

# SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

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PARISH UPDATE 24

Greetings, everyone!

Friday's breakfast arrived early this week – on Thursday afternoon! Justel and I will be at the Catholic Regional College St Albans Fathers' Day Breakfast on Friday morning. This year that means going to our offices and sitting at our computers in a Zoom shared gathering, munching on the breakfast kit while the Guest Speaker, Tim Costello, presents to the gathering.

Tim Costello is Baptist minister who has been the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Advocate of World Vision Australia. He worked as a lawyer and served as mayor of St Kilda. He has authored a number of books on faith and life. He is a much sought after speaker on social justice, leadership and ethics. (There is another Tim Costelloe – with an 'e': he is Catholic Archbishop of Perth, having a lead role in convening the Plenary Council for our Church planned to gather next year.)

Yes: Fathers' Day! Greetings and Blessings to all fathers and families!! Our experience of Mothers' Day was strange and tough - now a similar situation for Fathers' Day. I wonder what shape our adaptability and creativity will give to Sunday morning and the rest of the day??

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 the 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.

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 path of life that they have set us up for.

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

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*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, in 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!*

**Happy Fathers' Day – to all fathers and to all families in our Parish!**

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. An attachment reflects on this in the context of the Gospel readings for this Sunday and the next.

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 'passing the plate' we will forward \$3,000 to the Priests' Retirement Foundation from your Thanksgiving contributions.

The 'track record' of the presenter at the Fathers' Day Breakfast 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. If one of your concerns in that regard is the provision of assistance to homeless people, look at the attachments with this letter. They have been forwarded from Catholic Social Services Victoria, indicating a way of calling for action in this situation by contacting local Members of Parliament.

There's more! Two attachments are a greeting from Archbishop Comensoli, and from the combined Bishops of Victoria in a Press Release about 'Voluntary Assisted Dying', both received during this week.

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 as we await announcements about the next phase of coming through this pandemic – let's pray for the Spirit of God to keep hope strong!

Best wishes and blessings

Maurie Cooney  
Parish Priest