

# St Thomas the Apostle

## Catholic Parish, Clyde North

Phone: 03 5998 0947

0407 085 532

E-mail: denisobryan13@gmail.com

Parish Office: 50 Heather Grove, Cranbourne East.

PO Box 6089, Clyde, Vic, 3978



23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

Dear Parishioners,

It's been a very strange experience for both parishioners and priests to have a weekend without our usual parish Masses.

What is heartening to know is that we are united in prayer and that the technology of our time allows so much access to spiritual nourishment. Today we have heard that all churches are to be closed but there is one church that is definitely still open and never more important, and that is the domestic church. As St John Paul II reminded us over 30 years ago, ***"The family is the domestic church."*** Our active family prayer is very important now, and as we can't all be together in the same building to pray it is even more important that we don't forget to pray for one another. I am celebrating Mass every day and you are all very much in my prayers in every Mass.

We are entering into a time in our country and in our parishes like no other that we have experienced. So, there are some aspects of our parish life that I wish to address.

**Pastoral Care:** Most importantly, the bishops of Victoria including Archbishop-elect O'Regan, who is the Administrator of the Sale Diocese until he goes to Adelaide, have urged the clergy ***"to make themselves available to visit individuals, especially those who are unwell or vulnerable. This includes Viaticum and all the opportunities for healing through the Anointing of the Sick and Reconciliation."*** Parishioners who wish to avail themselves of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick are asked to please ring the parish office to make an appointment with Fr Denis.

**Our parish office** is still open, and our parish staff are still working, and we are committed to being as available as possible to our parish families and to all in our local community. We do, though, ask that you limit your visits to the parish office and presbytery and where possible ring before visiting. All our parish staff, Christine, Fiona, Corralee and Sr Julie remain available through both phone and email. Please keep in touch with us; we are grateful for any practical suggestions you may have.

If you are an **approved parish volunteer** (with Working With Children Check) and are willing to offer practical assistance to people in the coming weeks please offer your name to the parish office. If you are yourself in need of some practical assistance, please contact the

parish office. This practical assistance may also mean just giving people, especially those who are vulnerable, an occasional contact phone call.

Our **Parish Stewardship** remains important. The parish needs the continued support of its parishioners. The electronic giving to which most parishioners are committed will continue as usual. I ask those parishioners who usually contribute to the Stewardship through envelope giving to please contact the parish office for further advice. With the prospect of preparing to start the building of our church and parish offices later this year it is important that we try to maintain our financial support for the Stewardship Program.

The **financial support for the priests** in our parishes, including myself, does not come from the Stewardship Program, either our stipend or the needs of the presbytery. So, I am seeking your assistance in maintaining support for the parish in this way too. Please contact the parish office to discuss how you can continue to support the presbytery collection.

**We are highly aware that the financial circumstances of our parishioners might also change in these very uncertain times.** Please contact us promptly if your own circumstances change and you need to alter your giving or need other practical support.

We have a very dedicated parish staff who all have the parish very much at heart. We set aside an hour of our time each week to pray that our own lives in Christ may be deepened and for the needs of our parish. During Lent this year we have spent our prayer time each week contemplating St John's Gospel account of the Washing of the Feet. We don't know how we will celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday this year, but the humble, loving service that is expressed in the Washing of the Feet is surely something that should be a hallmark of the lives of all our parishioners at this time.

May God bless us and protect us in this testing time. St Thomas the Apostle pray for 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)

With: Sr Julie Ogbole SON (Pastoral Associate), Christine Salu & Fiona Goh (Parish Secretaries) & Corralee Floyd (Parish Safeguarding Officer)