



St Michael's Parish

Incorporating the Churches of Holy Family Bell Park, Ss Peter & Paul's Geelong West & Holy Spirit Manifold Hts.

PARISH PRIEST:**Fr. Minh Tran****OFFICE:**

147 Separation St Bell Park 3215

Phone: 5278 1343 Email: bellpark@cam.org.au**OFFICE HOURS:**

Mon -Fri 9am-1.30pm

PARISH SECRETARY:Bernadette Bilogrevic Phone 5278 1343 Email: bellpark@cam.org.au**PASTORAL WORKER:**Sr Anne Lourey Phone 5278 1343 Email: bellpark@cam.org.au**SCHOOL PRINCIPALS:**

Holy Family	Peter Brunt	Separation St, Bell Park	Phone 5278 4634
Holy Spirit	Rachel Holdsworth	Minerva Rd Manifold Hts	Phone 5229 8298
St Patrick's	Luke Sheahan	Petrel St, Geelong West	Phone 5229 4412
	(Acting Principal)		

Web Page Address:www.stmichaelsbellpark.org.au**Facebook Address:**www.facebook.com/michaelparish.st**RECENT DEATHS:**

Marianna Bianchi

ANNIVERSARIES:

Tony & Ivan Fantella, Nobby Da Costa & Valli Glynn,

SICK:

Veronica Werzek, Josica Markov, Giuseppa Forestieri, Julita Aquino, Fr Philip Godsell, Theresa Vickers, Sr Carmel O'Dwyer

**ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION:**

My Jesus,

I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

SOCIAL SERVICES SUNDAY:

This Sunday we mark Social Services Sunday within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. We are invited to give thanks and pray for all who stand with and provide support to those who are marginalised and vulnerable within our communities. We recognise with deep gratitude, those working within the 45 member organisations, the 7,000 staff and 17,000 volunteers, who together, serve more than 200,000 people in need each year. We also give thanks for all in our parishes, who are so often at the forefront of providing practical support and care to those in need within our local communities, and beyond.

St Michael's News:

- **COVID-19 UPDATE:** Due to **stage 3 restrictions** currently in place, all religious gatherings, including private prayer in the parish remain **cancelled** until further notice.
- **The Combined Catholic Churches Raffle** organised by Fr Kevin Dillon (Rowville Parish) will be drawn on **Saturday Sept 26th**. Winners will be notified by phone on the night (if possible), and results advertised in the Herald Sun and Geelong Advertiser on Wednesday, Sept 30, and also on the website at www.stsimonsparish.com.au.
- **LIVESTREAMING OF MASS:** This Sunday at 10am. Also available on Channel 10 at 6am and 11am on Channel 31 & 44. Mass is also available on You Tube daily, from St Simon's Parish, Rowville.
- **PHNA PAMPER DAY** will be offered via Zoom on Sept 26 between 11am-1pm. Our health topic will be 'Social isolation and its effects on health' and our guest presenter will be Aunty Bronwyn Razem demonstrating Weaving within a Yarning Circle. All welcome. To join our virtual pamper day, call or email Rod Bust for the link rodbush@gmail.com or ph 0410 471 005.

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

(Year A - Sept 20, 2020)

Is 55: 6-9

Phil 1:20-24, 27

Mt 20:1-16

Prayer for Courage and Compassion

Compassionate God, Your unconditional love for all inspires our hearts and empowers our actions for those who are most vulnerable. May we boldly and humbly serve one another and be steadfast in our work for justice for all people.

Keep our hearts open to the joys and the hopes of our world, and our ears ready to hear your call to truth, justice and reconciliation. Let us continue to draw inspiration and strength from those, like St Mary MacKillop, on whose shoulders we stand. We gather in Jesus' name to be nourished and to move forward together in hope and joy.

Amen.

Reflection by Richard Leonard

The film *Forrest Gump* was once described as the 'battler's triumph'. On one level it was about how the last will be first. This story picks up where the film left off.

Forrest Gump dies and goes to heaven. On arrival St Peter informs him that there are three questions he has to answer before he can enter.

- 1) What days of the week begin with the letter T?
- 2) How many seconds are there in a year?
- 3) What is God's first name?

Forrest answers straight away, 'Shucks, there are two days in the week beginning with the letter T - Today and Tomorrow.' St Peter replies,

'That's not what I was thinking, but you have a point. How about the next one?' 'I think the only answer can be twelve.' 'Twelve?' St Peter asks. 'Shucks, there's gotta be twelve: January 2nd, February 2nd, March 2nd. . . . 'Hold it', interrupts St Peter, 'I see where you're going with this. Let's go to the final question.' 'Sure', says Forrest, it's Andy! 'Andy?' exclaims an exasperated St Peter. 'OK, I can understand how you came up with your answers to my first two questions, but just how in the world did you come up with Andy as God's first name?' 'Shucks, that was the easiest one of all', Forrest replied. 'I learned it from the hymn . . . ANDY walks with me, ANDY talks with me, ANDY tells me I am his own.' St Peter opened the pearly gates and yelled, 'Run Forrest, run!'

In today's Gospel, in which the first labourers are paid the same wage as the afternoon workers, what the early birds didn't reckon on was that they could have come much later and got the same deal.

We would cynically call the afternoon workers, 'Johnny-come-latelies' and chances are if we were confronted with the same situation we would be with the complainers.

This story was important to the early Church because generations of Jews waited and longed for the Messiah and, like the first workers, they were the first to respond to the call of Jesus and to work in the field of his Kingdom. For some of the early Jewish-Christians, including St Peter, it came as a surprise that the Lord was calling Gentiles to the life and work of Jesus' Kingdom as well.

We can imagine that it rankled some of the early birds to see these Johnny-come-latelies taking charge of the Christian mission. This wasn't how it was supposed to be!

This story, then, is a wonderful commentary on how fickle we are and, luckily for us, how extraordinarily generous God is. What we see in ourselves and others is only a glimpse of what God is like. God is so much more: more loving; more forgiving; more compassionate; and more just.

And because God is so much greater than anything we could ask or imagine, we are constantly surprised at how he turns our expectations, our fears and predictions upside down. We constantly look for God in the big and spectacular and he comes to us poor, naked, sick, in prison and hungry. God speaks through the most surprising people at the most surprising times.

That's why those people who have decided that God can only work in certain ways, places, people, institutions and times so often end up at the end of the line when it comes to religious wisdom. Michael McGirr in his excellent book, *Things You Get for Free* argues that there is a crisis of belief today, but that it's not the way we often think. In a brilliant turning of the tables, McGirr says that the crisis of belief is that people inside the Church sometimes cannot believe that people outside its traditional structures can experience the love of Jesus. God loves and guides the Church, but is not bound by it. God is busy about making sure those who might be last have a chance to come in first.

Rather than resent this, however, let's thank God for being bigger than we are and for being just to all of us, no matter when, or how, we get the Word.



We proclaim a crucified Christ

1Cor1.23

16 September 2020

To the People and Clergy of the Archdiocese of Melbourne

Dear friends in Christ,

As we now welcome the beginnings of easing in COVID-19 Restrictions in Victoria, I would like to take this opportunity to write to you, the Clergy and people of our Archdiocese. It is great news that regional Victoria will, from tonight, move into the Third Step of the Roadmap to reopening, which includes our parishes located outside the metropolitan zone. However, we have a long way to go.

The deprivation in sacramental life has been a profound loss for our people. As well as all the other sufferings of the Pandemic, the sense of estrangement from the Eucharist has been a particular struggle for Catholics. The Mass is our primary means of gathering together in faith; it is the source and summit of our Christian life, and its life-giving nourishment and healing is dearly missed.

In the midst of this loss, I am grateful to our Priests and Deacons for continuing to serve the faithful, for sharing a sacramental ministry even under strict conditions, and for being alongside our people and their loved ones in times of death and grief. Thank you for your faithfulness.

All of us are anxious to open church doors, but I want to emphasise our need to be creative in the ways we do so, especially with the thousands of children who have been waiting for Sacraments of Initiation. Countless Catholic families are awaiting Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation for their children. Adults, too, have longed to be received into the life of the Church. We shall be exploring possibilities such as outdoor liturgies in parish and school settings to facilitate these crucial events of grace and welcome.

Throughout the pandemic, I have been advocating directly with the Government, reminding authorities continually of our respectful compliance with each stage of restrictions, and seeking a fair consideration in what is permitted. The Catholic community throughout the pandemic has been constructive and positive.

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We have, and continue to act in a mature way, caring for the safety and vulnerability of Victorians facing great risk. Thankfully the signs of driving down COVID numbers are looking good at this moment and Catholics join other people of faith in giving thanks for this outcome and working to ensure the steps ahead do not take us backward.

Now, it is essential that the Government does not treat faith communities as an afterthought to the opening up of other sectors. Our churches are locations for communities of care and essential service, and must be treated fairly and reasonably.

Practically speaking, I have been in discussion with the Premier to thank him for overturning the restriction on spiritual ministry to the sick and the dying, and have assured him that the Catholic Church is able to manage restrictions (including good hygiene, face coverings, social distancing and density requirements). If pubs and restaurants can open, then places of worship should be open under similar conditions and numbers.

If case numbers track well, I expect we will see larger outdoor gatherings in regional Victoria become possible over the next few weeks, and proportionate opportunities for gathering in metropolitan Melbourne. I am hopeful that this may occur sometime in October, which would be a deeply welcomed improvement on the current Roadmap indications. If we can open our churches, even for outdoor gatherings, then we should open them.

The Deputy Premier and the Multicultural Affairs Minister are conducting discussions this month through the Multifaith Leaders Forum. The Archdiocese will be contributing to these meetings. In addition I will continue to engage with the Premier and Ministers directly on the Church's need for opening doors, carefully and safely.

Be assured of my ongoing closeness in prayer and concern. I have heard your cry, and I am working to bring your voice to the authorities. The Lord has promised he will be with us always; let us place our hope in Him.

With every grace and blessing, I remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne