

25 June 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Helen Farley and Ken Hoy for the flowers and the intercessions respectively for Mass at the weekend. Thanks also to Lynn Mulley who continues faithfully in her ministry of giving us a Pew Sheet every week. Services at St John's this week will be as follows:

Holy Communion

- Saturday at 6pm – **27 June 2020**
- Sunday at 9am – **28 June 2020** – livestreamed
- Wednesday at 9am – **1 July 2020**
- Morning Prayer – livestreamed daily at 8am – Tuesday to Saturday
- Evening Prayer – livestreamed daily at 5pm – Tuesday to Saturday

With the livestreaming of Morning and Evening Prayer, there is a Mobile Phone app available for download called "epray". It is free and has the service and readings all in one neat package. If you would like to join us for these services, I encourage you to download this particular app. For i-phones it is from the app store and for android devices, from the Google Play Store.

For the final time, 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 "**There's No Substitute For God's Word**", I was directed to the letter of Paul to the Romans, chapter 15:4 - ⁴For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, **so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.**

The Bible is filled with encouraging truths. There's no need to find substitutes from other sources. GOD's Word is filled with truth, given to us for the sole purpose of encouraging our hearts. In Romans 15, Paul reminds us that one of the purposes of the Old Testament was to provide encouragement for us today: ⁴"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope." Everything from Genesis to Malachi was written for our learning so that we, through the encouragement of the Scriptures, might have hope. If we don't get our encouragement from God's Word, we may find its benefit sadly temporary.

In the New Testament, the theme of encouragement is everywhere, especially in Paul's writings. When Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus, he reminded those young pastors of the critical importance of using God's Word as a tool of encouragement. ²"proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching." (2 Timothy 4:2)

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

I'd like to encourage you again to consider 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 continued 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 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
- The families of Narelle Scott and Robert Perkins as they mourn

We will be having 2 funerals at St John’s on Friday 26 June – at 11am, Narelle Scott and at 2pm, Robert Perkins.

Last Tuesday – 23 June, I was honoured to lead a Memorial Service for a much-loved Maintenance Man at Opal Nursing Home, Martin Hughes. Our dear friend, Jeanne Mullaney was the instigator of this service. Staff and Residents were present to pay tribute to this much-loved man. A bird bath has been placed in one of the gardens in his memory

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.

Under the heading of “**One Glance**” the bible in the Song of Songs tells us “You leave me breathless – **I am overcome by merely a glance from your worshipping eyes**, for you have stolen my heart.”

Song of Songs 4:9

It only takes one moment of affection to touch the LORD’s heart. Whether in times of intentional worship; or choosing to focus on Him instead of the chaos around us, when we make JESUS our focal point, He takes notice. Our devotion captures the heart of the King! By a simple turning of our attention to JESUS, He cannot resist us. When we know how much He loves us, it demolishes rejection and fills us with faith. Why would we fear the obstacles of life, when the majestic King, who has everything we need, loves us? Let His love dispel every anxious thought. We need to release our cares as we worship Him. We need to lift our eyes today and focus on His faithfulness. We need to remind ourselves that this beautiful GOD loves us; and He holds the solution to everything we face.

LORD, I want my love and my faith to move your heart. In the face of opposition, I will give you praise. You are glorious, faithful, and powerful. You hear my prayers and each one matters to you. I want every word that I speak and each stirring of my thoughts to bring you honour and reflect a heart of total devotion. 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