

5 June 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Susanna, the family of the late Gladys Stafyniak, and Ken Hoy for the music, the flowers, and the intercessions respectively for Mass on Sunday. Our 4-page "Re-Opening Application Form has been completed and lodged. We had applied for services to resume as normal but under the new rules, there needs to be a 3-hour gap between services so that the church can be thoroughly cleaned. Our Application has been successful; and services will resume in St John's as follows:

Holy Communion

- Saturday at 6pm – **13 June 2020**
- Sunday at 9am – **14 June 2020** – livestreamed
- Wednesday at 9am – **17 June 2020**
- Morning Prayer – livestreamed daily at 8am – Tuesday to Saturday
- Evening Prayer – livestreamed daily at 5pm – Tuesday to Saturday

Under the new COVID19 regulations, we all need to register to come to Church. For those who are included in our Parish Directory, we will have a list with your name and phone number on it. Each week we will simply "mark the roll". Each week we have to send this list to the Diocese so that, in the rare event of somebody having COVID19 at one of our services, everybody who attended can be contacted and appropriate medical care can be administered. The areas of the Church used for any service need to be cleansed thoroughly each time using new cleaning protocols issued by the NSW State Department of Health. Communion will continue to be of one kind – bread – only. When we return to worshipping at St John's, things will be different. There will be marks on the floor, posters on noticeboards telling us about conditions of entry into the Church, how to wash our hands, how to stay 1.5 metres apart, and what to do when we cough or sneeze. **AT ANY ONE TIME, THERE CAN BE ONLY A MAXIMUM OF 50 PEOPLE INSIDE THE BUILDING.** This regulation is one to which we must strictly adhere.

This is the last call for anyone who may be interested in forming a Zoom Bible Study group. Zoom is becoming more widely used; and Zoom Bible Study groups have been trialled in other parishes and seem to be working well. A connection to the NBN is important and I can see that the use of such technology as part of the ministries we offer going forward will become necessary.

It is important for all of us to spend more time studying the Scriptures. In the second letter of Paul to Timothy 3: 16-17 it says that **"¹⁶All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work."**

I recently read the story of a couple in Northern America that when their son left for his first year at university, his parents gave him a Bible – assuring him that it would be a great help. Later, as he began sending them letters writing for money, they would write back telling him to read his Bible – even citing certain chapters and verses. He would reply that he was reading his Bible but that he still needed money. When he came home for a semester break, his parents told him they knew that he had not been reading his Bible. How? They had tucked ten- and twenty-dollar notes by the verses they had cited in their letters!

The rewards of Bible study are life-changing – even if there is no money between the pages. It is vital to spend time in GOD's Word because it is the guide to help us prosper in everything we do. We need to create new ways to re-vitalise our walk with the LORD – by investing in new study materials, finding an accountability partner, or re-arranging our schedules to include a different environment in which to meet with GOD. When we commit to reaching out to GOD, He has already committed to meeting us where we are.

[David Jeremiah – Morning and Evening Devotions – Thomas Nelson Publishers]

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

If you are connected to the internet, I encourage you to visit our parish website and have a look around. The internet address is:

<http://www.stjohnsraymondterrace.org>

Prayer points for this week:

- Our Bishops and Diocesan staff who are working to get information to parishes on how we should structure ourselves as we gradually come out of lockdown
- Peace within the streets of the U.S.A. and other countries where there is unrest and strife
- Respect for all people
- People who have been diagnosed with COVID-19
- Families physically separated internationally due to this pandemic
- People who are working on the front-line such as doctors, hospital and aged-care staff, nurses, pharmacists, police, fire fighters, emergency service personnel, grocery store employees, retail workers and truck drivers
- People who have become unemployed because of COVID-19
- People who are struggling because of the isolation of having to live in lockdown
- People who are on our parish prayer list and those who mourn

Thank you for continuing to support our parish financially. It is important that we all continue to support the Church through our giving. If you have internet access, you might like to consider making a direct deposit into our parish account. Thank you to those who already use this method. The parish account details are as follows:

BSB 705-077 and the Account Number is 00041040 – and our account is with the Anglican Savings and Development Fund. If you don't have internet access or prefer not to give electronically, give our Treasurer Edith a call and she can work with you on the best way to do this.

If you would prefer to make a **DONATION**, it may be done as follows:

At the top of the webpage there are 7 headings – the first of which is Church. If you click on Church, another menu appears. The 7th topic on this menu is DONATE. If you click on that, there are some steps to follow on that page in order to donate.

Under the heading of “**Secure**” the bible in the Song of Songs tells us “I see your inner strength so stately and strong. **You are as secure as David's fortress.** Your virtues and grace cause a thousand famous soldiers to surrender to your beauty.” *Song of Songs 4:4*

GOD is for us – ALWAYS. His love knows no bounds. He is good and kind. Though we may face temporary setbacks or disappointments, He will turn things around and work in unexpected ways that prove His faithfulness and strengthens our faith. After time, we learn that trusting and praising Him in the midst of pain is our greatest weapon against fear. No matter what happens, we know He will never fail us. This type of boldness reveals not only a strong person but also a humble one – submitted to the will of GOD. We become resolute, determined to do the right thing with no double-mindedness. Like David, we have a heart after GOD. David's tower was a place where the weapons of warfare were stored. Our decision to follow the King – our inward life and confidence in Him – is like a storehouse of mighty weapons that we wield against the enemy.

Father, I release all my cares to you today. I allow my spirit, soul, and body to rest confidently in your love. I say no to fear and plant my feet firmly upon Your Word. I choose to trust You despite everything swirling in thought. In you I am safe. AMEN

[Taken from *The Divine Romance* – 365 Days Meditating on the Song of Songs]

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

Fr Steve