

03 November 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Susanna Denham for the music, Caroline Coppins for the flowers, Ken Hoy for assisting at the altar, Edith Hoy and Marea Niland for advancing the slides and Lynn Mulley for the Pew Sheet. Services at St John's coming up will be as follows:

Holy Communion

- Saturday at 6pm – **7 November 2020**
- Sunday at 9am – **8 November 2020**
- Wednesday at 9am – **11 November 2020**
- Morning Prayer – livestreamed daily at 8am – Tuesday to Saturday
- Evening Prayer – livestreamed daily at 5pm – Tuesday to Saturday

We farewelled Garry Roth on Thursday at St John's. The service celebrated Garry's life and showed his contribution to those around him through his love for GOD, his service to others, and his love for family and friends. Please continue to keep Julie and their family surrounded in prayer.

I would like to hold a Parish Meeting to discuss how we will move into the future and to talk about the updated COVID-19 requirements. I am looking at holding this on Sunday 22 November 2020 at 10:30am following the 9am service. As most of you may have come to realise, I AM NOT a fan of long meetings – so, if it is not over within an hour, I will be disappointed.

Last Saturday, the National Secretariat of Australian Anglican Cursillo held its annual meeting. It was supposed to happen here at St John's Raymond Terrace in the days leading up to the long weekend in June of this year – but like a lot of events had to be cancelled because of COVID. It was the most well-organised non-event with which I have ever been involved. At the end of the meeting I was de-commissioned from the role of National Spiritual Advisor which I have held since May 2017. The Reverend Jane Lamont from Tasmania was commissioned as National Spiritual Advisor for a 3-year term.

Bishop Peter has issued an invitation to people in the Diocese to make submissions in relation to the administration of Holy Communion. Given the ongoing nature of the Global COVID pandemic, it is his intention, prior to Advent, to release some revised guidance about the administration of the Holy Communion in the Diocese. He is reviewing the way we might resume the administration of wine in the service of Holy Communion either with intinction of the bread in the wine or the use of individual cups or both. There have been studies overseas and within Australia concerning this which will guide Bishop Peter in his decision-making process. Watch this space!

Under the heading "**Never Too Old**", I was directed to Psalm 71:18 – "*Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O GOD do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come.*"

Sometimes an elderly Christian isn't sure what his or her role is in the Church. That wasn't true of two saints named Simeon and Anna. Simeon spent all his time at Church involved in Bible Study and prayer; and Anna, a godly widow in her eighties, worshipped, fasted, and prayed day and night. As it turns out, they were the first two people to pronounce blessings on a baby boy named JESUS. Somehow, Simeon and Anna missed the "retirement" message. Instead, they continued serving the LORD as they always had. As it worked out, their faithfulness was rewarded. They both recognised JESUS as the promised "Consolation of Israel," the Messiah, when His parents brought Him to the temple to be offered to the LORD as the firstborn son (Luke 2:25). Simeon and Anna declared His identity to all who were in the temple; and offered prayers and blessings over Him. Whatever your age today, plan on remaining faithful and active your entire life. If you're available, GOD will use you to bless someone. The only aged saints who don't get used by GOD are those who have removed themselves from service.

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

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 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
- **People who are on our parish prayer list and those who mourn**

Under the heading: "**Friend**", I was directed to Song of Songs 5:16 – "*If you ask me why I love him so, O brides-to-be, it's because there is none like him to me. Everything about him fills me with holy desire! **And now he is my beloved – my friend forever.***"

He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is Creator, Saviour, and Counsellor. But He is also our Friend who enjoys our company and loves to be around us. We never have to try and impress Him because He already knows everything about us. We can tell Him anything, without feeling judged or misunderstood. He knows when to speak and when to hold us in silent wonder. Friendship with the LORD brushes away the pollution of the world, which causes us to see things through a distorted lens. When we include Him in every conversation, seek His wisdom and open ourselves up to His point of view, life becomes enjoyable. Knowing He's with us and cares about the things we care about makes our burden lighter.

JESUS, You are my dearest and closest Friend. It's amazing that You, the King of the universe, could enjoy my company. Even when I get distracted and neglect to spend time with You, You reach out to me. You're so kind. I want to know You more and become acquainted with what moves Your heart. I want to know the sound of Your laugh and to see you in the eyes of a stranger. Come, walk with me today. 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