

Some thoughts from Debbie

Anzac Day was just as different this year as everything else seems to be at the minute. I looked up and down our dark street at 6 am to see little candle lights scattered in driveways as far as I could see. A trained bugler lives in our neighbourhood, and he played note perfectly. With our candles in our hands, whole families listened to the Last Post together, with the tiny lights of the Southern Cross above us in the dark sky, just beginning to lighten with the gathering dawn. So beautiful. Silently, we prayed for all who have been affected by wars everywhere.

I thought about darkness and light, and how light always overcomes the darkness it touches. Our Easter Vigil Mass is filled with celebration of the light defeating the darkness of ignorance, and pain. The Easter fire is blessed, and we usually each hold a candle in our darkened church, while we listen to the readings from the Old Testament. As the Gloria is prayed, the bells are rung, the lights are turned on, and candles on the altar and at the tabernacle are lit from the new Paschal candle. We use a lot of candles in our church throughout the year, a light is kept burning in our church continuously in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Our children are familiar with lighting candles in their classrooms at prayer time. The lit candle reminds us that God is with us in our worship, and that our time with him is significant and remarkable.

Here is a suggestion for a special family activity this week, using candles to inspire our thoughts. This is not one for kids to do by themselves! The ingredients needed: Mum or Dad, or both, kids, 3 birthday candles, and some matches, and a table that is covered with paper so that dripping wax does not wreck anything important. 3 people each hold a birthday candle, and each is lit. Encourage everyone to have a close look at the 3 flames, to see their colours and shapes, to see how smooth and round they are, and to see how alike they are. Over the covered table, each person now brings their candles close to the other two, to allow the flames to join together. Consider what happens to the flames as they join, pointing out how many flames there are now, one single flame, which looks just like the 3 did when they were separate, only maybe a little bigger. Now separate the flames again and hold the candles apart. The 3 flames are still there, unchanged. We can use this exercise to think about the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and about how they are 3 distinct 'persons', but one God.

As with so much in our Faith, this mystery may defeat our understanding, but we believe, even though we have not seen. There is only one God. Yet we know that Jesus is a distinct person from his Father, whom he speaks of with love throughout the Gospels, and that he promised at his Ascension to send the Advocate, or Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, to guide and protect his Church. 3 persons, one God. 3 flames, one flame. Have a think about this as a family, or in the quiet of your Covid 19 isolation, and finish off your contemplation by making the Sign of the Cross: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Our candles will be extinguished, but our unfolding relationship with God goes on forever.