

SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

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ST ALBANS VICTORIA 3021

2nd September

PARISH UPDATE 76

Greetings everyone!

*"The extension of the current COVID lockdown means that **our churches will remain closed** for the duration of the lockdown – until Friday 24th 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."*

Yes: Fathers' Day! Greetings and Blessings to all fathers and families!!

Again this year a similar situation for Fathers' Day as for last year. I wonder what shape our adaptability and creativity will give to Sunday morning and the rest of the day??

The continuing lockdown is calling us to draw deeply on those life-qualities of respect, harmony, good humour, calmness, hopefulness. Well done, fathers, mothers, children for putting in the extra effort for the family to 'keep it together'!

Google tells me that for centuries the Orthodox Church has had the second Sunday before Christmas Day as 'the Sunday of the Forefathers' to commemorate the ancestors of Jesus.

The feast includes the ancestors of Mary, mother of Jesus, and various prophets.

A customary day for the celebration of fatherhood in parts of Europe is known to date back to at least 1508. It is celebrated on March 19, as the feast day of Saint Joseph, who is referred to as the fatherly *Nutritor Domini* ("Nourisher of the Lord").

In 1908, American Grace Golden Clayton proposed that a day be set aside to honour men who lost their lives in a mining accident. In the following year Sonora Smart Dodd, who along with her five brothers was raised by their father alone, was inspired after attending Mother's Day celebrations in a church, and convinced the Spokane Ministerial Association to celebrate Fathers' Day worldwide. And 'the rest is history' as they say!

(There is also 'International Men's Day' on November 19 in honour of all men including boys.)

Interesting that Fathers' Day has a clear religious/faith setting across the ages. I like that word 'nourisher'. The faith setting for that is that God is Creator of life, Jesus renews life for us, the Holy Spirit brings the spirit of God alive in our own spirits. That's who our fathers are, along with others including mothers, friends, siblings and more : they nourish our lives. They don't determine our lives according to their own plan; they nourish us to choose and take the paths of life that they have opened before us.

The attachment 'The Importance of Fathers' makes insightful reading to someone who doesn't have children!!! What about you who are right in it??

Another attachment reflects on fathers in our complex contemporary society – it may be encouraging reading, too. As may be the prayers on another attachment. To start with:

We thank you, God, for the gift of our fathers, for grandfathers and godfathers and step-fathers and fathers-in-law, too. Send your Holy Spirit upon our fathers, in whose laps we were cradled, from whose hands we were fed, instructed, at times corrected, in whose company we learned to work and play and pray, at whose side we hear Your Word and celebrate Your life amongst us.

Give to them the good that they have given to others. Heal their pains and disappointments.

Forgive what needs to be forgiven. Welcome into your arms those who have died.

Fill this world, O God, with a true Father's love!

Of course family life does not always go smoothly. In these months of being 'in one another's pockets' 24-7 I can imagine that tension and other negativity can show up in the relationships that make a family. Following our recent Parish donation to CatholicCare, this reminder of their services came back:

IS IT GETTING TOO MUCH? CATHOLIC CARE MAY HELP TO SUPPORT YOU

Many families and individuals are dealing with the effects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our community.

Some have lost jobs and are in financial crisis. Others are experiencing increased anxiety and depression due to social isolation. Meanwhile, couples and families may continue to face relationship issues from prolonged lockdown. CatholicCare Victoria is here to help.

Visit <https://www.catholiccarevic.org.au/page/159/covid-19-updates> or contact the head office directly on (03) 5337 8999 where you can be referred to the relevant branch or team.

One custom in our Archdiocese is that Fathers' Day is taken as an opportunity for us to contribute to the support and assistance of retired and sick Priests. Because we're not in the position of being able to 'pass the plate' at Mass, we will forward \$3,000 to the Priests' Retirement Foundation from your contributions through the year to our Presbytery Account.

The Second Reading for this Sunday fits very well with last week's reminder that 'social justice', that is putting our faith into action in the world around us, is an essential aspect to our lives of faith. As well as this applying to 'big ticket' issues, the Reading draws our attention to the way each of us treats those around us by using a particular example:

Do not try to combine faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord, with the making of distinctions between classes of people. Now suppose someone comes into your synagogue, beautifully dressed and with a gold ring on, and at the same time a poor person comes in, in shabby clothes, and you take notice of the well-dressed person, and say, 'Come this way to the best seats'; then you tell the poor person, 'Stand over there' or 'You can sit on the floor by my foot-rest.' Can't you see that you have used two different standards in your mind, and turned yourselves into a judge, and a corrupt judge at that? (James 2:1-5)

This sort of thing applies in many situations!

Spring is breaking through – the warmer and windy days we've had during this week are signs of that. Let's keep our spirits up even as we continue further into this lockdown. Let's pray for the Spirit of God to keep hope strong!

Best wishes and blessings, and be 'in good spirits' on Fathers' Day!

Maurie Cooney
Parish Priest

With this letter come attachments –

- *The Importance of Fathers*
- *On Fathers' Day*
- *Prayers on Fathers' Day*
- *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>

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The Importance of Fathers: Being a Great Dad

[edited from Stephen F. Duncan, Family and Human Development]

Fathering is more than a biological necessity. Our children's growth and development is enhanced through active, involved fathering. Some keys to effective fatherhood would include:

Nurture your marriage first: An important key to good father-child relationships is to have a strong relationship with your wife. If things aren't going well there, it's easier for bad blood between you and your spouse to spill over into the parent-child relationship. It has been said that the best gift a father could give his children is to love their mother. If you are a divorced father, maintain a civil relationship with your ex-wife. Never bad-mouth her in front of the children. Maintain a cooperative parenting partnership.

Prioritize fatherhood: Plan your work around your family. Decide that father-child time is important. With calendar and planner in hand, schedule the activities of your children, the school concerts, the one-on-one times, then write in your other obligations and preferences.

Get involved with your child from the beginning and stay involved and connected.

Learn the fatherhood craft: Keep up with the language of child rearing. Talk to other dads informally or in support groups or parenting classes. Read articles about good fathering. In some families, the woman becomes the "expert" and Dad feels excluded. Don't let that happen to you.

Have regular one-on-one time with each child. Sometimes it's fun to talk while you're doing jobs; also be sure that there are times that you turn off the screen and give your kids your undivided attention. Schedule a dad-daughter or dad-son date occasionally. Go out to eat a favourite meal or to do an activity your child enjoys. Sit with them occasionally just before bed and talk about how the day went.

Show affection often: Even if older kids seem squeamish, all kids enjoy a hug and encouraging words now and then from their dad. With the older kids you may want to do this away from the sight of their friends!

Take your kids to work: If your situation allows for it, this is a great way to teach them about the world of work that you are a part of.

Stay connected when you have to be away: If work takes dads away, including because of your shift at work, set up a routine to stay connected, e.g. a specific time you will call that is convenient for all members of the family.

Teach them: No dad has every gift or skill. Use opportunities to share *your* talents.

Connect with your child at all levels: Make sure you have some contact with every aspect of your child's life. Visit the school, meet the teacher and other kids and have some contact with an afterschool activity. If you have seen where your children are and met their friends, you will have more to talk about and more interesting conversations. Parent involvement during children's schooling is critical to their school success, too, as well as to everyone's wellbeing and development.