



The Parish of St. Fidelis

8 May 2020

Dear friends,

I trust and hope that you are all well and safe.

Opening our churches and Masses

Each Wednesday the priests meet with the Archbishop via Zoom for a time of prayer and discussion. Last week the Archbishop reported on his discussions with the authorities about opening churches. Whilst no agreement has yet been reached, the Archbishop made a couple of observations.

Firstly, he believes that the re-opening of the churches will need to be planned in a staged way to protect the common good of people, while respecting the spiritual and social health of people. Personally, I would not envisage the public celebration of Mass for a large congregation for some time to come.

Negotiations are under way with public health officials and the government about this. Let's continue to pray for wisdom for our leaders at this hard time.

COVID-19 App

As a personal comment, I would encourage each of you to participate and download the COVID-19 App that the Federal Government are asking us to do. The Archbishop has encouraged all priests to do this, and I have already done so. A comment by Bishop Edwards referred to this App as 'Pro Life', in that we are seeking to protect each other as part of the common good, one of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

I acknowledge that some people express concerns about safety and security. I simply say that these times call for humility and cooperation to help our fellow citizens and the future of our nation.

Support of the Parish

A very big THANK YOU to those who have continued to financially support the parish during these times when our source of income from collections has ceased.

I am very grateful to those who have used the direct debit facility and those who have contributed on line via the parish website or Facebook Page.

Your contribution can be made at:

<https://stfidelisparish.org.au/donate>

Thank you for whatever you can offer to support us at this time.

Some people have already returned their Project Compassion contributions, and these will be forwarded to Caritas Australia.

For those who have any contributions that they wish to make to Caritas, they can be sent to:

<https://www.caritas.org.au/welcome/project-compassion-2020>

Keeping in Touch

These weekly emails and social media posts are small ways that I am trying to stay connected with you. I am aware that some parishioners are not 'tech savvy' and able to use these modes of communication. If you are aware of somebody in your street or neighbourhood that may fall into this category, why not print off a copy of this and put it in their letterbox ? Or give them a quick call to keep them 'in the loop' ?

The times of social isolation can be very hard particularly for the senior members of our parish, so anything that we can do to help them will be very much appreciated.

Sunday Mass

Each Sunday I celebrate Mass at 11am in our church, for the people of the parish and your families and your intentions. The Mass can be accessed via the parish Facebook Page (*St Fidelis Parish, Moreland*). For those who do not have Facebook account, it can be seen from the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/St-Fidelis-Parish-Moreland-183834618311776/>

The Mass can also be seen on the (newly created!) parish YouTube channel: *St Fidelis Parish, Moreland*.

There is also a link to this from the parish webpage:

<https://stfidelisparish.org.au/contact-us>

The Sunday Mass will not be live streamed to the YouTube channel (yet!) but will be available there Sunday afternoon.

As you can see, we are trying a few things to enable you to 'virtually' participate in Sunday Mass from our parish. I am very grateful to Roger and Mark who have done such great work to make these things happen.

Whilst it is the best that we can do at the moment, let's remember that God is not a 'virtual reality'. This way of 'participating' at Mass cannot become the new reality. God became incarnate- flesh and blood. We need to be physically present to God as He is to us in the Eucharist, in the Word and the people and priest.

Let's continue to pray that our physical presence in our church may become a reality soon, mindful of the need to safeguard personal safety and health.

Thursday 14 May

Pope Francis has accepted the proposal from the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity for May 14, 2020, to be a **Day of Prayer and Fasting and Works of Charity**, to implore God to help humanity overcome the coronavirus pandemic. "We began May a short while ago, Marian month par excellence, during which the faithful love to visit Shrines dedicated to Our Lady," Pope Francis said. "This year, because of the health situation, we go spiritually to these places of faith and devotion, to place in the Holy Virgin's heart our worries, expectations, and plans for the future.

"And, as prayer is a universal value, I have accepted the proposal of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity so that next May 14 believers of all religions unite spiritually in a Day of Prayer and Fasting and Works of Charity, to implore God to help humanity overcome the coronavirus pandemic. Remember: May 14, all believers together, believers of different traditions, to pray, fast, and do works of charity."

You might consider what you can do on Thursday in solidarity with others in this time.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Confessions are available on Saturday mornings and Saturday afternoons in a safe and private way. Please contact the parish for the usual times, or to make a time which is convenient for you.

Parish Life

Whilst we cannot physically gather for what is the most important thing that we do- celebrate Holy Mass- parish life continues in other ways:

- Our parish school is open with a small number of students, with our teachers working very hard to support home learning. We also stream school prayer on Friday mornings for the families at home.
- Funerals are celebrated in a restrained manner- with only ten mourners able to be present. This is a most distressing time for everyone.
- Wedding and baptism enquiries continue (for many months in advance !)
- Confessions are celebrated and homes are blessed.
- Phone calls are made and received; emails are received and answered.
- The hospital is visited and the dying are attended to.
- A number of parish meetings are planned via Zoom
- My vocations work also continues in a 'remote' manner with interviews, emails and calls.

So life is not boring ! I haven't yet had the time to learn how to bake bread or finish the spring cleaning of the house !

This Sunday, as we know, is Mother's Day. We will pray for all Mothers at the Mass this Sunday, as well as continuing to ask the intercession of Mary our Mother for our parish, our nation and our world during this time.

May Our Lady continue to protect you and your loved ones. You all remain in my prayers and daily Masses.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



Fr David Cartwright
Parish Priest