

10 November 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest weekly newsletter.

I am thankful to Victoria Baumann for the music, Heather Buckingham for the flowers, Denise Brown for the prayers and 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 – **14 November 2020**
- Sunday at 9am – **15 November 2020**
- Wednesday at 9am – **18 November 2020**
- Morning Prayer – livestreamed daily at 8am – Tuesday to Saturday
- Evening Prayer – livestreamed daily at 5pm – Tuesday to Saturday

On Tuesday I was able to have a communion service at Opal Aged Care. Joyce Wood reminded me that she turns 102 next week (16th) – so many birthday blessings, Joyce. Jeanne Mullaney, Peggy Davies and Edith Hostler were also at the service – along with Ted and Mick.

Bishop Peter has called a meeting of Clergy on Wednesday 25 November at the NEX Club in Newcastle – the old Newcastle Workers Club Site – to talk about:

- Our life together following the decision of the Appellate Tribunal
- Sustaining parish ministry following the conclusion of Jobkeeper
- The administration of wine as part of communion services
- Other matters

In the same letter, he also informed us that in 2021 there would be 2 sessions of Diocesan Synod – again at the same venue. The first session – postponed due to COVID – will be on 5 and 6 March 2021 and the second session on 29 and 30 October 2021.

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 will be holding this on Sunday 22 November 2020 at 10:30am following the 9am service. This meeting should be over within an hour.

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!

In other news, the vacancy at Gloucester Parish due to the Reverend Rob Llewellyn becoming the Dean of Darwin Cathedral is to be filled by the Reverend James Brooks, currently an assistant priest in the Parish of Forster-Tuncurry.

Under the heading "**Freedom to Love**", I was directed to Romans 13:10 – "*Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilment of the law.*"

The famous 19th century preacher Charles H Spurgeon was fond of smoking cigars. Because this was before the days of research into the effects of tobacco, he saw nothing wrong with the practice. Until, that is, he passed a tobacco shop with a sign advertising a particular cigar for sale: "The cigar smoked by C.H. Spurgeon." That was the last day Spurgeon ever smoked a cigar. Charles Spurgeon recognised that something he had a right to engage in might be viewed as a vice by other believers. He didn't want his actions to be a stumbling block for others. In other words, his love for people was greater than his love for cigars. Spurgeon learned this spiritual lesson in love from the apostle Paul, who counselled first-century Christians to be self-sacrificing in their love for one another. While "all things are lawful," he wrote, "all things are not helpful" (1 Corinthians 6:12). Freedom in CHRIST does not mean we have the right to do anything we want. Rather, it means we have the power to do everything we ought. If there is any right we love more than a brother's or sister's progress toward holiness, it is a right that is best left unexercised.

[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
- Instability in the United States to come to an end.
- Children to be brought for baptism and their families
- For politicians and their advisors, to 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: “**Speak To Me**”, I was directed to Song of Songs 5:13 – “**No one speaks words so anointed as this one** – words that both pierce and heal, words like lilies dripping with myrrh.”

We were created to hear GOD's voice. Most of us don't hear Him audibly with our natural ears but as a still small voice within us. Too often people think they cannot hear Him because they expect a booming voice to come from heaven. The Holy Spirit lives within us. He knows how to speak to us and get our attention. We need to still our minds and rest in His presence each day. Thoughts, ideas, and images, which agree with His Word and stir hope and faith within us, are more than likely Him. Listen for Him in every conversation. Often, His love and counsel come through loud and clear. Watch for Him to speak through emails, prophetic words, books, articles and even in the beauty of creation. GOD is not confusing. Though it takes time to separate His voice from our emotions, He is patient. If we desire to know His voice, He will make it clear.

Father speak to me. Teach me to recognise your faintest whisper as it brushes my sub-conscious. Help me to discern your intentions as they spark my mind like a brilliant idea. I tune myself into you and will listen for you in every situation. 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