



TOGETHER

In the Diocese of

Wagga Wagga

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FREE

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Urbi et orbi

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Pope Francis delivers his "Urbi et orbi" blessing in an empty St Peter's Square. See full story on page 4...

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Archbishop Christopher announces churches are CLOSED

Archbishop Christopher Prowse - Apostolic Administrator of the Wagga Wagga Diocese



TOGETHER
IN THE DIOCESE OF WAGGA WAGGA

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All news stories, advertising enquiries, correspondence and subscriptions to:
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Archbishop Christopher said Pope Francis was sharing love and pastoral care with the world's Catholics every day and he encouraged parishioners to read the Pope's homilies and messages.

"If parishioners have access to the internet I highly recommend the Vatican site news.va where you will find Pope Francis' Masses and homilies," he said. "They are excellent and everything is translated into English."

"Pope Francis wants us particularly now to pray the Our Father. On Friday he gave a special blessing from the Vatican for the protection and healing of the world."

"We also have daily Mass online here in the Archdiocese which is a great comfort for many people. That is at our Catholic Voice website which is catholicvoice.org.au."

There will be Sunday Mass on free-to-air WIN TV from the Melbourne Archdiocese.

With no public Masses and church doors shut, some priests are adopting new and creative ways to connect parishioners such as phone trees and bulk emails and mail-outs.

"I commend the phone tree initiative where people have a list of parishioners to

call, particularly older people who are on their own, to check in with them and see what they need," Archbishop Christopher said.

"Let's go to homes and share printed prayers because many people are not online. Check if people need shopping. It's great that this is happening and that so many young people are involved too."

"And let's share other creative suggestions about how we can maintain our spiritual closeness."

Archbishop Christopher said many families would suffer financially and there would be more stress at home due to job losses and caring for children. He urged Catholics to keep in touch and support one another.

"I want people to feel my loving heart for them and my spiritual encouragement."

Archbishop Christopher Prowse



Prayer Intention for April - Pray with Pope Francis

Freedom from Addiction

We pray that those suffering from addiction may be helped and accompanied.

Visit this link to hear the Pope deliver his monthly prayer:

<http://popesprayerusa.net/category/pope-video/>



**Pope's Worldwide
Prayer Network**

APOSTLES OF PRAYER

<http://popesprayerusa.net/popos-intentions/>

In our world and our Church, many of our brothers and sisters struggle with addictions. Indeed, almost half of Americans report having a family member or close friend who has struggled with drug addiction, and one in seven report suffering from substance addictions themselves. Today, the internet also provides an avenue for addictive behavior, including to internet use itself, to electronic devices, and to pornography. The latter is especially prevalent and known to have devastating effects on personal relationships. Which family has not experienced something of addiction's difficulties?

Whatever factors push a person toward addiction, as a result relationships are sure to suffer: one's relationship with God, with family, with friends. Addiction can be a tremendously isolating experience. As a Church, as persons bound together to one another through our common love of God, we

recognize and pray that individuals struggling with addiction not only have their needs met through appropriate professional help, but also that their relationships with God and others be strengthened and healed.

We celebrate in our Christian faith that Jesus has set us free from sin and death; such is Jesus' greatest victory and His gift to us. In Baptism each of us is made a sharer in this mystery and is washed clean of sin and illumined with the light of God's grace. Yet, we struggle to live according to the "glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rm 8:21), and this gift typically becomes actualized only progressively in our lives. Let us pray for our brothers and sisters who suffer from addiction, that they may be both helped and accompanied by healing relationships along the road of recovery, in order to enjoy in authentic depth their dignity as God's image.



Prayer for the election of a Bishop

O God, eternal shepherd, who govern Your flock with unfailing care, grant in Your

boundless fatherly love a Bishop for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga who will please You by his holiness and to us show watchful care. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

A letter from Archbishop Prowse: “WHEN EVENING HAD COME”(Mark: 4/35)

During these momentous days regarding the pandemic, there has been such an understandable focus on the reality here in Australia. However, Pope Francis has been reaching out to the entire world with great Spiritual Wisdom.

A few days ago on the 27th of March His Holiness delivered a marvellous meditation based on Mark 4:35/41. The Disciples are in the boat during the storm and Jesus is “asleep on a cushion” (v. 38). He links the Gospel to our Covid-19 crisis beautifully.

Here are some direct quotes. First, our present situation. “When evening had come” (v. 35). “For weeks now it has been evening. Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void...we feel it in the air, we notice it in people’s gestures, their glances give them away. We find ourselves afraid and lost.”

Secondly, the response of Jesus to the boat with the disciples in the midst of the storm.

“Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” (v. 38). “Do you not care”:

they think that Jesus is not interested in them. It is a phrase that would have shaken Jesus too. Because he, more than anyone, cares about us. Indeed, once they have called on him, he saves his Disciples from their discouragement.”

Thirdly, what is our faith response in the present crisis?

“Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” (v. 40) “Lord, you are calling to us, calling us to faith. Which is not so much believing that you exist, but coming to you and trusting in you. This Lent your call reverberates urgently: ‘Be converted!’” “Return to me with all your hearts” (Joel 2:12).

Fourthly, and so the challenge to our faith in these days before Holy Week is clear.

“You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a time of choosing. It is not a time of your judgement, but of our judgement: at time to choose what matters



and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others.”

Please take the time over these days of Lent, Holy Week and Easter to reflect on these wonderful words of Pope Francis.

You will find the full text on: http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200327_omelia-epidemia.html

I know you are all trying your best over these days of crisis. Thank you

so much. The challenge surely is to respond as closely as we can to the new regulations that surround our everyday life. However, at the same time, let us all envision this Holy Week as “a time of choosing” afresh Jesus in total trust. In His Suffering, Death, and Resurrection is our sure and lasting joy and hope.

My daily prayers and blessings are directed to you, my dear people.

Archbishop Christopher Prowse
Apostolic Administrator of the Wagga Wagga Diocese

Easter Message 2020 Corona (Crown) of Thorns

Just a few months ago, none of us had heard of Coronavirus. Now it is our uninvited Easter guest.

It seems the whole world has become sick due to its global presence.

We cannot get away from it. It has turned our world upside down. We are anxious and fearful. Even in supermarkets we appear to be suspicious of each other.

We are trying our best in our home isolation. The experience so far is one of mixed blessings. New routines are not easy to navigate on our own. Now whole families and others are to negotiate a new way of daily life for the next few months.

“Corona” is a Latin word meaning “crown”. This pandemic has become a crown of thorns for us all.

In the hours before his death, Jesus too knew of a crown of thorns. It became one of his terrible sufferings before his death on the Cross of Calvary.

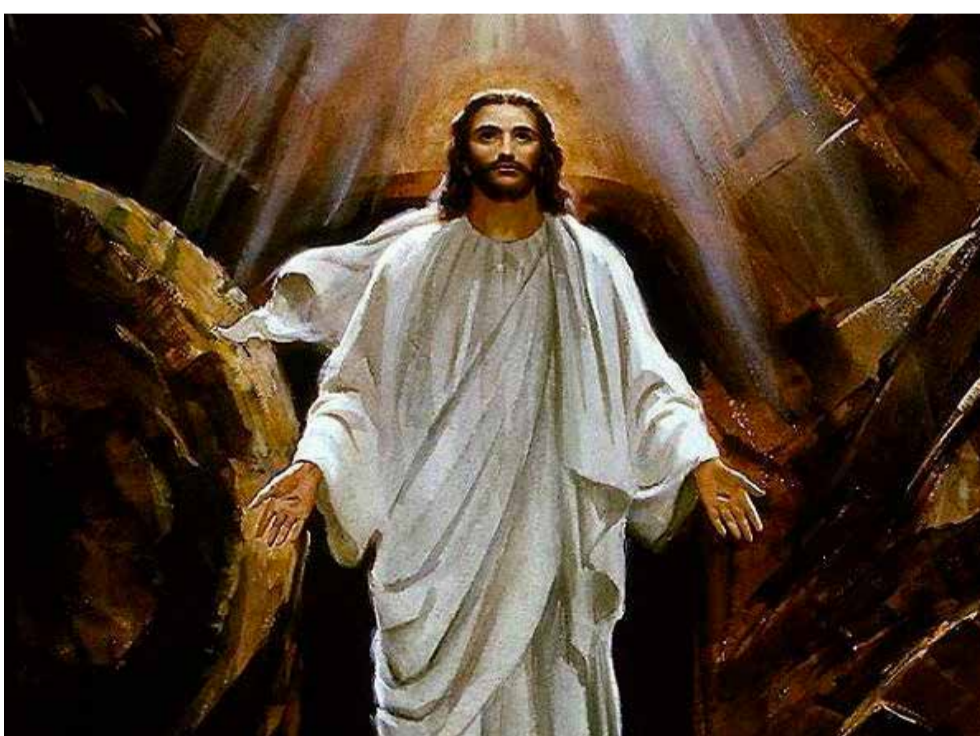
Jesus suffers with us in our sufferings. This is the meaning of the key word compassion.

The Easter message is clear: by suffering with the suffering Jesus we enter by Grace into the hope of Resurrection in Him.

Doing this is not something of mere human initiative. We surrender to the Grace invitation of Jesus. The Risen Lord awaits our YES coming from our deepest selves. We do this as Church through, with and in Jesus. Mary and all the saints participate in this saving encounter. We are never alone.

This Easter will be celebrated in unprecedented circumstances. All our Churches are closed. Many, but not all, can participate via online platforms. It will be so new to us. Yet, this pandemic will eventually be contained. Hope insists on this.

We want, however, from the quasi-Monastic anchorage of our homes, to encounter Jesus more than ever. Our lives are in flux. Only Jesus remains forever.



Alleluia!

Our new found Easter faith insists that it be expressed in practical charity. We do all we can to help those struggling. We thank the medical professionals, cleaners and volunteers, emergency forces, priests and religious, lay faithful and all who give us particular leadership in our time

of real need of human closeness and the caress of the Lord who rises in our midst.

Happy Easter and every blessing to you all!

Archbishop Christopher Prowse
Apostolic Administrator of the Wagga Wagga Diocese

Powerful photos show Pope Francis praying alone in St Peter's Square

Amidst steady rain, Pope Francis delivered his “*Urbi et orbi*” blessing to an empty St. Peter's Square during the coronavirus pandemic.

The powerful scene was captured by reporters and live-streamed by the Vatican.

In a sign of the times, today Pope Francis delivered a special “*Urbi et orbi*” blessing from the steps of St. Peter's Basilica to a completely empty Vatican City.

Although such an occasion would normally draw large crowds from across the world, Italy is in the middle of a national lockdown and many people are isolating at home during the coronavirus pandemic. So instead of gathering physically, the Vatican and Pope Francis live streamed the blessing, encouraging “everyone to participate spiritually through the means of communication,” according to Vatican News.

Traditionally only given on celebratory occasions like Christmas and Easter Sunday, Pope Francis chose to deliver the “*Urbi et orbi*” blessing at this moment in order to pray for strength and

an end to the coronavirus. To date, over 500,000 people have tested positive for COVID-19 and over 26,000 have died globally, according to the New York Times data.

Reporters worldwide shared photos and videos of the harrowing but powerful scene.

According to Vatican News, the Pope concluded with this prayer:

“Dear brothers and sisters, from this place that tells of Peter's rock-solid faith, I would like this evening to entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, Health of the People and Star of the stormy Sea. From this colonnade that embraces Rome and the whole world, may God's blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace. Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort



our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm.”

Although many places are under quarantine and shut down, there are still ways to explore popular destinations from home. The Vatican Museum is offering free virtual tours, like a view of the Sistine Chapel including the famous painted ceiling. North America's largest Roman Catholic church, The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate

Conception, located in Washington D.C., also has 360° Virtual Tours on its website.

In addition, the Pope is offering daily mass via live stream, as well as taking to Twitter to offer prayers during the growing public health crisis.

The Pope's full “*Urbi et orbi*” blessing can be watched on the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcUqLrbi9Cg>



Join Caritas to help protect the world's most vulnerable people

As Australia intensifies its response to meet the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19, Caritas Australia is urging thousands of school children, teachers, churches and community leaders across Australia to get involved in Project Compassion and act in solidarity with those most marginalised globally.

Caritas Australia is the Catholic church's international aid and development agency and part of one of the largest humanitarian networks in the world. Caritas Australia's CEO, Kirsty Robertson says for the communities which we serve through your support across 23 countries globally, the spread of the Coronavirus represents a growing risk.

This is particularly so due to growing water and sanitation challenges, as well as during food distributions and in the delivery of medical and emergency supplies.

"We understand that the challenge and impacts of COVID-19 in Australia are great, and we urge everyone to do whatever we can to look after each other and stay strong," said Ms Robertson. "But we also know that Australians are willing during such crises, to act in solidarity and compassion with those

who are even more vulnerable."

"Imagine facing all of this in a country or marginalised community that is already experiencing poverty, with an insecure food supply, no fresh drinking water, and fewer hospital beds? Now more than ever we must act in solidarity with the world's poorest and most marginalised communities."

Caritas Australia through our international network has already been supporting marginalised communities through its existing humanitarian and long-term development programs, in disaster preparedness and promoting awareness of health and sanitation in this crisis.

Ms Robertson warns that if the virus hits places like the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, or conflict-torn communities in the Middle East, the impact will be catastrophic.

"Communities like these have lacked sufficient access to proper sanitary



Caritas Australia's CEO, Kirsty Robertson

living conditions and medical support, even before the spread of COVID-19," Ms Robertson said. "The situation for people in these communities is already highly precarious."

"The need for support and donations during Caritas Australia's Project Compassion which takes place over Lent is more urgent than ever. If you are in a position to donate to Caritas Australia, your donation will truly save lives."

There are also some great ways to fundraise online for families, schools and communities while at home. Go to lent.caritas.org.au or call 1800 024 413.

Ms Robertson has made a special video for supporters, discussing how

Caritas Australia is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and why we need your help today. Watch the video at <https://bit.ly/Kirsty-Robertson>

To donate to Project Compassion visit Caritas Australia's website lent.caritas.org.au or call 1800 024 413





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Caring for your wellbeing during stressful times

We are currently facing an unprecedented health crisis across the globe. It has impacted upon our cities, our workplaces and our homes.

by Catholic Care

When humans face a crisis, feelings of fear and worry are inevitable.

These are natural responses to uncertainty, and it is normal to worry about your wellbeing and safety, as well as the wellbeing of people you love. While these are natural responses, it is helpful to consider what we can do to reduce the impact anxiety and fear can have on our mental health.

It is important to remain informed on this crisis' developments and to focus on what actions you need to take to maintain your wellbeing. However, continual exposure to the media can heighten anxiety and bring about a fearful response (such as panic buying). Instead you should seek out factual information from reliable sources such as the Australian Government Department of Health or the World Health Organisation website.

Experts have recommended good hygiene, frequent handwashing, social distancing and maintaining a daily routine during this time. When self-isolating, don't give up on activities that improve your mood, including daily physical exercise, social contact and healthy eating. These activities can positively impact upon your wellbeing and mental outlook. It is important to respect the precautionary

measures of self-isolation, which means adapting these activities to remain safe amid the COVID-19 crisis. For example, you can set up a time to call or Facetime a friend and have a virtual lunch together. This can provide you with much needed social interaction, in a safe setting.

If you have children, it's important to talk to them about COVID-19 in a calm manner. Explain the importance of good hygiene and handwashing so they can feel an element of control, reassure them that coronavirus is less common in children compared to adults, and allow them regular contact (phone, Facetime) with people they worry about (such as grandparents) to reassure them that they are doing ok. Children can respond to stress in a variety of ways including becoming more clingy, anxious, angry, withdrawing or recommencing bedwetting. Don't overwhelm children with unnecessary information as this can increase anxiety (such as statistics) and turn off the news when they are around.

It is important to model calmness to children and encourage them to talk about how they are feeling. Explain it is normal to feel worried about getting sick in this current crisis. Children look to their parents for cues on how to respond so its



important to manage your own anxiety before talking to them about what is going on. Children can need increased attention and love during this difficult time.

Even doing the best you can, there may be times when you feel overwhelmed and your mental wellbeing is affected by these current challenges. Sometimes the stress of dealing with a crisis of such scale is beyond our ability to cope.

At these times, it is okay to reach out to family and friends, and share your feelings with them. You can also connect to specialist mental health services like Lifeline, Beyond Blue and your local mental health centre for additional care. You can also connect with a local psychologist for ongoing support through telehealth. **Some numbers you might find helpful include:**

Lifeline Australia (24 hour support):
13 11 14

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
Centacare Southwest NSW:
1300 619 379100

Helpful websites may also include:

1800 RESPECT
<https://www.1800respect.org.au/>
Psychology Australia
<https://www.psychology.org.au/>
World Health Organisation
<https://www.who.int/>
Kids Helpline
<https://www.kidshelpline.com.au/>
Relationships Australia
<http://www.relationships.org.au/>

Maintaining your mental health and wellbeing is essential. If you notice your mental health being compromised, try these actions to minimise the impact of these worldwide events. When your plans fail, know that you are not alone and there are services available to support you and your family.



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Catholic Hospitals welcome Morrison government jobs guarantee for doctors and nurses

Australia is largest grouping of non-profit health providers, Catholic Health Australia, welcomes the news that the Morrison Government will ensure its hospitals will be able to continue the fight against coronavirus.

The National Coronavirus partnership will provide the certainty that the not-for-profit hospital sector needs to maintain its full capacity and shift its service offerings towards fighting coronavirus, in the wake of the Morrison Government cancelling all but the most urgent surgery.

Catholic hospitals account for around 30 per cent of all private hospital patients and approximately 10 per cent of all healthcare needs across Australia.

The move would have forced some hospitals to furlough services and stand down staff just as the health sector prepares for the expected surge in COVID-19 cases.

Wednesday night’s agreement with the Commonwealth will ensure staffing and capacity in our hospitals is maintained.

It was also agreed that the States and Territories would draw up plans to fully integrate public hospitals with the private sector in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic.

Speaking to Sky on Wednesday night about his meeting with the private hospital sector that afternoon, Health Minister Greg Hunt said the Government was “guaranteeing their viability as we go forward over the coming six months because that is such an important message to the market and to the staff to maintain their viability and they in turn

maintain their capacity.”

CHA Chief Executive Pat Garcia said the news would ensure that the private and non-profit hospitals remained viable and ready to deal with the coronavirus threat.

“This is a welcome common sense approach and ensures that Catholic hospitals can continue their state of readiness and work with all tiers of government. We urge the States and Territories to support the Commonwealth’s plan to underwrite the viability of private and non-profit hospitals, so that we can beat this pandemic.”

“This deal ensures that everyone in the health sector - the private sector, Catholic non-profits and the public hospitals - will be working together to fight this pandemic. Our doctors and nurses have been ready for weeks but this deal ensures they can remain at their posts.


“We thank the Prime Minister, Minister Hunt and the bureaucracy for swinging into action so quickly and we hope that the funds will flow soon so that we can get on with our job of looking after Australians in their time of need. We look forward to working with our partners in state and territory governments in getting the best result - which is helping the sick and getting the country back to health.”




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A message from Archbishop Mark Coleridge, Australian Catholic Bishop

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We will be producing a new look Together on a fortnightly basis which will be online only.

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Please pray for those priests whose anniversary of death occurs in April:

- 8 April 1920 Fr Michael O'Dowd
- 11 April 1974 Mgr Augustus Ambrose Lacey
- 13 April 1995 Fr Phillip Mel Roach
- 25 April 1930 Fr Maurice Hoyne (On Loan)
- 25 April 1976 Mgr Jeremiah Galvin
- 25 April 1977 Fr Joseph Dudley Dyson-Smith
- 30 April 1941 Fr Jerome Hennessy



These faithful servants, Lord, put their wholehearted trust in you - Grant that they may live in your love.

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Family reflections for: April

5th April - Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, Cycle A
Palm, or Passion, Sunday begins the most sacred week of the Church year—Holy Week. During these days, we prepare ourselves for Easter by prayerful reflection upon the events of Jesus' Passion and death. You might display a crucifix in a prominent place this week, as reminder of the salvation Christ won for us. The crucifix can also be the focal point for family prayer during Holy Week.

Because of the length and complexity of the Passion narrative, young children have difficulty remaining attentive when it is proclaimed in its entirety. Families can choose to read a portion of this Sunday's Gospel each day of Holy Week, providing ample opportunity for children to ask questions and respond to the events described there. In this way, the entire week can become a "way of the cross."

Each day during Holy Week, the family can gather in a prayerful space with a crucifix as the focal point. The Passion as found in Matthew's Gospel might be read as follows throughout the week:

- Sunday: Matthew 21:1-11
(Gospel at the Procession with Palms)
- Monday: Matthew 26:14-25
- Tuesday: Matthew 26:26-35
- Wednesday: Matthew 26:36-56
- Thursday: Matthew 26:57—27:14
- Friday: Matthew 27:15-54

After reading from the Gospel each night, the family might reflect on the reading together. Conclude your prayer time together by praying the Lord's Prayer and/or singing an appropriate hymn, such as "Jesus, Jesus," "Were You There?" or "What Wondrous Love Is This."

Isaiah 50:4-7 Psalm 22:8-9,17-20,23-24
Philippians 2:6-11 Matthew 26:14—27:66

12th April - Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
In the Easter Gospel we hear about how the disciples found the tomb empty three days after Jesus' death. We are also told that they do not yet understand the Scriptures or

that Jesus had been raised from the dead. That understanding gradually unfolded for the disciples as they began to experience the risen Lord. Similarly, our understanding of Jesus' Resurrection unfolds for us throughout our lives. In the weeks ahead, we will hear how the first disciples moved from confusion, doubt, and skepticism to faith. Their experience can teach us how we too might receive this gift of faith from God.

Gather your family members and ask them to share what they know about the events that happened in the days after Jesus' crucifixion. Invite your family to imagine that they are among Jesus' first disciples. Read together today's Gospel, John 20:1-9. Reflect together on the Gospel with questions such as these: If you had been among the first disciples who heard that the stone had been removed from Jesus' tomb and that Jesus' body was no longer there, what would you think? What did Mary of Magdala, Simon Peter, and the disciple whom Jesus loved think had happened? Recall that this experience is the first indication Jesus' disciples have that he is risen. Throughout the Easter season, we will learn more about how the disciples came to believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

Pray together using today's psalm, Psalm 118: "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad."
Acts of the Apostles 10:34a,37-43 Psalm 118:1-2,16-17,22-23
Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8 John 20:1-9

19th April - Second Sunday of Easter, Cycle A
Many of us can relate to Thomas's response to the news that the disciples had seen Jesus. We want to see for ourselves too, but we grow in faith, trusting the experience and knowledge of others.

Many of us have heard the saying "Seeing is believing." As your family gathers, take some time to consider what that saying means. What are some things we believe because we see them? Is there anything we believe without seeing? Today's Gospel reminds us that faith sometimes asks us to believe things we cannot see with our eyes. Read today's Gospel, John 19:19-31, with your family. Think about Thomas's response to the reports about the risen Lord. Is Thomas's doubt reasonable?

How does Jesus respond to Thomas? Jesus grants Thomas the evidence that Thomas needs to believe, but Jesus also affirms the faith of those who will be called upon to believe without first-hand experience. We are among those whom Jesus calls blessed. Discuss with your family the basis of each member's faith in Jesus—the witness of the first disciples, the Gospels, the continuing activity of the Holy Spirit, the community of the Church.

Pray together that your faith in Jesus will be strong. Pray an act of faith together.

Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47 Psalm 118:2-4,13-15,22-24
1 Peter 1:3-9 John 20:19-31

26th April - Third Sunday of Easter, Cycle A
Families, as the domestic church, have the opportunity to make the family meal a time of prayerful encounter with one another and with Jesus. At a family meal we share our experiences of the day and connect them with the experiences of others in the family. We can also enjoy the meal as an opportunity to reflect upon our family life in light of Scripture. At their best our family meals can connect us to Jesus too.

Choose a family meal this week to share one another's experiences of the week in a special way. Perhaps invite family members to plan and prepare the meal together. Begin the meal by reading today's Gospel, Luke 24:13-35. As you eat, talk together about how the disciples discussed their experiences in Jerusalem and how they came to understand them differently when Jesus interpreted those events in the light of Scripture. Then invite each family member to share the things that are going on in his or her life. Consider what Jesus might say to each person if he were sitting at your dinner table. Conclude with a special prayer after your dinner. Pray a prayer of blessing for each family member, asking that Jesus continue to be present in each person's life, helping each one to be a better follower of Jesus. Conclude with a Sign of Peace.

Acts 2:14,22-33 Psalm 16:1-2,5,7-11
1 Peter 1:17-21 Luke 24:13-35

Strange days indeed

"Nobody told me there'd be days like these. Strange days indeed". So wrote John Lennon in "Nobody Told Me" (1984).

by Tracey Edstein

It has often occurred to me that a visitor from another planet – or even just another culture – could be forgiven for thinking that in our culture, individuals are not all allocated the same period of time in which to work, recreate, sleep, pray, complete household tasks – and simply live!

- ‘If only I had time...’
- ‘When I have time...’
- ‘When I get around to it...’
- ‘Who has time for that?’

These strange days in which we are living – when toilet rolls have become trophies and nothing is certain anymore – can offer those who consider themselves time-poor a real gift.

Some will recoil immediately and think – what about those who are isolated already; who have families to support; who are particularly vulnerable to Covid-19; who have mortgages and whose income is no longer guaranteed?

And those concerns are very real. The Chinese word for ‘crisis’ is composed of two Chinese characters signifying ‘danger’ and ‘opportunity’ respectively. For all of us, Covid-19 is a very real danger. For all of us too, I believe, it can be a very real opportunity, although for some opportunity will be clouded by danger.

The first dimension of this is the opportunity to step back and take stock. In restricting our social contact; minimising such tasks as shopping and other errands; working from home if possible and withdrawing from regular activities such as church, gym, book club and so on, we have no choice but to reconsider almost every aspect of life.

This careful assessment of how we spend our days is a healthy exercise. It can lead, on the one hand, to greater solitude and on the other, to a heightened awareness of the needs of those around us.

There is a significant number of people in my circle whom I see regularly at Mass. While I may see them in other contexts in my small town, I know I will see them at Mass. Now I know I won’t see them at Mass. Some are older and live alone. Will they have what they need and will they still feel part of our parish community? There’s a challenge – and an opportunity! There are neighbours too who may be missing their usual contacts through work or other activities. There’s a challenge – and an opportunity!

Some who are still working have the spectre of reduced hours – or no work at all – hanging over them. If you know people in this boat, can you support them in any way? Perhaps by delivering a meal or two, or arranging commercial delivery if you’re in a position to do so. Even the smallest gesture, such as flowers or a bottle of wine, shows that they are not forgotten. Of course, all this needs to happen with social distancing kept in mind!

For some, the kindest way to reach out is simply to phone. The luxury of a good long yarn can be enjoyed by both parties and reflected on afterwards. Many of us are at home most of the time and there’s no risk of transmission of the virus by phone!

Most of us, I believe, have at least a mental to-do list. Now’s the time! I’ve heard people speak enthusiastically about gardening, reading, writing, baking, decluttering, family history, letter writing – as well as a good autumn clean. Even those who commute to work but are now working from home have gained some time – for some, two hours a day.

I’m writing this in Lent, and a traditional way of marking Lent is to give more time to prayer – perhaps a form of prayer that is different from your usual practice. For many of us, Eucharist is no longer available. There’s a challenge – and an



opportunity! These “strange days” that lack the usual rhythm of life may draw us into meditation – contemplation – music – spiritual journaling or spiritual reading. I am reading Timothy Radcliffe’s *Alive In God: A Christian Imagination* (highly recommended) to be followed by Jan Richardson’s *In the Sanctuary of Women: A Companion for Reflection & Prayer*.

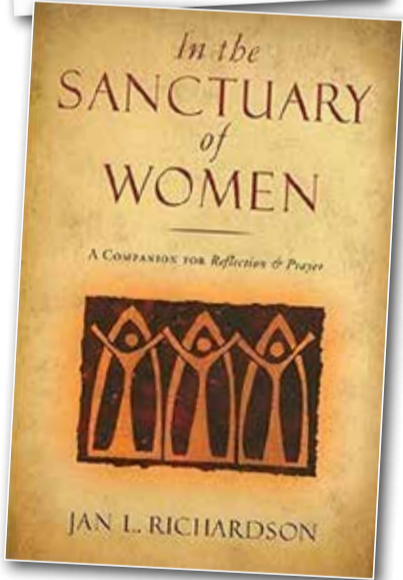
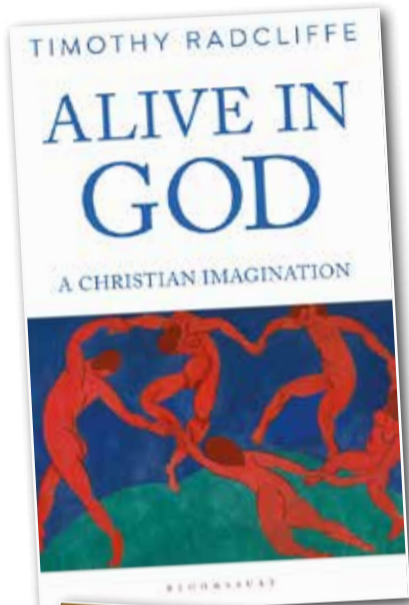
Many websites with a spiritual bent are offering practical and creative suggestions to guide and support those who are missing their usual guides and supports. In fact the internet itself is a great boon, offering information, diversion, a safe means of communication and – for those so inclined – cat videos!

During these strange days, we are not able to hear the gospel – the good news – proclaimed in our communities. However, Jan Richardson blesses us with these words:

*In every word,
with every gesture,
by every art,
through every means,
may you be
a living gospel
for the life of the world.*

(from *In the Sanctuary of Women: A Companion for Reflection & Prayer*.)

Savour these strange days...





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Marian Catholic College, Griffith



Marian Catholic College students were busy at We Will Rock You rehearsals practising their dance moves and fine tuning their tunes ... #WWRY save the dates 17th - 20th June 2020!



St Patrick's Primary, Griffith



Left: St Patrick's Primary School took part in the Teddy Bear Hunt which encourages families to look for teddy bears when they go for a walk.

Below: Year 2 created chicken houses using lego!



St Peter's Primary, Coleambally

K-1-2 students have been reading *The Fantastic Cake* by Joy Cowley. In writing the students designed their own fantastic cake and were lucky enough to make it!! Look at those smiles...



Henschke Primary, Wagga

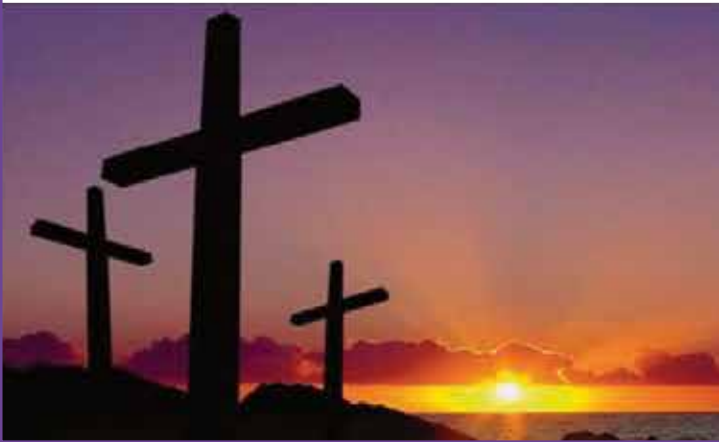


Congratulations to Henschke Primary's U11 and U12 boys who took part in Rugby League Trials in March. It was a successful day for all the boys who represented their school. Well done to everyone!

Holy Week Masses to be live streamed

All Holy Week Masses will be live streamed from the crypt at St Christopher's Cathedral.

FOR THE COMPLETE TIMETABLE OF HOLY WEEK VIA LIVE STREAMING FROM ST CHRISTOPHER'S CATHEDRAL PLEASE SEE THE LIST ON THE RIGHT.



INVITATION TO THE PRIESTS AND PEOPLE OF THE DIOCESE OF WAGGA WAGGA

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE WILL BE CELEBRATING THE CHRISM MASS FROM THE CATHEDRAL CRYPT OF ST CHRISTOPHER'S, CANBERRA NEXT **TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK, 7TH OF APRIL 2020** AT 11.00AM VIA LIVE STREAMING

www.catholicvoice.org.au

GIVEN THE REGULATIONS REGARDING COVID-19 THE CHRISM MASS WILL BE CELEBRATED WITHOUT A CONGREGATION.

NEVERTHELESS, ARCHBISHOP CHRISTOPHER INVITES YOU TO JOIN HIM FROM YOUR HOME FOR THE LIVE STREAMING.

The program is:

Sunday April 5 at 11am - Passion (Palm) Sunday

Tuesday April 7 at 11am - Chrism Mass

Easter Triduum

Holy Thursday April 9 at 7pm – Evening Mass

Good Friday April 10: 10am – Way of the Cross

3pm – Celebration of the Lord's Passion

Holy Saturday April 11 at 7pm – Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday April 12 at 11am – Easter Mass

www.catholicvoice.org.au/mass-online

Good Friday Collection vital to support Christians in the Middle East

Catholic parishes in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga last year contributed almost \$13,500 to help support Christians in the Holy Land as part of the annual Good Friday Collection.



Australian Catholics donated more than \$1,000,000 in last year's Good Friday Collection which supports the missionary work of the Church in the Holy Land as well as the upkeep of the sacred shrines associated with the life of Jesus.

This year, due to the threat of the COVID-19 virus, in some countries, there may be no liturgy held at all so your support is needed now more than ever. There will also be a special collection in September when we return to our churches.

For 800 years since St Francis of Assisi travelled to the Holy Land with a message of peace, the Franciscan Friars Minor have cared for the people, churches and sacred places in the Middle East as part of their everyday pastoral ministry.

Franciscans first arrived in the Holy Land in 1217 just six years after St Francis founded the Franciscans (Order of Friars Minor). This new Holy Land Province included the places where Christ was born, performed His ministry, died and was resurrected. St. Francis himself stayed several months in the Holy Land during 1219-1220.

The Friars Minor, then, are the official guardians of the Holy Places on behalf of the Christian world. Today the Custody of the Holy Land embraces Israel and Palestine,

Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the islands of Rhodes (Greece) and Cyprus.

"The political and economic crisis of these areas shows evidence each day of unspeakable suffering," Fr Schafer said as he thanked Australian Catholics for their generous and ongoing financial support.

"The situation impresses upon all of us that there is an absolute and urgent need to support our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. Despite their countless difficulties these Christians offer day by day, and in silence, an authentic witness to the Gospel.

"They need the support of their fellow Christians in other parts of the world including Australia.

The main projects of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem during 2018-2019 centered around three main themes, being expanding the humanitarian support to needy Christian families; enhancing the educational support, mainly through the schools and parishes; and focusing on the pastoral activities, mainly through the parishes and the work of the pastoral committee.

The Latin Patriarchate continued with the existing humanitarian assistance programs that have been offered for many years and expanded the programs to areas where there are emerging needs resulting from the deteriorating economic and political reality of the Holy Land (Palestine, Jordan, and Israel).

The Latin Patriarchate operates a network of 45 schools and 34 kindergartens spread over the three countries of Israel, Palestine and



Jordan. Many of these schools are old, with some buildings being over 170 years old while others more recently constructed. In total the schools educate 19,000 students and employ around 1,550 people, mostly Christians. The project support is divided into two components, the first being new institutions, while the other being the focus on enhancing the buildings through infrastructure, furniture, and equipment upgrades.

There was renewed commitment to support the pastoral work of the diocese and this can be divided in two categories, the first being to support the pastoral activities while the second component consisted of much needed infrastructure development to support the activities.

“Please pray for them on this Good Friday and where possible assist them by giving generously to the Good Friday Collection via <https://myfranciscan.org/donation-page-pontifical-good-friday-collection/>”

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