

SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

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ST ALBANS VICTORIA 3021

26th August

PARISH UPDATE 75

Greetings everyone!

*“The current COVID lockdown means that **our churches will remain closed** for the duration of the lockdown – until Friday 3rd September. The exception is for funerals, with ten ‘mourners’ permitted. There will be no other activity in our churches over that time. See attachment for information for accessing Mass on TV and online.”*

On a walk in Brimbank Park early in the week I met two Parishioners – keeping away from one another through our masks and keeping our distance. One asked if our churches are still closed: I said “Yes, until the government allows us to open.” His father corrected me: “I was taught in my old country that the people make up the Church, and that the church is the building where the real Church meets. So the Church stays open because the people have faith and hope!” He is so right, isn’t he? As we continue not to be allowed to gather, we continue being people of faith and hope and love-of-neighbour, missing the direct community enlivening for that; but ‘the Church’ nonetheless!

That ‘living our faith’ comes into focus around this time each year as Social Justice Sunday shows in our calendar – that comes to us this Sunday.

The life of our Church is shaped around Jesus who reveals God to us and reveals the truth of human life to us – in words and in action, in Himself. That can be explored through four channels: doctrinal (how we talk about the experience of God), liturgical (how we worship together and pray), moral (how we shape our lives according to the Way of Jesus), social (how we participate in God’s creation of which we are part).

It is that ‘social dimension’ of our life of faith that is drawn to our attention on Social Justice Sunday. This is, however, a constant element of our faith. How are we to respond to the situation in Afghanistan which we have become aware of through the distressing images we’re seeing and hearing about each day? This is a question of faith! See on one of the attachments with this letter that the Bishops have approached the Australian Government. Another attachment, ‘Action for Afghanistan’ indicates ways for us to participate directly.

Social Justice Sunday is marked by the Bishops issuing a statement on a particular aspect of life. The celebration of Social Justice Sunday is a long tradition in the Catholic Church in Australia. For almost every year since 1940, our Bishops have joined together to issue a major social justice statement at this time. The bishops also make statements on matters of social and ecological justice at other times throughout the year too – for example the situation in Afghanistan. It is hoped that these statements will inspire our reflection and action throughout the whole year. Across the years, Statements have invited our attention to the situations of workers and unemployment, the homeless, refugees, financial policy, environment, access to healthcare, mental health, ageing ... and more.

This year’s Social Justice Statement – **Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor** - focusses on climate change. It can be [downloaded online](#) here along with other resources. As Pope Francis points out, it recalls, some previous readings of humans having ‘dominion’ over other creatures (Genesis 1:26-31) appear deficient in our contemporary context where creation is now endangered by this form of mastery. Now we can better appreciate that we are creatures within creation, in relationship

with the whole earth, plants, birds, beasts, fish, soil and garden. We are called to be caretakers (Genesis 2:15).

Pope Francis, the Statement recalls, invites us to conversion saying “many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change”. The state of our common home call us to a “profound interior conversion ... whereby the effects of our encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in our relationship with the world around us.” It is not just a matter of awareness or changing our minds, but a shift at the level of the heart and will that results in changed action.

Two attachments with this Letter present this message in further ways. One is a video clip that portrays the message in a visual reflective way; the other is a suggested action plan ‘C.A.R.E. for our Earth’.

As the next set of Thanksgiving Envelopes went out this week, I was very mindful that the demands that COVID and its impacts are weighing heavily on some of our Parishioners’ circumstances. I am also so admiring of the many Parishioners who continue to give their financial support to our Parish. In my letter that went with those Envelopes, I wrote:

All along, Parishioners’ continuing financial support for our Parish is outstanding! This is a great testament to the importance of our Parish to you, of how important the Parish has been over the years, and how you want to ensure that continues well into the years ahead.

Because of changes in their circumstance, some of our Parishioners have had to change their participation in Thanksgiving. We have readily supported that.

During the present cycle of Envelopes since April, there have been \$31,000 of extra costs to the Parish in addition to ‘the usual’. Those extra works included updating the security lighting around Sacred Heart church (the system had ceased to function, and replacement parts are no longer available – it gave many years of good service!), maintenance on the heating/cooling systems in Sacred Heart and Emmaus churches, donations to the works of CatholicCare (given that Parishioners haven’t been in church to contribute on-the-spot), our ‘Parish quota’ towards the running of the Archdiocese, servicing our Thanksgiving process.

Over those months, Parishioners’ have continued contributions to Thanksgiving through DirectDebit and Credit Cards, CDF Pay and Envelopes. You have enabled us to carry out those works and to keep up with all those other ‘usual’ costs.

In the Second Reading for this Sunday the Letter of James is straightforward: “Be doers of the Word and not just hearers!” While in lockdown it’s with the people closest to us where we live that out as well as in the wider world that we are part of – and that’s not always easy, is it? The Gospel Reading urges us to work on our attitudes: Jesus is blunt in saying that what corrupts a person does not come from outside but from within. If our hearts are shaped by the compassion and generosity of God, then our actions will show that grace.

There is a lot of reading with this Letter and its attachments! Is that because I’m spending more time at my desk than being out-and-about around the Parish? However there is much to be putting our attention to as we ‘live faith’ in all its dimensions.

Be of good spirits. Pray for one another. Pray for all who are impacted by COVID and lockdown. Pray for peace, for justice for all, for respect, for harmony – throughout all of God’s creation of which we are part!

Maurie Cooney
(Parish Priest)

With this letter come attachments – Bishops on Afghanistan to Government; Action for Afghanistan; Video clip Another Sunny Day; C.A.R.E. for our Earth; Reminder for accessing Mass on TV and online

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Sacred Heart and Emmaus churches are closed in compliance with COVID-19 restrictions.

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>



Action for Afghanistan

Dear Friend,

It is clear that the Afghan people, especially ethnic and religious minorities as well as women and children are in great danger in their own country. In addition, there are more than 5,100 Afghans living in Australia, many with families in Afghanistan, and many without any certainty about their future in Australia.

While the Federal Government has undertaken to allocate at least 3,000 places for Afghans within the current humanitarian intake, the need is dire and immediate, and a special additional intake is required. We therefore wish to raise our voices as members of the Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA) to urge the Federal Government to:

- provide a special allocation of at least 20,000 additional humanitarian places for people fleeing Afghanistan,
- guarantee permanent visas to those living here under temporary visas, and
- enable family reunions for Afghan people living in Australia.

We encourage you to be part of the voice of CAPSA, through one or both of the following ways:

1. Send a letter to your local Member of Parliament directly through the CAPSA website at capsa.org.au/afghanistan. On this website you will find a form letter which you can easily edit or send as it is. By entering your postcode, you will be able to send it to your local MP.
2. At www.actionforafghanistan.com.au you will be able to sign a petition along with thousands of other Australians.

We remain in solidarity with the people of Afghanistan who need our compassion and kindness now.



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We can DO SOMETHING!

We could be forgiven for thinking ‘woe is us/me’ at this time in our story: with a pandemic raging and climate change more real than ever and savagely raiding our sense of fabricated security. Our temptation can be to shut down, or shut off from everything, because it all seems doom and gloom; equivalent to burying our heads in the sand. IT NEVER WORKS. Please resist doing this.

Below is a simple outline to help all of us with our choices, particularly regarding our Earth, that is currently in great crisis and distress and crying out to us for our help. How can we say no?

Place this formula below somewhere in your home or work place as a reminder that change only comes about through our/my conscious action and choices however simple.

Annemarie Reiner

C.A.R.E. FOR OUR EARTH.

CONSUMERISM: Endeavour to live more simply. Consume less in every area of life. And with what we do consume be aware of how its production and use is affecting the well-being of our Earth and then the well-being of all of us.

OUR UNEXAMINED CONSUMERISM IS KILLING OUR PLANET AND EACH OTHER.

APATHY: If something stirs you or upsets you - ACT. Make contact and express your upset with the appropriate body – don’t just whinge and leave it at that, expecting someone else to act. Our inaction enables shocking choices and corruption to go unchallenged. We must SPEAK and act upon our disturbances.

OUR APATHY ENABLES POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND CORRUPT CHOICES TO FLOURISH AND IS KILLING OUR PLANET AND EACH OTHER.

RESPONSIBILITY: Too often we proclaim it is someone else’s responsibility to DO SOMETHING. It is the responsibility of all of us. The Earth Crisis we find ourselves living in calls us to change the way we all individually live, and demand change from our political systems and from ourselves.

OUR EARTH, THE ONE WHO PROVIDES US WITH LIFE’S NECESSITIES, IS PLEADING WITH EACH OF US TO CHANGE OUR WAYS AND OUR ATTITUDES. TO REFUSE TO CHANGE IS KILLING OUR PLANET AND EACH OTHER.

ENGAGEMENT: We must open our hearts to engage our passions and our fears. Encourage each other in our daily lives and choices. We are not all Greta Thunberg's, but we can do our bit to make a change in our own backyard. The way we now consciously CHOOSE to live is becoming a life line for our Earth and for each other and our future.

WHEN WE CHOOSE TO LIVE SELFISHLY WITHOUT
CONSCIOUS ENGAGEMENT OR CARE, WE ARE KILLING
OUR PLANET AND EACH OTHER.

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Increase Afghan intake, Archbishop Coleridge urges PM



The Australian Government should provide at least 20,000 humanitarian places for Afghans in the wake of the Taliban takeover, Australian Catholic Bishop Conference president Archbishop Mark Coleridge has said.

In a letter to Prime Minister Scott Morrison last night, Archbishop Coleridge noted there has been “an outpouring of concern for the people of Afghanistan” as that country’s government has collapsed and the Taliban seized control.

He said the 3000 places offered above and beyond 8000 places over the past decade “is a substantial commitment, but more is needed”.

Based on estimates from key humanitarian organisations and pledges from other countries, Archbishop Coleridge proposed that at least another 17,000 places be made available.

“Australia has stepped up before in response to significant humanitarian crises, and I urge your government to be generous,” he wrote, adding that Catholic agencies “stand ready to assist your government with resettlement of refugees as an expression of our great concern for the people of Afghanistan”.

Archbishop Coleridge said many Afghans would find themselves vulnerable under Taliban rule, but he made particular mention of those who supported Australia’s defence personnel who served in Afghanistan, some of whom lost their lives, as well as religious minorities and women.

“It would seem our moral duty to stand with those who supported Australian military forces as interpreters or in other capacities, who it seems likely will suffer reprisals and even death for their work,” he wrote.

"We should also offer refuge to other Afghans who are likely to suffer persecution or risk being killed because of their opposition to the Taliban, or because of their beliefs, values and way of life, including members of the Christian community.

"There is a particular risk to women, and Australia's humanitarian response should recognise and support their dignity and human rights."