

# SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

ABN 56 751 544 850  
Telephone: 9366 2146 Fax: 9366 9876  
Email: [stalbans@cam.org.au](mailto:stalbans@cam.org.au)

4 Winifred Street  
ST ALBANS VICTORIA 3021

PARISH UPDATE (2)

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020

Greetings to everyone!

What great autumn days we have had this week – cool mornings, warm blue skies later. For our younger Parishioners and their families it's school holiday time, and so a break from the routine of every morning and evening. And that applies to us all even if we're not directly connected with schools – we all slow down a bit during school holidays.

And yet: this year we're living with that heavy pall of anxiety, of not knowing, of concern, of chilling images of other places where the virus is bringing great havoc. The gospel reading in last weekend's Mass was the story of Lazarus who had died, whose body had been placed in a cave, and who was called back into life. That's something of a parable for the situation we are in, I think. It's as though we are being put in a 'cave' away from life as we have known and experienced it. We want to hear the all that Lazarus heard, "Here: come out!" It seems that isn't going to come soon, though.

I wonder how Lazarus felt when he came back into life. I wonder how it will be for us when we are allowed to take up life again. Will we revert to the patterns, routines, habits, behaviours that shaped our lives before COVID-19? Or will we have learned some things about living life from the altered patterns, routines and restrictions that we now have to adopt?

The live-stream of our Parish Mass last weekend was a great success given the many notes of appreciation that have come in. By Tuesday night there had been 1,100 views of it. Expand that by several people who may have viewed it together in families! More strict limitations – a group of no more than two people – may affect the way we stream the Mass: nonetheless we will continue! The Masses are available on YouTube and Facebook at SHEPARISH (Sacred Heart-Emmaus Parish).

This is the last week of Lent. Usually we would be gathering in our churches to share prayer and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In one attachment to this letter there is a short form which you could pray at home: the down-to-earth writing of St Paul ('when I try to do good, something sinful comes to hand'), the reflection that we're not bad people (it's the small things that drag us and others down), the act of contrition (always looking forward), and the praise of God for forgiveness and new spirit.

Another way of sharing in the prayer of the Church on Palm Sunday this weekend is in another attachment: 'Holy Week at Home – Palm Sunday'. Another attachment has the order of service we had planned for the public Stations of the Cross on Good Friday amongst the shops at St Albans – you may like to use that as the days of Holy Week unfold.

I encourage you to share this letter and its attachments with others. If they would like to receive it directly, have them send their email address to the Parish Office.

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In the Lazarus story of last weekend, Mary and Martha didn't give up on hope even though they were deeply troubled. They are great models for us in this predicament of 'living-but-not-fully-as-we'd-like'.

Let's continue to pray for one another, and for all who are brought down by this pandemic. Let's pray in appreciation for all who are keeping us as safe as possible.

Yours sincerely

Maurie Cooney  
Parish Priest

**Streaming times for our ceremonies in Holy Week are:**

**Holy Thursday 7pm**

**Good Friday 3pm**

**Easter Vigil 7pm**