

# SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

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ST ALBANS VICTORIA 3021

19<sup>th</sup> June 2020

PARISH UPDATE 13

Warm greetings to everyone as winter settles in!

A feature of the week coming up is that Sunday is the 'winter solstice', the day when there are fewest daylight and most night-time hours of the year. From Monday we will start to head towards springtime and summer as the sun rises a minute earlier and sets a minute later each day!

We know that there are still those days to come of low, grey clouds, rain, cold winds, days of temperatures that struggle to get to double figures. Don't give up - spring and summer are coming!

That could be a parable for life, couldn't it? We have goals, we know that we will come through the tough times - and there also will be obstacles and hard times as we move forward. That's what's happening as we move through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The virtue of 'hope' is so important for human life. It is central in our Christian faith. Hope isn't dreamily wishing into some fantasy ahead. Hope is solid, determined, sometimes gritty: knowing and experiencing reality, not giving in to the hard times, convinced of the goodness at the heart of life, and managing life now in such a way that responds to the call 'onward, always onward!'. Jesus' heading to the Cross, flinching but not giving up; the Holy Spirit keeping the flame of hope alive in our hearts - these are our stories and models of hope, of our lives of faith!

Our Parish will be taking small steps onwards into the next phase of the COVID-19 lockdown next week. From next Monday (22<sup>nd</sup> June) we are permitted to have fifty people gathering for Mass. To make the most of that slight relaxation we will begin this weekend to have eight English-language Sunday Masses and two Masses on each of Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday in both our churches. The details, a summary, and the instructions come with this letter.

There are difficulties. Even if we have the maximum number of people allowed, we will still be closed to the other 1,500 of our Parishioners each week who usually come to Mass. We must clean the churches after each gathering - that means spacing out the Mass times.

To give everyone the opportunity to come to Mass soon, it will be essential that each person books in advance (only 50 allowed), and that you don't repeat a booking for four weeks. It's a small way forward; it won't be easy: we have to think of one another!

The new timetable is at the top of the next page:

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## SUNDAY MASS

EMMAUS:	Saturday	5pm	7pm
	Sunday	8am	10.00am
SACRED HEART:	Saturday	5pm	7pm
	Sunday	8am	10.00am

## WEEKDAY MASS

EMMAUS	Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday, Friday	6pm
SACRED HEART	Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday	7.30am

**!!!! YOU MUST BOOK IN IN ADVANCE !!!!**

**(see other pages for details)**

In the bigger picture, material came through this week about the Plenary Council for the Catholic Church in Australia. You may remember that we submitted responses to the question 'What do you think God is asking of the Church in Australia at this time?' The organising group has shaped all the responses they received into six further questions and have prepared papers for discernment on those:

How is God calling us to be a Christ-centred Church that is:

- \*missionary and evangelising?      \*humble, healing and merciful?
- \*prayerful and Eucharistic?      \*inclusive, participatory and synodal?
- \*a joyful, hope-filled servant community?      \*open to conversion, renewal and reform?

One of those 'discernment papers' (Missionary and Evangelising) is included with this letter. All the papers are available at [plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au](http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au) - look for 'discernment'. The first Assembly for the Plenary Council was to have been in October this year. That has been postponed to October 2021.

Did you hear talk of Refugee Week over the past few days? That experience of finding a home in a new place, driven by hardship, displacement, persecution, threat to life, hope for a new beginning, is widespread across our Parish. For many amongst us the experience of coming here was in horrific circumstances – for themselves or their families before them. Even when coming to Australia was by choice, there is the anguish of leaving others behind, being part of two places and cultures, and the uncertainty of welcome and sure future.

Many stories in the gospels are of Jesus going out to those whom others had been rejected by others. "If you only love those who love you, what's the point?" he asked. Let's make sure that we – and our country – always do what we can for those who are seeking a home here! That would be 'the Sacred Heart of Jesus' at work - we have that great feast on Friday of this week.

So the footy is back, the sun will be staying with us longer each day, we're opening our churches a little, our young people are back at School/College – be hopeful, be careful for yourself and one another.

Blessings to all!

Maurie Cooney      (Parish Priest)