

30 June 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Susanna Denham, Caroline Coppins and Denise Brown for the music, 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 – **4 July 2020**
- Sunday at 9am – **5 July 2020** – livestreamed
- Wednesday at 9am – **8 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.

On Monday 29 June, we had Kyle Phillips our plumber come and replace pipes that were completely blocked, and which would cause problems when larger functions were held at the PMC. It was a very efficient operation – trench dug, new pipes installed, and remediation of the site completed all in the one day. Our grandson in Newcastle was extremely impressed with the fact that we had a digger here that dug a trench and then filled it in again!

On Wednesday at the 9am service we celebrated the **Coming of the Light** to the Torres Strait Islander people.

The Coming of the Light is a holiday celebrated by Torres Strait Islanders on 1 July each year. It recognises the adoption of Christianity through island communities during the late nineteenth century. The London Missionary Society set out to convert people of the Southwest Pacific to Christianity from the 1840s. In July 1871, the Reverend Samuel MacFarlane, a member of the Society anchored at Erub (Darnley Island) in the Torres Strait. He was accompanied by South Sea Islander evangelists and teachers. In defiance of tribal law Dabad, a Warrior Clan Elder on Erub welcomed the London Missionary Society clergy and teachers. The acceptance of the missionaries and Christianity into the Torres Strait Islands is often credited with ending conflict between different island groups. However, Christian principles were already somewhat compatible with Islander religion. The missionaries offered a more practical advantage. Torres Strait Islanders had been grossly exploited in the maritime industry. The missionaries provided some protection and assistance to Islanders who negotiated with outsiders in the maritime industry. The acceptance of missionaries and Christianity into Torres Strait led to profound changes that affected every aspect of life from that time onwards. Torres Strait Islanders living on the islands or on the mainland come together to honour this anniversary every year. Islanders of all faiths celebrate the Coming of the Light in a festival like no other in Australia. Activities include church services and a re-enactment of the landing at Kemus on Erub. Hymn singing, feasting and *Ailan dans* (Island Dance) strengthen community and family ties.

Under the heading "**Meeting GOD Anywhere**", I was directed to the book of Nehemiah, chapter 2:4 - <sup>4</sup>Then the king said to me, 'What do you request?' **So, I prayed to the God of heaven.**

A person was in the habit of praying while ironing. One day that person was thinking about the different kinds of lines – bus lines, clotheslines, fishing lines, telephone lines. "Why not a prayer line?" they asked themselves. So, they strung a short rope with names of people they knew needed prayer. Now, as this task is done, they pray for each person by name. not surprisingly, they get regular requests to "hang me on your prayer line."

Prayer is a conversation WITH God. It doesn't matter where we are or what we are doing; we can meet with Him and pour out our hearts in prayer. Most dictionaries define prayer as a reverent petition made to GOD, a god, or another object of worship. Do we come to GOD with our petitions, thanksgiving and praise each morning and evening? While we are driving or taking a break during the day?

Creating habits with prayer helps us meet with GOD no matter where we are or how hectic our schedule is.

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

I continue to encourage you 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”. Why not 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](mailto:frsteve@bigpond.com)

We are looking to re-open our Parish Pantry ministry on Monday mornings. As Heather Buckingham has advised us in the Pew Sheet:

“We have been given permission by the Diocese to reopen our Parish Pantry with the following conditions in place. **1. We must follow all Social Distancing (and personal hygiene) Requirements. 2. Any volunteers who are over 70 years of age or have underlying Medical Conditions are required by NSW Health to collect a form from St. John's and obtain Medical Clearance from their G.P.** If this causes any difficulties, please talk to Fr. Steve or Heather Buckingham. Until this happens, we unfortunately cannot reopen Parish Pantry and resume our Emergency Food Programme.”

Like everything in a “COVID-19 world” there is usually a form to be filled out – partly a cynical response but overall a true statement. This one is called “Anglican Diocese of Newcastle **Health and Medical Declaration Form – Volunteer Role During COVID-19.**” It is our responsibility as Church to maintain a safe environment and this is a part of this responsibility.

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

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 “**Milk and Honey**” the bible in the Song of Songs tells us “Your loving words are like the honeycomb to me; **your tongue releases milk and honey**, for I find the Promised Land flowing within you. The fragrance of your worshipping love surrounds you with scented robes of white.” *Song of Songs 4:11*

Fill yourself with the sweet promises of GOD. Let them saturate the way we think; and they will drip from every word we say. Others will be fed by the nourishing truths that flow from our lips. The promised land was a land flowing with milk and honey – abundant and rich. This is who we are – abundant and richly filled with living truths. The very Spirit of GOD, the Promised Land, so to speak, is within us.

JESUS hears every word we say. Each sigh of our heart, every declaration of our love, and every cry for help – nothing goes unnoticed. Every word matters to Him; and they should matter to us as well. If we notice negative, complaining, doubt-filled words, it’s time to flood ourselves with His truth. We need to be intentional about what we think – it will be evident in our demeanour and speech.

*JESUS, pour out your presence upon the dry, cracked, and thirsty ground of my soul. Drench me; flood every thought with the goodness of who you are. Consume my thoughts, so they are filled with nothing but your truth. Touch my lips, so my words glorify you and spark hope and life to all who hear. 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