

SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

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4 Winifred Street
ST ALBANS VICTORIA 3021

28th October 2021

PARISH UPDATE 84

*"COVID restrictions now allow our churches to be open for 75 people for Mass at our usual times 'fully vaccinated'. As well, there is an extra Mass with those of 'unknown vaccination status', limited to 30 participants. Bookings are essential - see below for full details".
See an attachment for information for accessing Mass on TV and online."*

Greetings, everyone!

Whilst sharing with so many something of your frustration, annoyance, caution, I've found that the most recent easing of some restrictions has brought further confusion and anxiety along with some relief. Our churches are allowed to be re-opened for Masses ... with restrictions. An extra complication this time is the vaccination question. It is by no means a satisfactory solution, nonetheless this is how our Mass this schedule for this weekend (30/31 October) looks:

- SACRED HEART:
 - 5pm Saturday (fully vaccinated)
 - 6.30pm Saturday (vaccination unknown)
 - 7.30am Sunday (fully vaccinated)
 - 10.30am Sunday (fully vaccinated)

- EMMAUS:
 - 6.30pm Saturday (fully vaccinated)
 - 9.00am Sunday (fully vaccinated)

Other restrictions are:

- Booking for all Masses is essential: see below for details
- We will have a Mass which allows for 'unknown vaccination status' to come: that will be an extra Mass at 6.30pm on Saturday at Sacred Heart – limited to 30 people
- All other Masses require 'full vaccination' for all participants, which you indicate in the foyer – limited to 75 people with all 16 years old and older to be fully vaccinated (i.e. double)
- Evidence of 'fully vaccinated' is to be presented at the entrance of the church. A paper copy is acceptable and will be recorded.
- QR or manual recording of each person present is required.
- Face masks are to be worn indoors.
- Hand sanitising is to be done at the entrance.
- Social distancing (1 person per 4sq.metres) is required, except for people who live in the same household.

Bookings are essential in order to keep within the limits that are placed on us:

Emmaus

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

Sacred Heart

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

Weekday Mass re-commences in Sacred Heart church on Tuesday 2nd November at 7.30 (Tuesday-Friday) and 9.00am on Saturday. Bookings are not required for these Masses – all other restrictions apply.

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If things were as they used to be, the Priests of the Archdiocese would have been at the Annual Clergy Conference this week. Last year it was cancelled altogether; this year it has been diminished to three-hour 'webinars' on a screen each afternoon.

This year's speakers have opened up for us the meaning of Pope Francis' call to develop more as a 'synodal' Church. That's part of the process that the Plenary Council is attempting to use in its deliberations.

The first speaker, Michael Casey from the Abbey at Tarrawarra in the Yarra Valley, tells us that 'acting in a synodal way' means 'to journey together': to let the Holy Spirit be a key player to Whom we listen and Whose advice we are open to, and will be guided by'. That recognises that each one of us holds something of the Wisdom, no one of us has it all; each one of us holds something of the Holy Spirit, no one of us has it all. He went on to say, quoting Pope Francis, that 'individualism is the root of all evils; we must develop that sense of belonging to each other and to the whole of humanity'. This is to be the way for all who make up the Church – listening to the ways in which the Holy Spirit is being expressed in each person's life.

With the Glasgow climate conference coming up, he quoted Pope Francis: 'to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God'.

Another speaker, Austen Ivereigh, live from England (at 4am his time!) helped us to know the leadership of Pope Francis more clearly, particularly from the perspective of becoming a synodal Church and a missionary Church. That is, a Church that is part of the world as it is with all its changes, not imagining a world and a Church of past eras; and participating in this world with the Gospel of Jesus in our actions, attitudes and motivations in a life-giving way.

An attachment with this Letter looks at this from another perspective: 'Acts of the Apostles – Vision for a Synodal Church'.

At the end of 2019, do you remember, we put out a call in our Parish for 'expressions of interest' in establishing and participating a Parish Advisory Group (Parish Pastoral Council) and a Parish Finance Committee. Fifteen or so Parishioners responded to each of those possibilities. This was to be a way of our becoming 'synodal'. It was more straightforward to start with the Finance Committee: the Archdiocese has set statutes and roles to shape that. And so at the end of the year, we had a Parish Finance Committee – which, unfortunately has had to meet mostly by Zoom since then.

A goal for 2020 was to gather those other fifteen Parishioners and establish a Parish Advisory Group. One of my disappointments about the impact of COVID lockdowns is that they have stopped us having group meetings. Not giving in, a goal for our Parish for 2022 is to get this sort of 'synodal' group going.

In a few days the year becomes November, during which we remember in our prayer in a particular way for those who have died and passed beyond us to eternity life in the Resurrection of the Lord. An attachment with this Letter reflects on that experience for us who remain here.

Blessings amongst us, as always; and the struggle continues. As one of the Readings put it during the week: 'Nothing can separate us from the love of God made visible in Jesus!' (Romans 8:39).

To our Year 12 young people now in the midst of exams, and to all: take care ... prayers and best wishes!

Maurie Cooney
(Parish Priest)

*With this letter come 4 attachments: #Vision for a Synodal Church
Ministry recruitment # Accessing Mass on TV and online.*

Grieving

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Parish of Sacred Heart/Emmaus

St Albans & Sydenham



Pray—Work—Share
Together

MINISTRY VOLUNTEERING IN THE PARISH

“I would like to participate in the Ministry of our Parish”

PARISH OFFICE

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PARISH SAFEGUARDING

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CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Sacred Heart/Emmaus Parish is committed to the care, wellbeing and protection of children, young people and people at risk in our community. The Parish takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and upholds that child protection and the dignity of every person is the responsibility of every adult.

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Safeguarding Sunday –September 12, 2021

This weekend, the Catholic Church in Australia marks Safeguarding Sunday.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne and Sacred Heart/Emmaus Parish are committed to the care, wellbeing and protection of children, young people and people at risk in our community. Safeguarding and the dignity of every person is the responsibility of every adult.

A significant impact of COVID lockdowns for the Sacred Heart/Emmaus Parish has been that we have had to limit severely all our Ministry activity.

When restrictions begin to ease we will be in a position to reassemble our various ministry groups. That will be the opportunity to re-engage with our community in those well-established 'tried and true' ways, to re-form our groups and invite new participation, and to offer 'formation for ministry' as a refresher or an introduction.

To get ready for that, there are some administrative details that we can prepare. It is the policy of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne that *everyone* in *every* Ministry within each Parish must hold a valid Working With Children Check (WWCC).

I invite all who have previously been involved in Ministry and also those who wish to participate for the first time to build up this aspect of our Parish's life again! There is a list of our Ministry areas on the next page.

To ensure that all involved in Ministries have complied with the requirement for holding a Working With Children Card, please complete the information on the attached form and send it to the Parish Office: this will indicate your choice for participation in Ministry.

If you have a WWCC already, include a copy of that.

If you do not have a WWCC, the procedures for acquiring one are on a following page.

When a Card is sent to you, forward a copy to the Parish Office.

Maurie Cooney
(Parish Priest)

September 2021

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The Gift of Tears - Grieving

The human instinct is to block suffering and pain. This is especially true in the West where we have been influenced by the “rationalism” of the Enlightenment. As anyone who has experienced grief can attest, it isn’t rational. We really don’t know how to hurt! We simply do not know what to do with our pain.

The great wisdom traditions are trying to teach us that grief isn’t something from which to run. It’s a liminal space, a time of transformation. In fact, we can’t risk getting rid of the pain until we’ve learned what it has to teach us and it—grief, suffering, loss, pain—always has something to teach us! Unfortunately, most of us, men especially, have been taught that grief and sadness are something to repress, deny, or avoid. *We would much rather be angry than sad.*

Perhaps the simplest and most inclusive definition of grief is “unfinished hurt.” It feels like a demon spinning around inside of us and it hurts too much, so we immediately look for someone else to blame. We have to learn to remain open to our grief, to wait in patient expectation for what it has to teach us. When we close in too tightly around our sadness or our grief, when we try to fix it, control it, or understand it, we only deny ourselves its lessons.

Saint Ephrem the Syrian (303–373), a Doctor of the Church, considered tears to be sacramental signs of divine mercy. He instructs: “Give God weeping, and increase the tears in your eyes; through your tears and [God’s] goodness the soul which has been dead will be restored.” [1] What a different kind of human being than most of us! In the charismatic circles in which I participated in my early years of ministry, holy tears were a common experience. Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi reportedly wept all the time—for days on end!

The “weeping mode” really is a different way of being in the world. It’s different than the fixing, explaining, or controlling mode. We are finally free to feel the tragedy of things, the sadness of things. Tears cleanse the lens of the eyes so we can begin to see more clearly. Sometimes we have to cry for a very long time because our eyes are so dirty that we’re not seeing truthfully or well at all. Tears only come when we realize we can’t fix it and we can’t change it. The situation is absurd, it’s unjust, it’s wrong, it’s impossible. *She should not have died; he should not have died. How could this happen?* Only when we are led to the edges of our own resources are we finally free to move to the weeping mode.

The way we can tell our tears have cleansed us is that afterwards we don’t need to blame anybody, even ourselves. It’s an utter transformation and cleansing of the soul, and we know it came from God. *It is what it is*, and somehow God is in it.

[1] Ephrem, sermon on Isaiah 26:10, in *Penthos: The Doctrine of Compunction in the Christian East*, by Irénée Hausherr, trans. Anselm Hufstader (Cistercian Publications: 1982), 29. Adapted from Richard Rohr, *Beloved Sons Series: Men and Grief* (Center for Action and Contemplation: 2005),