­

27th March 2020

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

Dear Parishioners,

So much has happened in one week. Not being able to celebrate mass with you has been really tough. I feel like my hands have been tied behind my back and I am still expected to go on ministering as a priest. Being present to you and the sacraments is my lifeblood but that just has to go on hold. I am now asked to minister in other ways that are possible.

Last weekend I was present at all the masses for 30 minutes prior to the start time just to anticipate those who still thought that mass was being offered. It was heartbreaking to announce to those few who came that mass wasn’t offered. I was able to hand them a newsletter and refer them to the parish website.

As I mentioned in the last letter, the parish website is our main form of contact with you all. The newsletter, prayer resources and links are all there and hopefully a link to a mass said by me that has been recorded. My hope that is that this will be a weekly mass for all of you to watch.

I have met with the Parish Pastoral Council in a video conference during the week. We will continue to operate as a council addressing the needs of the parish. The most important need is that of staying connected. For those with access to the internet then that is a great start but we are aware that many parishioners don’t have access. We are also concerned about the elderly and vunerable parihioners so I have asked councillors to call all parishioners who are aged 70 + to check in on them. This becomes our starting point for maintaining our parish community links.

As government guidelines advise us to stay indoors as much as possible (until the inevitable lock down), we are discouraging people from coming to the parish office. The churches are closed even for private prayer and the parish staff (Bernadette, Susan and Ann) are working remotely from home. Please call or email with any questions as these forms of communication are being monitored remotely. There will be some newsletters on the church doors for parishioners who are passing by and who cannot access the internet but maybe if you know someone nearby who isn’t connected to the internet then maybe you could print off the newsletter and drop it into their letterbox followed up by a phone call?

Our new way of being calls us to look after our selves and our loved ones. Making sure that we stay healthy physically, emotionally and spiritually is crucial. Eat well, do exercise, check in with family and friends and keep those prayers going. This may be a time to try different ways of praying like Christian mediation or Lectio Divina? What about the De La Daily Prayer app – meditate daily on words from the Founder of the De La Salle Brothers, St John Baptist de La Salle - download FREE from the app store. We may be exercising social distancing but not spiritually distancing!!

Can I leave you with this prayer? What about praying it as a family? What about praying it at 12pm this Sunday knowing that other parishioners are doing the same making us united in prayer?

**Almighty and all-merciful God,**

**lover of the human race, healer of all our wounds,**

**in whom there is no shadow of death,**

**strengthen 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.**

**St. Brigid…. pray for us.**

**St. Louis…. pray for us.**

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

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Andrew

**ASPENDALE**

PARISH CENTRE

37 Dolphin Street

Aspendale Vic 3195

Tel: 03 9580 7981

**Mordialloc**

PRESBYTERY

520 Main Street

Mordialloc Vic 3195

Tel: 03 9580 1018

mordiallocaspendale@cam.org.au

**www.cam.org.au/mordiallocaspendale**

ABN 30 159 648 648

St. Brigid’s, Mordialloc

St. Louis de Montfort’s, Aspendale