

Voice from the Vicarage March 10th 2022

Dear All,

A little while ago someone who receives this little epistle and reads it every week mentioned that the print face was a little small. As a gesture of goodwill towards this increasingly senior citizen (whose name discretion forbids me to mention, though they know who they are!) I have upped this side of the page by one percentage point. Sometimes I'm amazed by my own thoughtfulness.....

On a more serious note, all that might be happening in Brunswick is simply a 'bit part' on a national and world stage overshadowed by human misery caused by natural disaster in the case of NSW and Queensland, and disastrous misuse of power in Eastern Europe. There has been perhaps understandable frustration with the way governments have responded to the flooding. It comes with the territory of being a leader that to justifiable blame is added blame beyond your doing, generally born of not knowing who else to blame.

The invasion of Ukraine is of a different man made order. The added evidence that the international rules of engagement in the unfortunate case of war (which owe much to the Christian idea of the 'just war') are being ignored by the Russian leadership undermines any legitimate claim (if indeed there is any) Russia might have had in declaring Ukraine not to be a sovereign state. Strategically planned misery to civilians, even children, is justifiably a crime, and makes future peace and reconciliation a distant, far distant hope.

The Christian Church has a duty to name injustice. In Russia, the Church has remained, with a few exceptions, unimpressively silent at the atrocities being committed upon brother and sister Christians in Ukraine. This is surely a reminder of the dangers of too close a link between Church and State. The Christian faith is lived in nations, but can never be 'of' the nation without fear of loss of its identity as a divine society. The confusion between 'of' and 'in' was a key reason, by the way, that St John Henry Newman left the Church **of** England. He came to the conclusion that there is no biblical warrant for national Churches, and that the 'of' had tamed the Church...

My prayer is that the Russian Church might be given strength to be braver, and as I pray for them, I pray that I too might be more brave in my life here about what the Church believes to be true.....

Well, now to life in Brunswick....

I hope you have been able to begin Lent as well as you can. Remember that if you didn't quite start your attempts at deeper devotion on Ash Wednesday you have not missed the boat! And if you've already lapsed from any discipline you had decided upon, just begin again.

Remember. Small things delight our Lord!

One way in which I have failed is the preparation of my first session on 'The Good Shepherd'. I fear the sessions, like London buses or

Number 19 trams, will come all in a rush... my apologies.

Seven minutes on....

But the 'Seven minutes on....' Thursday evening @ 6.30 series is well on track. A good number have tuned in to Father Russell's seven mins on being a pilgrim, available on the parish website. Tonight, Deacon Jack talks on being an intercessor, and the week after Sister Cara on being a contemplative.

LIFE at The Lamb

On Sunday @ 6 we begin something of an experiment. Worship and study on Sydney Road.

Of course, the café will not have the stillness of the church nor the protection of anonymity provided by stone and stained glass. We will be exposed to the elements— whatever is happening on 260 and on the road and in the sight of any who pass by.



.....but the sign will definitely say 'OPEN'...on Sundays @ 6

This little 'exposure' came to my mind when I saw some photos of Ukrainians huddled in an air raid shelter with the sound of sirens and bombs as their priest offered the mass with them. Our exposure will be as nothing, but it will add something gospel hearted to the sights and sounds of the Sydney Road, and surely be a blessing.

It will have a simple format and it will be for an hour.

We will make full use of Deacon Jack's musical talents on our new, state of the art, keyboard, with a bit of extra accompaniment from Bella. In a series called 'Faith in the City', I will be reflecting on Christian life in the city of Philippi and what it might say to us seeking to live that same life in Melbourne.

Simple bread and cheese available after for any who like to stay and a beer or glass of wine or cup of coffee (by donation).

And finally. it's all beginning to kick off! No sooner have we got all the transformation required for 'The Lamb' done and dusted... next week we meet with the architect and builders transforming the vicarage into the parish house, and on the same day, the Education department architects and builders come to meet in readiness for a construction start around March 23rd!

More dust until it's done! Much love, **+Lindsay**