

St. Clare's Parish

Parish Office & Church:

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21st March, 2020

Dear Members and Friends
of St Clare's Parish, Thomastown West.

Putting thoughts together in these trying times is difficult. What appears to be "okay" today is reviewed and revised tomorrow. This is the way in which we are trying to beat this viral war we are experiencing.

We are constantly being bombarded by reports from the media, or even well-intentioned comments made by fellow parishioners or neighbours.

On 18th March, the Prime Minister, considering the seriousness of COVID-19, announced that non-essential indoor gatherings are to be under 100 people. This is for public safety. The four diocesan bishops of Melbourne, Ballarat, Sale and Sandhurst have asked us to follow guidelines given:

a) immediate suspension of public liturgies and the celebration of Mass until further notice. This is in accordance with Canon Law #1248,no.2. This canon allows such suspensions, but further recommends that Mass be replaced with personal and family prayer, to read and reflect on the scriptures, to make a spiritual Communion (see overleaf), and even participate in online Masses (<http://bit.ly/MassOnDemand> or <https://melbournecatholic.org.au/Mass> or www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass).

b) other gatherings are also suspended.

This is not easy for families, practising members of our parish, and for me, as your recently-arrived parish priest. Weddings and funerals may proceed – but with limited numbers and safety measure. We are still to receive instructions on the various rites of for the upcoming Holy Week. Baptisms will only be done in cases of emergency. First Confession, First Communion and Confirmation will be postponed until the pandemic is over.

Please note that I will continue to pray the Mass daily for your intentions and I ask you to join me with your prayers for the intentions of parishioners and a quick recovery from this epidemic that has paralysed the world.

Arch. P. A. Comensoli has asked us to pray to St Joseph to intercede for an end to our present situation. I include the prayer as part of this letter. Let us, as a parish, place our faith in God, interceding though through St Joseph, our Blessed Mother, Mary, and St Clare.

The church, until further notice, will be opened between 9:30am and 12:00noon each day for personal prayer and devotion. On Saturdays and Sundays the church doors will be open between 9:00am and 10:30am with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. I urge you to please not congregate in numbers over 30 (my suggestion) and to keep a distance of at least two to three metres from other individuals. You can come back later if the numbers have reached 30.

For the opportunities of Reconciliation (confession) and the Anointing of the Sick, you can call the parish office (9465 4717) or parish mobile (0492 883 232) to organise a time. If I am not able to answer your call please leave a message.

At every Mass the priest, just before we receive Holy Communion, prays: **Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your apostles: PEACE I LEAVE YOU, MY OWN PEACE I GIVE YOU. Look not on our sins but on the FAITH of your CHURCH and grant her PEACE and UNITY in accordance with YOUR WILL ...** let us live out these words, let us put them into action! This is not a time for panic or anxiety, nor is it a time to care just only for ourselves. We have to be practical, sensible and prayerful ... sharing Christ's peace especially with those who are struggling.

St Clare's Parish, Thomastown West, is our parish. Please do not forget to support us with your prayers and help us with the upkeep of the church and office. For further information we will try to update the parish webpage at: <http://pol.org.au/thomastownwest/Home.aspx>

I await our return together as a people of love, hope and prayer.

Peace and blessing to all.

Fr John Magri.
Parish Priest.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace you as if you were already there, and unite myself wholly to you.

Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

A
PRAYER
to
ST JOSEPH

St Joseph,

You were receptive to God working in your life.
Help us by your prayers at this time of trial.
You kept Jesus and Mary under your watchful care:
may your prayers assist our local Church to respond
to those in need.



You taught the Christ Child your trade and prayers:
help us to follow his example of love.

You were part of God's plan for all humanity:
assist us to be vigilant and responsible this day.

You spent your life in service:
may we be mindful of others, particularly the
elderly and vulnerable, caring for them in these
difficult days.

You trusted in the clear primacy of God over all
history and every situation: help us to grow in faith
and pray to the Father, *Thy will be done.*

Amen



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE