



3rd April 2020

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

Dear Parishioners,

I received a beautiful card from 2 school children, Leila and Lucy who took the time to draw a beautiful rainbow with a flower and lots of love hearts on the front with words on the inside saying: *"Dear Fr. Andrew, we hope that you are doing OK with everything that is happening. We saw you on Sunday morning standing in front of the church and we thought it would be hard for you not to be able to say mass."*

This card and along with many other emails, texts and phone calls of support continue to lift my spirits in all that is happening at the moment. Thank you! Every effort to let others know that they are being thought of at this time is so important. Let's keep this up with each other.

The Parish Pastoral Council continue to call all parishioners aged 65 + and "check in on them". We will endeavour to ring those who are between 45 and 64 and see how they are going as well.

I thank a small team of people who are assisting with the production of the recorded mass being uploaded onto the website. Thanks Phil, Michelle, Berna, Tanya, Michael and Bernadette. We'll keep this initiative going. Please check the website for updates.

I encourage you to have a break from all the news that bombards us regarding Coronavirus. There is no reprieve and unless we deliberately choose not to watch the news or read the newspaper headline, it is at the forefront of our thoughts. We have to be updated with relevant news but let us be mindful that we need to "turn-off" from that news and fill our minds with news and information of other kinds. This is where prayer and meditation can be of assistance because it allows our minds to have a break. I find meditation most helpful for me.

I need to address the elephant in the room also and that is our Thanksgiving and financial support of the parish. Parishioners who contribute to the Thanksgiving by envelope (cash), may be concerned that their giving will fall behind over the next few months when the churches are closed for liturgical celebrations. During this time you are under no obligations to make up the arrears, particularly if you are experiencing

hardship. However, if you are in a position to continue your contributions these are gratefully appreciated.

You may wish to change your method of giving to a “set and forget” Direct Debit or Credit Card facility (and a switch back to envelopes later on if you choose). Please email or call the Parish Office to discuss your options.

In addition many of you generously support the Presbytery (First) Collection on Sundays. As this is traditionally cash only, contributions will be impacted. But if you wish, you can continue to support the Presbytery Collection which provides for the parish priest, you may do so through Direct Debit or Credit Card. Again just contact the parish office via phone or email to discuss your options.

We are living times of great challenge. These early days of isolation may be received as a welcome from the busyness of normal life or a time of stress and tension especially amongst family members. Not being able to visit and hug our loved ones seems so counter cultural but we are called to be part of the solution to the problem and stay at home. Let’s hang in there and do our bit.

Lent continues until Holy Thursday so our time of Lenten retreat is for a few more days. Can we embrace these next days of a “new retreat”? Taking some of the extra time in prayer recalling the gospel of the First Sunday of Lent when Jesus went into the desert for 40 days. Those days called upon Jesus to rely on what was truly important. He was tempted in every human way and Jesus gives us an example of how we are to respond. That is to trust in God the Father. We have this remarkable opportunity to strip away those layers of unimportance and focus on what is important. May this time be a time for “new fruit” to emerge.

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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