

**CATHOLIC PARISH OF HEALESVILLE, INCORPORATING HEALESVILLE (ST BRIGID'S),
YARRA GLEN (ST ALOYSIUS) & MARYSVILLE (OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS)**



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TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (Year A) - 15TH & 16TH August 2020

First Reading: Isaiah 56:1, 6-7

Thus says the Lord: Have a care for justice, act with integrity, for soon my salvation will come and my integrity be manifest. Foreigners who have attached themselves to the Lord to serve him and to love his name and be his servants - all who observe the sabbath, not profaning it, and cling to my covenant - these I will bring to my holy mountain. I will make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their holocausts and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar, for my house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 66:2-3, 5-6, 8

R. O God, let all the nations praise you!

O God, be gracious and bless us
and let your face shed its light upon us.
So will your ways be known upon earth
and all nations learn your saving help.

R. O God, let all the nations praise you!

Let the nations be glad and exult
for you rule the world with justice.
With fairness you rule the peoples,
you guide the nations on earth.

R. O God, let all the nations praise you!

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
May God still give us his blessing
till the ends of the earth revere him. **R.**
O God, let all the nations praise you!

Second Reading: Romans 11:13-15, 29-32

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

The gifts and call of God are irrevocable. Let me tell you pagans this: I have been sent to the pagans as their apostle, and I am proud of being sent, but the purpose of it is to make my own people envious of you, and in this way save some of them. Since their rejection meant the reconciliation of the world, do you know what their admission will mean? Nothing less than a resurrection from the dead! God never takes back his gifts or revokes his choice. Just as you changed from being disobedient to God, and now enjoy mercy because of their disobedience, so those who are disobedient now - and only because of the mercy shown to you - will also enjoy mercy eventually. God has imprisoned all men in their own disobedience only to show mercy to all mankind.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 4:23

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus preached the Good News of the kingdom and healed all who were sick.

Alleluia!

Gospel: Matthew 15:21-28

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus left Gennesaret and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Then out came a Canaanite woman from that district and started shouting, 'Sir, Son of David, take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil.' But he answered her not a word. And his disciples went and pleaded with him. 'Give her what she wants,' they said 'because she is shouting after us.' He said in reply, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.' But the woman had come up and was kneeling at his feet. 'Lord,' she said 'help me.' He replied, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house-dogs.' She retorted, 'Ah yes, sir; but even house-dogs can eat the scraps that fall from their master's table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, you have great faith. Let your wish be granted.' And from that moment her daughter was well again.

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

FROM FR FRANCIS DENTON

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This Saturday 15th August was the Solemnity of the Assumption of Our Lady. Ordinarily this is observed as a Holy Day of obligation although obviously in the present circumstances this was not possible, for Victorians at least. The doctrine of Our Lady's Assumption, body and soul into heaven, is taken as an affirmation of the inherent goodness of the human person, whom Christ has destined for glory. Mary's Assumption is a sign to us Christians of our hope

in a share of Christ's Resurrection, since Christ also intends us to enter into the glory of heaven, body and soul, at the general resurrection of the dead. Since we are assured of all the good things God has in store for us in the life to come, our faith tempers our fear of mortality. From the first centuries of Christianity we see this fearlessness in the readiness of the martyrs to die for Christ. Writing in the fourth century St Ambrose consoles us: *"Death in this sense is a pilgrimage, a lifetime's pilgrimage which none must shirk, a pilgrimage from decay to imperishable life, from mortality to immortality, from anxiety to perfect calm. Do not be afraid of the word death: rather rejoice in the blessings which follow a happy death."* In the Canticle of Creation St Francis of Assisi even spoke affectionately of "our Sister, bodily Death." Christians through the centuries have always had the crucifixion of Christ before them as the ultimate 'memento mori' (the reminder of death). Christians need not fear death, because Christ has conquered death, making it the portal to eternal life.

As the spectre of COVID19 continues to terrorise the globe I've been reflecting much on human response to this pandemic and what it reveals about the 'zeitgeist' of our times. The corollary of the modern world's unhealthy preoccupation with bodily pleasure, comfort, health and physical beauty is its terror of suffering and death. In my opinion the mass media have seized upon this fear of death in an exploitative and irresponsible manner, terrorising the public. Objectively, there is nothing new about pandemics. Plagues and pandemics are as old as the human race. The pandemics of previous generations have been vastly more devastating in terms of the raw statistics. It's estimated the Black Plague wiped out a quarter of Europe's population. Curiously, this pandemic has generated a response that has never been witnessed in human history – it's as though people have just discovered their mortality! At the time of writing the Australian death count for COVID19 stood at 313. For those who have lost loved ones to the Coronavirus this is a great tragedy and our hearts go out to them, especially those who have died without the consolation of family by their side. Yet with the incessant media hysteria over COVID19 I wonder whether we've lost all sense of perspective.

Sickness and death are a part of our human condition and always will be. The mortality rate of humans is 100% although most choose to forget the fact. The Australia Bureau of Statistics records that in 2018 there were 158,493 registered deaths in Australia. Heart disease alone accounted for 17,533 deaths that year; influenza and pneumonia accounted for 3,102 deaths (ie. that's ten times the present COVID19 death toll). Every day in hospitals, nursing homes and private residences people die from all sorts of causes. As a priest I deal daily with people grappling with the reality of terminal illness, death and grief, as they try to make sense of human mortality. Christianity has never sought among its many noble aims the elimination of death. Our faith is not oriented towards immortality in this world. We live in hope of the world to come. The proof of this is Jesus' own willingness to enter into the human experience of suffering and death, fashioning from mortality a remedy for mortality: "O Death where is thy sting; o grave, where is thy victory!" taunts St Paul (1 Cor 15:55). In Romans Paul is more philosophical about his impending death: "If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord" (Rom 14:8).

In saying this I mean in no way to encourage a reckless or cavalier attitude towards the restrictions in place. We should each play our part in minimising the risk of spreading COVID19 – and avoid the hefty fines. However nor should we capitulate to a climate of paralysing fear. We should find ways to live our life to the full even with the limitations we must for now endure. Good food, exercise, regular sleep, staying in contact with loved ones and above all else drawing close to God in prayer, will help us to sustain a positive and healthy outlook. Personally, I'm minimising my exposure to social media and the inordinate

television and news coverage of COVID19 as this only seems to aggravate an unhealthy fear and anxiety. As we reflect on the meaning of the feast of the Assumption we should be reminded that our Christian hope is for the eternal beatitude of heaven, not earthly contentment. Whilst we Christians uphold the dignity of human life, and work to alleviate suffering, we need not live paralysed by a fear of death. Mary points us the way, heavenward.

Now, to some more practical matters. Although all public Masses are currently cancelled, Government and Diocesan guidelines still permit the recording of Church services for online viewing. Therefore we will continue to record and upload the Sunday Mass alternating between the two parishes from week to week. This should be accessible from Sunday morning on YouTube which you can find via the link on the parish website. A huge thanks to Rod Hysted for his expertise, generosity and commitment to providing this service each week. A reminder that I will continue to offer a private Mass each day from Lilydale, since that's where I'm presently confined to. If you would like Mass offered for a particular intention you are welcome to make your request via phone or email.

Tragically under stage four restrictions, both the state and ecclesiastical authorities are not permitting us to open the church except for funerals. Baptisms, weddings, confessions and other sacraments are currently suspended on the grounds that they are "non-essential". I would strongly contest that verdict however I am still required to abide by the guidelines. My sincerest apologies to those who find themselves thus deprived of the sacraments.

Finally, at the prompting of a few interested parties we are looking at ways for parishioners to stay in contact with each other while the restrictions are in place. If you would like to be part of a parish group email to stay in touch with other parishioners, please email the parish office with your email of choice. Another possibility would be a weekly online Bible study/reflection group that could meet on Zoom or Google Meet. Again, contact the parish office if this would be of interest to you and indicate your preferred day and time. We're very happy to hear any other ideas or initiatives you might have.

And for some light relief:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEr_84HJb_gk

WEEKLY MASSES ARE AVAILABLE ON OUR ST BRIGID'S YOU TUBE CHANNEL

A reminder that Fr Francis' Sunday Masses are recorded each weekend and are available on St Brigid's You Tube Channel each Sunday morning. Fr Francis records Masses from St Brigid's, St Patrick's and St Aloysius churches. The link is accessible through St Brigid's Healesville's website, or by searching St Brigid's Healesville on You Tube, or using the link: <https://bit.ly/StBsHville>

KEEPING US CONNECTED

As Fr Francis mentioned, we are looking into further ways for our parish to stay connected.

Email chat group A suggestion has been made that an email chat group be formed. The office would facilitate the first distribution list, and then the chat group would take it from there, with no other management by the parish. If you would like your details to be added to

an email group that allows you to chat with other parishioners by email, share personal news, etc please send an email to the parish office, healesville@cam.org.au specifying that you wish to join the chat group. Addresses attached to this group will be openly shared with members of the group.

The Parish Grapevine Our previous Parish Grapevine is out of date and will no longer be used. The Parish Grapevine advises of deaths and funerals, and notifies parishioners of news instantly, but privacy is maintained as addressees do not see the email addresses of others in the group. Please email the office if you would like to participate in the new Parish Grapevine. Previous participants need to email to be added to the new list.

Weekly Bible Study/Reflection Group If you are interested in joining a discussion group via video chat on a phone, ipad or computer, please email the office.

[SOME THOUGHTS FROM DEBBIE](#)

How do *I* go about actually showing my love for God in this time of lock down and isolation? Every time we turn on the news we see front line workers risking their own lives to care for those who need them. These heroes are visibly supporting those with the virus, and their families, as best they can. Lock down deprives most of us of any chance to move about in our community at all, we are completely prevented from physically ‘doing good and saving lives’ past our own front gates. It is therefore easy to be a little hard on ourselves, thinking that this means that those of us who are at home drinking coffee are doing absolutely nothing to help out. This cannot be further from the truth. Even the simple act of obeying the rules and co-operating to the best of our abilities with wearing masks and restricting our movements as most of us are happy to do, is a massive contribution to the overall good, and something we can all do. The decisions have been made, we need to go with them. As humans, it seems to me that our first reaction to a new rule is to work out how it does not apply to me! It is really funny! My friend Judy provided me with a quotable quote this week, from Saint Pope John Paul II, who 25 years ago said: “Every generation needs to know that freedom consists, not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought?”. Fitting! Words of wisdom from a Saint.

We may not like the rules, but in restricting our own freedom, we are ministering to others. Given that we have to stay isolated, there is still plenty that we can achieve. As I speak to our parishioners by phone, I am constantly picking up that many are supporting others by simply being themselves in their daily routines, speaking to friends and reaching out to those who they know can use a little boost. Don’t forget that phone calls and emails between friends are helping to keep us connected, and calm. Don’t underestimate the power of one simple phone call! Not all of us are confident enough, together enough or well enough to reach out to anyone else, just getting through the day unscathed seems as big a challenge as we can handle. This is ok too. Whatever our capability, we need simply to follow the lead of my heavenly friend, St Therese of Lisieux. She died at the age of 24, having lived in a closed convent since the age of 16. She did not save anyone from a burning building, or make any grand speeches, but every dish she washed, every cobweb she swept, every smile she shared, she did as best she could for the love of God. St Therese has taught me a lot.

A simple prayer for someone else, or for our world, is never wasted nor left unheard, and sitting in our chair and turning our hearts to God for comfort and company for ourselves, and for others, is prayer. Feeding the dog, having a shower or listening to the birds can be prayer,

if we simply offer God whatever we do, whoever we are, with love. Whether we are lying in bed in a nursing home, curled up in a favourite chair in our family lounge room, reaching out to others, or running the country, we can all serve God in the way in which he has asked us to live, to the best of our abilities in each moment, with patience and acceptance. Thank you God for my vocation.

GUARDIAN ANGELS OF KENYA

Please remember Fr Jason and his community in your prayers. Covid has hit them hard and daily life continues to bring great pastoral and financial challenges.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

Congratulations to **Wynn Wilson, Ann Grieve and Lynn Doenson** who celebrate birthdays about now. Congratulations again to **Bruce Dowler** who celebrated a very quiet big 60th during the week.



PLEASE PRAY:

For all of our parishioners, and their families and friends, and for their special intentions, and for all who need our prayers

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY

Albert Slawinski, Maureen Fogarty (Jo Drummond's Mum)

FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK

Babies Emmett, Noah Glen Christie, Tedi and Santi; Roman, Blake Smith, Trish Leahy, John Snell, Abby Sharp, Peter Munro, Megan, Bernie Jansen, Andrew Sharp, John, Glenn, Lyn Francis, Dorothy Barber, Fiona, Annie Preuss, Michelle Ryan, Damian, John, Alison, Heather, Julie Bates, Garry Dettman, Bradley Jordan, Jeanette Henkel, Richard Galbraith, Debbie Huby, Geoff Lucas, Sandra Donkin, Dorothy Fraser, Glen, Fred Bullas, Fred Coullas, Evie Gleeson, Indy Dawes, Rade Krstic, Megan Williams, Michael Wood, Bill Howie, Jennie, Michael, Margo & Stephen Youngberry, Marie Hammond, John Mulholland, Rhiannon Days, Val Savitt, Ron Garland, Jaz Nueber, James Cooney, Robert, Mary & Gerard Bariola, Tilly Van der Zee, Lydia, Joyce Slattery, Lawrie Field, Annie, Bob Ireland, Val & Michael Christie, Ted & Peter Bowling, Natasha, Mia, James, Richard Adams, Mitchell & Wynn Wilson, Carina Warton, Anne Bateman.

FOR THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES ARE IN AUGUST

Ann Maris (03.07.07), Julie Ann Ward (03.07.86), Nick Pitt (John McDonald (03.08.93), Patricia Newell (06.08.07), John Youngberry(07.08.79), Barbara Pollard (11.08.09), Andrew Sotko (14.08.07), Fr Loughnan(15.08.02), Bernadette Hanley (18.08.09), Mary Thomas (19.08.07), Douglas Ireland (21.08.79), Zandor Hunka (22.08.06), Alison Snell (25.08.02) Maria Slawinski (25.08.82), Gerald Slattery, Derek Beeby, Tilly Blackburn, Thea Humphries, Maggie Lloyd-Smith, Margaret Pomeroy (23.08.19), Rosemary Fries (10.08)