

# SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

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## PARISH UPDATE 62

Hello everyone!

What a week, with levels of anxiety rising as COVID-safe restrictions have been re-imposed. And numbers of vaccinations increasing, too – that's good! Let's take all the right measures to keep others and ourselves safe and well.

Ironically, some of our Ministry teams for 'Communion to the Sick' in aged care facilities re-commenced their ministry during the week. Those places and our people are keeping a very close eye on developments!

Last week marked the sixth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical letter to the world on ecology and climate - *Laudato Si*. In this letter, the Pope reminds us of the interconnectedness and interdependence of creation, and calls on all *people of good will* to take care of our common home and the most vulnerable and fragile in our community. He reminds us that care of all of creation is an essential part of our faith, and that protecting our common home is an urgent matter, one that can no longer be delayed. At one of our Colleges (CRC St Albans) a group of students and staff has met to establish a 'Catholic Earth Care Committee' within the school. Their first initiative is awareness-raising of the Pope's encyclical and its key ideas.

This is such a topical conversation, isn't it, as we grapple with the debates over fossil fuels-renewables-gas-electric vehicles-pollution-forestry. These are questions about how we live our faith. There are four basic strands in our Tradition of faith: liturgical (how we pray and worship), doctrinal (how we speak about what we believe), moral (how we live out our faith), social (how we participate in the life of the world). It's in this fourth area that our young people are showing a way.

This current week is National Reconciliation Week. Here is another 'social matter' – that fourth area of our life of faith again. We are becoming more and more aware of the disparities that exist in the lives of the indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in this country, and more and more of the contributions that indigenous people have made and continue to give to us all. Pope John Paul II's presentation during his visit to Alice Springs in 1986 gave us these opening words:

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

*It is a great joy for me to be here today in Alice Springs and to meet so many of you, the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders of Australia. I want to tell you right away how much the Church esteems and loves you, and how much she wishes to assist you in your spiritual and material needs.*

*1. At the beginning of time, as God's Spirit moved over the waters, he began to communicate something of his goodness and beauty to all creation. When God then created man and woman, he gave them the good things of the earth for their use and benefit; and he put into their hearts abilities and powers, which were his gifts.*

*And to all human beings throughout the ages God has given a desire for himself, a desire which different cultures have tried to express in their own ways.*

*2. As the human family spread over the face of the earth, your people settled and lived in this big country that stood apart from all the others. Other people did not even know this land was here; they only knew that somewhere in the southern oceans of the world there was "The Great South Land of the Holy Spirit".*

*But for thousands of years you have lived in this land and fashioned a culture that endures to this day. And during all this time, the Spirit of God has been with you. Your "Dreaming", which influences your lives so strongly that, no matter what happens, you remain for ever people of your culture, is your only way of touching the mystery of God's Spirit in you and in creation. You must keep your striving for God and hold on to it in your lives.*

There is an attachment with this letter from our regular writer, Andrew Hamilton, which gives a current reflection on this (social) part of our faith.

Archbishop Comensoli has continued his practice of writing to us on Pentecost Day (last Sunday). This year he speaks broadly about that his plan to reorganise and restructure the Archdiocese. If you have kept number 58 of these Parish Letters you will see there some of the detail behind this plan. The Archbishop's Pentecost Letter is an attachment with this current Letter.

Life is not straightforward, is it? The writer George Bernard Shaw commented that "Life is not meant to be easy, my child; but take courage: it can be delightful."

Greetings and prayers for continuing blessings go to more of our young Parishioners who have shared in the Sacrament of Confirmation during the week – students at our Emmaus Catholic Parish Primary School: the strength and hope of the Holy Spirit be with you!

Best wishes and blessings to all as we head onwards!

Maurie Cooney  
(Parish Priest)