



ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC PARISH

52 Yarra Street

HEIDELBERG

We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which our parish stands, the Wurundjeri-Balluk clan of the Woi wurrung people in the Kulin Nation. We respectfully recognise elders, both past and present, and join in a silent prayer for healing of the pains caused by our ancestors.

Central to the mission of St John's Parish is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

11TH / 12TH APRIL 2020—EASTER SUNDAY, YEAR A

A VERY BLESSED EASTER IN THE RISEN LORD!

Dear Parishioners, Friends and Visitors,

I always wonder what the first Easter would have felt like! The poor disciples had followed their Lord for three years, and come to believe in him as the 'Son of God,' the one who was to be sent into the world. Yet they had just seen him dead, hanging on a tree, like a criminal.

In the Roman world, crucifixion was the worst type of execution they could come up with. It was reserved for the worst criminals. The person was stripped naked and tied to a cross to die. Often death was a very long process; that is why they had to break the knees of the thieves hanging with Jesus, because they were still alive!

Then, on day after the Sabbath, when the faithful women go the tomb, they find it empty! To add insult to injury, someone had come and stolen the body, so that the followers could not even come together around his tomb to grieve his loss! I am sure the disciples wondered about the meaning of all this.

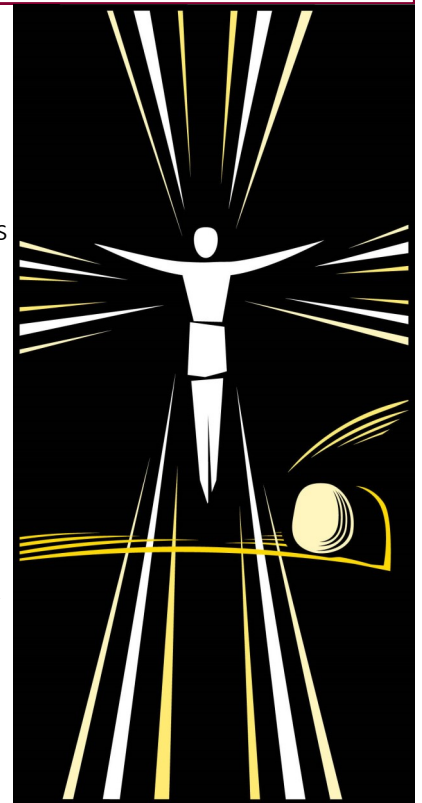
In a very odd way, we seem to be going through this same story right now. We have been locked in our homes and we are threatened with hefty fines if we are caught with friends. Once busy shopping malls are now desolate; shops are closed and no one is in the malls. What was once a vibrant show of life, and energy is now more like a cemetery for the dead!

It is at these moments that our faith is severely challenged and we are called to reflect on the meaning of life and of who we really are. The pain of isolation and deprivation we are feeling now is very similar to the pain the disciples must have felt when their Lord was taken away from them. They too would have questioned: what have we come to? What is next? Why? There is an empty taste of death in our mouths.

In this world we are constantly surrounded by death. We are aware that everything that has life will die. Entropy is part of life. And yet our Christian faith teaches us something else. The Jesus story does not end in death but in life. Jesus, the God-Man dies on the cross and is buried, and after three days he rises again. The disciples got to experience the risen Christ. They came to realise that the empty tomb was not a joke, but the source of a new and glorified life, in which we are all invited to share.

For the moment we need to live through this COVID moment of death, but we need to look forward to the moment when we can together celebrate new life. God has given us the gifts of faith, hope and love. At this time we are encouraged to remain faithful and hopeful, as we reach out in love to those who are struggling and in need. This way we will be able to live the new life of the resurrection on the other side of the COVID adventure! Let us keep faith, stay strong and sane!

Mario mssp



PARISH PRIEST: Fr Mario Zammit mssp

PARISH SECRETARY: Mary Peeris

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

CHAIR: Michelle Robertson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Domenica Ashworth;

Timothy Boyle

Margaret Bradley

Adrian Daly

Moira Di Cesare

Karen Frost

Russell Lew-Kee

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE CHAIR:

Michelle Penson (0499 891 101)

PARISH PROGRAMME COORDINATORS:

Jan McCaffrey (0423 478 504)

Elizabeth Williamson (0447195553)

PARISH OFFICE:

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e: heidelberg@cam.org.au

w: cam.org.au/heidelberg

Facebook.com/stjohnheidelberg

Instagram.com/stjohn.heidelberg

OFFICE HOURS:

Mo, Tu, Th, Fr; 9:30am to 2:30pm

MASS TIMES:

WEEKEND: Saturday: 6:00pm

SUNDAY: 8:30am, 10:30am, 5:00pm

AUSTIN HOSPITAL:

3rd Sunday of the Month at 9:30am

WEEKDAYS: 9:15am

RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION):

Saturdays at 9:45am & 5:30pm

or by appointment

BAPTISMS: Sundays at 11:45am, by

appointment

BAPTISM INFORMATION EVENING:

Last Thursday of each month at

7:30pm in the parish house, except

Dec and Jan

WEDDINGS: By appointment

FIRST RECONCILIATION,

FIRST COMMUNION, CONFIRMATION:

Parish Secretary (9457 1066)

ROSARY: Monday to Saturday after

morning Mass

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT:

Wednesday: 7:30pm - 9:00pm;

Thursday: 9:40am - 11:00am,

Friday: 8:00am - 9:00am

LECTIO DIVINA: Every second and

fourth Monday of the month at

7:00pm, in the parish house

LEGION OF MARY: Every Tuesday

night at 7:00pm in the parish house;

contact Sue 9459 8604

PARISH PILGRIM STATUE OF MARY:

To have the statue of Mary in your

home for one week contact Marj

McBroom m: 0414 289 304

ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC PARISH PRIMARY:

PRINCIPAL: Maureen Stella

55 Cape St Heidelberg 3084

t: 9459 2963;

office@sjheidelberg.catholic.edu.au

HALL HIRE:

Contact parish office during hours.

PARISH PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we the parishioners of St John's are grateful for all we have received from the men, women and children of our past. Help us to cherish and maintain our parish heritage. Most of all, enable us to be people who welcome the stranger, the needy, the sick and the lonely. Like St John, our patron saint, may we be people who love others, as your Son Jesus, asked us

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION PRAYER: My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment 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.

PRAYER TO 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.

FOR DAILY PRAYER YOU CAN VISIT:

<https://www.pray.com.au/>

**EASTER CELEBRATIONS ON
FACEBOOK.COM/STJOHNHEIDELBERG:**

HOLY SATURDAY 11TH APRIL:

9:15am—Way of the Cross

8:00pm—Vigil of the Resurrection

EASTER SUNDAY 12TH APRIL:

8:30am—Easter Mass

CELEBRATING EASTER AT HOME:

Holy Saturday: The Crucifix with a lighted candle in front of it should be our main focus for the major part of today, as we continue to meditate the passion of Jesus. Perhaps you can find time to pray the Way of the Cross together, around the cross. The Way of the Cross can be downloaded from the parish web page.

In the evening, around 6:00pm, you can cover your coffee table with a large white cloth. The abundance of cloth also celebrates the greatness of the feast. On top of the white cloth place a nice white burning candle. This candle represents Jesus that is now risen, and our own Baptism candle. Next to the candle place a big bowl of water. As a family, pray the prayer of blessing on the water. Bless yourselves with this water and then go around your house blessing each room in the house. Bless yourself with the water every time you pass by this table, and before your prayers. You can download a house blessing from the parish web site.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

THE SICK: Ken Fisher, Sally Hodgson, Alan Castles, James Artinopoulos, Doreen Booth, Charles Garraid, Giovanni Mirabella, Vita Nativo, Matais Navajas, Brett Ralph, Naoise Wheeler, Mary-Teresa Wright.

ANNIVERSARIES: Colin Anthony Bolger, Kevin Bolger

Names on the sick list remain for six weeks, unless otherwise advised.

*Please submit any items for the newsletter, including sick, recently deceased and anniversaries, by **Thursday morning**.*

FIRST READING

Acts of the Apostles 10:34,37-43

Peter addressed Cornelius and his household: 'You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea; about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil. Now I, and those with me, can witness to everything he did throughout the countryside of Judaea and in Jerusalem itself: and also to the fact that they killed him by hanging him on a tree, yet three days afterwards God raised him to life and allowed him to be seen, not by the whole people but only by certain witnesses God had chosen beforehand. Now we are those witnesses – we have eaten and drunk with him after his resurrection from the dead – and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people and to tell them that God has appointed him to judge everyone, alive or dead. It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name.'

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 117:1-2. 16-17. 22-23.

TOGETHER: This is the day the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad.

LEFT SIDE

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his love has no end.
Let the sons of Israel say:
'His love has no end.'

RIGHT SIDE

The Lord's right hand has triumphed;
his right hand raised me up.
I shall not die, I shall live
and recount his deeds

LEFT SIDE

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the corner stone.
This is the work of the Lord,
a marvel in our eyes.

TOGETHER: This is the day the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad.

SECOND READING

Colossians 3:1-4

Since you have been brought back to true life with Christ, you must look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand. Let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things that are on the earth, because you have died, and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ is revealed – and he is your life – you too will be revealed in all your glory with him.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Christ has become our paschal sacrifice; let us feast with joy in the Lord.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 20:1-9

It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb' she said 'and we don't know where they have put him.'

So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They ran together, but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first; he bent down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in. Simon Peter who was following now came up, went right into the tomb, saw the linen cloths on the ground, and also the cloth that had been over his head; this was not with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed. Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

LIFE OUT OF DEATH

Today's gospel begins on a disturbing note: Mary Magdalene's discovery of the 'real absence' of Jesus' body from his tomb. Later, of course, she will meet the risen Lord. But for now she can only run back, in high alarm, to Simon Peter 'and the other disciple, the disciple whom Jesus loved.'

Her plaintive cry, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him,' expresses both the anguish of loss and continuing love. What she fears is that some human agent (the gardener, the authorities or grave-robbers) has worked this final indignity on her beloved Lord.

Things change when Peter and the other disciple arrive at the tomb. Peter enters and sees not only the linen cloths in which Jesus' body was wrapped but also the cloth that covered his face rolled up neatly and set aside.

The 'disciple whom Jesus loved' sees what Peter sees but with a keener sense of faith. Grave robbers do not leave things neat and tidy. For him the absence of Jesus' body is not due to human agency. It points rather to a majestic, divine resumption of life.

In his very anonymity (though traditionally identified as St John) the 'disciple whom Jesus loved' stands in for all of us believers of later generations. Like him, we do not actually see the risen Lord and yet we believe. For us too, emptiness and absence need not mean failure and loss, but mysterious evidence of the divine power to bring life out of death.

Fr Brendan Byrne sj