

Voice from the Vicarage 5th November 2021 Special Bumper Edition....

Dear All,

Today is 'Bonfire Night' and in the UK, Brits remember the 'Gunpowder plot', when a group of conspirators — the most famous being Guy Fawkes — were caught trying to blow up King James 1 and Parliament, with the desire to restore a Catholic monarchy... It's a complex story and while, as I said in my sermon on Sunday, Jesus distances himself from change by anarchy, the gradual exclusion of Catholics had caused much ferment, frustration and anger.

I suppose its just in the nature of things, one person's celebration or victory can be another person's defeat. Even today serious Catholics do not sit comfortably with the annual celebrations...

WE ARE BACK IN CHURCH.....

This is good news, **but** our joy must be muted by the fact that we are not yet **ALL** able to gather freely together for worship on Sundays.

Most people have been vaccinated. I have myself, and encourage others to do the same, but there are folk in our community who feel strongly that people should be free to decide for themselves whether to receive the vaccine. As a matter of conscience, some of those have chosen not to be vaccinated.

Under current rules vaccinated and unvaccinated persons are only permitted to join together in worship in limited numbers. This is certainly the case for the next three weeks. Further easing of restrictions are due to take place from November 24th, when the so called 'vaccinated economy' begins, but it is not yet clear what this will mean for gatherings for worship. There are welcome indications that faith groups are making representations to the government, protesting about any long term segregation in Victoria, the suggested rules for which will be among the most severe in the world, and beyond the generally agreed medical necessity. I share that disquiet, and would find it unacceptable to divide this congregation and community on such lines. But in the meantime let me share with you the fruit of discussion with the parish council about provision for the next few weeks. And let me say, I have so much appreciated the gracious and thoughtful way the Council have responded to these difficult circumstances.

DAILY WORSHIP and SUNDAYS @ 8am

Under the current rules, up to thirty persons may gather without distinction. This means all our midweek worship (masses and evening prayer) can welcome anyone. There need to be no checking of vaccination status, though I must point out that folk are required to sign in and wear masks.

This is also true of the 8am Sunday Mass according to the Book of Common Prayer, which from this Sunday will also include a couple of hymns.

To be honest, our daily pattern of prayer means we are probably offering more opportunities of this kind than any other parish in the diocese, which makes me both sad and proud. (If I boast I boast in the Lord!)

SUNDAYS @ 10 and 12 For the next three Sundays there will be two further masses that will include music and our much loved cantors. (Thanks be to God for our organist Stephen by the way who is insisting on playing at all three masses on Sundays)

There are so many folk who are anxious about life at the moment. The unvaccinated are anxious about their exclusion from society and what it means for employment and family and among some vaccinated folk are fearful of catching the virus. Whether this fear is exaggerated or not (and there is much that I could say about the rhetoric of our leaders on this matter) there is an existing pastoral need for those who remain concerned about being close to the unvaccinated.

So, **for the next three Sundays at 10 am** up to 65 vaccinated persons are invited to gather in the church itself while, because of density rules, up to 15 persons who do not wish to declare their status can gather in big room of the 'Parish House'. (Enter by the fountain gate). The service will be live streamed into the House and communion will be administered to folk in both places. This is the 'best worst' scenario but at least it means that all who come to the mass at 10 will be on the same Christ Church 'precinct' and receive the Blessed Sacrament at the same time.

Coffee and tea will be available for a short time after the service served from the kitchen at the 'Lamb and Flag'. We can't invite everybody inside due to number restrictions, so the joy and the logistics of that might be weather affected..

There will be a third mass for up to 30 vaccinated or unvaccinated people at 12 noon. It will by and large be the same format and music as the 10.

Some who know about the provision of this third mass have asked why we need it. Numbers-wise we may not, but I am not prepared to give anyone the impression that the 10am mass which has only vaccinated people in the church building, albeit with others in the 'Parish House', is in any sense the 'principal' Sunday mass, as it has of course been regarded hitherto...

To suggest that it is satisfactory to have a principal mass or maybe any mass with only one category of person allowed in the church building is to undermine something essential about the Eucharist and the saving act of Christ at its heart.

I realise that some disagree with me about the importance of this, but I ask that you respect my conscience on this matter as your parish priest.

But now to a bit of other and happier news in this 'bumper' edition of the Voice!

Praying for 'our' soon to be priests..

On Saturday November 27th our Deacon Russell will be ordained to the sacred priesthood by Archbishop Philip at St Paul's Cathedral.

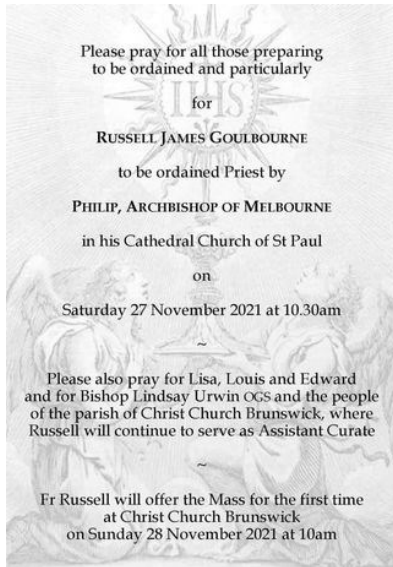
At the same celebration, 'our' Deacon Katie will also be ordained. She may now be in Altona, for we clergy are 'movers', but she still has so much of a place in our hearts here.

Pray for them both as they prepare for this life changing gift. Pray that their hearts will be ready and steadfast!

Details of who may attend the cathedral service are not yet clear due to Covid restrictions, but when such matters are made clear I will let you know.

Father Russell will preside at the Eucharist for the first time at the 10 am mass on the following day, the Feast of Christ the King.

One of the joys of a parish priest is to guide deacons as they prepare to offer the Mass for the first time. It's a process both tender and firm...It is a goodly tradition that the parish priest stands next to the new priest as a reassuring and discreet prompter on the first occasion...



The Annual Meeting...

At 12 noon on that day, our Annual Meeting will take place. There will be no third mass that day. At present the format and venue is not clear, so watch this space!

However the date for joining the electoral roll has now passed and John Vincent and I will update it over the next week, in readiness for nominations of people for churchwarden (2) and parish councillors (up to 9).

We have an interesting year ahead of us in 2022.

We can trust in the Lord and have good hope, for every year is a 'Year of Grace'!

News just in...our Cara back in town

We will have a bit of a homecoming on that Sunday!

Our Cara, who is testing her vocation to the religious life has been offered the opportunity of some rest time in Australia and will have a few weeks based with Deacon Katie. How good it will be to see her! In an email this morning she was telling me that she walked past a pub called 'The Lamb and Flag' on what I assume was a prayerful novice like walk (so she couldn't go in!!) which made her chuckle..



Talking of 264.....

This coming week we will do a bit of what they call a 'soft opening' serving coffees from the servery hatch along with croissants, bacon 'butties' etc...



Please pray for the gift of patience among any who are waiting for me to make them coffee from the beast machine that I'm just learning to tame...had a couple of lessons from our resident expert Albert in barista-ing, but will be relying on my winning smile....

We won't open the café space just yet, but it is certainly taking shape.

We will be recruiting folk willing to learn to use the 'beast' and/or share in the serving ministry at 'The Lamb' as the ministry unfolds. If you have an interest let Albert Young know. He will be 'targeting' a few souls as well....

CHANGE in SERVICE TIMES

For the time being I would like to change the Tuesday and Friday morning masses to the earlier time of 7 am. (actually it's a revival of the times I inherited when I came to Christ Church) The reason relates to 'The Lamb' to allow me to be there for opening on those mornings for the first season of its life....

The change will be from this coming week...

This WEEKEND will mark a change in a number of lives as their

Saturdays will no longer be given over to recording, editing and uploading the Sunday Mass, a stern necessity of the long periods of lockdown. I think those who contributed so freely of their time, expertise and love to this endeavour can lay down the burden with a strong sense that their labours have brought many blessings both to our parish family and to very many folk beyond who have looked to them as a mainstay of their keeping on in difficult days...I was grateful to Cecilia Fairlie who gave particular thanks for this ministry during the intercessions during last week's mass.

Of course 'life is changed not ended'. Our Jesse will be managing the 'live streaming' of the 10am masses from the church to the Parish House from this Sunday.

And finally, on **MONDAY at 10.30 am** the funeral Requiem mass will be offered for the soul of Heather de Viell-Richter. You will be welcome. Please pray for her. May she rest in peace...and rise!



Not all sacrifice...Cecilia and Ruth have been video buddies on Sunday mornings. Last week they began with breakfast in some café somewhere. The location was hidden from their hardworking vicar.

Hope to see many of you on Sunday

+Lindsay