

Voice from the Vicarage 6th July 2023

Dear All,

Well, what a lovely Sunday it was!

A cheeky prayer?

You may know that every Saturday evening, the few of us who gather to pray at 6pm for Evening Prayer always ask the Lord, during the time of intercessions, to bless us at mass the following day with one or two folk we are not expecting.

It's perhaps a bit of a cheeky prayer. And certainly, we can't *demand* such a blessing from the Lord, so we do hedge the prayer about with two caveats which we name before the Lord week by week. The first is that we only ask Him to answer our prayer with such blessings if we, as a community, will be ready to welcome that person or those persons as if they are indeed a gift from our Saviour to us. The second tempering of our prayer is that He should only answer it if the message such a person would hear will truly be a message faithful to the Gospel, preached with sincerity and love.

I can't tell you the joy it gives me to tell someone who arrives at Christ Church for the first time, or returns after a considerable period away, that, whatever the circumstances that led them to come to mass on that particular day, I believe their presence is an answer to prayer. And I was able to say that to more than one person last Sunday!

Every parish will say it wants to grow. But does every parish deserve such a blessing? In the Bible it seems that God both bestows his blessing and withholds his blessing. And why shouldn't he?

A Church of the 'unutterable beauty'

Let's be honest, Christ Church might be old by Melbourne standards, but God managed to survive for a considerable time before the foundation stone of our beloved CCB was laid, and God would survive if Christ Church left the scene. So let's so live our life together in ways which might mean our Bless-ed Lord *wants* us to survive! Because we are bearers of his Light and Joy and Mercy and Hope in this neighbourhood!

The call to faithfulness; the call to be a community different from the world by its desire to have the Divine Love as its dynamic heart; the call to be a servant hearted, penitent and praising community, a community that finds its joy in the Scriptures and the Sacraments; the call to be generous. Let's be a true company of friends ready, without any hedging, to embrace others into the company...How beautiful the Church is when it is truly open to God's transforming Grace!

The Lamb buzzing...

The Lamb was buzzing during the coffee hour last week, which reminds me to thank those who offer the hospitality there after mass. Did you know it's a member of the 8am congregation who sets out the cups etc. every week. A gift from 8 to 10! Thank you **Anne Bediaga**! Serving a bit of a crowd can be quite a pressure, and it takes a little tact to prise cups away from folk who don't want to leave, but what a delightful pressure! What a lovely lingering!



The café was somewhat quieter later in the day as around 16 of us gathered around Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians. The café space is such a cosy place to meet, and fortunately there were no disasters with danishes this week. Great that our cantor Anna and Sam who sometimes plays the trumpet have offered to join the little crew helping out with the music, in addition to our Tess who is somewhere in Europe as I write!

I suspect the offer of help was a generous response to my keyboard skills, or lack of them, but of course A & S, being good Christians, didn't say so! It will be a blessing this Sunday @ 6 as we continue with St Paul and 'The Glorious Ministry of the Church' looking this week at what he says about reconciliation.

Oh I do like to be beside the seaside.....

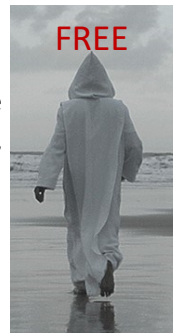
While it was a good crowd in church last week, we did of course miss **Cara**, our pastoral assistant, who is currently on a four week placement in the seaside parish of Flinders and Balnarring...She informs me it's



not all lattes and lying on the beach, and lo and behold here's the proof...She is missing us of course, but she has been overwhelmed by the kindness of the folk there.

And finally, I took advantage of the couple of

days 'mini break' at the café to go to the 'movie house' on Tuesday. I haven't been for ages, and it was my first visit to the Westgarth in Northcote. Very 1920's and Art deco! Aside from the eye watering cost of a decent size glass of wine to get one through the show—more than the cost of the tickets - it was great. You might be forgiven for thinking it was a bit of a 'busman's holiday'. A documentary of cloistered monks and nuns talking about their life, the film is part of the HSBC Spanish Film festival. The number in the 'congregation' in the cinema was fewer than at some of our low masses here, but the film was amazing. Deep and affecting, and not an ounce of cynicism about the call of the cloister. The paradox of commitment was evident in the film's title : **'LIBRES'** ...free... The makers understood.



Hope you might be **'libre'** on Sunday to experience just a touch of that amazing and mysterious **'Libertad'**.

Masses @ 8 & 10

Very much love,

+ *Lindsay*