

Bellerive - Lindisfarne Catholic Parish

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Fr Richard Ross PP

Dear Parish Family,

On this Ascension Sunday, we are called to contemplate the absence of Jesus from our lives. Never has this seemed so relevant as the present experience of being deprived of the celebration of Eucharist. When we gather for Eucharist, Christ is present in four ways: in the gathered assembly, in the presiding priest acting in the person of Christ, in the Word proclaimed and in the bread and wine blessed, broken and shared. (Vatican II, Sacrosanctum Concilium No.7)

I invite you to prayerfully consider which of these you are aching for the most, and what this might tell you about your relationship with Christ and our faith community. There is no wrong answer, as the same Christ is present in all of them, though I have certainly heard from many who are keen to receive Communion once more, and others who are yearning for contact with the wider community for the hope and strength and support they experience through the love and care of others.

I invite you to sit with your experience of the absence of Eucharist and speak to Jesus about what he is inviting you to consider in your relationship with him. In his visit to Australia in 1986, Pope John Paul II invited us to “discover Christ in the poor and lonely, the sick and troubled, the disabled, the aged, the unwanted”... perhaps if we discover Christ anew in those deeply human experiences, we will find he is present even more powerfully in the Eucharist when we are able to celebrate again.

Whilst this is a rich focus for prayer on the Feast of the Ascension, our Parish Pastoral Council is working hard to make the necessary arrangements for the celebration of public Mass in our parish. The primary obstacles concern the logistics of choosing and supervising those who attend, and ensuring that the appropriate cleaning protocols are followed. The PPC determined that we would use the next few weeks during Stage One easing of restrictions where only 10 people are allowed to attend religious services to get the systems established and ready for an opening of our parish churches in Stage Two, after June 15.

To this end, **we need volunteers** who are under the age of 70, who have no issues with their own health and who would be willing to supervise the attendance register, ensure that only those with bookings actually gain admittance to the church, ensure that the number limits and social distancing requirements are observed and assist with a thorough cleaning and disinfecting of the church after

the service. Please contact the Parish Office if you are in a position to help. This would be necessary for public celebrations of both Sunday and weekday Mass to proceed. The advice of the Government still remains that anyone over the age of 70 ought remain in their own home, so I also feel somewhat compromised by providing a temptation to break this isolation.

In other news, something of the broader context of the speedy departure of Fr Fidelis was made clear this week. The Archbishop announced that he has accepted the resignation of Fr Michael Tate as Vicar General and appointed Fr Shammi Perera as Vicar General of the Archdiocese. Fr Shammi will continue in his role as Administrator of the Cathedral. Obviously, the appointment of Fr Fidelis, which has now been expanded to that of Assistant Priest at the Cathedral Parish, provides the support Fr Shammi will need in this new role.

With best wishes for the week ahead,

Fr Richard

Celebrating Pentecost

At the end of Luke’s Gospel, the disciples are told to “stay in the city until you are clothed with the power from on high”. In the days between the Ascension and Pentecost, we too wait and prepare our hearts to receive the Holy Spirit. As we prepare for this great Feast, spend some time in quiet prayer each day. Invite the Holy Spirit to enlighten your mind and help you to understand the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in your life. Where do you see the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in your life and the people around you? (*Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Right Judgment, Courage, Reverence, Wonder and Awe*) When do you experience the Fruits of the Holy Spirit? (*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, and self-control*) Gal 5:22-23)

Write about some of these, record the names of Spirit Filled people in our community and send them in to the Parish Office before Friday and we will use them as a prayer focus for our Pentecost Mass. Also, listen to Fr Richard’s Pentecost Message on the parish Facebook page and record your own brief witness statement to camera and we will include it in the parish video tribute to the life of the Holy Spirit in our community.

There are also some excellent prayer resources on-line to assist in preparing for Pentecost. We need the Holy Spirit more this year than ever: let us pray earnestly

*Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created
and you shall renew the face of the earth.*

Next week’s Readings: Acts 2:1-11; 1 Cor 12:3-7,12-13; Jn 20::19