

SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

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PARISH UPDATE 51

Hello everyone!

Haven't there been some startling pieces in the news over the past week !! Amongst all the others, did you catch reports of Pope Francis' visit to Iraq? Before the visit, some commentators said that he was 'courageous', others said that he was 'crazy'. On his way back to the Vatican, he reflected that 'sometimes you have to take a risk so that a greater good will come about!'

That comment of the Pope's links into other reflections of his, which can be drawn into our experience of the past year and also into our continuing journeying through the Season of Lent. In an attachment with this letter (from MSC Mission Outreach) the writer quotes from Francis' book from last year *Let us Dream: the Path to a Better Future*:

The basic rule of a crisis is that you don't come out of it the same. If you get through it, you come out better or worse, but never the same. ... You reveal your own heart: how solid it is, how merciful, how big or small. ... It is an illusion to think that we can go back to where we were. Attempts at restoration always take us down a dead-end street. ... Rather, this is a moment to dream big, to rethink our priorities – what we value, what we want, what we seek."

The writer recalls that during the lockdowns of last year we were wondering 'what are we learning in this that we will continue into the post-COVID world? or will we go back to the way we were?'

They are very Lenten questions, too, aren't they? The goal of our annual passage through Lent is that we will be people of faith at Easter in more ways than we were at Ash Wednesday. That may involve our dropping some of our habits and routines that do not reflect the life of Jesus in how we think, what we say, what we do ... and taking up some new ways of living the life of Christ. There's a strong temptation, I think, to put in a solid effort during Lent and then to revert to 'the way we were'. Resist!! Carry even one new 'way of Christ' into the rest of the year; leave behind even one inappropriate way of living, a habit, a routine!

Another Pope Francis quote: "what is needed is the ability to forgive, and also the courage not to give up!" That might include that we forgive ourselves.

There are just 2 weeks of Lent left. During the final week, we will have the customary 'Services of Reconciliation', which will be followed by the opportunity for the First Rite of the Sacrament of Penance [i.e. 'individual confession']

- Sacred Heart church: Tuesday 23rd March at 7.30pm
- Emmaus church: Thursday 25th March at 7.30pm.

(The First Rite of the Sacrament of Penance continues to be offered on Saturdays at Sacred Heart on Saturdays at 10.30am.)

An attachment with this letter shows the timetable for our Holy Week liturgies, from Palm Sunday on the weekend of 27-28 March through to Easter on the weekend of 3-4 April.

One of the avid readers of this weekly letter reminded me on Monday (International Women's Day) of a list of women in our Tradition that had been attached with an earlier edition during the year. I've found it again, and attach it as a reminder that 'we're in this together - all of us!' We all have so much to give to life. We all are to be thankful for and respectful of all!

Keep at Lent - look forward to Easter renewal. Think of the twisted willow on the sanctuaries of our churches: having dropped off unwanted leaves there is now room for new green buds to show and grow into new green life. That's a great parable for our own renewal through the Season!

Blessings!

Maurie Cooney
(Parish Priest)