



ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC PARISH

52 Yarra Street

HEIDELBERG

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which our parish stands, the Wurundjeri-Balluk clan of the Woi wurrung people in the Kulin Nation.

Central to the mission of St John's Parish is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe and supportive environment in which to flourish.

5TH/6TH DECEMBER 2020, SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR B

BUILDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

It came to my attention recently that a few parishioners are curious about the works taking place around our primary school here at St John's. The parents and friends involved in the school more directly are getting regular and detailed updates by Mrs Stella in their newsletters and other forums, but others not so much or at all! Mea culpa.

I am excited to say that there are some significant works taking place that will make this wonderful school even more impressive. There will be new play space areas and a resurfacing of the basketball courts. Cricket and soccer pitches will be marked out on new and larger ball sport areas. There will be new sandpits and even an edible garden for the students to tend to and enjoy. There will be a new school entry formed on Cape Street near St Monica's Hall to improve accessibility and more importantly, safety for our children and parents. On top of all that, the planting of native flora will provide shade and add beauty to our grounds. A special thank you to our principal Maureen Stella and to Fr Mario who begun this process, and to all those working towards the fulfillment of this master plan.

These works should be exciting and encouraging not just for our school but for all our community. When works are being done it shows that things are alive and that we are placing hope and trust in the future of St John's. Using the talents and gifts God grants us whilst showing appreciation for what has been handed onto us by caring for it are hallmarks of a Christian community. We truly are living the Gospel when we not only talk of growth and the building up of things in the spiritual sense, but when we also back it up with our actions. What is taking place in our parish shows that the Gospel is alive here. Let's keep building it up together by our prayers and our good works.

God bless,

Fr Joel.

EASING OF RESTRICTIONS

Although things are looking a lot more normal now than anything we've seen in Melbourne for the past 8 or so months, returning to mass will still be a bit different to what we are accustomed to. We are still inviting people to attend mass freely without booking in, either on the weekend or on weekdays. The church can seat 70 people socially distanced using the side chapel and the choir loft spaces in addition to the nave.

Things that you need to note if you are attending masses at St John's:

- ◆ You will need to record your details on the sheets provided in the foyer/narthex. If you enter through any of the side doors, please take the time to record them after the service.
- ◆ Please use the hand sanitiser available as you enter and leave the church
- ◆ Please use the wipes available at the end of the pews to clean the area where you have been sitting once you are ready to leave.
- ◆ The wearing of masks is still mandatory when indoors, unless you have a reason for not doing so.

We ask you to continue to be patient and considerate as steer our path through the easing of restrictions. Thanking you for your efforts so far.

Fr Joel

PARISH PRIEST Fr Joel Peart

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:

52 Yarra Street Heidelberg
3084

t: 9457 1066

e: heidelberg@cam.org.au

w: pol.org.au/heidelberg

Facebook.com/stjohnheidelberg

Instagram.com/stjohn.heidelberg

OFFICE HOURS:

Tue - Fri; 9:30am to 2:30pm

MASS TIMES: Tues to Sat: 9am &
Sat Vigil 6pm, Sun: 9am & 10am

RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION):

by appointment

WEDDINGS: By appointment

FIRST RECONCILIATION,

FIRST COMMUNION,

CONFIRMATION:

Parish Secretary (9457 1066)

LEGION OF MARY: meeting on
Zoom All Welcome. contact Sue
mob 0499260206.

PARISH PILGRIM STATUE OF MARY:

Statue not in circulation until
further notice mob Sue

0499260206

ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC PARISH

PRIMARY SCHOOL:

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 to do. We make this prayer, through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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.

FR JOEL ON LEAVE: From Tuesday the 8th to Saturday the 12th of December. Thanks to Fr Ted who will be celebrating the 9am masses during his absence. Fr Joel will be back to celebrate the Vigil mass on Saturday the 12th of December.

MELBOURNE OVERSEAS MISSIONS ANNUAL APPEAL: 12th & 13th

December: Thank you for your support which has, over the years, made it possible to fund many projects for disadvantaged people in Papua New Guinea, Peru, West Africa, Pakistan, Palestine and the many Islands in the Pacific. Some \$200,000 has been provided in clean water, health, education and improved living stands to people who would not otherwise have had this opportunity over the last year. This is especially in the areas of MOM activity, where the effect of the pandemic has been devastating. *Please visit <https://mom.org.au> for more information or to donate.* Please note that due to the current restrictions the Melbourne Overseas Missions Appeal of December 2020 will primarily be held online at our website. MOM appeal donation link: <https://bit.ly/CDFpayMOM>

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR MASS TIMES

CHRISTMAS EVE: THURSDAY 24TH

6pm & 9pm

MIDNIGHT MASS: starting 11:30pm
with Carols (If Permitted)

CHRISTMAS DAY: Masses at 8:30am
& 10:30am

No evening Mass on Christmas Day.

NEW YEAR'S DAY: 10:30am

No 9:00am Mass on New Year's Day

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL: This weekend, at all Masses. Money collected at this appeal will be given to our Heidelberg Vinnies conference for use among less fortunate people. Thank you for your continued support to this ministry in our parish.



PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

RECENTLY DECEASED:

ANNIVERSARY: Keith Ashworth, Peter Kingsley.

PRAYER FOR THE SICK: Elizabeth Finn, Pauline Hewatt, Giovanni Mirabella, Patrick Morel, Sam Palmieri.

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.***

ENCYCLICAL LETTER - FRATELLI TUTTI - AN OVERVIEW

OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS ON FRATERNITY AND SOCIAL FRIENDSHIP

Link: http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

CHAPTER 8: RELIGIONS AT THE SERVICE OF FRATERNITY IN OUR WORLD

Because of their respect for each human person as a creature called to be a child of God, the different religions contribute significantly to building fraternity and defending justice in society. Dialogue among religions seeks to establish friendship, peace, and harmony, and to share spiritual and moral values and experiences in a spirit of truth and love (FT 271). We all share an ultimate foundation: openness to the Father of all. Only with this awareness that we are not orphans, but children, can we live in peace with one another. Reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality of all human beings and of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity (FT 272). As visible images of the invisible God, human persons possess a transcendent dignity; they are therefore by their very nature the subjects of rights that no one may violate (FT 273). Our witnessing to God benefits our societies. The effort to seek God with a sincere heart helps us recognize one another as travelling companions, truly brothers and sisters (FT 274).

The Church, while respecting the autonomy of political life, does not remain on the sidelines in the building of a better world, nor does it fail to reawaken the spiritual energy that can contribute to the betterment of society. It is true that religious ministers must not engage in the party politics that are the proper domain of the laity, but neither can they renounce the political dimension of life itself, which involves a constant attention to the common good and a concern for integral human development (FT 276). Christian identity The Church esteems the ways in which God works in other religions, and rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. Yet we Christians are very much aware that if the music of the Gospel ceases to resonate in our very being, we will lose the joy born of compassion, the tender love born of trust, and the capacity for reconciliation that has its source in our knowledge that we have been forgiven and sent forth. For us, the wellspring of human dignity and fraternity is in the Gospel of Jesus in the Gospel of Jesus. Christ. From that source there arises, for Christian thought and for the action of the Church, the primacy given to relationship, to the encounter with the sacred mystery of the other, and to universal communion with the entire human family, as a vocation of all (FT 277).

Called to take root in every place, the Church has been present for centuries throughout the world, for that is what it means to be “catholic”. The Church can thus understand, from her own experience of grace and sin, the beauty of the invitation to universal love. Indeed, all things human are our concern. Wherever the councils of nations come together to establish the rights and duties of men and women, we are honoured to be permitted to take our place among them. For many Christians, this journey of fraternity also has a Mother, whose name is Mary. Having received this universal motherhood at the foot of the cross, she cares not only for Jesus but also for “the rest of her children”. In the power of the risen Lord, she wants to give birth to a new world, a world where all of us are brothers and sisters, where there is room for all those whom our societies discard, and where justice and peace are resplendent (FT 278). We Christians ask that we be guaranteed freedom in those countries where we are a minority, even as we ourselves promote that freedom for non-Christians in places where they are a minority. Since the important things we share are so many, it is possible to find a means of serene, ordered and peaceful coexistence, accepting our differences and rejoicing because, as children of the one God, we are all brothers and sisters (FT 279).

We ask God to strengthen unity within the Church, a unity enriched by differences reconciled by the working of the Spirit. Hearing his call, we recognize with sorrow that the process of globalization still lacks the prophetic and spiritual contribution of unity among Christians (FT 280). A journey of peace is possible between religions. Its point of departure must be God’s way of seeing things, because “God does not see with his eyes, God sees with his heart” (FT 281). We believers are challenged to return to our sources in order to concentrate on what is essential—worship of God and love for our neighbour—lest some of our teachings, taken out of context, end up feeding forms of contempt, hatred, xenophobia or negation of others. The truth is that violence has no basis in our fundamental religious convictions, but only in their distortion (FT 282). Sincere and humble worship of God bears fruit not in discrimination, hatred and violence, but in respect for the sacredness of life, in respect for the dignity and freedom of others, and in loving commitment to the welfare of all. Religious convictions about the sacred meaning of human life permit us to recognize the fundamental values of our common humanity, values in the name of which we can and must cooperate, build and dialogue, pardon and grow; this will allow different voices to unite in creating a melody of sublime nobility and beauty, instead of fanatical cries of hatred (FT 283).

As religious leaders, we are called to be true “people of dialogue,” to cooperate in building peace not as intermediaries but as authentic mediators. Each one of us is called to be an artisan of peace, by uniting and not dividing, by extinguishing hatred and not holding onto it, by opening paths of dialogue and not constructing new walls (FT284).

FIRST READING

Isaiah 40:1-5. 9-11

'Console my people, console them' says your God. 'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for, that she has received from the hand of the Lord double punishment for all her crimes.' A voice cries, 'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low, let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley; then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion. Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem. Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God.' Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him. The prize of his victory is with him, his trophies all go before him. He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 84:9-14

RESPONSE: Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

I will hear what the Lord God has to say,
a voice that speaks of peace,
peace for his people.

His help is near for those who fear him
and his glory will dwell in our land.

R./

Mercy and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have embraced.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth
and justice look down from heaven.

R./

The Lord will make us prosper
and our earth shall yield its fruit.
Justice shall march before him
and peace shall follow his steps.

R./

SECOND READING

2 Peter 3:8-14

There is one thing, my friends, that you must never forget: that with the Lord, 'a day' can mean a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises, as anybody else might be called slow; but he is being patient with you all, wanting nobody to be lost and everybody to be brought to change his ways. The Day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire and fall apart, the earth and all that it contains will be burnt up. Since everything is coming to an end like this, you should be living holy and saintly lives while you wait and long for the Day of God to come, when the sky will dissolve in flames and the elements melt in the heat. What we are waiting for is what he promised: the new heavens and new earth, the place

where righteousness will be at home. So then, my friends, while you are waiting, do your best to live lives without spot or stain so that he will find you at peace.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths:
all people shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way. A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight, and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

PREPARING THE WAY OF THE LORD

Today the focus lies upon John the Baptist, whose appearance and voice in the wilderness indicate the fulfilment of what Isaiah foretells in the First Reading: the 'good news' ('gospel') of the coming of the Lord, for whom 'a way' has to be prepared. 'The Lord' is, of course, Jesus himself, Messiah and Son of God. The 'way' that has to be prepared for him is no longer, as in Isaiah, a road back to Jerusalem for those who have been in exile. It is the 'way' of conversion of heart called for in John's message and enacted in the baptism he celebrates for the crowds.

Beyond the summons to repentance, John points to the One who is to follow him as a 'more powerful One' who will 'baptise', not with water, but with the Holy Spirit. This prediction foreshadows Jesus' ministry in Mark: he will be the 'stronger One' who will bind up the 'strong man' (Satan; see 3:22-27) who currently holds human beings in thrall, alienating them from God and from their own true humanity. Empowered by the Spirit (1:9-11), Jesus will reclaim human lives from all the captivities (sin, ignorance, disease, etc.) that hold them bound, and draw them into his own life-giving intimacy with God. The 'good tidings' of homecoming from exile that Isaiah proclaimed to Israel now becomes the 'gospel' of humanity's return to its true home within the family of God.

Fr Brendan Byrne SJ