My dear parishioners,

The thought of ‘service’ often comes to mind. Yes we need to service our cars each year, or perhaps the air conditioner, the heater and other things we use to make sure they are functioning as they were intended to do. Sometimes we may wait until something goes wrong and then reach out to have the item serviced and made good again, if possible. We all know how important it is to maintain these items which we use constantly. Image for example if we never serviced our cars.

It makes sense to make sure the heater, air conditioner and vehicle are in good order, otherwise we may find in times of need they don’t work.

We likewise need to look after ourselves and in this respect ‘service’ ourselves and those entrusted to our care. This is why holidays are important for they allow us to take time out and refresh, to replenish and restore ourselves for the year ahead. It is also important we take care of ourselves and find time to reflect on our daily lives, each day.

Before Sunday trading we saw this special day as a day of rest. A time to gather as a family and perhaps share a family roast together. Most would gather to worship and spend time in prayer together – to take time out to refresh – to service – or as some would say to ‘go to a service in the Church’. Maybe it’s time for all of us to stop and look at where we are going and what is important in our lives.

Perhaps the past year has challenged us to take stock of our daily lives and hopefully allowed us to consider how we need to find time to ‘recharge of batteries’ or to take time out to service ourselves.

The Gathering Prayer for this Sunday’s Mass fits well with this theme as we seek the grace of God to replenish and restore us.

*Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care,*

*that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace,*

*they may be defended always by your protection.*

*Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,*

*who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,*

*God, for ever and ever.*

In a similar way the second verse of the Psalm speaks of the service God provides to us by ‘healing’ restoring and making good our broken-heart. Yes we are able to turn to the Lord to be serviced, in this sense.

*Praise the Lord, who heals the broken-hearted.*

*The Lord builds up Jerusalem*

*and brings back Israel’s exiles,*

*he heals the broken-hearted,*

*he binds up all their wounds.*

*He fixes the number of the stars;*

*he calls each one by its name.*

I’m sure many of us feel as though we need time to get away, time to spend quietly and reflectively, due to the busyness of our lives. Perhaps it the constant demands upon us, families needing, and children wanting, and so on. The Gospel this Sunday brings these thoughts together as he hear Jesus taking some time away for the busy and demanding crowds to pray and have some time to recharge.

*In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there. Simon and his companions set out in search of him, and when they found him they said, ‘Everybody is looking for you.’*

Hopefully we all find time to come to the Lord to ask for ‘service’ and made new again so that we may be there for those entrusted to our care in the best possible way. In this way we are them able to serve those who journey with us each day.

Below are the links to register for our weekend Masses:

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

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

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

As I mentioned last week Patricia in our Parish Office finished on the 29th January. I’ve attached a copy of the position being advertised. If anyone is seeking further information you are welcome to contact me.

Attached also is a copy of this Sunday’s Scripture and the Children’s Worksheets for this week.

May our God strengthen and nourish us especially in the days ahead,

Peter