



17<sup>th</sup> April 2020

**Pastoral Letter to Parishioners of St. Mary of the Cross Catholic Parish,  
Mordialloc and Aspendale**

Dear Parishioners,

Our Easter week continues to feel surreal with our current state of affairs. The great news during the week is the reduced impact of the virus and the “flattening of the curve” which is really positive and a step in the right direction. We have heard that our current stage 3 lock down conditions will continue until the 11<sup>th</sup> May when a review will determine the next step so in the meantime masses will continue to be recorded weekly and uploaded onto the parish website.

The schools have begun term 2 in a very different way and it appears at this stage that this new structure will be for all of term 2. Only children whose home is not a safe environment or whose parents are involved in essential services are able to be on site means that most are at home and remote teaching is the new way of school. It has rolled out smoothly with only a few inevitable settling down issues. I thank Michael Russo (principal St. Brigid's) and Sarah McDermott (Acting principal St. Louis') for their leadership, care and concern with this transition to remote teaching and learning.

All baptisms are postponed for the immediate future and weddings can only have 5 people present. Of the two weddings that I had booked in April and May, the couples have chosen to postpone their celebrations until later in the year. It was a difficult decision to make especially after months of preparation but they both want as many of their family and friends to be present on their special day.

Funerals are still part of my ministry yet the experience is very different. During this week I celebrated the funeral for Peggy Pashly (sister of Barbara O'Callaghan) and for Gavin Kirchner. Both funerals only allow 10 people to be present yet the live streaming allowed many more to be part of the virtual congregation. I find these funerals so challenging especially when there gatherings afterwards are also banned. I realise even more the vital role that funeral wakes' play in the grief and support process.

I hear of many stories of how people are utilising their spare time. Obviously we can redirect some of this time into prayer which I did in a creative way. After two years

in hibernation, it was time to dust off the cobwebs off my bike and pump up those tyres. The long bike ride reintroduced me to the beautiful surrounds that we live in and continue to amaze me. My mind was then brought to prayers of thanksgiving for the ability to ride my bike and enjoy the beauty around me. It was also terrific to see so many families out and about together. I won't mention the "sore saddle" feeling that kicked in the next day!

I hope that you are all OK and able to make contact with those around you. If you are part of a parish group, are you able to contact members of your group to say G'day and maybe even continue the group in it's work? The Parish Child Safety Committee met on Friday for our monthly meeting via Zoom and we were able to progress a bit further with our work. The Liturgy Committee are due to meet on Wednesday evening so I will propose for those members to meet via Zoom and reflect on the readings for the month of June. If you would like to be part of this meeting (no experience required) please email the parish and I'll send you a Zoom invite.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVGI57fNPCc>

Stay safe and God bless,

St. Brigid.... pray for us.

St. Louis.... pray for us.

St. Mary of the Cross.... pray for us.

Yours in Christ,

*Fr. Andrew*

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St. Brigid's, Mordialloc

St. Louis de Montfort's, Aspendale