

29 September 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

PLEASE NOTE: DAYLIGHT SAVING BEGINS THIS WEEKEND - SO WE NEED TO PUT OUR CLOCKS FORWARD BEFORE BED ON SATURDAY NIGHT SO WE ARE NOT LATE FOR CHURCH ON SUNDAY!

I am thankful to Susanna Denham for the music, Heather Buckingham for the flowers, and Ken Hoy 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 – **3 October 2020**
- Sunday at 9am – **4 October 2020** – livestreamed
- Wednesday at 9am – **7 October 2020**
- Morning Prayer – livestreamed daily at 8am – Tuesday to Saturday
- Evening Prayer – livestreamed daily at 5pm – Tuesday to Saturday

This week I received an email from Bishop Peter about an initiative within the Church called the ANGLICAN RENEWAL NETWORK. It has been decades since the Anglican Renewal Movement in Australia coordinated an effective ministry to encourage and equip clergy and lay people in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Anglican Renewal Movement are looking to establish a new network across the Communion of those clergy and laity, interested in pursuing renewal through the work and person of the Holy Spirit. I have registered an interest in joining this network as a positive and exciting way of journeying into the future.

There are moves afoot concerning the return of singing in Church. Small singing groups – a maximum of 5 – are permitted in Church under **very strict conditions**. Congregational singing is still NOT PERMITTED but a small group of up to 5 people may sing together in a large, well-ventilated (preferably outdoor) area if:

- All singers face forwards and not towards each other
- All singers have physical distancing of 1.5 metres between each other and 5 metres from all other people including the congregation and a conductor.

Musical groups should rehearse and perform outdoors or in large, well-ventilated indoor spaces. The Diocesan staff are in the process of updating all relevant COVID-19 planning documents – which are part of our legal requirement to be a COVID Safe place. **Application needs to be made and permission needs to be given** for rehearsals and public worship to have singing in strict accordance with these guidelines. So things are starting to move – but not too quickly.

Our Seasons of Creation celebrations conclude with **The Blessing of the Animals** – being the theme for this coming Sunday.

We have had 3 funerals this week – Ellen Gordon, Duncan McLachlan and Mavis Mordue. Thank you to those who assisted with the COVID record keeping requirements which were described by one of the funeral directors as the best in the area.

Under the heading "**Follow the Leader**", I was directed to 1 Peter 2:21 – "*For to this you were called, because CHRIST also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.*"

You show up bright and early for the first day of your new job and sit down with your boss to review your job responsibilities. Everything looks good – meet deadlines for reports, monitor departmental budget, supervise junior staff – until you get to the last item: “Suffer extreme persecution, harassment, and loss of some privilege for the sake of the company.”

Whoa! Are you serious? Not many people in today’s world would agree to a job that required them to suffer for the sake of the company. Yet, in a manner of speaking, that’s what Christians are asked to do. For instance, when Paul met the LORD JESUS CHRIST on the Damascus road, JESUS said He was about to show Paul “how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:16). And Paul never wavered throughout his life.

We are not promised deliverance from every hardship in this life. In fact, we are told that we will suffer. How often are you surprised at the suffering you experience in this life? Following the example of JESUS means imitating His example in all things – even suffering for the sake of the gospel.

[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 continued and sustained reduction in the spread of the coronavirus around our nation.
- May we all continue to diligently obey the directions of the health department and use caution in all our dealings
- Peace between and within countries in our world and increasing respect for and between people
- Children to be brought for baptism and their families
- For politicians and their advisors, be guided to get the appropriate balance between Public Health needs and the needs of the economy
- Those who travel on our roads during the School holidays
- **People who are on our parish prayer list and those who mourn**

Under the heading: **What Love**, I was directed to Song of Songs 5:9 – “*Jerusalem Maidens, Brides-to-be – What love is this? How could you continue to care so deeply for him? Isn’t there another who could steal away your heart?*”

Oh, how our hearts swell with love for JESUS! No matter what, He is our rock, our answer, our help in time of need; and the One we live for. Encounters with His glory will leave us refreshed and encouraged, yet utterly undone and longing for more. His love catapults us into a lifestyle of zealous devotion, the fires of which must be tended.

Passionate hearts that are willing to pay any price to follow JESUS are not easily understood, yet people are drawn to those whose lives are marked by GOD – those who exude encouragement and compassion and who live by example. The testimony of an authentic lover of GOD, one who doesn’t hide behind a mask and pretend life is perfect, will reach more unbelievers than a judgemental “holier than thou” attitude. This is the kind of lifestyle that will cause others to ask, “What love is this?”

LORD, I want my heart to be true – filled with unquenchable passion for you that guides my life. Let there be no mixture in my soul. Shine the light of your glory upon the areas that hide in darkness, and we’ll face them together. May my life be a beautiful example of your presence, power and love. Amen

The Divine Romance – 365 Days meditating on the Song of Songs – Brian Simmons and Gretchen Rodriguez

May GOD richly bless you as you journey with Him this week.

Fr Steve