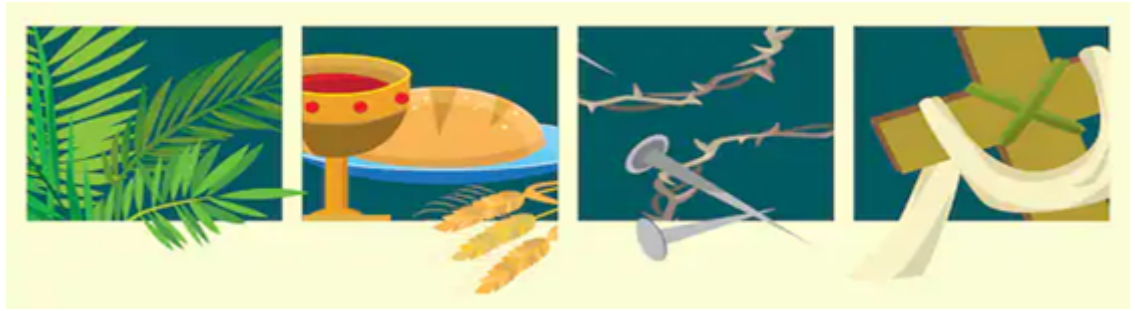


8th April 2020



Dear Parents and Caregivers

We have been advised that while all Catholic schools will remain open next term, learning for students will **continue to be delivered remotely from home**. As has been the case since we transitioned to remote learning in Term One, parents and caregivers who are engaged in essential services, or who are both required to maintain employment, may choose to send their children to school, if they are unable to care for them at home. We appreciate how difficult it is to work from home with children, however it is clearly the expectation from the Government that families do this.

Our staff will continue to work through Term Two to ensure we can best support your children's learning from home, as well as those students who may be at school. Some staff will be working from home. As parents, you clearly continue to play a key, hands-on role, assisting your children to engage in learning at this time, as well as supporting them to deal with any anxiety or worries.

It is important to be said however, that parents are by no means expected to take the place of teachers. **All you can do is your best under very difficult circumstances**. We too will be doing our very best to support you to deliver the curriculum and to respond as pastorally as we can to your needs at this time.

As we continue to partner together, we acknowledge that it will be important to maintain **regular contact** between the school and parents and caregivers. You will receive further details of our plans in this regard by the start of Term Two. We have now been advised to plan for remote delivery of learning for the first four weeks of Term Two. We have also been told to prepare for this situation to potentially extend until the end of Term Two and possibly beyond this timeframe. For now, however, let us just focus on **one day and one week at a time**.

As communicated last week, I wish to reassure every parent and caregiver that the ongoing enrolment of every child in our school is guaranteed, regardless of a parent's financial circumstances. The following options are immediately available to all families with children in Catholic schools:

- The **Health Care Card Discount** Scheme provides an automatic fee concession to the holders of eligible means-tested family concession cards. **This discount applies to all year levels from Kindergarten to Year 12.**
- For parents who do not qualify for the Health Care Card discount, but who are experiencing financial difficulty, please contact **Gillian Norris, our School Finance Officer ph 92569696** or myself, to confidentially discuss your situation.

Our school staff are so very grateful for the support and appreciation that so many parents and caregivers have shared with us at this challenging time. Thank you, and please know that we are also in awe of all your efforts at home. **Thank you for completing our recent survey** -it has assisted us with **modifying our Remote Learning Plans** for next term. I will continue to keep you updated with any new information as it becomes available.

All the very best for a peaceful, joyful Easter break and best wishes for the school 'holidays' :)

Yours sincerely

Tania Thuijs

Principal

The Other Side of the Virus - an opportunity to Awaken...

Yes there is panic buying.

Yes there is sickness.

Yes there is very sadly, even death.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet

The sky is no longer thick with fumes
but blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi

People are singing to each other

across the empty squares, keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone may hear the sounds of family
around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland

is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know is busy spreading fliers with her number

through the neighbourhood **so that the elders may have someone to call on.**

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples are preparing to welcome

and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary.

All over the world people are **slowing down and reflecting.**

All over the world people are **looking at their neighbours in a new way.**

All over the world people are **waking up to a new reality**

To how little control we really have.

To what really matters.

To Love.

So we pray and we remember that -

Yes there is fear. **But there does not have to be hate.**

Yes there is isolation. **But there does not have to be loneliness.**

Yes there is panic buying. **But there does not have to be mean spiritedness.**

Yes there is sickness. **But there does not have to be disease of the soul**

Yes there is even death. **But there can always be a rebirth of love.**

Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.

Breathe. Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic.

The birds are singing again,

The sky is clearing,

Spring is coming,

And we are always encompassed by God's great and never-ending Love.

Open the windows of your soul

And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,

Sing.



Written by Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM, March 13th, 2020

Loving God,

Your desire is for our wholeness and wellbeing.

We hold in tenderness and prayer the collective suffering of our world at this time.

We grieve precious lives lost and vulnerable lives threatened.

We ache for ourselves and our neighbours,
standing before an uncertain future.

We pray:

may love, not fear, go viral.

Inspire our leaders to discern and choose wisely, aligned with the common good.

Help us to practice social distancing and reveal to us new and creative ways to come together in spirit
and in solidarity.

Call us to profound trust in your faithful presence,

You, the God who does not abandon.

What interactions with others were significant to me today? What care and compassion did I show?

What was going on in my head during these interactions? Was I truly present?

What control do I have over the circumstances of these individuals? Did I do all that I could in this point
in time?

What can I do for tomorrow?

Prayer for Compassion

Merciful God,

Open my heart and mind to be fully present to those I interact with throughout the day.

Allow me to listen to others without passing judgement or haste to solve what I cannot change.

Give me patience and understanding and grant me grace in my shortcomings.

Be with me in times of fatigue and lift me up with the strength to carry out your compassionate love to
all those I meet.

Amen.

- By Ashley Henkes,

