

27 August 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Susanna Denham for the music, Helen Farley for the flowers, and Lorraine Phillips for the intercessions for Mass at the weekend. Thanks also to Lynn Mulley who continues faithfully in her ministry of giving us a Pew Sheet every week. St John's is now registered as a COVID-safe site. Services at St John's this week will be as follows:

Holy Communion

- Saturday at 6pm – **29 August 2020**
- Sunday at 9am – **30 August 2020** – livestreamed
- Wednesday at 9am – **2 September 2020**
- Morning Prayer – livestreamed daily at 8am – Tuesday to Saturday
- Evening Prayer – livestreamed daily at 5pm – Tuesday to Saturday

It was lovely to have Bishop Sonia with us last Sunday. She held a discussion with members of Parish Council after the service – being concerned for our well-being during the pandemic and sharing some of her own experiences and those throughout the Diocese.



Please continue to pray for Heather as she recovers from being struck by a car on the pedestrian crossing in William Street near Market Place, the Mutual Bank and Terry White Chemist – thankfully, no broken bones. Continue to pray that the police may locate the driver.

It is still important – though not mandatory – that we wear masks when we come to St John's. COVID-19 is still casting its shadow over us and we must all continue our diligence in following the health regulations issued by the relevant authorities. Wearing masks is just one of these – hand hygiene and sanitising and keeping physical distance from each other is still important, too. There are signs up around the Church building and regular hand sanitising stations to assist.

During the month of September, we will again be holding our **Seasons of Creation** services. It will begin on Sunday 6 September. The fifth and final Sunday is usually a Blessing of the Animals service. This year, I invite you to take a photo of your pet/s and email it to me at frsteve@bigpond.com so that we can pray a virtual blessing on them on Sunday 4 October. I ask your permission to display these photographs on the Parish Website, Facebook, and Instagram pages. Please let me know when you send your photos in, please. The 5 topics for the five weeks will be:

6 September – The Greatest Commandment

13 September – Protecting The Commons

20 September – There Is Enough For Our Need, Not Our Greed

27 September – The Gift of Water

4 October – The Feast Of St Francis – Blessing Of The Animals – Creation Spirituality

This coming week we have:

- Our usual services on Wednesday
- SRE at Raymond Terrace Public School
- A Baptism on Saturday 5 September at 11am

Under the heading "**The Velvet Ant**", I was directed to 2 Corinthians 11:14 – "*satan ... transforms himself into an angel of light*"

There's a strange little insect called the velvet ant – attractive, as ants go – garbed in a thick coat of tiny hairs that feel smooth and velvety. But it's all a disguise. This tiny creature isn't an ant at all but a wingless wasp with a nasty sting. After injecting its victims with venom, it lays its eggs in their incapacitated bodies.

How like satan! He's a venomous imposter who wants to implant his warped ideas into the dulled hearts of his victims. One of his cleverest strategies is to make evil seem desirable. Just consider today's movies. Sexual sin of every type is glamourized and glorified. Profanity appears as righteous indignation. Fame captivates. Fortune beguiles. Violence titillates.

Or take modern faith fads – satan doesn't mind if we become religious, just so long as it remains politically incorrect to proclaim JESUS CHRIST as the only name under heaven whereby we must be saved.

Paul told the Corinthians, "I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in CHRIST." (2 Corinthians 11:3)

Be on guard! Don't fall into satan's frauds.

[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

Prayer points for this week:

- A reduction in the spread of the coronavirus around the world
- May we all continue to obey the directions of the health department and use caution in all our dealings
- Peace in our world and increasing respect for and between people
- Children to be brought for baptism and their families
- **Those GOD is calling to the ministry of SRE teaching to come forward**
- For politicians and their advisors, be guided to get the appropriate balance between Public Health needs and the needs of the economy
- The people of Victoria and those in hot spots and clusters in other states as we seek to control the spread of coronavirus.
- A reduction in the incidences of cyber-crime
- People who are on our parish prayer list and those who mourn

Under the heading of "**A New Season**" the bible in the Song of Songs tells us "**The Season has changed, the bondage of your barren winter has ended**, and the season of hiding is over and gone. The rains have soaked the earth." *Song of Songs 2:11*

JESUS was faithful to us in the gloomiest of winters, and He will be faithful to us in the blossoming of spring. The cold winds of trials have ended. The warmth of love has arrived with new hope. A new season has come. Light shines against the backdrop of darkness, illuminating the many lessons we've learned during our barren winter. As we step over into a new season, we can see how faithfully He's cared for us. He has held us close, strengthening and encouraging us all the way. We need to invite Him into our most traumatic memories, and He'll remove the painful sting. He's good at taking what the enemy meant for our destruction and turning it around. He fills the darkness with glory.

Father, I feel the warm winds of springtime. The fragrance of your love floods our senses. You've come to escort us out of the darkness and into the light. Thank you for everything you've taught us. We honour you for your patience, even when we kicked and screamed in protest. Now, let our lives be as a fruitful vine, so others may eat from the wisdom we've gained 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