

19th March 2020

Dear friends here at St Therese's,

It has just been announced, after 10am Mass this morning, the Feast of St Joseph, that all public parish Masses have been discontinued until further notice, at the direction of the Victorian diocesan bishops, following the professional medical and scientific advice, given the rampant virulence of the Coronavirus COVID19. In other parts of the world, it has spread exponentially before appropriate precautions have been taken by public authorities and individuals unaware of its infectious and insidious nature. The wisest advice is to stay at home wherever possible, particularly for those who are older and those whose health is compromised in any way, through medical conditions or ongoing treatments of all sorts.

At present, St Therese's Primary School remains open, on government advice, but nothing is certain about future arrangements, with parents having the right and freedom to make their own decisions about what they consider best for their children.

These are unprecedented and uncertain times, but not a time for irrational panic and fear, just a time to take sensible precautions to isolate ourselves from others, in terms of touching, shaking hands, kissing, and keeping at a distance of a metre (socially distancing), washing hands thoroughly regularly, and using antibacterial soap where possible.

For the sake of both those been visited and those who generously give of their time and energy to visit, we need to suspend regular services for Communion to the Sick, visits to nursing homes, and of course, all parish meetings, for the time being.

We'll continue to keep each other and our families and friends in our thoughts, prayers and concerns.

As parish priest, I will continue to remember you all, particularly at Sunday Mass, which I will celebrate privately, remembering your needs and intentions. And I will continue to respond to urgent calls in critical circumstances.

Meanwhile, let's remember the words of Jesus, from Matthew's Gospel of Ash Wednesday: "But when you pray, go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you." Sound advice for turbulent times!

For the time being, the parish church will be opened each day from 10.00am to 3.00pm for private prayer and devotion, but please remember that prayer is effective, wherever and whenever you feel comfortable to take time out for personal reflection or meditation.

Let us hope these strange times pass before too long and that we make the most of the extra time to ourselves to get things done at home and catch up on the things we never get around to, in the normal busyness and hustle and bustle of everyday life.

The sky will not fall in, and the sun will still come up each day (allowing for Melbourne weather!))!! The end is not at all near!! All things must pass.

Warmest wishes and good health to all.



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