

Website <http://pol.org.au/stalbanssydenham>

29th July 2021

PARISH UPDATE 71

Greetings everyone!

“The easing of some of the COVID lockdown means that **our churches are allowed to have 100 participating in Mass. *BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL*** for Saturday night and Sunday Masses– see attachment for details, and for information for accessing Mass on TV and online.”

The various ways of accessing Mass during COVID restrictions is on TV includes the ‘Mass for You at Home’ presentation on Channel 10. It began 50 years ago this weekend, and has been a great connector for many people over those years, even more so in this pandemic era. When I was in Wantirna Parish (1987-93) I was part of the schedule of celebrants for that Mass, recorded in the studios of Channel 0, as it was branded in those days, at Nunawading – *Neighbours* was recording just along the corridor! An attachment with this letter notes the anniversary and gives details of how to tune in.

At St Patrick’s Cathedral this Saturday at 10.30am there will be the ordination of two Bishops for the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Fr Martin Ashe will become the Auxiliary Bishop for our Western Region, Fr Anthony Ireland for the Southern Region of the Archdiocese. The ordination Mass will be livestreamed on the Archdiocesan YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/archmelb) and broadcast on Melbourne’s free-to-air TV community channel C31 (channel 44 on digital TV).

Our Sunday Readings from the Word of God continue the exploration of Eucharist that began last weekend with the story of Jesus feeding the multitude with very little to start with.

In this weekend’s Gospel, Jesus reprimands the crowds because they ‘have not seen through the signs’ of that great action – they have stayed on the surface and not explored what it could mean. Always the Scriptures are calling us to look further into the meaning of what Jesus says and does – to look into ‘the signs’ and follow where they might lead.

Have you ever wondered about last week’s feeding-of-the-crowds story, and why we’re told that there were five loaves and two fish? Perhaps that’s how much there actually was. Or, because we know that recurring numbers are so important in the Scriptures (think of ‘3’, ‘40’, ‘7’), might the ‘five loaves and two fish’ be signs of something more?

The original readers of this story would know well the five Books of the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Numbers, in our Old Testament) – which spoke of the ways of God, the wisdom of God in action, the life the people of God were to lead. Is there something to learn here in there being five loaves of bread? And those readers would know about the two tablets of stone which contained the Law of God for the ways of the people. Is there something to learn here in there being two fish?

The Torah (five books) and the Law of God (two tablets of stone) had been life for the people so far, like bread sustaining their lives. Now Jesus says to the crowds that *He himself* is the true Bread of Life, given by the Father to the people. In Him himself are the Ways of God, the Wisdom of God, the Law of God for the people’s lives. The ‘five and two’ have been life for the people, and now there is this new presence of God for them. For “the Father gives you the true Bread from heaven. The Bread God gives is the One who comes from heaven and gives life to the world. ... I am the Bread of life!”

It is this ‘new presence’ of God in Jesus that we gather for in Eucharist. “Do this in memory of me,” Jesus said at the Last Supper. That’s not merely to be recalling what happened back then in that upper room in Jerusalem all those years ago. Think of a wedding ring: it recalls that great day when the couple’s love was given definitively and publicly; it is worn as a pledge of that love being

given every day now; and it commits that love into the years ahead. That's what 'doing this in memory of me' means: honouring what happened at that Last Supper, experiencing that giving of Jesus now, and having that commitment of God proclaimed to us continuing into the future!

There are further ways of 'seeing through the signs' in that story of the feeding of the crowds. There is sufficient food in our world to ensure that no one should ever be hungry. Sadly, the distribution of that food is such that there are some in our world whose bellies are expanding from an excess of food while others' are distended from the lack of it. We could easily feed the entire world. It is the responsibility of those of us in the developed world with more than we need to bring about a more equitable distribution with those who don't even have enough to live. After all Jesus fed the crowd, and he is model and inspiration for us!

Further, some scripture scholars suggest that the real miracle of the feeding of the crowd was a personal response by individuals within the crowd. It is suggested that upon seeing the willingness of Jesus and the small boy to share the small amount of food available, everyone dug into their pockets and pulled out the small amount of food they also had and shared it with one another. The miracle was a breaking through from selfishness and isolation to a spirit of sharing and community.

For the next few weeks, I'll keep attaching some further reading about the Eucharist. This week it's an article 'How the Eucharist evolved – Part 1'. I find it interesting and helpful to know a little about the background of those things that are so important to us – you may, too.

Great sounds around Sacred Heart, Emmaus and Cana during this week and in our Colleges, too – students and staff sharing company – and learning – face-to-face again! The Year 4s in our Schools are in preparation for their sharing the Meal of Eucharist for the first time – their First Communion. Hold them in your prayer, I suggest – such a significant stage in their lives!

Blessings for staying well and being hopeful as these tentative steps lift some restrictions from us. We extend our compassion to those who still are not permitted to meet up and gather as you would like – families, weddings, funerals. One day this, too will end!

Maurie Cooney
(Parish Priest)

**Sacred Heart and Emmaus churches are
open to a restricted number of only 100 participants
in compliance with COVID-19 restrictions.
- BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL -**

**Bookings for all Masses at Sacred Heart are made through Trybooking
for a first-come-first-serve basis:**

<https://www.trybooking.com/BMKXC>

**Bookings for Masses at Emmaus are made through Trybooking for a
first-come-first-serve basis:**

<https://www.trybooking.com/BMLBL>

MASS is available through STREAMING and TV

Other Options/Alternatives to view Mass

Mass for You at Home, (MFYAH), is celebrated in St John Vianney Co-Cathedral, Wollongong. It shows at 6.00am Sundays on Channel Ten and is repeated multiple times a day on Foxtel's Aurora channel.

This Sunday Mass is also available on demand on Channel Ten's platform www.tenplay.com.au/mfyah.

This Mass is also available on Wollongong's YouTube channel which can be accessed on www.massforyou.com.au as well as the Diocesan website, www.dow.org.au. There are also links to it on their Diocesan Facebook page and the MFYA Facebook page.

Channel 31 (usually found at '44' on digital TV's):
Mass at 11.00am Sundays from St Patrick's Cathedral or **online at:**

<https://melbournecatholic.org.au/Mass> at 11.00am on
Sundays and at 1.00pm on weekdays

Mass continuous daily from Lavender Bay Parish, Sydney, **online at:**
<http://bit.ly/MassOnDemand>