

10 June 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Susanna, Marea, and Denise and Tracie for the music, the flowers, and the intercessions respectively for Mass and Evening Prayer on Sunday. 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. What does this mean?

**When you walk up the driveway, go first to the morning-tea area to have your name and telephone number recorded.** You will then be informed of the area of the church in which you'll be sitting – because of the social distancing regulations in place. 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 cleaned 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.

Our Zoom Bible Study group will be starting next Wednesday. 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. I would like to open this study up to more people later in the year or maybe even next year – as it seems to me to be a very "down-to-earth" kind of study.

It is important for all of us to spend more time studying the Scriptures. In the gospel of John at 14:27 it says that **"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."**

There are 6 interrogative (having the force of a question) words commonly used when people speak to each other – *who, what, when, where, why and how*. Of these six, one is used more frequently than others in times of personal anguish: **WHY**. It is human nature to want to know **WHY** things happen the way they do. And for Christians, **WHY** means "Why did **GOD** allow it?"

The disciples of **JESUS** surely asked "WHY?" questions more than once in their relationship with **JESUS**. But at no time did they wonder **WHY** more seriously than when their lives were in peril on the Sea of Galilee. A huge storm had come up while they and **JESUS** were crossing the water. While they feared for their lives, **JESUS** napped calmly in the back of the boat. They wondered, *WHY doesn't JESUS do something?* When **JESUS** finally calmed the storm, He had a "WHY?" question for them: "WHY did they let their faith be overcome by fear?" (Mark 4:40)

If you've been asking GOD "WHY?" questions lately and receiving no answers, stay focused by faith in JESUS. He will still the storm at the right time. It's OK to ask GOD "WHY?" it's even better to wait for the answer in faith instead of fear.

[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](mailto: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 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

On Tuesday, I visited Opal Raymond Terrace Gardens Nursing Home for a service of Holy Communion. Peggy Davies, Jeanne Mullaney and Joyce Wood were present at the service. They were in one room and there were others in another room tuning in on Zoom.

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 "**Grace**" 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*

We are beautiful, filled with His grace. Whether we have a strong or timid personality, when it's seasoned with grace, there's little anyone can say to discredit us. We see situations and people with GOD's perspective, and words of affirmation, honour, and hope stream from our lips. We look and sound like JESUS. Grace runs deep within us. It isn't only seen by the way we speak or act; it's evident in the way we depend on GOD. This humility, founded in our reliance upon the LORD, is a beauty that's apparent. It defines us. People know there's something different, even if they don't fully understand what that is, and they're drawn to our nature. What a refreshing person we become when we accept GOD's unconditional love and know how to share it with others.

*Lord, I want to be known as a person of grace, confidence, and compassion. I want others to feel your presence when they're around me, to be encouraged by the way I treat them, and to know it's only by your grace that I stand. I want to live free from offense and without offending others. Help me to live in a way that glorifies you and reveals your heart. 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