

**OUR COMMUNITY NEWS – May 17th 2020**  
**SIXTH SUNDAY of EASTER YEAR A**

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**Information for special parish events (Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals)**

Please contact Anne Beer on 5349 2168 or 0417 369 322

**Parish Support:**

A reminder that if anyone needs help with anything,  
to please get in touch with one of our members below, if needed.

**Gail Hall 0412 311 586 Bernadette Franc 0427 678830 Anne Beer 0417 369 322**

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**Welcome again to 'Our Community News for May 17th**

*Note: Today's Community News email has four other attachments*

- Sixth Sunday of Easter copy of 'The Saving Word'
- Letter from Ballarat's Bishop Paul Bird (below)
- Reflection by Fr Justin Driscoll
- Letter from Pope Francis for month of May
- Pastoral Letter from Bishops of the Archdiocese
- Coronavirus Stakeholder Pack "Testing"

**PLEASE NOTE FROM OUR DIOCESE:**

***Novel coronavirus (COVID-19)*** All updates are on the diocesan website "news" section".

There are new updates from Bishop Paul Bird regarding the easing of COVID-19 restrictions and gathering in our churches. A letter is below and also available of the diocesan website [www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au).

***Managing Coronavirus Together – Stakeholder Pack "Testing"***

The Victorian Council of Churches has forwarded information from the Victorian Government to keep Victorians informed about the outbreak of COVID-19 and is providing translated information in up to 48 languages. Making sure people understand what they can do to reduce their risk of coronavirus, is key to slowing its spread. Information provided by the Victorian Government is the most relevant source of information for people living in Victoria. The pack is attached.

***Message from Pope Francis to Pray the Rosary in May***

Pope Francis has asked Catholics to make a special effort to pray the Rosary during May and has composed two new prayers asking for Our Lady's intercession to help end the COVID-19 pandemic. See attached or go to the diocesan website [www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au)

**FATHER JUSTIN'S ONLINE MASSES FROM ST JOHN OF GOD HOSPITAL:**

Reminder: Daily Mass at 11.30am from St John of God Hospital.

Access by searching St Patrick's Cathedral in Facebook If you can't watch then, you can always replay it.

**REFLECTION FROM FR JUSTIN:**

Attached is a reflection from Fr Justin Driscoll "This is an opportunity to RESET"

***World Communications Day – May 17, 2020***

This Sunday, May 17, the Church in Australia will celebrate World Communications Day. Read the message on the diocesan website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/news/fx-articles.cfm?loadref=102&id=2799&categoryId=101>

***Week of Prayer and Christian Unity 2020***

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Australia will be observed from May 24-31, 2020 in the week between Ascension and Pentecost. Resources are available at [The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity](#)

### **RECENT DEATHS:**

We continue to pray for all the victims to Coronavirus throughout the world.

### **ANNIVERSARIES:**

Graeme Taylor, Anthony Hare, Ian Stanley, Dr Cyril Checchi, Nando Rosini, Maurice Mahony, Leon Martin, Norm Bain, Jenny Cuthbertson, Geoff Tucker, Fr Barry Stickland

### **PRAY FOR ALL THESE FRIENDS OF OURS WHO ARE ILL:**

Pat Byrne, Margaret MacDonald, Roger Molomby, Graeme Dawson, Blake Dridan, Fr. Adrian McInerney, Shelagh Mulcahy, Valda Murphy, Michael Wise and all those in need of prayer.

### **ROSTERS:**

The newsletter roster will continue, but if any parishioners wish to contribute anything at all for inclusion, it will be greatly appreciated. This is be a great way to keep our little community in touch. Just simply put your contribution in an email.

**May:** Angela Gerrard Phone: 0439 565 468 Email: [colangegerrard@gmail.com](mailto:colangegerrard@gmail.com)

### **MASS COUNTS**

Under normal circumstances the Annual Mass Counts are conducted in May. As we know, Masses are currently not being held due to government restrictions for the Coronavirus. We will send details of when the Mass Counts will take place once the restrictions have been lifted and Masses are able to be held again.

### **REFLECTION ON TODAY'S SCRIPTURE:**

Our generation has witnessed a resurgence of the place of the Holy Spirit in our liturgy. Previously it was not common to speak of the working of the Spirit in the prayers of the church. Nowadays we regularly name the Spirit working in our liturgy, particularly in the eucharistic prayers. It is only by the Spirit that the gifts we bring for consecration become the Body and Blood of Christ. As we share these gifts, we become one body, one spirit in Christ.

### ***COVID 19 Fee Relief for School Families***

The Catholic Education Office Ballarat have provided information for families experiencing difficulty paying school fees during the COVID-19 crisis. See the video on their website <https://ceob.edu.au/>

### ***Laudato Si' Week - May 16-24, 2020***

Pope Francis invites you to celebrate *Laudato Si'*. The theme for the week is "everything is connected." Pope Francis has invited Catholics all around the world to reflect, pray and join to take action during this week. Catholic Earthcare media release, info and resources on [www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au) or click [here](#).

### **POSITION AVAILABLE — BALLARAT EAST PARISH COORDINATOR**

Applications are currently being sought for a part-position position of Parish Coordinator.

Details on St Alipius' Parish website [www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au) . Applications close Friday, June 26, 2020.

### **BALLARAT DIOCESE LAY PASTORAL MINISTRY PROGRAM – NOW OPEN FOR NEW PARTICIPANTS**

Low-cost online study and formation for lay workers in parish and other ministries - employed or volunteers. Sacraments, Scripture, Youth Ministry, Liturgy, Leadership and more. Study over 5 weeks per subject. Study Cycle 4 begins May 24. Registrations open now until May 13. More information at [www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au) or email [kim.butler@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:kim.butler@ballarat.catholic.org.au) ph. 0407 523 424.

### **HEART TO HEART E-SEMINARS**

Archbishop Chris Prowse, Canberra-Goulburn Diocese, is presenting these 30-minute e-seminars over four weeks. <https://www.catholicvoice.org.au/hearttoheart/>

### ***Pentecost Pilgrimage***

Catholics are invited to join others worldwide on a spiritual pilgrimage to Pentecost. Register for free for a series of talks uploaded twice a week. Go to <https://www.pentecostpilgrimage.com/>

# Gatherings in our churches

13 May 2020

We have all been conscious of the government restrictions regarding gatherings in our churches, which have been part of the community response to the coronavirus pandemic. We now have the very welcome news that some of these restrictions were eased from midnight on May 12.

In summary, the following will now be permitted in churches:

- Private prayer for up to 10 people (in addition to door attendant)
- Liturgies (such as Morning and Evening Prayer, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation) and other forms of prayer (such as the Rosary) with up to 10 attendees (in addition to celebrant, ministers, door attendant)
- Weddings with up to 10 attendees (in addition to bride, groom and celebrant)
- Funerals indoors with up to 20 attendees (in addition to celebrant and funeral staff)
- Funerals outdoors with up to 30 attendees (in addition to celebrant and funeral staff)

In all cases, the **following requirements apply**:

- Distancing of at least 1.5m between attendees
- Signage at the church door specifying the maximum number permitted at any time, allowing 4 square metres/person
- A register of attendees, including name, phone number, date & time of attendance
- A reasonable time between events to allow for cleaning between each service
- Cleaning by wiping with disinfectant: frequently touched surfaces (at least twice/day) and whenever a surface is visibly soiled

I have attached relevant parts of the official regulations for your reference [here](#).

The full document is available on the following website:

[www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/state-emergency](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/state-emergency)

I am very mindful that the limit of 10 people in the congregation poses particular challenges for the celebration of Mass, especially on Sundays. I suggest that the parish priest or administrator consult parishioners about this. Where Mass with a limit of 10 seems impractical, the priest might judge that it would be better to continue simply with the present provisions for Mass online. Where Mass with the limit of 10 seems practical, the community would need to find a way to have no more than 10 people in the congregation. Such a celebration might also be live-streamed to those unable to attend in person.

When considering whether to have Masses with the limit of 10 people in the congregation, these are some points to note:

- The canonical limit that a priest celebrate no more than two Masses on weekdays and no more than three Masses on Sundays continues to be relevant.
- It may be helpful to ask parishioners to book in advance. This might be done through the parish office or by a web-based booking service like TryBooking, Eventbrite or Calendly.
- Ensuring the contact register, attendance limits and cleaning regime are fulfilled will require an attendant whenever churches are open; it would be helpful to advertise particular periods of time when the church will be open, with intervals between for cleaning.
- As not every parishioner will be able to be accommodated, it is important that we keep in contact in other ways with those who are not physically present.

As we begin to gather again in our churches, even though in limited ways, I pray for each one of you.

In this Easter season, may the peace of the risen Christ be with you.

God bless you all.

**Bishop Paul**

This is an opportunity to RESET.

I can't count the number of times I've heard someone say that over these past weeks. Perhaps because life is slower, there's a spaciousness that fosters deeper reflection and contemplation, and I've been seeking to make the very best of the gift of having more time. Isn't that what we've so often desired? So what could it mean for our Cathedral Parish and our Church to RESET? To reset is "setting, adjusting, or fixing something in a new or different way." COVID-19 has already reset us. We're all adjusting and are learning to be more adaptable. Reflection on our practice of ministry and our way of being Church is always needed, but challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic we're asking with greater depth and sense of urgency what's essential to us, essential to our identity as the Church, the People of God, the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit?

We ask these questions and many more while our Church buildings have been closed, when public celebrations of the liturgy and the sacraments have not been possible, gatherings of people have been prohibited and we've needed to stay home, self-isolating. We ask these questions within the context of a much larger global threat to human life, unprecedented in our time, forcing government leaders to respond to both the health and economic impacts of COVID-19, plunging us into a state of emergency.

Daniel Ang writes that "In this strange and unchosen landscape, the Church cannot afford to read off old maps, at least not if the mission to bring people to Christ and Christ to people has higher priority than our methods."<sup>1</sup> Pastoral Care, Faith formation, Service, Outreach, the pursuit of Justice and Mercy, Prayer and Worship are all essential to our communal identity and mission. How are we resetting?

The digital frontier offers us opportunities to adapt and reset. As we enter this frontier we need to discern the effectiveness of such adaptation and resetting, looking to the fruits that are borne of these endeavours. Like many, we've entered this frontier as novices, and what may seem like a naive desire to respond to this opportunity to reach out and connect with people where they are, it demands that we recast our missional imaginations. Over these weeks the

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel Ang, <https://www.catholicweekly.com.au/big-questions-the-pandemic-our-mission-and-the-new-evangelisation/>

vision of Pope Francis for parishes such as ours has resonated with great urgency than ever as he tells us that “The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be “the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters” This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few.”<sup>2</sup>

The Coronavirus pandemic has called on the missionary creativity, flexibility and adaptivity that Pope Francis dreams of for a missionary Church in ways that we may never have never thought possible (or necessary). We have intentionally sought to be in the homes of as many people as possible, just when we were self-isolated and unable to come together, when everything from children’s education to their parent’s employment was happening in their own homes – so too we have sought to build the Church at home also. Sarah McDonald recognises that “In this Covid-19 era, it seems the Lord is calling us “home”. May our hearts find rest and rejuvenation. May the gentle nature of domestic life restore a flourishing creativity.”<sup>3</sup>

The digital frontier has seen us create a Parish Facebook page to connect with people near and far was our first step. Live streaming Masses each day via Facebook from the Chapel at St John of God Hospital was the second. Going digital has also meant a complete rethink of the weekly Parish newsletter. After all, what news did we have? What was the purpose of this weekly communication? Who have we been trying to reach and what have we been trying to say? The very name that we give it reveals so much – was it a Mass sheet? A Pew Sheet? A Bulletin? A Newsletter? All of these presumed a gathered community of faith, yet we haven’t gathered and yet communication is more necessary than ever to bring us together as One Body, One Spirit in Christ. The desire to be connected, the opportunity of more time to read, reflect, pray and be spiritually nourished, offered us an opportunity to reset and adapt this method of communication.

Our daily live streamed Masses that included the liturgies of Holy Week have borne fruit in ways we could never have expected. One email said *“11.30am each day gives me a short time to forget that I’m here on my own which I must say is not easy for an extrovert, and know that I am part*

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<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 28.

<sup>3</sup> Sarah McDonald, <http://animanetwork.org/2020/04/09/reawakening-the-domestic-church/>

*of the wider prayerful community.” Another emailed saying “11.30 am is the focal point of my day and that of many by the look of it.” Yet another wrote “God really does work in mysterious ways; who would have thought I would start 'going to Church' at a time when going to Church is virtually impossible, and yet it is possible because it is virtual. Curious times!”*

The writer of this email continued (their communication is printed with permission),

*“I wanted to thank you for the Facebook Live services. I have been questioning being Catholic for a while (not my faith but the way I practice my faith). It wasn't until I found your services on here that I realised that being part of St. Patrick's Parish is still important to me.... I was determined to keep the faith because I didn't think the appalling behaviour of others should drive out the people who could stay and help with the healing. But over these past few years I have succumbed to it being all too hard. I couldn't go on because it made me feel complicit. My faith was there but I couldn't keep marching with the band. I have maintained that I am Catholic but my heart wasn't in it anymore...It was amidst all this that I found your Facebook streamed services. Your voice, even more comforting and familiar in this time of being removed from the people closest to us, combined with one shot inside St Pat's Cathedral, stirred me. It's partly pain, because now I am torn again but partly peace because there is hope too.”*

To reset is to adapt, but authentic and faithful adaptation requires a dialogue between our mission and our context. The way that the mission of Christ is understood by us will subsequently shape our Church, not the other way around. Considering our way of being the Church, Daniel Izuzquiza says that “the primacy always belongs to the strategy, but the strategy, in accord with the basic principle of Christian incarnation always requires tactical alliances.”<sup>4</sup> Conceived as a strategy of mission, the Church is not an end in itself, and its identity must be shaped by the mission as it is perceived. These questions of identity are important to our Church and our Parish in particular, that must always be developed in the particular context in which we find ourselves. To be a missionary Church that enters the digital frontier in order to proclaim the Gospel is to deconstruct the many borders that we may have erected over time and some of the behaviours that have contributed to a fortress mentality of ‘us and them.’

We have the image of the ‘Upper Room’ from which the early Church was born, one that emerged from behind locked doors through the power of the Holy Spirit that inspired the

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<sup>4</sup> Daniel Izuzquiza, *Rooted in Jesus Christ. Towards a Radical Ecclesiology*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 3.

disciples to emerge with the courage to exercise their missional imagination. They were sent to new frontiers, to the margins. In these days between Easter Sunday and Pentecost, as the restrictions are gradually being eased, we pray that the Holy Spirit will inspire us, with courage and imagination as we pray

*Come Holy Spirit,  
fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love.  
Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created.  
And You shall renew the face of the earth.*

Fr Justin Driscoll  
May 14<sup>th</sup> 2020

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

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

*I shall ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate.*

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘If you love me you will keep my commandments.

I shall ask the Father,

and he will give you another Advocate

to be with you for ever,

that Spirit of truth

whom the world can never receive

since it neither sees nor knows him;

but you know him,

because he is with you, he is in you.

I will not leave you orphans;

I will come back to you.

In a short time the world will no longer see me;

but you will see me,

because I live and you will live.

On that day

you will understand that I am in my Father

and you in me and I in you.

Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them

will be one who loves me

and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father,

and I shall love him and show myself to him.’

#### ■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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# Reflections on the Gospel



# THE SAVING WORD

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER / A

17 MAY 2020

## ‘AT HOME’ WITH GOD

In last week’s Gospel Jesus reflected on two understandings of his ‘going away’ and ‘return’: first, his going away in death and his re-appearance three days later as risen Lord; second, his more final departure to the Father, to return only at the end of time. The section from Jesus’ instruction that we hear today focuses upon that second, much longer period of absence.

As far as the non-believing world is concerned, Jesus will simply have ceased to exist. Believers, however, will continue to ‘see’ him with the eyes of faith and experience his presence in this way.

In loving him and keeping his commandments, they will participate in the mutual love that unites Father and Son, both of whom will ‘make their home’ within them. Though deprived of Jesus’ physical presence, they and God will be mutually ‘at home’ in this sense.

In this connection Jesus speaks of ‘another Paraclete’ whom he will ask the Father to give. A ‘paraclete’ is someone who stands beside a person in time of difficulty, a supportive and encouraging presence. We might think, for example, of a highly respected person whom we might ask to go to court with us to act as a character witness. Though Jesus will no longer be physically present to carry out this role, the community will have ‘another paraclete’ in the shape of the Holy Spirit.

In the face of the world’s hostility and doubt, the ‘Spirit of truth’ will offer reassurance that what they believe and seek to live by is the most profound truth.

Brendan Byrne, SJ

## FIRST READING

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

*They laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.*

Philip went to a Samaritan town and proclaimed the Christ to them. The people united in welcoming the message Philip preached, either because they had heard of the miracles he worked or because they saw them for themselves. There were, for example, unclean spirits that came shrieking out of many who were possessed, and several paralytics and cripples were cured. As a result there was great rejoicing in that town.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, and they went down there, and prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not come down on any of them: they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

#### ■ The word of the Lord.

## RESP PSALM

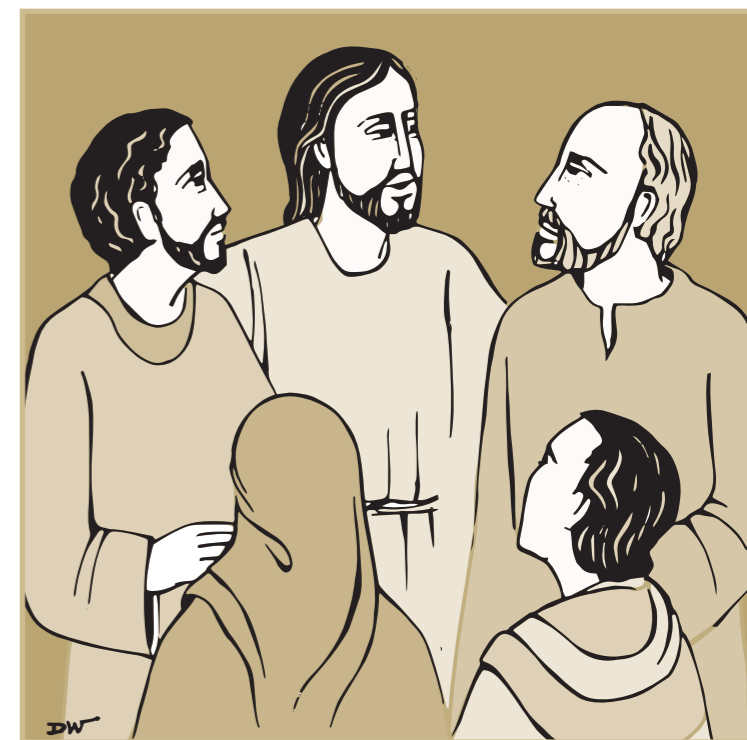
Ps 65:1-7, 16, 20. R. cf. v. 2

**R.** Let all the earth cry out to God with joy. (or Alleluia.)

1. Cry out with joy to God all the earth, / O sing to the glory of his name. / O render him glorious praise. / Say to God: ‘How tremendous your deeds! **R.**

2. ‘Before you all the earth shall bow; / shall sing to you, sing to your name!’ / Come and see the works of God, / tremendous his deeds among men. **R.**

3. He turned the sea into dry land, / they passed through the river dry-shod. / Let our joy then be in him; / he rules for ever by his might. **R.**



4. Come and hear, all who fear God. / I will tell what he did for my soul: / Blessed be God who did not reject my prayer / nor withhold his love for me. **R.**

## SECOND READING

1 Pet 3:15-18

A reading from the first letter of St Peter

*In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.*

Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience, so that those who slander you when you are living a good life in Christ may be proved wrong in the accusations that they bring. And if it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong.

Why, Christ himself, innocent though he was, had died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

#### ■ The word of the Lord.