

SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

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ST ALBANS VICTORIA 3021

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PARISH UPDATE 6

Continuing Easter greetings to everyone!

It was scheduled to be a busy weekend coming up in our Parish until the closure of churches changed that. We were due to have the **Sacrament of Confirmation** for our young Parishioners of Cana School in two ceremonies on Saturday, and another two ceremonies for our Emmaus young Parishioners on Sunday. Sacred Heart young Parishioners would have shared in the Sacrament two Sundays ago. Ahhh ... so much is changing! There is no word about when the Sacrament of Confirmation will be resumed, except that it will be!

In preparation for the Sacrament, we would have had several gatherings of these young Parishioners with their families. We would have remembered our gatherings at 'Sacraments 1' and our language there of 'connections', and proceeded to identify what that means for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

'Sacrament' basically is about God's becoming part of our lives and our becoming part of the life of God. This encounter takes place in many ways in our lives, especially through Jesus, the community of the Church, in those seven 'peak experiences' of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, Orders, Anointing of the Sick, and in many aspects of our lives. We've heard in the Easter Season gospel readings over the past few weeks, **the Risen Christ meets people exactly where they are**: Mary Magdalene in her weeping, Thomas in his curiosity, the group in the upper room in their fear, over a meal with the two who went out to Emmaus.

We may not easily see the extraordinary presence and action of Jesus Christ, the work of God, in our ordinary lives. It is important in our prayer to think this through and look for signs that God is at work beneath and within our day-to-day lives, even when circumstances make the going tough. There are 'sacramental' experiences all throughout our lives!

Hasn't winter come to us suddenly! One attachment uses the image of the **changing colours of autumn** to recognise that there are "different divine qualities present inside each one of us at all times: compassion, justice, kindness, forgiveness easily covered up". Our young Confirmation Parishioners would be naming these as 'fruits of the Holy Spirit'. What fruits of the Spirit do you share in? What fruits of the Spirit show up in the lives of others around you?

How are Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings going for you? Not being able to go to Mass in our churches, many are joining in through our **live-streaming Masses** and other options (see attachment for details). Is the rest of Sunday quieter now, or are we finding things to make it a busy day like the rest of the week? The long-standing tradition that the Bible calls 'sabbath' is such an important feature of life – taking a break from 'the usual'. I clearly remember the weekends when there was footy only on Saturday afternoons, when there was no shopping after 1pm on Saturdays until

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Mondays: Sundays had a quite different feel from the rest of the week. In these weeks when so many are at home all the time, there's a risk that Sunday will be 'just another day'. My Saturday evenings and Sundays have usually been involved with our people in our churches and standing around before and after: how do I make Sunday something 'special' without that? Hmmm

Have a look at the article in the attachment '**Looking for rest amid the pressures of life**'.

That reflection opens easily into that further consideration 'What are we learning about life and ourselves that we want to keep after we're through this virus drama?' Keep that as a continuing reflection, I suggest.

Archbishop Comensoli sent a message to the people of the Archdiocese by video link yesterday with some reflections, information, and advice about the circumstances around the regulations of the virus situation. Those on this Update mailing list would have received it yesterday. If not, go to : <https://bit.ly/MessagefromAPAC> .

Last week the Archbishop announced a discernment process about the redesign of the Parishes of Gardenvale, Brighton, Hampton, Sandringham, Ricket's Point-Beaumaris, Mentone, where all the Parish Priests are either over 75 or will be in the next couple of years. He is looking for ways towards an 'ecclesial unit' to be known as 'the Bayside Mission'.

This Sunday is annually called 'Vocations Sunday' with attention on the ordained Priesthood. The Parish Priest's role is to celebrate the Sacraments, to preach the Word, to build up the community, to administer the goods of the Parish.

Of course this can only happen properly when the people of the community are also active in all those aspects of Church life. Nonetheless, *we need Priests!!*

Let's pray that we can find ways to renewing this vital element in the life of our Church. See an attachment for a prayer.

Locally, quite a number of Parishioners have taken up the option of transferring their Thanksgiving Envelope contributions to the new system 'CDFpay for Parishes' – see the attachment for details of that. Thank you to everyone who is keeping up your Thanksgiving contributions – our bills and obligations are still there. We reach out, too, to those whose circumstances have changed meaning they must alter their arrangements.

Stay warm, take care, best wishes, blessings to all!

Maurie Cooney
Parish Priest