

# SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

ABN 56 751 544 850

Telephone: 9366 2146 Fax: 9366 9876

Email: [stalbans@cam.org.au](mailto:stalbans@cam.org.au)

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

4 Winifred Street

ST ALBANS VICTORIA 3021

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PARISH UPDATE 15

Greetings to everyone amidst the new lockdown experience!

There are many days when I don't venture beyond our neighbourhood – going between our two churches, visiting our Schools and Colleges, calling on Parishioners, accompanying our Communion Ministers to the five Aged Care facilities, shopping at Keilor Central, sitting at my desk in the Parish Office for administration and preparation. There's enough to do to keep me 'local' – and I enjoy it. Yet when we're *ordered* to stay local – there's another feel about it, isn't there!

The clear impact of the lockdown on our Parish is that we have gone back to the severe situation of the closure of our churches. In last week's letter we shared the disappointment of having to stay at twenty participants in Masses when we had planned to increase to fifty participants at each of more Masses than usual. Now our churches are closed again, except for funerals (just ten 'mourners' permitted). We will continue to live-stream Mass from our Parish, available from 5pm each Saturday.

We are applying these regulations to both Sacred Heart church and to Emmaus church, even though Emmaus is located in a 'non-hotspot' postcode. This avoids confusion, the suggestion that Parishioners might travel between our two churches, and the risk of people from other nearby hotspot Parishes coming to Emmaus.

Amidst our frustration, annoyance and disappointment, "It is what it is" as the saying goes; and "What can you do?" as so many of our Maltese and Italian Parishioners say with a shrug of the shoulders!

I wonder what the situation was when St Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome 'You must all obey the governing authority' (Romans 13:1) – was there some restriction that they were feeling frustrated, annoyed and disappointed with? There's that gospel story, too, where Jesus instructs his disciples to 'Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar'. Yes: we are to be good citizens of our society.

In this frustration I recall, too, the words of Psalm 13:

*How long O Lord will You forget  
me?  
How long O Lord will You look the  
other way?  
How long O Lord must I wrestle  
with my thoughts  
And every day have such sorrow  
in my heart?*

*Look on me and answer, O God.  
Bring light to my darkness before  
they see me fall.  
I trust in Your unfailing love:  
Yes, my heart will rejoice!  
I will still I sing of Your unfailing  
love.  
You have been good to me,  
You will be good to me!*

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In the gospel reading for this weekend's Masses there is the invitation of Jesus "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Remember, too the 'Footprints' reflection of God's being with us always (see a copy with this letter). A helpful way of praying in the first days of this new lockdown may be with Psalm 13 and 'Footprints'.

With this letter there is also a reminder of some places online and on TV where Mass is available.

In last week's letter there was some information about the Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in Australia, now postponed until next year. With this week's letter there is an article in which the writers suggest that there are important lessons in the pandemic experience that our Church might reflect on as we consider our continuing growth to be truly the Church of Jesus Christ.

During the week on my last drive along the Tulla Freeway for the next month I saw this sign on one of those overhead advertising displays: *Kindness is also contagious – pass it on. Do something kind in July!* I couldn't see who sponsored that message – whoever it is, it's worth considering, eh?

In this time of uncertainty, let's continue to pray:

- for those who are affected by the coronavirus, through illness or isolation or anxiety – that they may find relief and recovery;
- for those who are guiding our Nation and our State at this time, shaping policies and regulating our behavior – that they are always making wise decisions;
- for doctors, nurses and medical researchers - that through their skills, commitment and insights many will be restored to health and kept safe;
- for the isolated and housebound – that we may be alert to their needs, and care for them in their vulnerability;
- for our homes and families, our Schools and Colleges, our young people– that they find reassurance in the presence of your Holy Spirit and the friendship and care of those around them;

- LORD, HEAR US!

Blessings to all! Take care for yourself and everyone around us. Stay well ... and stay warm as the cold winter mornings come on!

Maurie Cooney  
Parish Priest