



St Patrick's Cathedral Newsletter



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

Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral and Administrator: Fr. Michael O'Brien.

Associate Pastors: Fr. Tom Duncan and Fr. Nandana Saparamadu

Safeguarding Officer: Ann Marie Pawsey (safeguarding@stpats.org.au)

St Patrick's, in communion with St Saviour's Primary School - Madonna Sleba (4637 1700)

St Saviour's College - Sharon Collins (4637 1600)

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



SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER [Year B]

Sunday 9th May, 2021

First Reading: Acts 10:26-26, 44-48. The gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the gentiles also.

Responsorial Psalm: The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

Second Reading: 1 John 4:7-10. God is love.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! All who love me will keep my words, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them. Alleluia!

Gospel: John 15:9-17. No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends.

Being Alive in the Present Moment.

Some time ago I read about the experiences of a Vietnamese Bishop, Nguyen Van Thuan, over a period of 16 years late last century. His experiences, in extreme isolation, offer us valuable insights and clues as we continue to live our way in a world being ravaged by Covid 19.

Nguyen Van Thuan was ordained as Bishop of Nha Trang in 1967 and then appointed as an auxiliary Bishop in Saigon in 1975 – just days before the North Vietnamese army took control of the city. On August 15th that year he was arrested and imprisoned. He spent the next 13 years in prison, then another 3 years under house arrest until he was expelled from Vietnam in 1991. For the first nine years of his imprisonment he was in total solitary confinement!

Van Thuan describes the conditions in which he was held. He was in a cell without windows and for several days and nights the light would never be switched off, and then for several days and nights he would be plunged into darkness. He felt as though he was "suffocating from the heat and humidity to the point of insanity". And he was distressed because he could not fulfil his ministry as a priest.

Then one night, from the depths of his heart, he heard a voice saying, "Why do you torment yourself like this? you must distinguish between God and the works of God." And he came to recognise that, excellent as his ministry was, his ministry was not God, but God's works, that God could do things infinitely better than he could, and that he had to choose God alone.

Perhaps the experience of Cardinal Van Thuan, extreme though it was, might help us as we consider our priorities during the coronavirus pandemic, a personal crisis for many of us, as well as a health emergency and a major social and political upheaval. One lasting lesson for Van Thuan was a keener awareness of the value of the present moment. "This is the only time we have in our hands," he writes. "The past is already gone, and we do not know if there will be a future. The present moment is our great wealth." As we come to terms with life in social isolation, are we becoming preoccupied with the past or fretting about the future? Or might we be able to see this present time, difficult as it may be, as gift?

Living in the present moment, in silence and isolation, does not make everything easy. As Van Thuan explains, "Time passes slowly in prison, above all in isolation. Imagine a week, one month, two months and more ... of silence. They are terribly long, and when they become years, they are an eternity.

We are unlikely to experience anything as severe as Nguyen's isolation, but here are lessons to be learnt through imagining his extreme isolation and efforts to cope.

He found it hard to pray; he placed himself often in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me!"

He speaks of small pieces of newspapers in which the food delivered to him by prison staff was often wrapped! And these brought to his mind reminders of other things, other people and their struggles. He was not alone, but part of a large community suffering, surviving, helping with him!

He focuses his praying on others rather than on his own problems – surprising his guards with his genuine interest in them and their families!

It's an extraordinary story that reminds us that Jesus' commandment to love our neighbour speaks loudest at times when they are in greatest need. A particular feature of our situation, whether we are self-isolating or not, is the care that we have to take of one another.

Is there something providential and seriously LIFE CHANGING in embracing the restrictions and new opportunities COVID 19 is bringing to us?

Hal Ranger



✠ **We remember in our prayers all those who have died recently:** John Tomczak, Margaret McNally, Kevin Duncan (Fr Tom's grandfather) Maureen Scheikowski and those who have died from Covid-19. 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:** Fred and Fay Betros, Fr Vincent Maher [1979], Msgr Patrick McMorro [1999], Fr Thomas Isaac [1992].

✠ **For all those who are ill in our community, especially,** Daniel Ligon, Rohitha Jayamanna, Ray Frelek, Patsy Quinn, Brian Machin, Graham McGovern, Madeline Gray, Loan Smith, Maria Brown, Kim Ireland, Christine [Faus] Barron, Greta Berge, Matt Vlietstra, Dr Peter Reiter, Elijah Rolls, Hayden Smith, Patricia Whyte (nee Stark), Margaret Walker, Rita Blacker, Kristina Dawidowicz, Nora Machin, Mary Allen, Tina Hobson, Bev Boundy, 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, Teresita Pamulaklakin, and those in our nursing homes and hospitals, and those suffering from Covid-19

BUS TRIP MARIAN VALLEY: Saturday 22nd May, bus departs St. Pats Cathedral Neil St. at 7:30 am, cost \$35. Bring own lunch. For bookings contact Theresa on 0434 528 904.

TRY BOOKING: On the parish website (www.stpats.org.au) you will find TryBooking is now available for the month of May and 5/6 June. **YOU MAY BOOK ALL OF THESE EVENTS IN ADVANCE.** Any queries please phone St Pat's office on 4637 1500.

DATE CLAIMER: St. Patrick's Cathedral and St. Saviour's Race Day will be held on Derby Day, Saturday 30th October. Featuring free entry to the Twilight races and musical entertainment. Dinner included. More information and pricing will be revealed later. If you would like to be a sponsor on the day please contact Sam Hannant at St Saviour's school on 4637 1600. **Please put this date in your calendar NOW!**



Unit for Rent: One bedroom unit for an actively independent person 60 years or older at St Patrick's Community Village is available for rent. Applications are to be made in writing to the Secretary, Board of Management, St Patrick's Cathedral, PO Box 7062, Toowoomba 4350 or may be dropped in at the Parish Office.

ADORATION – spend some quiet time with the blessed sacrament each Thursday 5pm-6pm at St Pats.

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| Sunday 9 May | 7am, 9am, 5.30pm Mass 9am Live Streaming SPC | 11am Baptism of Harrison Venz 12pm Baptism of Greeny Perera 4.30pm Bingo in the Cathedral Centre |
| Monday 10 May | 9am Mass STM 5.30pm Mass SPC | 9.30am Funeral of John Tomczak SPC Fr Tom away until 6/6 |
| Tuesday 11 May | 7am Mass SPC 5.30pm Mass STM | 6.30am Rosary |
| Wed 12 May | 7am Mass SPC | |
| Thurs 13 May | 7am Mass SPC | 5pm – 6pm ADORATION at SPC |
| Friday 14 May <i>Saint Matthias</i> | 7am Mass SPC 9am Mass STM | 7.15pm Bingo in the Cathedral Centre |
| Saturday 15 May | 7am Mass SPC 6pm Mass | 11am Baptism of Amelia Martine Quinlivan |
| Sunday 16 May | 7am, 9am, 5.30pm Mass 9am Live Streaming SPC | 4.30pm Bingo in the Cathedral Centre |
| Planned Giving: \$1365; Loose: \$808; Paypoint: \$570. Sandra & Peter Daly, Jan-Nell & Errol Chase Thank you for your generous giving to assist the works of St. Patrick's. | | |