

St Thomas the Apostle

Catholic Parish, Clyde North

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Dear Parishioners,

The big news keeps coming! We have learnt yesterday evening that Pope Francis has appointed our bishop, Patrick O'Regan, to become the new Archbishop of Adelaide. He will be installed as the new Archbishop there within the coming two months. We pray to God that he will be blessed and strengthened for his new appointment. We pray for a deep spirit of gratitude for the gifts and blessings that have been poured upon us in the Sale Diocese during his five years as our bishop. He has been a wonderful pastor and shepherd for us, and I'm sure we've all enjoyed his presence with us, his wise leadership as our bishop, and his humour.

I hope many of you are able to stay in close contact with our parish through the parish Webpage and the parish Facebook page. I thank those who have responded to my video message and I appreciate your prayerful encouragement and support. From the parish office we intend to communicate daily through the Webpage and Facebook.

Also, don't forget the many, many resources for adults, children and families on Formed.org. If you are not already connected to Formed.org I remind you that access is free to all in our parish and the staff at our parish office will gladly assist you to connect.

We are in our Third Week of Lent and today at Mass our First Reading comes from the Prophet Hosea. Pope Francis in his message for Lent 2020 also cites the prophet Hosea. Pope Francis writes, *"In this favourable season may we allow ourselves to be led like Israel into the desert (cf. Hosea 2:14), so that can at last hear our Spouse's voice and allow it to resound more deeply within us"*. The actual words of Hosea are beautiful to contemplate, ***"Therefore, I am going to allure her (Israel); I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her."***

It feels like we are now in a kind of "wilderness". Lots of our normal life has been stripped away. But as I said yesterday, we are not alone; never alone. God is with us. Wherever two or three gather Jesus promises that he is with us (Matthew 18:20). He promises to be with us always, to the end of time (Matthew 28:20).

This is the most unusual Lent in my life's experience, yet both the prophet Hosea and Pope Francis remind us that if we stay attuned to God that this is also a Lenten time when God will speak tenderly and lovingly to us a time of great grace.

So especially in this unusual time, but still our season of Lent, I urge you to find strength and consolation through your family prayer. This is a time to pray and to listen for God's voice. It is a time when we can watch Mass online and gain other spiritual nourishment online, but above all it is a time to pray together in our families, to pray together and to listen for God's voice.

Our Lady Help of Christians, pray for us. St Thomas the Apostle, pray for us. St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, pray for us.

May God bless and protect us,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Denis O'Bryan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a heart symbol between the first and last names.

Fr Denis O'Bryan (Parish Priest)