

SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

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ST ALBANS VICTORIA 3021

30th October 2020

PARISH UPDATE 32

Greetings all!

All across Melbourne there were people 'taking the freedom' today in glorious weather following the Premier's announcements on Sunday. I hope you feel a little 'released' from the burden of the last few months!

The announcements gave very small concessions towards the re-opening of 'places of worship'. Given that there are to be further announcements on 8th November, we will be taking things gradually in our Parish for the next two weeks. That decision is based on wanting a clear schedule established rather than changing one in a fortnight's time; on being wary of the changeable weather (rain and wind are problems for outside gatherings); and on the experience of some other Parishes who experimented with outdoor Masses last week.

The schedule we are offering in our Parish is this:

- **October 31 (Saturday)** Live streaming of Sunday Mass from Emmaus Church at 5 pm. 10 people allowed. By invitation only to families of musicians, lectors rostered for that Mass. No other Masses this

- From **Tuesday, November 3 to Saturday, November 7**, weekday Masses at Sacred Heart Church will recommence: Tuesday-Friday at 7.30am, Saturday at 9.00am.
- Indoors; 10 people are allowed. Parishioners can book via online (Trybooking) only. **No phone booking** at this stage (that will change). Trybooking will open on Sunday, 1st November for a first-come-first-serve basis: <https://www.trybooking.com/BMKXC>

- **November 7 (Saturday)** Live streaming of Sunday Mass from Sacred Heart Church at 5 pm. 10 people allowed. By invitation only to families of musicians, lectors rostered for that Mass. No other Masses this

This is very restrictive still. I dearly hope that further easing of restrictions will be announced on 8th November so that we can extend these arrangements to enable more people to gather in Eucharist.

We will continue to stream Sunday Mass from 5pm onwards each Saturday: on Facebook and Youtube at SHEPARISH.

You may have come across the poem 'And the people stayed home' lately – see attachment. I saw it just this week, with a commentary that some thought it was written by Kathleen O'Meara in 1869 after Ireland's potato famine and blight. It turns out that it is from

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another Kathleen (known as Kitty) O'Meara this year. The poem recognises the burden of the lockdown, and urges the people to 'create new ways to live'.

As we enter November this weekend, we move into that month when we are mindful of the reality of death, always, of course, interpreting that in the light of the Resurrection. The month begins with the feasts of All Saints, which this year falls on Sunday, and All Souls. This takes us to the heart of the presence of Jesus for us and therefore the heart of our faith.

That centre is the proclamation that we share in the life of Christ now in this life, fulfilled through our death and 'being born' into eternal life. That God is part of God's own creation, that in Jesus coming amongst us, living, loving, suffering, dying ('Incarnation') human life is made holy again, that in Jesus' resurrection we are all taken into that realm of 'new life' of His, that the presence of God's inspiring Spirit is in us – these are basic proclamations of who we are. St Paul called the people of the communities he wrote to 'the saints' – while they were living out their faith day by day. So the youngster who answered the question 'What do you have to do to be a saint?' with the answer 'Die!' got it wrong. We are (called and enabled to be) the saints of today! And that will be fulfilled in eternal life.

There's an attachment with this letter about 'the communion of saints' – in which we share now as do those who have gone ahead of us.

Ah, 'those who have gone ahead of us' - through death. One of the very precious times Justel and I are parts of is on the occasion of death. It's worth considering, this reality, and All Souls and November give us an opportunity to do that. To help with that, there is another attachment here that includes some very short reflections from a variety of writers – Banjo Patterson who wrote the words of 'Waltzing Matilda', Bill Graham who drew 130,000 people to the MCG as he spoke of Christian faith, Robert Dessaix, Australian writer.

There are always questions: 'what will we look like in heaven?' for example. 'How will we get there?' Have a read of St Paul's comment on that first question in that attachment. The 'how' of passing from life here to New Life is up to God 'who wills that all be saved' (1Tim 2:4)). We may all need some 'readjustment', 'realignment', 'purging': God will see to that and draw us to our place at 'the banquet of the kingdom of heaven' where we will be "saints among the saints in the halls of heaven" (*Eucharistic Prayer of Reconciliation I*). Take a read, too, of the attachment, The Twins Story: it says so much about what we wonder about– and sometimes agonise over – when we consider death. Remember that the over-riding proclamation is that we will share in the Resurrection of Jesus.

Our young people in Year 12 are closing in on their final exams: hold them in your prayer - *Bless them with calmness of spirit, hopefulness of heart, and thankfulness for those who have guided them this far: LORD HEAR US.*

Blessings to all you 'saints'!

Maurie Cooney
Parish Priest