



ST. AGATHA'S PARISH

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Community & Mission Council Chair: Mrs Mary-Caroline van Paassen
Office Hours: Monday - Thursday: 8.30am-12.30pm and 1.30pm-3.30pm
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School Principal: Ms Anne-Marie Maw

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Outside School Hours Care Coordinator: Roxanne Grogan

Fourth Sunday of Lent (Year A) - 21/22 March 2020

Readings

1st Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13; 2nd Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14, Gospel: John 9:1-41



THE MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF BRISBANE

19 March 2020

Solemnity of St Joseph

TO THE PASTORS AND PEOPLE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE

These are anxious times as we enter new and uncharted territory. The spread of the coronavirus is alarming for a generation that has known nothing like it, and it shows how fragile we are. How long it will last we do not know, but almost certainly we are in for the long haul. For all of us, this is a challenge at many levels.

In the Archdiocese there is a daily meeting to address the most recent advice from the Government and the health authorities and to consider its implications for the Catholic community. As a result, we have already taken some decisions to curb the spread of the virus. Now in the light of the latest advice from the Government and Catholic Health Australia, the Archdiocese has come to further decisions. Therefore, the provisions below will now apply and more are sure to follow:

• **The celebration of Mass on Sundays (including the Saturday vigil) is suspended with immediate effect and until further notice, and all the faithful are dispensed from the Sunday obligation.**

• **Priests will continue to celebrate Mass (the *Mass for the people*) on Sundays without a congregation, with people able to follow Masses live-streamed from the Cathedral at archbne.org/bzw on Sundays and weekdays.**

• For the time being, weekday Masses may be celebrated as scheduled, with the current restrictions and precautions to be observed.

• The Sacrament of Reconciliation should in general be celebrated only by appointment with the priest, with the current precautions to be observed.

• Any Church celebration or event where more than 100 people are expected should be cancelled or postponed.

• All attending any Church celebration or event should respect the requirements of physical distancing.

- All ministers of Holy Communion, including the priest, should disinfect their hands before and after distributing.
- In the Ordinary Form of the Latin Rite, the Body of Christ should be administered only in the hand and the chalice should be received by the celebrant alone.
- The Sign of Peace should be limited to saying “Peace be with you” with a nod or bow; no hand-shaking or hand-holding should occur here or at the Our Father.
- Hymn books should not be used.
- As far as possible, churches should remain open to allow private prayer; the Blessed Sacrament might be exposed in the monstrance for this purpose (as long as fewer than 100 are attending and with the usual provisions for reverence and security of the Sacrament).
- Communion to the sick should be taken by priests alone and in general be restricted to Viaticum to the dying, with the current restrictions and precautions to be observed.
- Prayers of intercession for an end to the pandemic and for the safety of all should be included in Masses, in the Liturgy of the Hours and in private prayer; houses of consecrated religious are asked to intensify their intercessory prayer also.
- Baptisms, weddings and funerals may be celebrated, but restricted if necessary to immediate family; baptisms and weddings can always be postponed.
- Preparation for and celebration of First Penance, Confirmation and First Communion should be postponed until the pandemic is over.
- Priests should ensure that parishioners can contact them in emergencies.

It is essential in a time such as this to strengthen and deepen our spiritual life, precisely so that we do not “lose sight of Jesus” (Hebrews 12:2). The Archdiocese will do everything possible to assist you with this; and there is an abundance of online resources – including Mass at home – to nourish your faith through this time. As Pope Francis has said, pastors will have to show creativity in ministering to their people; and there are many examples of this around the world, with technology making it less difficult than in the past.

To conclude I offer two prayers which you may wish to pray through this time. The first is one I have written: its words are simple but they may help to guide you in your prayer. May the God to whom we turn in this moment listen to the pleading of our heart and answer as he has so often before, so that love may come from fear, hope from despair and joy from sorrow:

Almighty and all-merciful God,
 lover of the human race, healer of all our wounds,
 in whom there is no shadow of death,
 save us in this time of crisis;
 grant wisdom and courage to our leaders;
 watch over all medical people
 as they tend the sick and work for a cure;
 stir in us a sense of solidarity beyond all isolation;
 if our doors are closed, let our hearts be open.
 By the power of your love destroy the virus of fear,
 that hope may never die
 and the light of Easter, the triumph of life,
 may shine upon us and the whole world.
 Through Jesus Christ, the Lord risen from the dead,
 who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
 Amen.

Holy Mary, health of the sick, pray for us.
 St Joseph, guardian of us all, pray for us.

The second is an ecumenical prayer from the National Council of Churches, who have invited all of us to pray this prayer at 7pm each day, but especially on Sunday 29 March which we will mark as a National Day of Prayer in this time of crisis:

Gracious God,
We give thanks anew for your providence and presence.
We prayerfully seek your grace, amidst COVID-19 here and overseas.
We pray for those in need of healing.
We pray for your peace with those who are anxious or grieving.
We pray you will continue to strengthen and sustain
all those who are serving in response.
We pray for your Holy Spirit's discernment
amidst the many choices and decisions
facing our national, community and medical leaders.
We pray we each might see quickly what more we can do
to help those who are vulnerable.
This prayer for our nation in the family of nations,
with all that is on our hearts,
we gather now and pray
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

With the blessing of peace,

Mark Coleridge
Archbishop of Brisbane

In our prayers we remember

Those who have died recently:

Archbishop John Bathersby

Those whose anniversaries occur about now:

Gary Cierlitza, Gene Bartels, Lou Bartels, Mary McDonald

Those who are sick:

Edward Chan, Duncan Pegg, Charlie Richards, Noreen Martin, Kateri Byrnes, Dhirend Akhil, Patrick (Paddy) Ryan, Nick Newton, Eugene Gaynor, Lauren Carney, Patricia Beveridge, Janice Lewis, Michael Blanchard, Colleen Smythe, Flynn Crowley, Lyndell Sawyer, Ray Pavey, Michael Cashman, Donald Morrisson, Joseph Tam, Bryan Weaver, Alexander Clark, Rosemary Douglas, Danielle Johnson, Gordon Hodge, Maureen Long, James Elliott, Camille Butler-Storms, Mary Ann Marcelo, Isabel Leddick, Carmel Elms, Helen Orosz, Lisa Bowes, Sophia Horrocks, Mario Di Filippo, Norma Fiore, Joan Healy, Dell McHugh, Ken Kipping, Paul White, Edward Clark, Regina Hwan, Deanne Du Bour, Melissa Waka, Agnes Tam, Kerri Smith, Mel Purwo, Patrick Gallagher, Hellen Passente

Reminder to let us know when names are no longer required to be shown on the sick list.

*You are invited to
celebrate*

WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday 23 March 6.30am

Tuesday 24 March 9.00am

Wednesday 25 March 9.00am

No Thursday Mass

Friday 27 March 9.00am

Stations of the Cross 8.30am

NO WEEKEND MASSES UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

*We adore you O Christ and we praise you,
because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

On every Friday, during this lent we practice the Stations of the Cross in our church. The Stations of the Cross is a powerful way to contemplate, and enter into, the mystery of Jesus' gift of himself to us. It brings us closer to Christ as we meditate on the great love He showed for us in His most sorrowful Passion! It is also, we do as an act of penance.

The Stations of the Cross involve Jesus enduring suffering, insults, moments of support, and relay the intense sacrifice that we know Jesus undertook for human salvation.

From the earliest of days, fathers of the church told the story of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. When pilgrims came to see Jerusalem, they were anxious to see the sites where Jesus was. These sites become important holy connections with Jesus. Eventually, following in the footsteps of the Lord, along the way of the cross, became a part of the pilgrimage visit.

The stations, as we know them today, came about when it was no longer easy or even possible to visit the holy sites. In the 1500's, villages all over Europe started creating "replicas" of the way of the cross, with small shrines commemorating the places along the route in Jerusalem. Eventually, these shrines became the set of 14 stations we now know and were placed in almost every Catholic Church in the world.

Meditating on Christ's Passion in the Stations of the Cross can strengthen your soul. In our hard times of life, Jesus says through His Passion, "I've been there too!" Our God isn't some lofty Being removed from it all who hasn't deeply experienced the pain and suffering of fallen humanity! Jesus was "tried in all things as we are except sin" (Heb 4:15).

Keep in mind that *in addition* to the events described in the Stations, our Lord was scourged, forced to wear a crown of thorns, spat upon, and constantly insulted throughout his lengthy ordeal.

Yet, He handled His suffering with great dignity and grace. This is not meant to diminish our own trials and tribulations but rather to give us a sense of perspective, as we look upon Christ as a model of patience and perseverance in His Passion! As St. Gregory once noted, "If we recall the Passion of Christ, nothing seems so hard that it cannot be borne with equanimity."

Through His Passion, Christ saved us in satisfying Divine Justice for humanity's offenses going back to Adam and Eve's fall from grace and Original Sin. Yet, while He opened the gates of Heaven for us, He didn't promise us paradise here on earth.

One of the main tenets of our faith is that we must walk the road to Calvary, to get to Heaven, figuratively speaking. As Our Lord once said "He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (Matt 10:38).

Fourth Sunday of Lent

In the gospel reading, we hear the story of how Jesus cured a man who was born blind. Here again there are unexpected binaries: the influential social status of the Pharisees is aligned with unenlightened blindness and the simple faith of the poor man is aligned with enlightened in-sight.

Jesus is the light of the world.

