



# THE GRAPEVINE

*Abandonment gloom, is overcome by resurrection glory!*

Dear Parishioners of St Thomas the Apostle,

As I reflect on the joy of Easter, I am also brought down to earth by the road that leads us there. The new life that Easter promises only comes after the experience of death. I think sometimes in our lives we do everything we can to avoid 'death' experiences because they are so painful. These can come upon us in a number of ways – in the grief we suffer when someone we love dies; or through the contemplation of our own deaths as we may go through serious illness; or as a result of a breakdown of important relationships; or through the loss of employment; or as a consequence of any failures in our goals for life. It is natural that we feel loss and grief and a sense of brokenness; any sense of a bright light eludes us at those times. Of course we would want to avoid these experiences, but the fact is that they break in on our lives and often when we least expect them. We can dull the pain, and many do, and we can try to escape, but we can't run away from ourselves and have to eventually come back to deal with the 'death' experience.

We must never forget that Easter is God's work and power over death – both over that of Jesus on Good Friday, but also over all our own 'good Fridays' – our own death experiences that assail us. Easter then becomes for us also a joyous experience when we are made aware of the way God has 'saved' us and brought new possibilities into our lives that are life-giving, when we haven't expected them. If you look back on your life, you may see how it has not been just simply good fortune or coincidence that something new and wonderful has sprung forth from where there was only disaster before. This is God's work and this is where we can experience his healing love.

In between the death and resurrection is the empty tomb of Holy Saturday – the emptiness that comes after the death experience – even in our own lives. The darkness of the empty tomb resonates with me at this time because I am experiencing the 'dying' of the Church and I know that much of what we've known and experienced of the church is going to die, some of its elements in the way we have behaved as church needs to die.

I'm not just referring to the perpetrators of crimes, those who have abused children, but all this has exposed the way the church has abused its power over people.

The problem is not individuals but is systemic and some of the structures that have protected the church need to die. The Royal Commission's findings and recommendations can be for us the cross that can become eventually the seedbed for new life. The empty tomb in the meantime, for us is the dark place where we are brought to our knees and humbled and have to listen to the voice of the risen Christ who calls us to find life by enabling his Spirit to breathe new life into us to discern new ways of being Church.

Mary Magdalene, plays an important role in the gospel accounts of the resurrection; she was obviously a significant follower of Jesus, being named as a witness to the crucifixion, discovering the empty tomb and the first to encounter the risen Christ; the first also to proclaim his resurrection to the other disciples. She recognized the risen Christ because she loved him and was so close to him in life. It is to this love of Christ that we as Church need to be drawn again and recognize how we too are called to be always authentic messengers of the Good News of new life.

As Parish Faith communities we gather during this time because we believe: that grave injustice has been set right – and can be set right again and again; that deadly violence has been healed – and can be healed again and again; that Death has been done to death – and can be done to death again and again, because the Son has risen.

I invite you to celebrate our faith in the resurrection at the Easter ceremonies, beginning with Holy Thursday, through Good Friday to Easter Sunday, as a people of hope for new life for ourselves as individuals who struggle with the complexities of our lives, for the Church, that it may be born anew to be true to its mission of being the instrument of God's love to all, and for the world in its international relations that we may be empowered to further peace and justice.

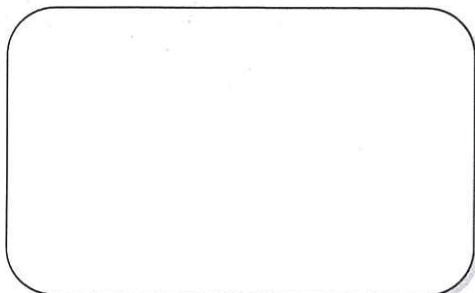
I pray that you all experience the joy and new life of Easter and that you have a safe and revitalizing holiday with family and friends.

Sincerely yours,  
Fr Steven Rigo



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## TAO'S JOURNEY

## Episode 11

### EVERYONE CAN BRING HOPE TO OTHERS

While living at St Vincent's hospital, Melbourne for almost 2 years, members of the Pastoral Care Team brought me Holy Communion every day. Lisa McDonald, Director of Mission at St Vincent's, understood my situation very well and came to visit me regularly. She worked for many years in a similar role at St Vincent's in Sydney and has many years of experience working in faith based organisations, volunteer management, adult education and corporate training and has a particular interest in nurturing the values base of organisations.

Before being discharged from hospital I told Lisa about my aspiration to bring Holy Communion to the sick in St Vincent's. She was encouraging but told me, "You will be far from St Vincent's hospital. You would be closer to St George's Health Service, Kew. If you wish, I will contact the staff and introduce you to them. She helped me fill out forms to apply for a volunteer card. She reminded me, "All of us can bring God's love to those in need through the healing ministry of Jesus. Thank God! I was encouraged by Lisa because she gave me the **HOPE** of being able to serve others even with my disability.

I was discharged on 3rd April 2013 in a wheelchair to live in the Redemptorist Community, Kew. During my second week there I went to St George's Health Service by wheelchair to book my physiotherapy sessions and to ask staff for permission to bring Holy Communion to the Catholic patients there twice a week. Teresa, the nurse in charge asked me for some information and was very happy to accept my offer. She told me, "Thank you for your cooperation, you are a man who brings **HOPE** to our patients here.

Teresa led me around the hospital and showed me where the Catholic patients were and then gave me a list of names and instructions. Before saying good bye Teresa, asked, "When can you start your job? I answered, "I can start to bring Holy Communion next week. She said, "Great, because at the moment we are short of members in the Pastoral Care Team.

The next week I started my physiotherapy sessions twice a week and brought Holy Communion to the sick twice a week. It kept me busy. In preparation, I attended Mass and afterwards would go to the priest with a Pyx for him to place 12 hosts (the Body of Christ). The first time he did this he was surprised when I told him that I was a volunteer to bring Holy Communion to the sick at the hospital. He looked at me and said, "You bring Jesus and bring **HOPE** to others. Good luck!

By the second week of taking Holy Communion to the sick, some of the patients began asking me questions about my sickness and I started telling them a little bit of my sad story. One patient who refused to receive Holy Communion in the first week, received Holy Communion this time and began to ask me about my background, my faith, my studies, my career and where I lived. Before saying good bye to her she told me, "You are an optimistic man, you have a strong faith in God, you bring **HOPE** to me and also to others in this hospital.

I started feeling better because I was encouraged by them. Another patient asked me questions about the meaning of life. I told her what one of my lecturers taught me before I got sick: The meaning of life, the meaning of our existence is that we are created to love and serve others. The more you seek to love and to serve those around you the more, over time, the focus of your life shifts outward, you are elevated above your own self-absorption into the bigger world, the real world around you. The lady listened attentively, and before saying good bye to her, I promised I would continue to tell her my story next time and she shook my hand and said, "You might bring some **HOPE** to me. Thank God for giving me a chance to meet you. Please come back and tell me your story.

After one and a half years of taking Holy Communion to the sick at St. George's, every Catholic patient was happy to see me. They called me "Happy Brother because I smiled every time I had a chance to visit them.

Before leaving the Redemptorist Community to move to Greensborough North I went to St George's to thank my physiotherapist and the staff. The nurse in charge asked all the Catholic patients to come to the common room to thank me and they gave me a special gift. One lady who spoke on their behalf said that, "We are very sad to hear you're leaving and will not be able to see us anymore. You have brought **HOPE** to us and help us to increase our Catholic faith. We love to hear your story. We hope that one day you can walk and become a good Catholic priest for our Church because you have a very strong faith in God. Good luck and take care of yourself! I left them on 13th September 2014 and became a priest on 10th September 2016. The lady's prophetic words came true.

If a man in a wheelchair can bring **HOPE** to others, I think that all of you in our parishes, in our community, can bring **HOPE** to others easily too, don't be shy.

## MANDY EXPLAINS R.C.I.A.

Many people join the Catholic Church every year and in the Archdiocese of Melbourne several hundred are enrolled. In this parish, the process followed is called the RCIA, (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults).

One of the greatest privileges I have ever been given is to be part of a team which welcomes people into our parish who are considering becoming Catholic.

Over the last year and a half, we have six people who have been making this journey, Fiona, Sonia, Kim and Nica as well as Elthia and Eden, children who attend St Thomas school. Most of these six have taken many years to come to this stage of faith, called and guided by God. They were formally welcomed into the church in November and will complete initiation at the Easter Vigil next month.

Along with their parish sponsors we all have had an amazing time reflecting on scripture and the encounters with our Lord Jesus in our lives. These meetings are occasions of enormous grace and kept very confidential so I cannot share with you the miracles that happen but take the time soon to talk to one of these new Catholics and hear their amazing stories.

Many people are often welcome participants within parish life for some time, before they make an approach to deepen their understanding of what it means to be Catholic. These include:

- Adults who are not baptised
- Adults who were baptised in another community e.g. Anglican or Presbyterian
- Adults in special circumstances e.g. frail, sick or with a disability
- Older children who are also similarly initiated

Those who are already baptised Catholic but perhaps never received First Eucharist or Confirmation, may also join this process, where small groups gather to reflect upon the basics of Catholic beliefs, prayer, life and service. Support is given by understanding and capable group leaders, who freely give of their time, with guidance from our parish priest.

Groups are formed as is practicable and continue according to need. No one is ever rushed, they are given plenty of time for questions. During the whole journey each person also receives any personal help and guidance as required.

There are no essays to write, no exams to pass and all you need to bring is an open heart.

Contact the parish office if you would like to learn more about becoming a Catholic. Mandy Robinson

## BAPTISMS

Christina O Connor

REZROCK

Congratulations and welcome to the following children who were baptised recently: Samantha Lefranchi, Noah Leone, Charlotte Adams, Stella Gibaldi, Erin Miller and Natalie Morton.

## RECENTLY DECEASED

Condolences to the family of recently deceased Charles Watson.

## COMMUNION VISITS

A group of volunteers continue home visits taking Holy Communion to people who are unable to come to Church.

They also visit Bupa Nursing Home and Leith Park Retirement Village on a regular basis.

If anyone is not able to attend Church and would like to receive Holy Communion at home please phone 9434 7373.

## PASTORAL VISIT

If anyone would like a pastoral visit please contact Christina O'Connor: phone 9434 7373 or email: greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au

## FAMILY CATECHETICS PROGRAM

For children at government schools registration is now open for those who wish to receive their First Eucharist or Confirmation. Please contact Josette or Lisa on 94341246 or email them at: cagbn@vic.chariot.net.au

## PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The PPC meet on a regular basis to discuss Parish business. If you would like to have any Parish issues discussed at our PPC meetings please either: phone 9434 7373 or email: greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au



# HOW TO BECOME MORE

## The Eucharist is the Source and Summit of Our Faith

Fr Tao has told us of his joy, whilst he was in hospital, when his daily Holy Communion would arrive and the disappointment on the rare occasion when, for whatever reason it didn't come.

We are able to receive the Blessed Sacrament at our Sunday Mass, even daily, if we wish, from the various services in our Parishes. We get to choose, when and at what time.

We have Parishioners who are house bound or in the care facilities that we minister to, who are unable to choose and so they rely on the volunteers of the Parish to visit. There are new facilities being built in the Diamond Valley area and we will be asked to minister to the residents.

We all have commitments, caring for an elderly relative, minding grand-children, or volunteering in other ways in the community. Please don't hesitate to volunteer even if you haven't done it before as training and assistance will be provided to you. If you are able to spare a couple of hours approximately once a month please contact our Parish Office 9434 7373.



Kaye Salm

### Volunteers also needed for:

- Baptisms
- Church cleaning
- Church set-up
- Counting

Please contact Mary or Lisa at the Parish Office if you are able to help in any way. Ph: 9434 7373

### Join Monday night Bible Group

A group of people meet 7.30 - 9.30pm each Monday at Sandra Bishop's home (9 Pindari Drive, St Helena) to learn from each other as together they study Scripture and Church teaching. The group has recently commenced the Book of Daniel. New participants are always welcome.

Enquiries: Sandra 9434 7553 or [sandraebishop@optusnet.com.au](mailto:sandraebishop@optusnet.com.au)



Judy Racz's painting clearly shows how together we build the Church.

# INVOLVED IN PARISH LIFE

## STATIONS OF THE CROSS

will be held at St Mary's during Lent, Friday nights 7.30pm, 16 February to 23 March.

The Stations of the Cross are a 14-step Catholic devotion that commemorates Jesus Christ's last day on Earth as a man. The 14 devotions, or stations, focus on specific events of His last day, beginning with His condemnation. The stations are commonly used as a mini pilgrimage. They were developed during the Crusades when the knights and pilgrims began to follow the route of Christ's way to Calvary along Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem.

Traditionally:

1. Pilate condemns Jesus to die
2. Jesus accepts his cross
3. Jesus falls for the first time
4. Jesus meets his mother, Mary
5. Simon helps carry the cross
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus
7. Jesus falls for the second time
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
9. Jesus falls for the third time
10. Jesus is stripped of his clothes
11. Jesus is nailed to the cross
12. Jesus dies on the cross
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross
14. Jesus is placed in the tomb

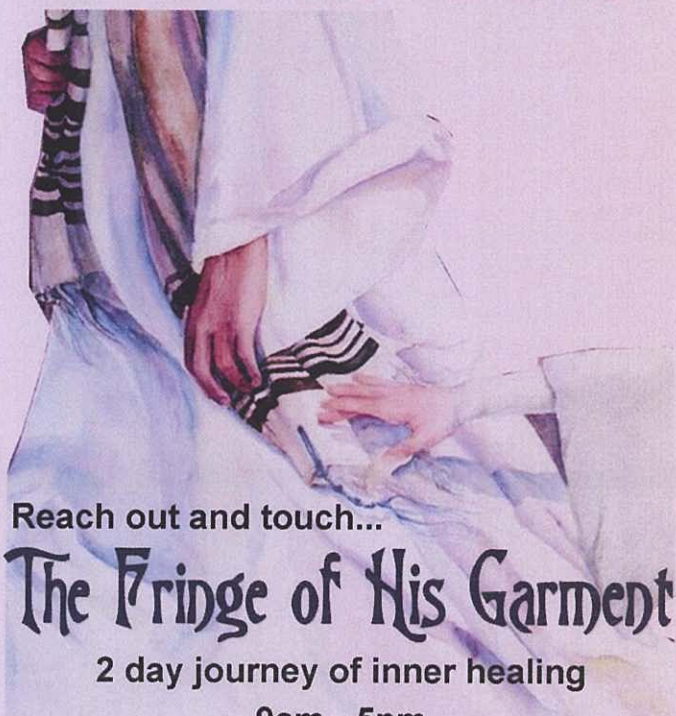
Occasionally an extra

15. Resurrection of Jesus

In 2009 Pope Benedict XVI approved:

1. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
2. Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested
3. Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin
4. Jesus is denied by Peter
5. Jesus is judged by Pilate
6. Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns
7. Jesus takes up his cross
8. Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene to carry his cross
9. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
10. Jesus is crucified
11. Jesus promises his kingdom to the repentant thief
12. Jesus entrusts Mary and John to each other
13. Jesus dies on the cross
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb

## DO YOU NEED HEALING?



Reach out and touch...

## The Fringe of His Garment

2 day journey of inner healing

9am - 5pm

Saturday 24 & Sunday 25 March

St Thomas the Apostle Parish Hall

A donation of \$50 is appreciated, students \$30

Further information & brochure ph Rose 0411 650 339

Retreat presented by the Catholic School of Evangelisation

[www.schoolofevangelisation.org.au](http://www.schoolofevangelisation.org.au)

# "CH\_RCH"

is not complete  
without "U!"

# EASTER LITURGIES 2018

## PENITENTIAL SERVICE

Wed 21 March 7.00pm (Second Rite of Reconciliation)	St. Thomas the Apostle, Greensborough North
Thurs 22 March 7.30pm (Second Rite of Reconciliation)	St Mary's, Greensborough

## MASS of the LORD'S SUPPER ~ MAUNDY (HOLY) THURSDAY

Thurs 29 March 7.30pm	Sacred Heart, Diamond Creek
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## SOLEMN LITURGY OF THE LORD'S PASSION & HOLY COMMUNION

Fri 30 March 3pm	Sacred Heart, Diamond Creek
Fri 30 March 3pm	St Thomas the Apostle, Greensborough North

## EASTER VIGIL ~ HOLY SATURDAY

Sat 31 April 7.30pm (replaces 6pm Mass)	St. Thomas the Apostle, Greensborough North
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## EASTER SUNDAY

Sun 1 April 9am	Sacred Heart, Diamond Creek
Sun 1 April 10.30am	St. Thomas the Apostle, Greensborough North

### The Way Prayer Group

Meets each Thursday night at  
Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham  
for a varied program focusing on spiritual growth.

**WHEN:** 8pm Thurs  
**WHERE:** Gathering Space, Our Lady Help of Christians,  
4 Henry Street, Eltham  
**MASS:** Every 3rd Thursday of the month at  
Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham,  
7.30pm Praise & Worship, 8.00pm Mass  
**ENQUIRIES:** Emilia 9435 7475, Rose 9434 3962,  
Sandra 9434 7553

### FUNERAL LITURGY PREPARATION BOOKLET

To receive this booklet  
containing suggested readings,  
hymns, prayers etc. in  
PDF format email:  
[sandraebishop@optusnet.com.au](mailto:sandraebishop@optusnet.com.au)



God, who raised Jesus from  
the dead, will give—new  
life to our own mortal  
bodies through his Spirit  
living in us.

### Mass Times

#### St Thomas

Sunday Mass: Vigil Sat. 6pm; Sun. 10.30am  
Tue & Thurs 9.15am

#### Sacred Heart, Diamond Creek

Sunday Mass: 9am;  
Wed & Fri 9.15am.

#### St Peter's, Hurstbridge

Sunday Mass: Vigil 1st Sat. of month 7.15pm

### Reconciliation

Friday Sacred Heart 9.30-10.00am  
Saturday: St Thomas 9.30 - 10.00am

YOUR ZONE.....

YOUR MESSENGER.....

YOUR MESSENGER'S PH. NO.....

St Thomas Parish, 251 Diamond Creek Road,  
Greensborough North, 3088

Telephone: 9434 7373  
for Sacraments, Administration & General Enquiries

Parish Email: [greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au](mailto:greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au)

#### Parish Priest

Fr Steven Steven.Rigo@cam.org.au  
Telephone 9432 2515  
For after hours & emergencies

#### Assistant Priest

Fr Tao Pham [taohautrach@gmail.com](mailto:taohautrach@gmail.com)

Deanery: [www.diamondvalleydeanery.org.au](http://www.diamondvalleydeanery.org.au)

Parish Website: [www.pol.org.au?greensboroughnorth](http://www.pol.org.au?greensboroughnorth)