

19 June 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Heather Buckingham and Tracie Hendriks for the flowers and the intercessions respectively for Mass on Sunday. Services have resumed in St John's and this week will be as follows:

Holy Communion

- Saturday at 6pm – **20 June 2020**
- Sunday at 9am – **21 June 2020** – livestreamed
- Wednesday at 9am – **24 June 2020**
- Morning Prayer – livestreamed daily at 8am – Tuesday to Saturday
- Evening Prayer – livestreamed daily at 5pm – Tuesday to Saturday

I repeat the information in last week's newsletter so that we can all allow it to "sink-in" to our understandings. 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. Things are different. There are 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, UNDER CURRENT RULES, THERE CAN BE ONLY A MAXIMUM OF 50 PEOPLE INSIDE THE BUILDING.** This regulation is one to which we must strictly adhere.

Under the heading "**The Job of Thanksgiving**", I was directed to the Old Testament book of 1Chronicles, chapter 16:41 - ⁴¹With them were Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest of those chosen and expressly named to **render thanks to the LORD**, for his steadfast love endures for ever.

Perhaps you've never heard of these two men – they're among the Bible's most obscure characters. Yet their role was paramount. In the great worship choirs of King David, they were appointed to give thanks. Jeduthun and Heman "were under the authority of the king," says 1Chronicles 25:6. And they were designated by name to give thanks. It was their job.!

Giving thanks is our job too. We're under the authority of a king who commands: "Be thankful" ... "Offer to GOD thanksgiving" ... "Come before His presence with thanksgiving" ... "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving" ... "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of GOD in CHRIST JESUS for you" (Colossians 3:15; Psalm 50:14; 95:2; 100:4; 1Thessalonians 5:18, respectively).

This is one of GOD's commands for healthy living. The Creator of the soul is the Master Psychologist. He knows that thanksgiving is not only appropriate but therapeutic. It's hard to be both thankful and, at the same time, grumpy, cantankerous, critical, or ill-tempered,

Be a Heman. Be a Jeduthun. We are appointed by the King to praise His name and to thank Him every day.

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

Something you might consider is a **Gratitude Journal**. I have been using one since the middle of May. All I do each day is to record **THREE** things for which I am thankful. You can always record more but 3 is the suggestion. By doing this exercise each day, we build up within ourselves an "attitude of gratitude". I encourage you to give it a go.

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

Our Zoom Bible Study group started on Wednesday. Our Study – called "Faith Pictures" – is all about helping us to find a way of sharing our faith with others. It is important for all of us to spend more time studying the Scriptures.

If you are connected to the internet, I continue to 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.
- 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 continue in lockdown even as many others experience eased restrictions
- People who are on our parish prayer list and those who mourn

This coming Tuesday – 23 June, I have been asked to help organise and lead a Memorial Service for a much-loved Maintenance Man at Opal Nursing Home, Martin Hughes. Our dear friend, Jeanne Mullaney has been the instigator of this service. I look forward to sharing in this.

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 “**The Beauty of the Mercy Seat**” the bible in the Song of Songs tells us “The king made this mercy seat for Himself **out of the finest wood that will not decay.**” *Song of Songs 3:9*

The Creator of the Universe spoke into existence the very tree that would become the cross of CHRIST. The same wood that once held our suffering Saviour also formed the mercy seat. It was sprinkled with blood and overshadowed by angels. We are now seated upon this seat of mercy, carried along in the safety of the cross, and granted forgiveness by His loving- kindness and outrageous compassion. In Scripture, wood also symbolises humanity. WE have become the seat of His mercy – the resting place for His mercy and glory. The mercy seat was made of wood and gold, inside and out. This illustrates how GOD infused Himself into humanity, and the two became one. We are in Him, and He is in us. We are His chosen vessel of His glory. Our true beauty will never fade away with age. It is eternally filled with the glory of love.

There is nothing as outrageously beautiful as Your mercy. Your sacrifice of love has saved us, healed us, and given us a foundation to dance on. Mercy has set us free and filled us with hope. The glory of the cross has extinguished every sin and infused us with your likeness. You are the radiant splendour that fills our lives. 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