

SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

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PARISH UPDATE 69

Hello everyone!

The COVID lockdown announced this afternoon for Victoria means that **our churches will be closed from 11.59pm tonight (Thursday) until Wednesday morning (21st July)**. There will be no activity in our churches over that time.

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You may remember that a few weeks ago I commented on Fr John O'Reilly's sixtieth anniversary of his ordination as Priest? A card arrived from John this week:

Thank you for remembering my 60th. Thank you for the Parish's generous gift.

Thanks to the People who continue to pray, work, and share together in Jesus.

God bless!

We really are the ones who greet John with our great appreciation for the service he gave to our Parish over those years.

Our 'supply Priest', Peter Hudson, has also recently celebrated an anniversary of ordination – fifty years for Peter. He enjoys being with us for weekend Masses, and fits well with us. I have 'signed him up' for the forthcoming First Reconciliation experiences for our young Parishioners – and also our other regular visiting Priest-friend, Tom Cleary. It adds a valuable substance to the service of visiting Priests when we can get to know them a little and their styles as they return into our midst - and vice-versa, too.

At last Saturday's Mass at Emmaus we prayed blessings over a couple who were celebrating their 58th Wedding Anniversary. The official prayers in the Missal go only as far as the fiftieth anniversary – when they were compiled, perhaps beyond fifty was hard to anticipate!

At each weekend Mass we read names of people who have passed ahead of us to eternal life – the anniversary of their death.

Anniversaries matter to us.

Every Sunday is regarded as something of an anniversary – of the Resurrection of Jesus. As well as being called 'the first day of the week', Sundays are also called 'the eighth day' in some places: as one round of seven days is completed we start a new round – enlivened for that by celebrating the anniversary of the Resurrection of Jesus. Whatever lies ahead in each week, may the Resurrection of Jesus keep us faithful and hopeful!

When I was a kid, the whole society regarded Sunday as something special: no shops open, no sport, no work; a lot of mixing with family and friends in unorganised relaxation, often over a meal. Churchgoing numbers were high in, say, the 1950s compared with these days (even without COVID restrictions).

Anniversaries – of weddings, ordinations, birthdays, deaths, the Resurrection give us opportunities to express our thanks for the life of the people at the focus of those events, thanks for their sharing their lives with us and taking us into their lives. Sunday is so important in this regard – and, indeed, the very word 'Eucharist' has its origin in the Greek word 'thanks'. Isn't the last thing we say as Mass draws to a close – "Thanks be to God!"? Of course, 'the Mass never ends, it must be lived: so let's go forth to love and serve the Lord and one another'!

Blessings for the week ahead! A special greeting to our Schools and Colleges who now settle into the rhythms of their third term: oh that it doesn't get disrupted!

Maurie Cooney
Parish Priest