

# SACRED HEART/ EMMAUS PARISH

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4 Winifred Street

ST ALBANS VICTORIA 3021

PARISH COMMUNICATION (1)

27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Greetings to everyone!

What heavy weights we are carrying these days from the swift impact of the COVID-19 Virus. For some of our Parishioners – and others – that impact has been so severe: now unemployed. For everyone there is the uncertainty which breeds anxiety, which in itself is a stress on our otherwise good health.

We hold one another in care ... and in prayer.

Parish life has changed radically. Our gathering for Eucharist is our central meeting point – and no one can go to Mass anymore!! Baptisms are postponed. Parish staff are working from home. We had a funeral during the week: limited to ten participants, which added a further dimension to the family's sadness. Palm Sunday – Holy Week – and Easter will not be celebrated publicly. Our eagerly anticipated Good Friday Stations of the Cross has been cancelled. Confirmations, First Communions and First Reconciliations have been suspended. With the churches being closed, Parish income has taken a hit because there isn't the opportunity for Parishioners to contribute their envelopes: if you are an 'envelope contributor' and in the position to do so it will be so helpful if you can still put that contribution aside now for the time when we gather again.

Our Parish Schools and our Colleges are such a significant element in the mission of our Parish. They have converted so rapidly to 'on line teaching and learning', and had the chance to trial that prior to the 'holiday' break.

We are 'live streaming' a Mass from our Parish commencing this weekend: on Saturdays at 5pm, and able to be accessed at any time after that.

Within Facebook, search for "SHEPARISH" or use the link [facebook.com/SHEPARISH](https://facebook.com/SHEPARISH)  
Click the "follow" button to be kept up to date with posts and be notified when we go live.  
Find the Live/ Videos link in the side bar and watch the Mass on your screen.

Use this link to access our YouTube channel  
[tiny.cc/SHEPARISH](https://tiny.cc/SHEPARISH)  
Click the subscribe button to be notified when we go live  
View our Mass recordings within the Videos tab

We are planning for the streaming of Holy Week-Easter ceremonies, too.

The importance of keeping in touch with one another is so significant now. The term 'social distancing' is really about '*physical* distancing'. We need one another's care, support and encouragement to reassure us that we are in this together.

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And of course we are together in faith and hope and prayer. During this week the Church had the feast of the Annunciation to Mary of the coming entry of Jesus into human life through her. In the First Reading of the feast it was proclaimed that "God is with us".

That never meant for Mary or to Jesus that life would go easily – just think of the trials, challenges and sufferings in their experience. It did give them hope, however: it had them focused on commitment, perseverance, loyalty. That proclamation heartened their spirits, allowing them to be reassured and to find the good and enjoyable signs of life around them. That proclamation is for us, too: "God is with us"!

There are two pages of prayers attached which you might like to include in your usual prayer time. Coincidentally there are seven prayers for various groups of people – perhaps use one of them for each day of the week.

I shall be sending a letter like this each week now. Share it with other Parishioners who may not be on our email address list.

In hope and in prayer

Yours sincerely

Maurie Cooney  
Parish Priest