 **ST. CHRISTOPHER’S PARISH**

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November 2021

Precious Parishioners of St. Christopher’s and St. Augustine’s,

 I hope this letter finds you well and happy, breathing a sigh of relief after enduring a longest lockdown in the whole world with more than 260 days being confined to homes.

 On the 21st of September, at 2:00pm, I participated a Zoom Meeting with Archbishop, Bishops, Priests and Deacons on the journey of **“Take The Way Of The Gospel”** according to the plan proposed by Archbishop Peter Comensoli for the future of the Melbourne Archdiocese. I wrote:

 *“Good afternoon* *Archbishop and everyone,*

*I am Peter Hoang, looking after 2 churches and two schools: St Christopher’s and St Augustine’s in Airport West. I have 3 minutes to share with you a little bit of my positive experience:*

*I have been in Airport West for 4 years and a half. When I started my mission here in this parish, I spent 6 months to watch, to perceive, listen and understand. After 6 months, I realised that there was something lacking in this parish in terms of faith, religious activities and unity. And then I decided to renew, reshape and reform the parish. I based on two schools to achieve my goal by having a meeting with the principals and religion-coordinators. I shared with them my plan for the future of the parish and the church. They all endorsed me in a very positive way.*

*So, I asked them to help me two things:*

*1. To bring the children of 2 or three classes with their teachers to attend Mass in the church with other parishioners every Thursday morning Mass, so I could talk and share with them about the Catholic faith.*

*2. I organised a Family Sunday Mass every Saturday evening and ask them to bring the children of 2 or three classes together with their parents, grand-parents, siblings and relatives to go to church to attend Mass with their teachers and parishioners. I also asked them to prepare the Prayers of the Faithful for the children to come up to the lectern to pray on behalf of all present. It was really wonderful and inspirational!*

*Apart from all religious activities with two schools, I also organise Sacramental Program to help the children from the State Schools; and every time I teach them, I invited parents to bring their children to the church and attend the courses with them. The courses became more crowded and all parents were so happy.*

*Every Saturday morning, we have Baptism for babies. However, as not many attendants for Sunday Masses, every month at 9:00am at St Augustine’s Church and 10:30am at St. Christopher’s Church, I organised alternatively 2 Sunday Masses with Baptism Welcome during Mass, and 2 Sunday Masses with Baptism within the Mass. I tried to bring the whole family into contact again with the Church, with the Eucharist, the Catholic community in order to form one big family.*

*After Sunday Masses, we prepared a cup of tea or coffee and biscuits for young and old parishioners to enjoy. The attendants of Sunday Masses in two churches became fuller and fuller. Everything went very well.*

*My last encounter after one Sunday Mass at St Christopher’s Church with a young parent who told me that he did not go to church very often, but after attending this Sunday Mass with baptism, he would like to book the Baptism within the Mass for his child.*

*Unfortunately, the Covid-19 came and postponed my dream in bringing more people back to God!”*

 Now, the lockdown has been lifted and the Church is allowed to open. In the spirit of keeping our faith and being close physically to God in the Church, I would like to invite you all to go back to Mass and bring along your fully vaccinated proof (Certificate of being double dosed), or a valid medical exemption to COVID-19 vaccination issued by an authorised medical practitioner, or aged under 16. If there are 30 people in the position of Unknown Vaccination Status, I will celebrate a separate Mass.

 Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a sign of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and to his Church. My hope is to be able to welcome you all to join us for the Masses each weekend on Saturday at 5:00pm (Family Mass at St Christopher’s Church) or Sunday 8:30am (Italian Mass at St Christopher’s Church), 9:30am (Parish Mass at St Augustine’s Church) and 10:30am (Parish Mass at St Christopher’s Church).

 In order to have a good relationship among families in our parish and form a strong partnership between Parish and two Schools, our parish requires financial support to provide sacramental, faith education and pastoral programs; and also to maintain, renovate and ensure the Church building and parish facilities to be safe and welcoming.

To those Parishioners who currently support the Thanksgiving Program, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your financial support and look forward to your ongoing commitment. Your generous and regular contributions assist with the ever increasing operational cost of running a Parish.

Your new set of envelops are included with this letter. Alternatively, if you wish to make your contributions by Direct Debit or Credit Card or via Bank Transfer, please ensure that in the description you put your name and envelope number *(For example: Smith 1234)* and follow the details as below:

\* **Church Account:** **- CDF** (**C**atholic **D**evelopment **F**und); **- BSB 083-347; - Account No. 716209715**

\* **Presbytery Account:** **- CDF** (**C**atholic **D**evelopment **F**und); **- BSB 083-347; - Account No. 666212720**

These Direct Debit forms are available from the Parish Office.

I encourage those who have not had a chance to support our Parish financially to contribute through the Thanksgiving Program. Receiving regular contributions allows the Parish to better plan and budget for programs, services, necessary maintenance and expenditure.

We have a beautiful parish, two wonderful schools with dedicated staff and a very positive and vibrant atmosphere. We are working together to build a strong and enduring partnership. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you all to try to support and come to as many Masses and celebrations as you can. Come and join us in prayer and thanksgiving to God for our wonderful parish of St. Christopher’s and St. Augustine’s.

Once again I personally thank you for your faith, generosity and commitment to our parish.

 May God bless you and your loved ones abundantly.

 

 Fr Peter Hoang

 Parish Priest