My Dear Parishioners,

There is a similar parallel which we have shared in the past year. We have been through a journey which the COVID Virus thrust upon us and therefore we were surrounded by rules to keep us safe. The Scripture passage from the Book of Exodus for this Sunday reminds us of the journey out of slavery (lockdown) of the Israelites, as God saved them.

*God spoke all these words.*

*He said, ‘I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*

As we were set rules to follow, similarly our God does the same, which we call the Ten Commandments.

These remind us to recognise the place of God in our lives, and not get caught up in worshiping false gods, and secondly to treat others with respect.

It is worth noting how our lives have changed, particularly our Sundays. Note what God says:

*‘Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. For six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath for the Lord your God. You shall do no work that day, neither you nor your son nor your daughter nor your servants, men or women, nor your animals nor the stranger who lives with you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that these hold, but on the seventh day he rested; that is why the Lord has blessed the sabbath day and made it sacred.*

How many would follow this today? Unfortunately our Sundays have been turned around, where our society sees Sunday’s not as a time to consider God, but a time to do everything else but rest, give thanks and worship. Maybe it is time for all of us to take a long look at what our lives are really about.

Please read this Sunday’s Gospel, where Jesus tells those who were not respecting the temple to get out. Their focus was not on the love of God nor neighbour. Our lives are too short to get caught up in the distractions of life which take us away from the real journey we are on. We are like the people freed from captivity, in the desert, wondering home away from exile in Egypt, the Passover, the event which we celebrate at Easter, where Jesu becomes, the Lamb of God. We are not home yet, for our true home is with God in eternal life.

The story in the Gospel reminds us of the need to focus on the message of Jesus. His ultimate sacrifice of love – dying and rising to give us life. Yes this action of our God, frees us to share eternal life, when we are out of the desert, so to speak, we are living in now. Therefore Lent is a time for us to stop and consider, do we listen to Jesus or allow ourselves to be distracted with the things that are not so important. For example, which is more important – receiving Jesus in Holy Communion for the very first time or having a party afterwards. Those selling their wares in the Temple had their focus around the wrong way. Maybe we likewise can get the focus around the wrong way.

Maybe it is time for all of us to read the passage from Exodus and reflect upon where are you with God and neighbour. Maybe if we all stopped and considered the love we have been given to share with all God’s creation we, and the whole of society, might have a deep respect for all and help us all to refocus the priorities in our lives.

Saturday 6th March 6.00 pm Mass link:  <https://forms.gle/xEuJTbLWzdW7JVMf8>

Sunday 7th January 8.30 am Mass link:  <https://forms.gle/BDnkF8RfLCcoT4eo9>

Sunday 7th January 10.30 am Mass link:  <https://forms.gle/4cfuEd1QKggxoCK16>

Attached are the Scripture reading for this Sunday and the Children’s worksheets.

Kind regards and every blessing,

Peter