UPDATE 19

Hello everyone!

With the increase of the number of infections and deaths from COVID-19, I had to go looking for the brave words of St Paul in his Second letter to the Corinthians:

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. *(2Cor 4:8-9)*

Amongst it all, don't we hold our older people in our care and prayer. Last Sunday was the Feast of Sts Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of Mary, mother of Jesus. There are some prayers on an attachment with this letter that reach out to our older people.

One of the articles with this letter reflects on living in isolation and the strength of friendship. The writer, Andrew Hamilton, is a Jesuit Priest – hence his familiarity with their founder Ignatius of Loyola.

Another Feast that was tucked away mid-week last week was for St Mary Magdalene, given the title 'The Apostle of the Apostles'! Another attachment by Andrew Hamilton wants to make sure we're thinking of the right person when we use her name!

What great 'bearers of the faith' there have been for our lives! Mary MacKillop and the Josephites have continued to be so for us in a particular way over their many years of service in our Parish! (Mary MacKillop's feastday is next Saturday, 2nd August.)

A worthwhile reflection would be: who have been 'bearers of the faith' for your life – in the way they live/d the gospel of Jesus, taught you the ways of Jesus and the Church, encouraged you to be a 'person of faith'?

There are those who have done that in public ways. There are those who do that day by day. Think of the people who grew Christian faith in this country over the years before the first 'official' Catholic Priests arrived in 1820. (In 1800 three Priests arrived as convicts following their participation in the Irish Rebellion.) Think of your parents, of others in our Parish communities, teachers, companions, friends. Remember, too, John Paul II's acknowledgement of the deep faith of the First Nation peoples of this land.

Amongst that we need Priests to lead us in Eucharist. This week is named 'Vocations Week' and focuses on the place of 'Priests and Religious' in our communities. I've been reading the Discernment Papers for the forthcoming Plenary Council. They acknowledge that a great number of the people's submissions to the Council ask that the criteria for ordination be expanded beyond 'single male' to all who make up the community of the Church, women as well as men, and to married men and women as well as to those who choose to be celibate.

Yes, we need Priests. And the number of Priests available for appointment across Melbourne Parishes continues to decrease. Recently Archbishop Comensoli announced that the five Parishes of Gardenvale, Brighton, Hampton, Sandringham, Rickett's Point-

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Beaumaris will now together be served by two Priests instead of one Priest each. The three Parishes of Greythorn, North Balwyn and East Kew will now together be served by two Priests instead of one Priest each. The five Parishes of Surrey Hills, Wattle Park, Camberwell, Balwyn and Deepdene will now together be served by two Priests instead of one Priest each. More of this is likely to follow given the age – in their 60s and 70s – of a large number of Priests.

I still recall clearly the opening words of the Priest who led the retreat just prior to the ordinations of the group I was part of (1974): “Since you invited me to join you on this retreat, I have so been looking forward to being with those young men on whom the future of the Church does not depend!” Yes: it’s the Holy Spirit, it’s the people who give life to our Church, isn’t it!

Given that we are all initiated into the life of Christ and the Church through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, we are all commissioned to be ‘other Christs’, to “carry forward the life of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit” (the teaching of the Church in Vatican 2 *CMW3*)!

There are so many ways for us to live that ... so many have done that for us, too.

In the garden by the driveway to Sacred Heart church during the week there was an earnest lesson going on: a family group of mum, dad, toddler boy and girl had stopped on their walk, and Dad was very excitedly and seriously explaining the new daffodil – its deep yellow flower, its strong green stem: the children just wanted to play with it!

If their walk took them up Alfreida St just north of the Biggs St roundabout, they would have noticed two trees coming into blossom. This was on Wednesday, with its rich blue sky, warm sun and still air.

The world of nature has begun to nudge forward to a change of season. Isn’t that what we’re urging for and praying for all across our lives: may the time come when we can be free again!

What lies ahead? That’s a question for all parts of our lives our lives. The attached article on ‘bucket lists’ proposes that we can build into our lives now some aspects that we may be imagining or hoping for in the future. As a Parishioner wrote: “Have a good day, remembering life is not cancelled, it is still there to be enjoyed. That’s the one freedom we seem to have: to choose what will be good for us today.”

Amongst it all, God’s blessings to you and those you care about and are concerned for ... indeed for the whole of God’s creation!

Maurie Cooney
Parish Priest