

SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

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ST ALBANS VICTORIA 3021

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PARISH UPDATE 20

Greetings all!

The word 'unprecedented' has been used since March whenever there has been talk about COVID-19. However this has been a week which we never imagined and which has asked so much and such unusual things of us!

During this morning I was signing off 'work permits' for the groups of five Parishioners who enable us to continue with our 'streaming Mass' (from 5pm each Saturday on YouTube and Facebook at SHEPARISH), and for the Principals of our Schools and Colleges. Justel and I now carry our Letter of Appointment and a 'sole trader' work permit whenever we walk out the front door – wearing masks, of course!

Still I readily recognise that I only have to manage my own life! What about families who are being kept apart from one another, not being able to visit; or being in close contact with one another all day and night! I've observed for many years how straightforward a Priest's life is. I don't get home after a hard day's work and have to lift my game to say "How was your day, dear?", and drive the kids all over the place to sports and music, and get the lunches ready for the next day, and check their homework, and !!

Last week's language of 'vocation' certainly applies to families – called to build one another's and one's own lives there amongst all that! And amongst all that, "There where you are – there you will find God" said Mary MacKillop.

It was rather abrupt, I thought, when the announcement of the Stage 4 restrictions was followed a little later on the channel I was watching by some advice saying 'don't put off planning your next holiday'! Later on I was able to take that as a good reminder. Not only are we being restricted to 5km, it can also feel that we're having our imagination taken away. There are many days when I don't venture further than 5km anyway – and that would be the case for a number of our Parishioners: but being *instructed* not to venture far can dull our spirits, I think.

Let's keep our the capacity to imagine and to hope alive and active!

With that sort of thinking, have you been remembering great holidays you've had? and imagining great holidays to come? I don't know much about Sydney except the Circular Quay – Rocks area. If you get there, here's a suggestion for half-day trip.

Take a ferry that goes beneath the Bridge to McMahan's Point; walk up the (steep) footpath (or take the bus) through Lavender Bay (several great coffee places) to North Sydney; and then another few hundred metres up Mount Street to Mary MacKillop Place where Mary's body is buried in the chapel of the Sisters of St Joseph 'headquarters' community. It's a 25 minute walk in all – plus coffee time. Spend time in

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the chapel by Mary's tomb, explore the museum (a great 'walk-through story') and gift shop. Then go back down Mount Street and take the fifteen minute bus ride to Gore Hill cemetery – it's right on the Pacific Highway - where Mary was first buried in 1908. In a quiet corner there's the site of the burial plots of some early Sisters including Mary's, and a great display of fifteen panels telling Mary's story and the story of the Josephite Sisters.

Bus back to North Sydney for an easy walk along the Bridge. You could add to that an exploration of the streets up behind the Rocks precinct shops. There's a 'Mary MacKillop walk' through those areas where she and the Sisters established 'providences' (shelter and care for women and children), schools, and participated in Eucharist.

It's the Feastday of St Mary MacKillop on this Saturday, 8th August. See an attachment with this letter.

Another attachment is a reminder that this weekend is the annual appeal for our support for Catholic Care, our Archdiocese's agency for providing services to support and offer hope to those whose circumstances of life have become a great burden, and for those moving into new circumstances. Our Parish will make our customary contribution to Catholic Care on your behalf (\$5,000) taken from your generous Thanksgiving contributions.

What a broad range of works we support with that, including – Family and Relationship Services, Hospital Chaplaincy, Prison Ministry, Asylum Seeker Support, Job Readiness Program, ... and much more – the attachment lists a very broad range. Further donations can be made directly at ccam.org.au; or to CatholicCare, PO Box 196, East Melbourne 8002.

Tucked away on Thursday was the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, celebrating the revelation of Jesus as 'the One who brings the true Light to our world'. That was also the anniversary date of the devastating dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima in 1945. What a mixture of life and death we are.

Another comment on this death/life mystery is the feast of the Assumption of Mary on next Saturday. Part of the life of the Church for so long, it was promulgated as a major Feast (ranking with Christmas Day!) only in 1950. In the enduring effects of the destruction of life during and ending the Second World War, the feast teaches us to honour life and the human body, honoured by God finally into eternal life!

An article is attached, 'Remembrance days of light and dark', reflecting that these are feasts of light, of celebrating a life and world that can be transformed.

As we readjust further, now into Stage 4, I can see one of those Keep Calm posters: 'keep calm and keep going' it says!

Best wishes to you ... and blessings. And stay warm and well!

Maurie Cooney
Parish Priest