



Parish News

Anglican Parish of Colac



Ss Johns' Colac, Christ Church Birregurra, St Andrew's Alvie

Parish Priest: Fr Ryan Austin-Eames

0466 548 937

Parish Secretary: Valerie May

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Sunday 25th October ~ Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost

Parish Diary

See the Parish Facebook page for details of services.
www.facebook.com/ColacAnglican.

Birthday Wishes

Birthday wishes to Henry Austin-Eames who celebrated his second birthday on Saturday 24th October, from all Parishioners.

From the Bishop COVID-19

There has been some agitation in the press recently from some church leaders, including our own Archbishop, criticising the Victorian Government for not relaxing the regulations about church opening. Some have pointed out that it is now possible for a hotel dining room to have plenty of dining patrons not wearing masks, but that it is not possible for a church across the road from the pub, to offer mass for even 20 people when high levels of COVID safe plans are in place.

While I understand people's disappointment, I want to encourage you all to keep calm heads and hearts, to keep the regulations which have had a great impact in controlling the virus in Victoria, and to see our current discomfort as the cost of being good citizens in a society that is increasingly tired and anxious. Our congregations ought to be islands of non-anxious reflection and prayer rather than places of stress, anxiety and blaming others.

There are 4 reasons why I am strongly in support of maintaining the Premier's current stance.

First, whatever regulations apply to Christian Churches must also be practically applicable across our multi-faith community. There are language and cultural issues in some faith communities that make compliance difficult. Second, within the Christian churches there is a wide diversity of practice. We Anglicans are used to a regulated environment, and we are generally compliant people. This cannot be said for all Christian groups. It is hard to imagine how physical distancing and sanitation levels could be maintained in say a Messy Church service, or in a mega church where two thousand congregants dance, sing and move around as part of worship.

Third, in the USA it is hard right conservative Christians who are at the forefront of not observing physical distancing, or mask wearing, and who peddle outrageous theories about the origins and purpose of COVID. Such

groups exist in Australia and their influence would be damaging to the common purpose of controlling the spread of COVID-19.

Finally, I believe Christians ought to play our part in the governance of our society as good citizens with a strong commitment to the common good, with a special care for the poor and disadvantaged. At present we need non-anxious leaders who can offer a cogent narrative about the future and who can work with other leaders to encourage all facets of our community to work together for the common good.

The last thing we need is to feel sorry for ourselves, to make comparisons with others, or to look to score easy political points from sadness, misery and real difficulties.

COVID restrictions

There has been some relaxation for regional Victoria but alas religious gatherings remain outdoors only. This includes ceremonies, with no sharing of food, drink, crockery, utensils, vessels or other equipment by participants. The number of people allowed has increased to 20 but please note that this is plus one faith leader i.e. a maximum of 21 with any assistants or servers to be included in the 20 permitted attendees.

Note as from 1 November the limitation for outdoor ceremonies will increase to 50 but at this stage indoor services are not permitted other than private worship attended by one household or bubble plus the faith leader. Weddings and Funerals can be conducted inside a church within their respective approved numbers.

A COVID Reflection from the Bishop of Ballarat

"The importance of precaution cannot be overestimated. The recommended measures may cause dislocation of habits and pleasures. They may even interfere with or even prevent our Church services. But there is good reason for them all. There is danger in disregarding them. They tend to a speedy passing of the epidemic. ...

It is not for fun or fad, or fancy, that the precautions from least to greatest are being urged or enforced upon the people... No part of the State is immune... no locality safe from outbreak. It is therefore incumbent upon all that the directions of the Health Authorities should be observed to the fullest extent... If this is done, and it can be done without panic or hysteria, we may hope that many parishes will escape unscathed ... But we beg our readers

not to regard the epidemic with indifference or themselves as wiser than the expert authorities.

There is some diversity of opinion in respect to the limitation or suspension of public worship. One minister of religion, whose faith seems to us to outbalance his reason, tells us that if he were Premier of the State, he would call the people together in their churches to prayer. We are thankful our brother is not Premier. To prayer, certainly; together, certainly not! The gathering of people provides the most fruitful field of infection. Divine mercy is not strained, nor the Hearing Ear limited to company. It is surely nothing less than Christian duty that our congregations submit themselves patiently to measures, which have, like prayers, the amelioration of this pestilence as their object.

If it be considered permissible and wise, steps will doubtless be taken in each parish to provide opportunity for intercessions often and by a few. If in this there seems danger, however small... then let the prayers of the faithful ascend from individual homes and hearts. We must be wise, unselfish and meek-spirited in the practice of our religion. Our wills and even our sacred rights must yield to the stern teaching of sad and terrible experiences elsewhere. Nothing we can do or forego can be too great an addition to our prayers for the deliverance of Australia from this present evil. Indeed, the prayers of sincere faith with the actions, or restraints of common-sense minds will make an offering of an afflicted people from which Almighty God will in no sense turn His face."

+ Maxwell Maxwell-Gumbleton 3rd Bishop of Ballarat, writing to the Diocese regarding the 'Spanish Flu' in 1919.

Gospel Readings for the Week:

Monday 26th October - Sunday 1st November

Monday 26 th	Luke 13:10-17
Tuesday 27 th	Luke 13:18-21
Wednesday 28 th	Luke 6:12-16
Thursday 29 th	Luke 13:31-35
Friday 30 th	Luke 14:1-6
Saturday 31 st	Luke 14:1 (2-6) 7-11
Sunday 1 st	Matthew 5:1-12

We Remember the Anniversaries of

October 29th Sheena Stewart '18

*Eternal Rest Grant Unto Them O Lord
And Let Light Perpetual Shine Upon Them*

Items for the Parish News can be forwarded to Catherine Bennett via email (catebenn@gmail.com) or left in the 'blue box' at the hall by midday Tuesday.

He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the lore and the prophets.' ~ Mtt 22:37-40