

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

25th September 2020

PARISH UPDATE 27

Greetings to everyone!

We had a funeral at Sacred Heart church during the week. (A 'feature' of our Parish is that for some years we have been holding around 80-90 funerals each year.) One of the great sadnesses brought by the lockdown is that the number who can gather for the funeral remains at only ten.

The man whom we handed over to eternal had featured in 'The Age' soon after his death as part of a series *Those who lived, loved and are gone: The men who helped build modern Melbourne*. During his working life he was a 'steel fixer', helping to construct the Rialto skyscraper, Collins Place, the Newport Power Station, the City Loop. A week before the West Gate Bridge collapsed during construction (15th October 1970) he had been assigned to the opposite end of the bridge.

This story is told again and again through our Parish of the many, many who 'helped build modern Melbourne', having come here from their countries of origin including Croatia, Poland, Malta, Italy, Greece, and later Vietnam and many more. They also built Sacred Heart church – I've seen photos of them digging trenches and pouring concrete. At home they cooked and enjoyed and shared meals they had brought with them from 'over there'. And Melbourne loved the new tastes and music and dances, festivals.

Well, it was really only after a while that we learned to appreciate. In an attitude that Australia keeps repeating, it isn't made easy for 'new Australians', 'recent arrivals' – in our red tape and its procedures, and in the caution many of us express about 'newcomers'. We aren't always the fun-loving, welcoming Aussies, mates, 'fair go for all' that tourist posters describe. One of the great aspects of our part of Melbourne is that in our streets and in our shops, in our Schools and Colleges, in our workplaces, we have the experience of 'all being in this together'.

We have Migrant and Refugee Sunday at this time each year which asks to focus on this situation. Pope Francis' statement – *Like Jesus Christ, Forced to Flee* - is attached. He says, "This is not a time for forgetfulness. The crisis (of COVID 19) we are facing should not make us forget the many other crises that bring suffering to so many people. ... When we talk about migrants and displaced persons, all too often we stop at statistics. But it is not about statistics, it is about real people! ... We are called to respond to this pastoral challenge with four verbs: welcome, protect, promote integrate."

As well as the full Statement, the prayer included in it is on another attachment: Pope Francis frames it around 'the example of Saint Joseph at the time he was forced to flee to Egypt to save the child Jesus.

Another perspective on this is the 'theme' for Catholic Regional College St Albans for this year: *We, though many, are one*. Principal Christina Utri says 'when we chose this for 2020, we never imagined how much it would reflect our lived experience that lay before us!' A

SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

ABN 56 751 544 850

Telephone: 9366 2146 Fax: 9366 9876

Email: stalbens@cam.org.au

4 Winifred Street

ST ALBANS VICTORIA 3021

prayer used for last week's Year 7 on-line assembly is attached – 'a celebration of the courage, connection and commitment that has been so evident in our community at this challenging time'.

In a similar vein, another attachment (On Freedom, Rights and Responsibilities) brings to the discussion the phrase 'the common good'. Yes, we are each individuals ... and at the same time we are 'part of the whole'. How are we to live both those elements of our identity? 'No one is an island, entire of itself' wrote the poet John Donne. 'We are all parts of one body' wrote St Paul. The article is strong on the importance of living and working for 'the common good'.

Pope Francis joins in on a second attachment (Solidarity is the antidote to selfishness, exploitation).

And there's that great Seekers' song that is featured on ABC TV, 'I am, you are – we are Australian'!

There is a 'behind the scenes' flurry of activity in relation to Catholic Schools and their management in the Archdiocese. You may remember that a year ago the decision was taken by the Archbishop to comply with Government instructions and change the 'governance structure', that is the management of Catholic Schools. From 1st January next year, Catholic Schools will be under the management of the Archbishop and the new company 'Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS)'. This will be a similar situation as in most Arch/dioceses across the country, some of which have had such a system for many years. Until now in Melbourne, Schools have been one of the responsibilities of Parish Priests and groups of Parish Priests. As the new governance structures are being designed, one of the related papers 'Working Together in Mission', describes how Priests, Principals, Parents, the Archbishop and MACS, Catholic Education Melbourne will be relating with one another and working together in the new arrangement. Papers have been circulated, Zoom consultations are being convened, drafts are being rewritten.

In practice, you may not notice anything changing in the usual Monday to Friday operation of our Schools and Colleges. The lines of management and accountability, mostly 'behind the scenes', are where the effect of the new governance model will be felt.

From various angles, this letter remembers that we are not on our own. At the base of that is God's commitment to be with us always, our being parts of God's creation together, God's naming us as 'My people', our being the community of the Church, our being parts of the Body of Christ in which Christ is our head, our sharing in the mission of Christ 'that *all* may have life, and have it to the full'. There is great reassurance in that, as well as great call and challenge!

Blessings to all as we eagerly await this weekend's announcements about lockdown. I'll let you know in next week's letter what impact that may have on Parish life.

Maurie Cooney
Parish Priest