



19 March 2020

To the Pastors and People of God in the Diocese of Toowoomba

The public health emergency of the kind that we are experiencing is a rare event. Given the directions provided by the Government and after consultation the following provisions apply effective from midnight Friday 20 March 2020.

All regular public Masses are hereby suspended until 1st May. This includes all Holy Week Ceremonies.

The obligation to participate at Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation is dispensed.

The Faithful are encouraged to keep the Lord's Day holy and celebrate Sunday as a domestic church by taking time to pray together as a household. Resources will be made available in due course.

Funerals and Weddings and Baptisms must follow the Government limitations as regards numbers attending (currently 100 indoors).

Preparation for and celebration of Confirmation and First Communion is postponed until the pandemic is over.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Second Form of the Rite of Penance is to be suspended. The First Rite of Penance may continue. Government advice on maintaining minimum distances between priest and penitent should be adhered to.

Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick may be administered by the priest holding his hands above rather than upon the head. Anointing the forehead is sufficient. Gloves may also be worn for the distribution of the Sacrament. Priests and those visiting nursing homes or hospitals must adhere to the safety requirements currently in force within those institutions.

Churches are to remain open

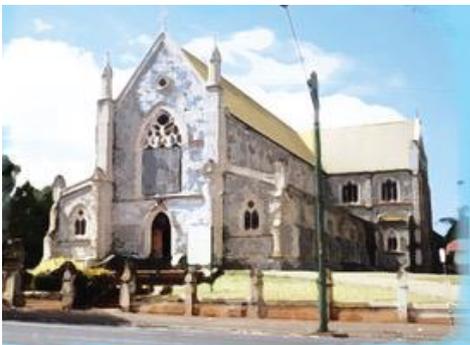
Churches should remain open for the faithful to access for the purpose of private prayer and personal devotion. There are many ways by which a small number of parishioners may still wish to gather, remaining compliant with the law – small Rosary groups, for Exposition and Benediction.

We are living in uncharted times with implications about which we are uncertain. It is essential that *our* communities of Faith remain beacons of hope during this difficult and challenging time. It is critical that all our parishes consider the most creative ways by which to retain communication with their people.

It is very important that those members of our community who require assistance: the young; the elderly; people with disabilities; the poor and the sick; the homeless; are cared for and not abandoned.

Priests should ensure that parishioners can contact them in emergencies. The Priests and I will continue to celebrate Mass in private for all the people entrusted to our care.

Most Reverend Robert M McGuckin
Bishop of Toowoomba



St Patrick's Cathedral Newsletter



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Office hours: 9am-4pm Mon-Thu 9am-3pm on Friday

Administrator/Priest Director STM: Fr. Michael O'Brien
Associate Pastors: Fr Hal Ranger & Fr. Thomas Duncan

St Patrick's, in communion with St Saviour's Primary School - Madonna Sleba (4637 1555)
St Saviour's College - Sharon Collins (4637 1600)

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners of this place, the Jarowair and Giabal peoples.



FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT - Year A Saturday 21 March/Sunday 22 March 2020

First Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13 [In the presence of the Lord God, they anointed David King of Israel.]

Responsorial Psalm: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. [Psalm 22]

Second Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14 [Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.]

Gospel Acclamation: Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ! I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life. Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel: John 9:1-41 [The blind man went off and washed himself and came away with his sight restored.]

Lenten Reflections

On the front page of the bulletin during lent this year will be a number of guest writers.

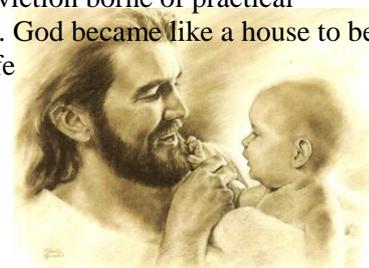
They have been invited to reflect on the question "Where do I find Christ?"

This week's reflection is given by "a regular Mass attendee giving a "view from the pew".

Bring up the topic of 'nuns in the old days' and often you rarely get to finish your sentence. The race is on to recount the horrors of rulers at piano lessons, being made to stand in the corner ostracised and ridiculed by sharp sarcastic commentary. These tropes with time grow bigger I suspect. Because in the main this was not my experience receiving a regional convent primary school education. Yes I was expelled in Grade 2 but persistently turning up to school each day gave the good sisters pause to reconsider given the title Mercy in their moniker of their order. *And I'm grateful. Very grateful.*

You see Grade 3 was the preparation for 1st Holy Communion and Confession (this was the 1960s mind). Our days began with a catechism lesson with Sister Mary G....in my dad's words a force to be reckoned with IN ALL THINGS and in my brother's words 'a penguin with attitude'. Irish and indomitable. Mind you she was once bested by a classmate Petrea (who evinced all the suavity of a future Bond girl) who mentioned she ate an ice cream for the missions during Lent. Sr Mary G just stared speechless and went very red in the face before momentarily leaving the room. Anyway back to the religion lessons. It started with the rote memorising of the question and answer formulae from the catechism but soon allowed for our own questions about the material. Sr Mary G allowed us to ask anything, with the freedom to not be immediately convinced by her explanations of religion in general, Catholic thought and church viewpoints. There was no denigration of the unconvinced or the doubters....not a whiff of fire and brimstone. Perhaps to many it may not seem likely that 8yr olds in the 1960s would be so upfront; but they were and often ongoing discussion leached into the time allotted for the following Maths lesson.(yeah verily a recurring miracle) Her openness often simply acknowledged with a 'I don't know but if you ask God He will tell you at the right time'....or 'ask St Peter when you get there but have a mind to the lineup behind you'(all in a brogue that had moss on it).

What this impressed upon me was that my Creator was not offended by doubts and questions; not a trait overly prevalent in other aspects of my convent education mind. 'God is there to be explored' she said....'it's called prayer.' She readily stated she didn't have all the answers for us but she knew someone who did. This was how she introduced the person of Christ to us. This introduction was not sentimental but pragmatic. In hindsight I can see it carried a personal conviction borne of practical experience. Our catechetical exercises became more of a thought provoking framework for me. God became like a house to be explored. The wisdom of Christ in scripture (I was an avid reader) helped with the everyday life even of an eight year old. And in time throughout the next 50 years Christ the light bearer also showed me that the joy in the quest is as wonderful as the answers, and that all believers share in bearing the light of Christ. Sr Mary G modelled respect for each of her charges; respect for Otherness; respect for our simple selves seeking answers and confidence that Christ would answer. I suspect I will really be ETERNALLY grateful to her.



"..though I was blind, now I see.....You have seen Him, and the one speaking to you is He.....Lord, I believe"



✠ **We remember in our prayers all those who have died recently:** Beverly Mead. *May perpetual light shine upon them, may they rest in peace.*

✠ **We hold in our hearts the memories of those whose anniversaries occur at this time:** Fr Patrick Brady.

✠ **For all those who are ill in our community, especially** Fr. Don Murray, Christine [Faus] Barron, Hughie Boyce, Greta Berge, Matt Vlietstra, Jean Denison, Jo Tuite, Dr Peter Reiter, Elijah Rolls, Hayden Smith, Rita Berry, Juanita Umipig, Maria Brown, Patricia Whyte (nee Stark), Margaret Walker, Rita Blacker, Kristina Dawidowicz, Nora Machin, Mary Allen, George Pardon, Tina Hobson, Bev Boundy, Roslyn Pardon [nee Kearney], Joanne Essey [Sydney], Braxton Rayner, Kate Gibbs, Max Shearer, Saturnino Bustamante, Hannah Marie Marasigan, Stephanie Shine, Andrew Supple, Mary-Ann Hine, Kathy Allan, John Morgan, Patricia McCracken, Reggie James, Morgan O'Brien, Teresita Pamulaklaklin.

✠ **For all those recently baptised:** **Oliver William Hibbs** son of Andrew and Kimberley. *May the gift of the Holy Spirit grow throughout their lives.*

This week is the Feast of the **Annunciation of the Lord** and we keep the people of *Our Lady of the Annunciation, Peranga* in our prayers.

Reconciliation: 1st Rite available this Saturday, 9.00am – 10.00am at St Patrick's Cathedral.

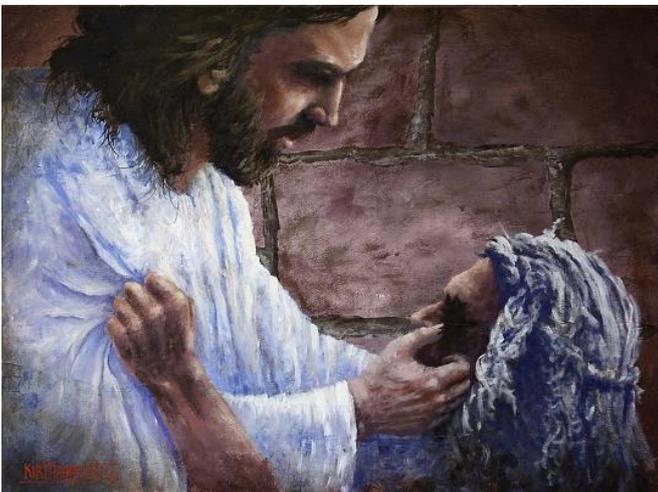
Holy Hour at the Cathedral: You are invited to spend an hour in quiet reflection each Wednesday of Lent between 5pm and 6pm in the Cathedral. **Please note next time of adoration is at 5pm on Wednesday 25th March.** **This can continue as long as people are aware of social distancing within the Cathedral and use of hand sanitiser. However, should, as per Government requirement should the number exceed 100 then you will not be able to remain.**

Holy Hour/Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Every Friday from 2pm at the convent of Missionary Sisters of St Peter Claver, 71 Margaret Street, Toowoomba.

Second (communal) Rite of Reconciliation: THIS CELEBRATION HAS BEEN CANCELLED.

Lenten Material – you will find some of the Lenten program books on the table for quiet reflection.

New SWAG now available – interesting and thought provoking articles relating to church and ministry.



REFLECTION by Dianne Bergant CSA

Humans see and judge by appearances, but God looks into the heart, and there finds the real person. God's standards are not superficial, as are so many of the standards of the world. It is not age, beauty or physical strength that is important; it is not social position or religious role that is preferred. God chooses whom God chooses. God saw in David, the insignificant shepherd, the potential for being the chief shepherd of his people. The man who was born blind became the one through whom others would see the mighty works of God. Yet, neither young David nor the man in the gospel made the initial step; each simply responded with openness to God's choice of him.

By what criteria do we judge others? Do we consider some people too insignificant for greatness? Are we overly concerned with status? Do we categorise people according to the disease or physical limitation that they must endure? Do we sometimes blame them for their disability? Do our eyes perceive life in accord with the standards of a materialistic, body-orientated, pleasure-seeking society? Or do we look into the other's heart, as God does?

As with the other scrutiny Sundays, catechumens and long-standing members alike are exhorted to make a choice. Jesus is the one who gives sight to blind eyes and religious insight to those open to receive it. However, there is a price to pay. Will it be the standards of the world, or the power of God in Jesus Christ?

Hand Sanitizers: Bishop Robert, mindful of our health and wellbeing, in this current climate, has made some decisions regarding some elements of our Eucharistic celebrations. You will find mounted hand sanitisers in the entry way at both the front entry and the Neil Street entry. For the middle doors there is a unit on the notice board on the Neil Street side.

Please use these to help safeguard your health. Thank you, Father Michael.

A word from the Administrator.....

It is with some sadness that we abide with the directions of Bishop Robert. We, as priests would love to celebrate the sacraments, especially Mass with the people within our community that we have come to know and value on our shared journey. We understand the "hole" that this leaves in your lives, as it does for us also. We assure you of our prayers during this confronting time and we know that you will be mindful of us also. The gospel on Friday, our last Mass as a community for 6 weeks was:

One of the scribes came up to Jesus and put a question to him, 'Which is the first of all the commandments?' Jesus replied, 'This is the first: Listen, Israel, the Lord our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: You must love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.'

As we begin this "desert" journey without Eucharist we are reminded of the breath of the power of praying. An invitation to depth our prayerfulness, to listen for the gentle whisper of the voice of Christ. To explore new or renewed ways of loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Maybe not a time to add more, but rather enter into a quiet and focussed way of prayer. We are especially invited not to abandon our prayer. Coupled so deeply with this is our love of neighbour. This sacrifice of not gathering as a community for Eucharist is for the greater love of our neighbour. In this case, as maybe always our neighbour is the most vulnerable within our community. The seniors, the young, those whose hygiene is compromised and those who we wish to keep safe. Our shared concern to slow this virus is the way we can "love our neighbour" in these times.

Please know that St Patrick's will remain open for prayer and adoration each Wednesday between 5pm and 6pm will be available. The first rite of Reconciliation will be available at the usual time, or when other times, will be advertised. Please keep an eye on the tables in the Cathedral, as resources, such as the bulletin will continue to be available for personal reflection. We will need to be careful to abide by the Government regulations.

During the week Angela Travers sent me this reflection, which is powerful food for thought:

Pandemic

What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.
Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Centre down.
And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.

Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move,
invisibly,
where we cannot touch.
Promise this world your love--
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.

Lynn Ungar 3/11/20

*So let us continue to keep each other in mind and in prayer.
May our hearts indeed reach out to those we love.
Peace of mind, and depth of God's love be with you.*

Father Michael