

6 October 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Susanna Denham for the music, Helen Farley for the flowers, and Trisch Lasorsa 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 coming up will be as follows:

Holy Communion

- Saturday at 6pm – **10, 17 and 24 October 2020**
- Sunday at 9am – **11, 18 and 25 October**
- Wednesday at 9am – **14, 21 and 28 October 2020**
- Morning Prayer – livestreamed daily at 8am – Tuesday to Saturday
- Evening Prayer – livestreamed daily at 5pm – Tuesday to Saturday

Marea and I will be on leave from Monday for 2 weeks. Fr Chris Freestone will be taking the weekend services and Fr George Mainprize will be taking our Wednesday services during this time.

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.

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 manner in which 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 "**Prayer Circles**", I was directed to Philippians 4:6 – "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to GOD.*"

One of the best ways I know how to remember how to commit things to GOD in prayer is by remembering 3 circles. One is the worry circle – in which I keep nothing. Second is the prayer circle – in which I keep everything. Third is the gratitude circle – in which I keep anything. So, when I pray, I am anxious for nothing, prayerful for everything and thankful for anything. [Philippians 4:6]

We feel foolish asking GOD to help us with some things in our lives. But remember, "In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to GOD." We just need to write out every one of our concerns before they turn into worries and commit them to GOD. He does care about each of them. If we take them back, we need to give them back to Him in prayer again. Day by day, as we get more and more practiced at committing the affairs of our lives to Him, we will begin to leave them with Him. Our trust in Him will grow, and we will stop grabbing back what we have given to Him

[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)

**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: "**Those Eyes**", I was directed to Song of Songs 5:12 – "*He sees everything with pure understanding. How beautiful his insights – without distortion. **His eyes rest upon the fullness of the river of revelation, flowing so clean and pure.***"

Gaze into His eyes and you will see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit looking back. These are the eyes that are filled with wonder and treasures yet to be discovered. These are the eyes that hold the answers to every mystery. They pierce our souls and interpret every movement of our heart. Nothing is hidden from His sight. When we know that GOD sees us and still loves us, we find courage to live an authentic life. The longer we stand in His presence, being vulnerable and honest with Him, shackles of people pleasing begin to melt away. His opinion of us becomes the only one that matters. He understands us, even when no one else does. This life of freedom releases us to be ourselves, to realise how fully we depend upon the LORD, and to live humbly before Him and others. We need to open our lives to His penetrating gaze and find confidence in His never-ending love.

*Thank you for seeing me – the real me – and still loving me. You're gracious and kind, yet your eyes blaze with purity. I want to live without any hindrances to your holy love. I want the courage to be genuine and to believe in myself the way you do. Help me to become the best version of me that I can be. 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