

16 April 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to another weekly newsletter. I hope this finds you all well and rested.

I was very encouraged by our Easter services last weekend – for those who were able to tune in, there was a good feeling, good interaction and appreciation that we could come together – if only “virtually”.

This Sunday, we are going to try and have some hymns – so how will that work? I will organise to have the words on the screen from behind where I broadcast. Susanna will pre-record the accompanying music so that we can all join in.

There hasn't been much new correspondence from the Diocese this week. Bishop Sonia wrote to all those who contributed to the Lenten Bible Study book thanking them for their contributions. Feedback received by the Diocesan office has been positive. Our GOD has everything under control because the studies – which were all completed by 31 December 2019 so that the book could be collated and published in time – were experienced as being relevant to what we are going through with the coronavirus pandemic. I hope all who took part in the study have been able to complete it and enjoyed it.

I am thankful to Lynn for producing, and Marea and Axel who help her deliver, the Pew Sheet each week to those who are not on email. If any of you are able to view our daily transmissions of Morning and Evening Prayer or Mass on Sunday mornings and can share these with those who don't have computers or internet access, could I encourage you to do so please. It is a great way of building community.

Last week I read a devotional – written by American pastor David Jeremiah – based on Acts 11:26 – *“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”*

***We're prone to think of disciples as turbo-charged Christians; but originally the terms DISCIPLE and CHRISTIAN were synonymous. Differentiating between the two has had the effect of watering down the original demands of following CHRIST.***

*(American philosopher and writer on Christian spiritual formation) Dallas Willard puts it this way: **The word DISCIPLE occurs 269 times in the New Testament. CHRISTIAN is found three times; and was first introduced to refer precisely to the disciples.** The disciple of JESUS is not the deluxe or heavy-duty model of the Christian – especially padded, textured, streamlined, and empowered for the fast lane of the straight and narrow way. He or she stands in the pages of the New Testament as the first level of basic transportation in the Kingdom of GOD.*

*Modern Christians don't often think of using the term **disciple** to describe themselves; but JESUS never put the terms of discipleship in small print. He's not content for us to be distant followers; and He will not rest until we learn to take His yoke upon us and learn from Him (Matthew 11:29).*

*The word **disciple** means “learner”; and refers to someone who is committed to learning to live the CHRIST-like life in conscious, daily obedience. Is that you?*

If you would like to explore what's available in studying the bible more or praying more, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or by text message – 0401 061 789, Facebook Messenger, or email – [frsteve@bigpond.com](mailto:frsteve@bigpond.com)

May GOD richly bless you as you journey with Him this week.

Fr Steve